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City Attorney Shuts Down Secret Yard Hookah Lounge, Chronic Nuisance Venue Agrees to Pay \$1.3 Million in Penalties After Years of Violence, Illegal Activity, and Code Violations

Venue operators agree to pay \$100,000 in penalties and \$12,500 in investigative costs.

SAN DIEGO – City Attorney Heather Ferbert announced the successful resolution of a civil enforcement action that has permanently shut down the Secret Yard Hookah Lounge, a business in Logan Heights that city officials say repeatedly endangered public safety, disrupted the surrounding community, and operated in flagrant violation of state and local laws.

The final judgments come after years of complaints, hundreds of police responses, and extensive investigation by the San Diego Police Department (SDPD), the City Attorney's Nuisance Abatement Unit (NAU), the San Diego Fire Department (SDFD), and the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

Between October 2021 and 2024, SDPD officers were dispatched to the Secret Yard venue over 200 times, often in response to reports of loud music, violent fights, intoxicated crowds, and gun violence. The business operated well beyond its permitted hours, served liquor without proper licenses, and illegally hosted DJs and dancing. In January 2023, a bouncer and his family member were charged with attempted murder of a customer, and in 2022, patrons were linked to a homicide. Additional criminal activity connected to the lounge included stabbings, assaults with deadly weapons, illegal firearms, drug sales, and a hit-and-run incident.

Despite receiving multiple warnings and notices of violation from local and state agencies, the Secret Yard continued to defy local and state regulations. Investigators from the city's Building and Land Use Enforcement Division (BLUE) uncovered serious safety code breaches, including unpermitted construction of a 50-foot structure, unauthorized electrical and mechanical work, and conditions that failed to provide adequate emergency exits. Fire marshals reported illegal occupancy levels, blocked doors, and missing safety hardware that posed severe risks to patrons.

"The Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control appreciates its ongoing partnership with local law enforcement and the City of San Diego as we work to address problem locations and support neighborhoods impacted by them," said Melissa Ryan, Supervising Agent in Charge, ABC.

"This nuisance business repeatedly chose profits over safety and showed no regard for the community it endangered," said City Attorney Heather Ferbert. **"After years of draining police resources, refusing to obtain required building permits, and inviting violence into a residential neighborhood, the Secret Yard is finally, and permanently, shut down."**

“Our community members deserve a thriving neighborhood with bars, restaurants, and other businesses that operate safely and responsibly,” Police Chief Scott Wahl said. “The Secret Yard was a magnet for criminal activity, and its closure is a huge relief for so many involved. I want to commend everyone for working together to finally get this done for the Logan Heights community.”

Under the final judgments, the Secret Yard must permanently cease all business operations and advertising within 24 hours. All social media accounts, signage, and listings promoting the business must also be taken down. Defendants are jointly responsible for paying \$112,500 in penalties and investigative costs. An additional \$1.2 million in suspended civil penalties is awarded and will be imposed if they violate the terms of the judgments.

Defendants are also permanently enjoined from maintaining similar violations anywhere in the City of San Diego. The court will retain jurisdiction to enforce the terms of the judgments and pursue civil penalties of up to \$2,500 per day for any future violations. Failure to comply will trigger immediate enforcement, imposition of the stayed penalties, and accrual of interest on penalties owed.

“This successful outcome is about restoring peace to a community that was robbed of it for far too long,” Ferbert said. “No business is above the law, and this case sends a strong message that public nuisance and criminal activity will not be tolerated in our neighborhoods.”

Ferbert added, **“We’re proud of the extensive work of our Nuisance Abatement Unit and our partnerships with SDPD, BLUE, the Fire Department, and ABC. This was a collaborative effort to protect public safety and reclaim a community space that had been overtaken by danger and disregard.”**

“Imperial Avenue is home to many vibrant small businesses that contribute positively to the Logan Heights community. When any establishment engages in illegal activity, it undermines the trust and safety of families and neighboring businesses. I appreciate the efforts of City Attorney Heather Ferbert and the San Diego Police Department for striving to maintain public safety and protect our neighborhoods”, said Councilmember Vivian Moreno.

The case was prosecuted by Deputy City Attorney Angel Alcaraz. The judgment only settles the case with the venue operators including Ascendant Group LLC, Eser Horuz, Huzur LLC, and Tolga Limon. Litigation is still continuing with the property owner defendants Krasne Family Properties LLC, and Kurt V. Krasne.

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