

Chinese nationals arrested for human trafficking on Long Island

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ShuwenAi (l) and Zhaowei Yin (r)
Courtesy Nassau County District Attorney's Office

Chinese nationals Zhaowei Yin, 49, and his wife Shuwen Ai, 46, of Flushing, NY have been arrested on charges of human trafficking, labor trafficking and promoting prostitution by Nassau County police. The couple, who do not speak English, pled not guilty through their attorneys Christopher Graziano (representing Shuwen) and John Healy (for Zhaowei) at their arraignment. earlier this week at court in Mineola, Both have been in this country for the last-3-4 years.

According to authorities, Zhaowei and Shuwen hired 2 women who answered their ad in a Chinese newspaper seeking workers for a massage parlor in May 2013 and January 2014. "The women were picked up in Queens and brought to 2 Nassau County business, identified as Lucy's Spa in West Hempstead and Panda Foot in Franklin Square, where they were "forced to commit sex acts," stated Nassau DA Madeline Singas. She went on to state that one victim endured abuse for about a month, while the other's ordeal lasted just under a week. Both were said to have also been threatened with deportation if they did not obey, as well as having naked pictures of them published on the internet. One of the women also suffered physical abuse at the hands of a customer.

Both victims had been arrested and charged during undercover operations by the Nassau County Police Department, and their cases were accordingly handled in the Human Trafficking Intervention Part of Nassau County District Court. As a result of further investigation by investigators and prosecutors from the District Attorney's Office, in collaboration with members of the Nassau County Police Department Narcotics Vice Squad, charges against the victims were subsequently dismissed, and a wider investigation into their alleged traffickers was instigated.

Bail has been set for the defendants at \$250,000 cash or bond and both were required to turn in their passports. If convicted they could spend anywhere from 8-1/2-25 years in prison.