

# Department of Justice

United States Attorney Terrance P. Flynn  
Western District of New York

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JUNE 13, 2008  
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## **YONG MEI SHI SENTENCED AND ORDERED DEPORTED**

BUFFALO, N.Y.-- U.S. Attorney Terrance P. Flynn announced today that Yong Mei Shi, 52, formerly of Niagara Falls, New York, was sentenced in United States District Court by District Judge William M. Skretny. Shi was convicted of Persuading an Individual to Travel in Interstate Commerce for Purposes of Prostitution. Shi was sentenced to time served after having been detained since her arrest on March 26, 2007 and was also ordered to forfeit over \$12,000 to the Government, representing proceeds of the prostitution business she ran and was also ordered deported. Following administrative processing by the U.S. Marshal's Service, Ms. Shi was taken into custody by the Department of Homeland Security.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert C. Moscati stated that the defendant admitted to speaking by telephone with an Asian woman, then in Florida, sometime between September, 2006 and March, 2007 and persuading the woman to travel to Buffalo for the purpose of working in a massage parlor owned and operated by the defendant. Ms. Shi owned and operated Asian Accupressure Therapy on Porter Road in Niagara Falls, New York. The woman who traveled from Florida worked in Asian Accupressure Therapy and performed numerous sexual acts for customers and was paid separately for these services while the parlor's base massage fee was paid over to Ms. Shi. Asian Accupressure Therapy and seven (7) other "Accupressure" and "Spa" locations were shut down after federal, state and local law enforcement agencies executed search warrants at these locations on March 26, 2007.

In November, 2006, the Attorney General announced the creation of the HTTFA in the Western District of New York (WDNY), one of 42 nationwide. The WDNY HTTFA is a collaboration of local, state and federal law enforcement agencies and non-government service organizations working together to identify, rescue and assist victims of human trafficking, human smuggling and other civil and human rights offenses in the 17 Counties of the District, through aggressive

investigation, prosecution, training, education and outreach to law enforcement, non-government organizations, vulnerable and affected persons and the general public.

The joint investigation underlying this conviction was lead by the Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Lev J. Kubiak, and included the participation of: United States Custom and Border Protection, under the direction of James Engleman; the United States Border Patrol, under the direction of Chief Patrol Agent Kevin Oaks; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Laurie Bennett; the United States Department of Labor, under the direction of Assistant District Director, Michael Fitzgerald; the Niagara Falls Police Department, under the direction of Chief of Police John Chella; the Town of Niagara Police Department, under the direction of Chief of Police James Suitor; the New York State Police, under the direction of acting Superintendent Preston Felton and Special Investigations Unit Lieutenant William Saunders; the Niagara County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Thomas Beilein; and the Erie County Sheriff's Office, under the direction of Sheriff Timothy Howard.