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## Whatever happens in Vegas ...

County's sheriff, undersheriff say they thought suspected brothel was legal massage parlor

By Michael Manekin and Rebekah Gordon, STAFF WRITER

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REDWOOD CITY — San Mateo County's two "top cops" — Sheriff Greg Munks and Undersheriff Carlos Bolanos — were detained by Las Vegas police Saturday night during a raid at a suspected brothel off the Las Vegas strip.

The bust, "Operation Dollhouse," targeted nine Las Vegas houses of prostitution, the majority dubbed as "massage parlors," according to police.

Neither Munks nor Bolanos was arrested, but they were questioned and released along with paying customers, said Las Vegas police spokesman Bill Cassell.

"No clients, customers, johns, whatever you want to call them, were arrested," said Cassell. "The only people who were arrested were ... the owners, operators, managers and promoters."

During an impromptu press conference Tuesday afternoon in the San Mateo County Hall of Justice, both sheriff and undersheriff denied that they had visited the alleged brothel to pay for sex.

"I believed I was going to a legitimate business," Munks said in a prepared statement. "It was not."

Munks, dressed in a suit, formally apologized to his family, the sheriff's office and the people of San Mateo County for his "lack of judgment and the undue attention and embarrassment this incident has caused."

"I hold myself to a high standard and am personally embarrassed by this mistake," he said. "I would not, nor did I, break any laws. Neither did the undersheriff."

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Both Munks and Bolanos declined to answer questions from reporters during the news conference, and Munks added later that he "won't be answering any more questions or talking about this anymore in the future."

The arrests at the establishment where Munks and Bolanos were found took place at about 9:30 p.m., according to the Las Vegas police.

"The sheriff and the undersheriff were not treated any differently than any other individuals," said Cassell. "As was related to me, they were forthcoming and very professional."

**Bolanos previously told a Las Vegas TV station that he and Munks had asked a limo driver to take them to a massage parlor**, because the sheriff was sore after participating in the Baker to Vegas Challenge Cup Rally, an annual run for law enforcement officials.

While Munks was inside the business, Bolanos waited in the limo. But the two soon realized that the business was not legal, he said. As they were about to leave, Bolanos said, the raid was

launched.

According to Cassell, the "massage parlor" did not have a sign advertising its services and lies in a mixed residential and light-industrial neighborhood, some two miles west of the commercial Las Vegas strip.

"They were on the property," said Cassell of the sheriff and undersheriff. "I'm not prepared to say they were actually customers."

The series of raids, conducted on Saturday and Sunday, were the result of a two-year investigation among Las Vegas police, the FBI, the IRS and Immigration and Customs Enforcement which targeted an Asian organized-crime ring. All of the suspected bordellos raided over the weekend were homes or apartments, said Cassell.

A total of 25 suspected prostitutes were detained — "they spoke limited English, if any English at all," Cassell said — and six people were arrested.

"Operation Dollhouse" also turned up 3,500 tablets of Ecstasy and \$20,000 in cash.

Prostitution is illegal in Nevada, but counties with fewer than 400,000 residents are free to legalize the world's oldest profession. Las Vegas is the seat of Clark County — an area with a population of nearly 2 million.

As news of the misadventures reverberated throughout the county Tuesday afternoon, representatives from the Sheriff's Office would not elaborate beyond Munks' statement, and most members of the Board of Supervisors did not return calls by press time.

"It would be premature for me or any other public official to comment on these news reports until we have all of the facts," Supervisor Rose Jacobs Gibson wrote in a prepared statement.

However, Supervisor Jerry Hill said the county does not have any current plans to discipline either Munks or Bolanos, adding that his professional relationship with the two men is years old, "and this would be totally out of character if they were doing something that would be illegal."

Munks spent 13 years as the county's undersheriff and was unopposed in last year's election to succeed retiring Sheriff Don Horsley.

Bolanos was appointed undersheriff by Munks, and the two have worked together in law enforcement for more than 25 years.

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