

# ILLEGALLY SELLING WHALE

## RESTAURANT CHARGED WITH SELLING WHALE MEAT

By Rosana Clarkson

SANTA MONICA—On March 10, the United States Attorney's Office announced that federal prosecutors filed a criminal complaint that charges a Santa Monica sushi eatery and one of its chefs with illegally selling the meat of protected Sei whales.

The sale of all whale meat is prohibited in the United States by the Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Sei whales are listed as endangered, according to the United States Attorney's Web site.

The criminal complaint charges Typhoon Restaurant—the owner of The Hump restaurant at the Santa Monica Airport—and 45-year-old chef Kiyoshiro Yasamoto, with the illegal sale of a marine mammal product for an unauthorized purpose.

"Someone should not be able to walk into a restaurant and order a plate of an

endangered species," United States Attorney André Jr. states in a press release. "Federal law has a variety of provisions, including criminal statutes, intended to protect this planet's threatened natural resources. People should be aware that we will use these criminal statutes where appropriate to protect endangered species, including to ensure that they do not end up part of a meal."

The criminal complaint and a search warrant executed at the restaurant indicate that The Hump sold whale sushi to customers three times since October. Scientists examined the meat sold as "whale" on two of the occasions, testing the DNA of the meat and determining it to be Sei whale. Receipts given to customers at the restaurant also indicated that they had purchased whale.

It is illegal to sell whale

meat in the United States, and that Sei whales are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and are listed as endangered in Endangered Species Act of 1973.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Law Enforcement had conducted the investigation on the case. NOAA investigators had been assisted by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish & Game, and U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

Martina Sagapolu, Acting Special Agent in Charge for the NOAA Office of Law Enforcement, Southwest Division, states, "Making illicit products like whale meat available on the market only encourages the illegal hunting of marine mammals...while there is a market for illegal products and delicacies, we are dedi-

cated to finding and prosecuting those who would exploit protected resources that are under threat."

Typhoon Restaurant and Yamamoto are charged with illegally selling a marine mammal product. The charge is a misdemeanor offense that carries a maximum statutory penalty of one year in federal prison and a maximum fine of \$100,000 for an individual and \$200,000 for an organization.

Yamamoto and representatives of The Hump are to make initial court appearances in United States Court in the near future. The Hump investigation began after members of the public reported information to NOAA.

Anyone with information about the illegal sale of marine mammals is urged to contact the NOAA Law Enforcement hotline at 1-800-853-1964.



Photo By Production

## DETECTIVES SEARCH FOR POSSIBLE VICTIMS

By Clark Milan

WILSHIRE—Detectives in the Los Angeles area have recently posted a picture of 47-year-old suspect Jorge Fernandez, and are searching for young people who may have been victims of harassment.

Fernandez, who resides in downtown Los Angeles, was arrested by detectives from the Central Police Station on Friday, March 5, and was booked on a charge of Lewd Acts with a Child. The suspect's bail was set at \$100,000.

"We believe the case we are investigating may be just one of several other crimes against children," said Lt. Paul Ver-

non, Commanding Officer of the Central Detective Division. According to Lt. Vernon, Fernandez was also arrested for a similar act back in 2008, and pled guilty to battery and willful cruelty to a child.

According to the Los Angeles Police Department, an unidentified mother and her 10-year-old daughter walked into an office at 634 South Spring St. about three years ago to enroll her daughter in a Mexican civic program, which was operated by Fernandez at the time. After meeting the young girl, Fernandez and his wife quickly invited her to stay

overnight at their downtown Los Angeles home in order to play with Fernandez's young daughter.

The LAPD said on their Blog site that according to the victim, now 13, Fernandez fondled the girl on three occasions over the next several months.

Both the mother and daughter, who moved to another state, flew to California to report the crime against Fernandez last January. The unidentified teenager revealed the information during a counseling session.

"The mother and daughter

felt compelled to come all this way to make this report," said Lt. Vernon. "Given the prior similar acts and conviction, as well as Fernandez's apparent frequent contact with children, we thought it would be prudent to release his photograph to help identify other victims."

According to the LAPD, Fernandez is a self-described Hispanic community organizer who promotes self-help improvement services for Latinos. The suspect has also been affiliated with the Conte Mexicano Civico Patriotic in Huntington Park.

## 18-YEAR-OLD DIES FROM ATTEMPTED ROBBERY

By Aiza Cayanan

TOPANGA CANYON—On Thursday, March 4, a suspect involved in an attempted robbery, which ended in the victim's death, is still on the lookout.

When the victim was approached by a man who was attempting to rob him, he ran away only to be hit by a passing car. The suspect fled the scene in an "unknown direction." He still continues to be unidentified. He could only be described as a "male

Hispanic."

Officers were at the scene at 8 in the evening in the Canoga Park area at the block of 20600 Sherman Way, where it was said to be a "traffic collision." They had found a man lying unconscious on the road.

The victim was an 18-year-old male named Miguel Alvarenga from San Fernando Valley. He was treated at the scene by responding paramedics and brought to a

local hospital in "critical condition."

Miguel Alvarenga died on Friday from his injuries.

The Los Angeles Police Department of the Topanga area is asking for the public to help in identifying the suspect.

The public is asked to call Topanga Area homicide detectives at 818-756-3363 with any information that they have. Also, call may be made to 1-877-LAPD-24-7

during non-business hours or on weekends. To remain anonymous call Crimestoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (800-222-8477) or for tipsters, contact by texting to phone number 274637 (C-R-I-M-E-S on most keypads), with a cell phone. Text messages should begin with the letters "LAPD." For tips, also go to LAPDOnline.org, click "webtips" and follow the prompts.

## TV PERSONALITY'S LAWSUIT DISMISSED

By Rosana Clarkson

WOODLAND HILLS—A lawsuit against Dr. Drew (David Drew Pinsky) has been dismissed after the reality TV medic accused a man of stalking and threatening his family.

The alleged stalker, 33-year-old Charles Pearson, was taken into custody at Pierce College in Woodland Hills after Pinsky told authorities that he had been harassing him through online messages. It was later found that Pearson, a possible transient, had attempted to sue Pinsky in a Los Angeles County Superior Court in February only weeks before he was arrested. A

judge, however, later dismissed the case after both Pinsky and Pearson failed to show up at a hearing.

Pearson had reportedly attempted to collect \$2,500, claiming that Pinsky had performed illegal surgery on him in the form of a microchip called a GED inserted in Pearson's genitals that would "hit" him throughout the day and cause his legs to burn. According to Pearson, other culprits include UCLA's Olive View Hospital, USC and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Pearson documented his alleged suffering on his Web

site internethackers.com.

On the December 22, 2009, he writes: "The hospital [Olive View Hospital] was in direct knowledge of my involvement with internethackers.com and was given an order by David Pinsky to hold me so that they could illegally implant me and continue this on air abuse described throughout the body of this document. The nature of this abuse is known a GED shocking or electro shock treatment..."

Pearson eventually pled not guilty to one count of stalking and five counts of making criminal threats against Pin-

sky. Pearson is currently in custody, with a bail amount set at \$400,000.

Pinsky has hosted the radio talk show "Loveline," since 1984, and produces and stars in the television shows "Celebrity Rehab" with "Sex Rehab with Dr. Drew," "Sober House" and MTV's "Sex...With Mom and Dad." He has also appeared on "Space Ghost Coast to Coast," "The Adam Carolla Project," "Minoriteam" and "Robot Chicken." He has also made film appearances on "New York Minute" and "Wild Hogs."

## BAN ON MOBILE ADVERTISING TRAILERS

By Aiza Cayanan

HOLLYWOOD—Since Friday, March 5, the Los Angeles City Council has called for a ban on mobile advertising trailers. Recent efforts have been made in the past month by two California legislators according to banbillboards.org. Councilman Dennis Zine has been calling them "blight on the community."

The AB2756 bill states, "Not only are mobile billboards a visual blight, but they pose a significant safety hazard when motorists are forced to veer around them into the next lane of traffic. Mobile bill-

boards also reduce available on-street parking and impair the visibility of pedestrians and drivers."

On the banbillboards.org Web site, there are pictures of mobile advertising trailers that are located all over the greater Los Angeles area, especially Hollywood. Concerns have been raised particularly because the signs are very distracting and it is hard for anyone commuting. As it is, Los Angeles is a congested city with pollution and traffic.

Since the motion has been made by two councilmen,



Paul Koretz and Bill Rosendahl on September 1, 2008, so far there are no recent updates on this bill. In

San Francisco, a ban on mobile advertising trailers has already been in place.

## HOTEL BURGLAR ON THE LOOSE

By Clark Milan

WILSHIRE—In an effort to catch a suspected thief, the Los Angeles Police Department has posted a picture of the burglar, and is asking for the public's support in locating him.

According to the LAPD, on March 5, the unidentified man posed as an employee at a Four Seasons Hotel on 300 South Doheny Drive, which is also in the LAPD's Wilshire area. The suspect allegedly walked in one of the guest rooms and stole an estimated \$40,000 worth of

jewelry from the unknown victim.

The LAPD said on their Blog site that in hopes to avoid similar incidents, detectives released the surveillance photo from the hotel to alert other nearby hotels of the suspect's criminal activity, and to encourage them to take every precaution possible.

In the stilled photograph, the man was in an elevator. He was wearing dark-framed eye glasses and a dark-colored suit

The criminal also had an object in both of his hands.

While the investigation of the suspect and his crime is still in its preliminary stages, the LAPD is uncertain if the robber is linked to other thefts that occurred at several downtown hotels last year.

Anyone who has information regarding the unsolved case is urged to contact a LAPD Burglary Special Section detective at 212-486-6947. During non-business hours or on week-

ends, calls should be directed to 1-877-LAPD-24-7. Anyone wishing to remain anonymous should call Crimestoppers at (800)-222-TIPS (800-222-8477). Tipsters may also contact Crimestoppers by texting to phone numbers 274637 (C-R-I-M-E-S on most keypads) with a mobile telephone. All text messages should begin with the letters "LAPD." Tipsters may also go to LAPDOnline.org, click on "webtips" and follow the prompt.

## ST. JOHN'S HOSPITAL ACCUSED OF ATTACKING RIGHTS

By Rosana Clarkson

SANTA MONICA—On March 5, the California Nurses Association's announced that St. John's Health Center will undergo a trial on charges of being in violation of the rights of its registered nurses.

St. John's Hospital, located in Santa Monica, is part of the Catholic chain Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth. The National Labor Relations Board is prosecuting St. John's for unlawful harassment of nurse leaders, illegally spying on registered nurses, questioning nurses about union activity and other violations.

The charges against St. John's were brought by the California Nurses Association on behalf of St. John's Health Center RNs who have been arranging to win col-

lective bargaining rights in the hopes of improving long-term concerns about patient safety and nurse retention.

The trial took place on March 8 at 9 a.m., at the National Labor Relations Board, Region 31, at 11150 W. Olympic Blvd., Suite 700, in Los Angeles.

CEO Lou Lazatin is being accused of breaking consistent promises to avoid breaking federal laws. It is reported that the hospital continued to violate these laws even after charges had been filed.

It is suspected that Ms. Lazatin's promises to comply with federal laws has been a way to circumvent the nurses' multiple requests to collaborate on a set of fair rules, in accordance

with guidelines established by the Catholic Church, which do more than federal law to guarantee a level playing field, as reported by the Web site.

Lori Hammond, an RN who works in the labor delivery unit of the hospital, states in the release presented by the California Nurses Association: "Saint John's administration should open its heart to respecting RN's rights and embrace the fair union election principles of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. This has gone on too long and has taken too high a price on our nurses, our patients and our community. We urge our hospital to respect their nurses and stop the attacks on our attempt to gain collective bargaining

rights so we can advocate for our patients." The release states that Lazatin consistently rejected the Catholic Bishops' principles on the basis that she simply needed to obey federal labor laws. The charges of violations of labor laws include:

1) Spying on the union activity of RNs

2) Interrogating RNs about their union support

3) Expelling off-duty pro-union RNs from the hospital

4) Threats to contact police if off-duty RNs refused to leave

5) Creating a policy to prevent off-duty RNs from campaigning for CNA representation

6) Prohibiting wearing ribbons that read, "Saint John's RNs for Safe Patient Care"

## ARRESTS AT ACADEMY AWARDS

By Susie Kopecky

HOLLYWOOD—According to various reports, somewhere between 15 to more than 20 people were arrested on Sunday, March 6, while attempting to enter the Academy Awards ceremony and/or to pose as legitimate members of the press.

According to TMZ, at least one of those intruders was fined \$5,000 for his transgression. Others arrested included 12 youths, nine of whom were from Germany. The 20-something individuals were pretending to be young representatives from MTV.

The Academy Awards has a long and colorful history of uninited guests attempting to crash the festivities, or successfully crashing, and making spectacles. In 1974, a man snuck into the Academy Awards, only to later run naked across the stage, as British comedian/actor David Niven was presenting. Niven famously ad-libbed the response, "Isn't it fascinating to think that probably the only laugh that man will ever get in his life is by stripping off and showing his shortcomings?" Other surprising and mem-

orable moments at the Academy Awards included Marlon Brando's 1973 refusal to accept his award for Best Actor, for Francis Ford Coppola's "The Godfather." Brando appointed a young Native American woman by the name of Sacheen Littlefeather, to accept his award and represent a chastisement to Hollywood for the way in which Native Americans were presented on film. In 2003, Adrien Brody surprised all at the awards show, when he took Halle Berry into a swooping kiss, after winning the award for Best Actor for

his role in "The Pianist."

The 2010 Academy Awards were hosted by comedian Steve Martin and actor Alec Baldwin. Sandra Bullock won the award for Best Actress for her role in "The Blind Side," Jeff Bridges won for Best Actor for his role in "Crazy Heart," Mo'Nique won for Best Supporting Actress for her role in "Precious" and Austrian actor Christoph Waltz won the award for Best Supporting Actor for his star-making turn in "Inglourious Basterds."

## DUI CHECKPOINTS SET UP

By Susie Kopecky

BEVERLY HILLS—Between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m. on Wednesday, March 17, the Beverly Hills Police Department will be setting up a DUI Checkpoint along the southbound side of La Cienega, within the stretch of road located between Olympic Boulevard and Gregory Drive. The DUI Sobriety-Drivers License

Checkpoint will be in operation between 6 p.m. and 11 p.m.

March 17 will mark St. Patrick's Day, a holiday celebrated in the United States with revelry, and traditionally with alcohol.

The Office of Traffic Safety and Mothers Against Drunk Driving are partners in the city's efforts

to cut down on drunk and unsafe driving.

Lieutenant Tony Lee notes that such tools as DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols and the deployment of DUI-enforcing officers are adding up to the creation of a safer Beverly Hills.

According to the BHPD, it is

hoped that local drivers observing St. Patrick's Day will do so in a safe manner.

The purpose of the police checkpoint is to identify and detain drunk drivers and other drivers who may pose a clear threat on the road. Officers will be checking for sobriety and for proper licensing.