



RACINE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Sheriff Christopher Schmaling

Chief Deputy James P. Weidner

Re: Application for City of Racine Massage Establishment Permit – Lotus Spa Massage

Date: February 19, 2026

On January 5th, 2026, I received an email from City of Racine Assistant City Attorney Ian Pomplin containing two (2) PDF attachments. The files were copies of an Application for City of Racine Massage Establishment Permit submitted by Anthony Buchanan.

BASIC INFORMATION | LICENSING | OPEN-SOURCE SEARCH

Attorney Pomplin inquired into any information or background that could assist the Public Safety and Licensing Committee in deciding to approve or deny each license application. I observed the applicant to be listed as Anthony Buchanan with an address of 2320 71st St. in Kenosha, Wisconsin. Buchanan listed the business name as Lotus Spa to be located at 1118 Grove Avenue in the City of Racine. Buchanan listed business, occupation or employment in last three (3) years to only include self-employment through his LLC "Tony's Custom Tiles" with nature of business being "construction."

Buchanan does not appear to have any history or experience in the massage or body therapy industry or obvious connection to such in his history. His LLC of "Serenity and Peace LLC" was only created in August 4th, 2025, per Wisconsin DFI corporation search.

Buchanan included an employee for the business to be Sanmei Liao (DOB: 3/5/67) who shows a valid massage therapist or bodywork therapist license through WI DSPS. I was unable to locate an obvious connection between Buchanan and Liao who is approximately 10 years his senior that would explain how he met and/or identified her as a prospective employee for the business.

Buchanan included a "certificate of Liability Insurance" with his application showing the insured party to be "Serenity and Peace LLC" with an address of 3717 52nd Street in Kenosha. A search of this address found it to be associated with Pink Spa in Kenosha. I know through previous human trafficking related investigations and research into the local and regional operation of illicit massage businesses (IMB) that Pink Spa has been identified as a suspected or known IMB. Pink Spa was listed on illicit websites such as Rubmaps.ch which are intended to catalogue and provide reviews of commercial sex acts provided at illicit massage businesses.

Other Business Applications

I contacted the City of Kenosha and learned that Buchanan has submitted multiple applications for opening a massage business at the 3717 52nd Street address. The application in September of 2025

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included a massage provider with a listed address of 2222 Roosevelt Rd. in Kenosha. I know this to be the address of JY Spa, another suspected and/or confirmed IMB. I have observed online advertisements for the same address posted to illicit websites such as SkipTheGames which are used almost exclusively for the solicitation of commercial sex acts and frequently exploited by individuals engaged in human sex trafficking, especially through illicit massage businesses.

A later application for the same location to the City of Kenosha included Liao as the employee with Buchanan's address listed as her own, however a copy of her Illinois driver's license was included with an address of 1907 S. Wells St. in Chicago. I know this address to be in or around the Chinatown area of the City of Chicago which I also know to be a hub for human trafficking through illicit massage businesses in the Midwest. It should be noted that the S. Wells St. address is what is provided on the City of Racine application.

Both applications for massage business permits in Kenosha submitted by Buchanan were denied.

CONCLUSION

I have reviewed the information included in the application by Buchanan for Lotus Spa. In certain instances, the information provided on the application for the Lotus Spa massage establishment permit appears to have direct links to known or suspected illicit massage businesses. The following points are presented for consideration:

- I know through training and experience in investigating illicit massage businesses that individuals known as "paper husbands" will often be utilized for the establishment of such locations. The "paper husband" is often utilized for the purposes of completing licensing or permitting with a "clean" name and may also be utilized for the management of utility accounts as well. This is done with the intention of shielding or concealing the true owners or operators of the business who profit most directly from the illicit commercial sex acts occurring. A "paper husband" is typically an individual who is or has been a long-time trusted customer of another illicit massage business and known to the actual owners or operators the business.
- Buchanan shows no prior history or connection to the massage or bodywork industry. There is no obvious connection between Buchanan and his prospective employee who lists an address in Chicago on his City of Racine application but shares an address with Buchanan on a previous application to the City of Kenosha.
- One of Buchanan's previous attempts to apply for a massage business in the City of Kenosha included a prospective employee with a provided address which is the same as a known illicit massage business, JY Spa, located at 2222 Roosevelt Rd. in Kenosha which has online advertisements on SkipTheGames as recently as January 30th, 2026 and known to have consistently appeared throughout the entirety of 2025.
- Buchanan's certificate of liability insurance shows his LLC to have an address to be the same as a now closed illicit massage business in Kenosha, Pink Spa. I know through training and experience that IMB's will be often be shut down or closed and then reopened with new applicants, "owners" and employees that have "cleaner" names and backgrounds which are not associated with the previous business's illicit reputation only to continue illicit operations under the new name.

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An illicit massage business (IMB) is commonly defined as an establishment that puts on the façade of a legitimate massage business in order to facilitate commercial sex services, often performed by unlicensed female workers who are victims of sex trafficking. Additionally, the Human Trafficking Institute adds:

“Victim workers spend years moving “to different cities and states, cycling in and out of IMBs, where they often sleep onsite and are expected to perform sexual services for an average of 6 to 10 customers per day (and often higher numbers of customers in many cities). In exchange, they receive payment toward their debt, which includes but is not limited to, the costs of their transport to the United States, lodging (in said business, often under surveillance), food, etc.”

I recognize the application information as being consistent with individuals or victims involved in the operation of illicit massage businesses. This is based on my training and experience as a law enforcement officer, which includes a previous assignment to a human trafficking task force which provided violation specific training to include illicit massage business investigations.

Respectfully Submitted,

Investigator Luke Johnson #9741
Racine County Sheriff's Office

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