



CHRISTIAN COUNTY PROSECUTING ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DATE: July 17, 2020

RE: Closure of Illusions Gentlemen's Club

OZARK, MO – Christian County Prosecuting Attorney Amy J. Fite and Sheriff Brad Cole announce the closure of Illusions Gentlemen's Club.

Today the Christian County Prosecuting Attorney's Office working with the Christian County Sheriff's Office completed two (2) cases stemming from an investigation into suspected criminal activity occurring inside Illusions Gentlemen's Club. The investigation into the Nixa, Missouri strip club and adult cabaret began in 2019. To date, the investigation has resulted in both criminal and civil cases. One criminal case involved charges against one of Illusions' owners. The civil case sought an injunction from the Court ordering the closure of Illusions as an illegally operating strip club. Other criminal and civil investigations against other suspects are ongoing.

Christian County Sheriff Brad Cole explained "I and my team of dedicated deputies and detectives spent countless hours addressing the crime and safety problems emanating from Illusions strip club. Their diligence and hard work over the last year, coupled with skilled advocacy from the Christian County Prosecutor's Office, lead to the closure of Illusion's strip club."

Christian County Sheriff Office's detectives found probable cause of various violations of criminal law and submitted them to the Christian County Prosecutors Office to review for formal charges. Christian County Prosecutors filed ten (10) criminal charges against Craig Winchell for illegally operating a sexually oriented business, maintaining a public nuisance and failing to register Illusions as a fictitious business. Mr. Winchell accepted responsibility for these charges by pleading guilty this afternoon. He was sentenced by Christian County Associate Circuit Court Judge Bacon and will pay fines totaling \$10,000 plus court costs and fees.

Craig Winchell is one of the owners of Illusions – owning both the Guin Road building and the sexually-oriented business. In an agreement with the Christian County Prosecuting Attorney, Mr. Winchell agreed that a sexually oriented business (strip club) cannot operate at 755 Guin Road. In settling the civil suit, Mr. Winchell agreed that the strip club that operated at 755 Guin Road will not reopen.

"The hard work of the Christian County Sheriff's deputies and detectives assigned to this investigation, with assistance from their law enforcement partners at MOCIC and Greene County Sheriff's Office,

eliminated a Christian County hot spot of criminal behavior. These deputies and detectives should be commended for their diligence and hard work” stated Christian County Prosecuting Attorney Amy Fite. “I am proud of my team of prosecutors and the entire staff at the Christian County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office whose hard work alongside their counterparts at the Christian County Sheriff’s Office has made Christian County a safer place.”

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For Additional Information please contact Sheriff Brad Cole at 417-582-5330 or Christian County Prosecutor Amy Fite 417-581-7915