



# TIM GRIFFIN

## ATTORNEY GENERAL OF ARKANSAS

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Attorney General Griffin Announces Arrest of Human Trafficker in Oklahoma Following Hot Springs Investigation**

*Griffin: 'I am committed to rooting out this repulsive practice and holding these criminals accountable'*

**LITTLE ROCK** – Attorney General Tim Griffin issued the following statement announcing the arrest of Zengguang “Gary” Liu in connection to human trafficking operations in Hot Springs:

“Earlier this week, following a lengthy investigation by my Special Investigations Division, Zengguang Liu was taken into custody by the U.S. Marshals Service and the Oklahoma City Police Department, and agents from my office served warrants on him in Oklahoma City. Liu is a naturalized U.S. citizen from China, and he owns and operates multiple illicit massage businesses in Hot Springs.

“On July 28, agents from my office raided three illicit massage businesses in Hot Springs: AI Massage, Magic Massage, and Diamond Massage. These raids were part of our ongoing ‘Operation Obscured Vision,’ which began in January. Three female victims, all Chinese nationals, were provided services following these most recent raids. Information gathered during the raids indicated that Liu was the owner of all three businesses and likely owned other such establishments elsewhere in the country.

“Thanks to the outstanding assistance of the U.S. Marshals Service, the Oklahoma City Police Department, and Oklahoma Attorney General Gentner Drummond, we were able to track Liu and take him into custody. He is facing charges in Garland County of trafficking of persons, an

A Felony, and unauthorized use of another person's property to facilitate certain crimes, a B Felony.

“In addition to gathering information that led us to the owner of the establishments, we seized about \$16,000 in cash, including currency from China and four other foreign countries. We also obtained valuable information about how these establishments work and how the victims, who are forced to work as sex slaves, are being lured and transported to the United States. One victim explained that she responded to a social media video in China promising work in America. She reported that she spent her entire life savings to fly to Turkey, where she was given a visa and put on a cruise ship bound for Mexico. Once in Mexico, she told our investigators, she walked across the border into the United States as part of a caravan of migrants and then claimed asylum after being detained by U.S. Border Patrol. She was recruited for illicit massage work by a friend in southern California and eventually was sent to Hot Springs.

“Another victim gave an almost identical story, and the third said she responded to an ad on a website in China and was sent to Los Angeles, where she also claimed asylum. She worked first in Los Angeles and Seattle before being brought to Hot Springs.

“As part of our operation in Hot Springs on July 28, two customers at separate massage businesses were detained, questioned, and released.

“The pattern here is clear, and it matches the intelligence and reports we have heard from federal partners and law enforcement agencies across the country. Criminals based in China have gained a firm business foothold in the United States with illicit massage businesses. They recruit vulnerable women from China with promises of making better money in America than they can at home, and once the victims are lured here, they're trapped and forced to work as prostitutes.

“Law enforcement agencies across the country are dealing with this issue to varying degrees, but here in Arkansas, I am committed to rooting out this repulsive practice and holding these criminals accountable.

“I am grateful for and tremendously proud of the tireless work of my investigators. I am also immensely grateful to Michelle Lawrence, Prosecuting Attorney for the Eighteenth Judicial District East; the Hot Springs Police Department; Arkansas State Police; Homeland Security Investigations, U.S. Department of Homeland Security; the Little Rock Police Department; the U.S. Marshals Service; the Oklahoma City Police Department; the Oklahoma Office of the Attorney General; and Into the Light, a victim-services organization.”

## **Background on Operation Obscured Vision**

Operation Obscured Vision launched on January 23, 2025, with coordinated raids on illicit massage businesses in Harrison, Hot Springs, Jonesboro, Little Rock, Rogers, and Russellville. Subsequent raids have been executed in Hot Springs on May 22 and July 28. A total of 13 illicit massage businesses have been served with search warrants, and to date there have been seven arrests with two active warrants still outstanding. Six of the arrested individuals are Chinese nationals, three of whom are naturalized U.S. citizens.

Arrest warrants have been issued and are outstanding for Junfang Li, 53, a Chinese national, and Yuanbo Xi, 53, a Chinese national. It is believed that both Li and Xi have fled the country.

Twenty-three victims have been identified, with 22 accepting services. All of the victims have been Chinese nationals.

More than \$107,000 in cash has been seized in the raids, most of which is American dollars, but currency from China, Turkey, Thailand, Mexico, the United Arab Emirates, and Serbia has also been seized.

## **About Attorney General Tim Griffin**

Tim Griffin was sworn in as the 57th Attorney General of Arkansas on January 10, 2023, having previously served as the state's 20th Lieutenant Governor from 2015-2023. From 2011-2015, Griffin served as the 24th representative of Arkansas's Second Congressional District, where he served on the House Committee on Ways and Means, House Armed Services Committee, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, House Committee on Ethics and House Committee on the Judiciary while also serving as a Deputy Whip for the Majority.

Griffin is currently an officer in the Arkansas Army National Guard and holds the rank of colonel. Griffin served as an officer in the U.S. Army Reserve Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps for more than 28 years. In 2005, Griffin was mobilized to active duty as an Army prosecutor at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, and served with the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) in Mosul, Iraq.

His previous assignments include serving as the Commander of the 2d Legal Operations Detachment in New Orleans, Louisiana; the Commander of the 134th Legal Operations Detachment at Fort Bragg, North Carolina; and as a Senior Legislative Advisor to the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness at the Pentagon. Griffin earned a master's

degree in strategic studies as a Distinguished Honor Graduate from the U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

Griffin also served as U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Arkansas, and Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs for President George W. Bush; Special Assistant to Assistant Attorney General Michael Chertoff, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice; Special Assistant U.S. Attorney, U.S. Attorney's Office, Eastern District of Arkansas; Senior Investigative Counsel, Government Reform and Oversight Committee, U.S. House of Representatives; and Associate Independent Counsel, Office of Independent Counsel David M. Barrett, In re: HUD Secretary Henry Cisneros.

Griffin is a graduate of Magnolia High School, Hendrix College in Conway, and Tulane Law School in New Orleans. He attended graduate school at Oxford University. He is admitted to practice law in Arkansas (active) and Louisiana (inactive). Griffin lives in Little Rock with his wife, Elizabeth, a Camden native, and their three children.

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