

METROPOLITAN BUREAU of INVESTIGATION NINTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT of FLORIDA

Post Office Box 1673 Orlando, Florida 32802

Telephone 407-836-9701 Fax 407-836-9743 E-Mail: mbiorlando@aol.com www.mbi-police.org

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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
LAW ENFORCEMENT

Mr. Rick Schreiber, Publisher
Orlando Weekly, Inc.
100 West Livingston Street
Orlando, Florida 32801

Re: Prostitution related advertising

Dear Mr. Schreiber:

The Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation (MBI) is a multi-agency police task force that consists of twelve enforcement agencies. As such, the MBI is responsible for enforcing the law in both Orange and Osceola County, Florida, regarding narcotics, organized crime, and vice-related criminal enterprises.

Over the past twenty-eight years, since the MBI's inception, agents with the Vice/Organized Crime Section have conducted hundreds of investigations involving the escort service industry. These investigations have disclosed that the escort service industry in Central Florida routinely engages in Racketeering, Money Laundering, and Prostitution. Escort service businesses operating in the Central Florida area presently rely heavily on advertising in the *Adult Services Section* of the *Orlando Weekly* to further their illegal activities.

In 1996 the *Orlando Sentinel* addressed this problem and demonstrated good corporate citizenship by removing the *business personal* category from the newspaper as well as all escort service/body scrubs advertising. In 1997, after an MBI/IRS investigation of the escort service industry, the *Sprint* and *BellSouth* yellow page advertisers also demonstrated similar good citizenship by removing the escort services category from their publications and tightening their procedures to avoid other categories from being successfully used by prostitution services.

Additionally, in late 1996 the MBI worked with the manager of the *Orlando Weekly*, Alisa Cromer, who communicated with corporate leadership of the publication in order to resolve the problem of advertising for prostitution services. On January 6, 1997, Alisa Cromer informed the MBI that an executive decision had been made by corporate leadership to stop the practice of running *Orlando Weekly* ads concerning escorts, relaxation sessions, and similar "in-call" and "out-call" businesses.




However, as noted by the subpoena that is being served today, just more than ten years after that decision, the problem still has not been resolved and the *Orlando Weekly* continues to aid escort service businesses.

In connection with advertising placed in the *Adult Services Section* and, to a lesser degree, the *Massage Section* of the *Orlando Weekly*, numerous arrests for prostitution related offenses have occurred and additional arrests are anticipated in the coming weeks for charges such as: Racketeering, Money Laundering, and Prostitution. These cases will be prosecuted by the State Attorney for the Ninth Judicial Circuit, State of Florida Office of Statewide Prosecution and the federal Office of the United States Attorney for the Middle District of Florida. As a result of these investigations the Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation has subpoenaed the *Orlando Weekly* advertising records to identify persons and businesses engaged in criminal activity and the advertising or sales personnel responsible for aiding such crimes by processing the advertisements.

Following a review of the subpoena records, I would like to meet with you to discuss the ways in which these persons and escort service businesses operate, how they are using the *Orlando Weekly* to perpetuate their criminal activity, and Florida Statute 796.07, subsection 2(h)3, which makes it a crime to aid or abet prostitution. Further, I would like to discuss how law enforcement and the *Orlando Weekly* may work together to keep our community free of these criminal vice enterprises.

I will call you in several weeks so that a meeting may be scheduled.

Sincerely,



Paul Zambouros, Commander
Vice/Organized Crime Section
Metropolitan Bureau of Investigation

PZ/cc