



Riverside County District Attorney
NEWS RELEASE

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**LAKE ELSINORE BUSINESS OWNER ARRESTED FOR CONSPIRING
TO HIDE HIS INVOLVEMENT IN RECALL CAMPAIGN**

RIVERSIDE – This morning, May 20, 2010, Riverside County District Attorney’s investigators arrested Michel Knight, the owner of Trevi Entertainment Center in Lake Elsinore, for conspiring to hide his involvement in the recall campaign of Lake Elsinore City Councilman Thomas Buckley.

Knight, 49, was arrested about 9:40 a.m. outside his Temecula home. Investigators then drove him to Riverside where he was booked at the Robert Presley Detention Center. Knight has been charged by the District Attorney’s Office with conspiracy to commit perjury, conspiracy to file false documents, conspiracy to violate campaign disclosure requirements, perjury, filing false documents and violating campaign disclosure requirements.

“Any attempt to mislead the voters by violating the law will be aggressively investigated and prosecuted by this office,” said District Attorney Rod Pacheco.

The investigation by the District Attorney’s Office began in August 2009 and revealed that Knight committed numerous illegal acts. Councilman Buckley had previously strongly opposed Knight’s request for a live entertainment permit from the city for Trevi Entertainment, which primarily houses a bowling alley. The recall election was held, at taxpayer expense, in February 2010 but failed.

When a committee is formed to oppose or support a candidate, a Fair Political Practices Commission Form 460 must be filed with the city clerk. The investigation showed that a then-employee of Trevi Entertainment, Enelida Caron, was listed as forming the committee and served as its treasurer. The form listed a single contribution of \$1,500 for the use of office space under the name of another Trevi employee. That person told investigators that he never made a political contribution to the recall committee. The investigation showed that the initial payment for the office space was made by Trevi Entertainment.

Search warrants were served the first week of February 2010 at the homes of Knight and Caron and at Trevi Entertainment. After those were served and became public knowledge through media coverage, and two days after the recall election, Knight filed a Form 461 – a major donor campaign statement -- which listed \$14,528 in contributions related to the recall. This form should have been filed Jan. 31, 2010.

Knight and Caron conspired to conceal Knight’s involvement in the recall effort. They conspired to commit perjury by willfully failing to disclose Knight’s monetary contributions on the Form 460. They also conspired to violate Govt. Code 84211, which requires disclosure of campaign contributors. Forms 460 and 461 were submitted to the Lake Elsinore city clerk under penalty of perjury.

The case is being prosecuted by Deputy District Attorney Tim Cross of the Public Integrity Unit.

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