



U. S. Department of Justice

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PENSACOLA WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY **TO SELLING COUNTERFEIT CONTACT LENSES**

PENSACOLA, FLORIDA – Son Chu Gilliam, 51, of Pensacola, Florida, pleaded guilty today to misdemeanor charges of receipt of adulterated and misbranded devices, and sale of prescription devices without a prescription -- those devices being contact lenses. Lawrence Keefe, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced the guilty plea.

Her sentencing hearing is currently set for September 10, 2019.

In May 2015, law enforcement seized approximately 600 counterfeit contact lenses that were being imported from China by Gilliam to her place of business, All about Ink, a tattoo shop in Pensacola, Florida. A number of the contact lenses seized were tested by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and determined to contain microbial contamination. FDA has determined that the types of bacteria found in the contact lenses can be hazardous.

Between July 2015, and October 2015, law enforcement made a number of undercover purchases of contact lenses from Gilliam and others working for Gilliam at All about Ink. Following the undercover purchases, a federal search warrant was executed at All about Ink, and approximately 200 pairs of contact lenses were seized. Samples of both the contact lenses purchased by undercover agents, and the contact lenses seized were tested by FDA, and a number of those also contained microbial contamination. In addition to agents determining that a number of the contact lenses were counterfeit and FDA determining that a number of the contact lenses were contaminated and that none of the contact lenses should have been sold without a prescription.

“American consumers rely on FDA oversight to ensure the safety of their medical devices, including contact lenses. Selling counterfeit contact lenses without a valid prescription puts patients’ health – and their vision – at risk,” said Acting Special Agent in Charge, H. Peter Kuehl, FDA Office of Criminal Investigations Miami Field Office. “The FDA is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to keep such products out of the U.S. marketplace.”

“This criminal was selling substandard, dangerous counterfeit contact lenses with no regard for the health and safety of consumers,” said HSI Tampa Deputy Special Agent in Charge Kevin D.

Sibley. “Our agents are committed to collaborating with partner agencies, like U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and the Florida Department of Health, to conduct aggressive investigations into the distribution of fake goods that threaten the safety of our public.”

The case resulted from the investigation by the Homeland Security Investigations, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, and the Florida Department of Health. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney J. Ryan Love.

The United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Florida is one of 94 offices that serve as the nation's principal litigators under the direction of the Attorney General. To access public court documents online, please visit the [U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida](#) website. For more information about the United States Attorney's Office, Northern District of Florida, visit <http://www.justice.gov/usao/fln/index.html>.

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