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HEADLINE: Bordello Owner Says She Bribed D.C. Worker; Woman Paid \$11,000 To Get City Permit

BYLINE: Bill Miller, Washington Post Staff Writer

BODY:

She called her business "Tokyo Gardens," and touted it as a place where customers could get massages. In fact, prosecutors said yesterday, Grace Kim was operating a house of prostitution in downtown Washington with help from a corrupt employee in the agency that was supposed to be watching over her.

Kim told authorities that she got a D.C. occupancy permit after paying a \$ 10,000 bribe to the D.C. government employee. She followed up with two more payments of \$ 500 each to the same man, prosecutors said.

But the business ultimately fell apart after D.C. police raided the establishment in February 1998.

Kim agreed to cooperate with the FBI and D.C. police in an investigation into government corruption, and secretly pleaded guilty to charges of running a bawdyhouse and providing illegal gratuities.

Details of Kim's arrest and cooperation came to light yesterday at her sentencing before U.S.

District Judge Thomas F. Hogan. The judge, who unsealed her case file, sentenced Kim to three

months in a halfway house and three months of home confinement. And he told her repeatedly, "You're going to have to find another way to earn a living."

Kim, 45, who came to the United States from Korea, told the judge that she was out of work and out of the massage parlor trade for good. "I truly admit the mistake that I made," she said. "I am truly sorry."

The Silver Spring woman was an acquaintance of former D.C. police lieutenant Yong H. Ahn, who pleaded guilty to federal charges that he accepted \$ 8,000 in bribes from the operators of two other massage parlors.

Ahn, too, became a government witness last year and agreed to aid the FBI in a proposed sting operation against then-Mayor Marion Barry. The sting, which was never carried out, became public last month when Hogan unsealed records in Ahn's case. The plan called for Ahn's wife to attempt to give Barry money in return for a D.C. government job. Barry expressed outrage about the plan. The Justice Department is reviewing the matter. Ahn, meanwhile, got a four-month prison term for his massage-parlor dealings.

Both Ahn and Kim provided prosecutors with information about the D.C. government employee, whose name has yet to be released. Prosecutors would not explain why the name of the city official remains under seal, though it is typical to do so when defendants agree to cooperate in sensitive cases.

The employee resigned last month from the D.C. Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs (DCRA), where he was an engineer. Authorities said he pleaded guilty to charges and is awaiting sentencing.

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In court yesterday, Kim's attorney, Robert Lombardo, said another massage parlor operator introduced Kim to the DCRA employee after she decided to open Tokyo Gardens in the 1000 block of Vermont Avenue NW.

Kim borrowed money so that she could provide the DCRA employee with \$ 10,000 cash in August 1996, Lombardo said. She taped their conversation so that she would have proof of the deal, he said. Later, she met the man outside his office and he gave her the permit, Lombardo said.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert R. Chapman said Ahn was with Kim when she made the subsequent payments to the DCRA employee in late 1996 and 1997.

D.C. law provides for the licensing of massage parlors and "health spas." Sexual contact is prohibited in both kinds of businesses. Kim admitted that women at her massage parlor performed sex acts for cash.

DCRA Director Lloyd J. Jordan issued a statement saying the agency is "committed to the ethical enforcement of District of Columbia laws, and we work very closely with law enforcement authorities to ensure the ethics of employees."

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