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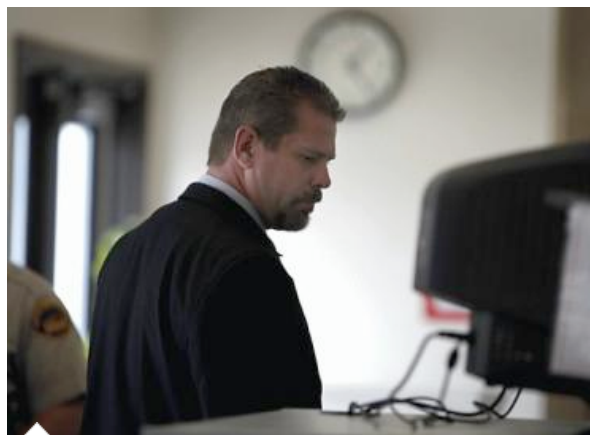
## Cop ran Pleasant Hill brothel, co-defendant says

Justin Berton, Chronicle Staff Writer  
 Friday, May 13, 2011

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Paul Chinn / The Chronicle

Former state drug agent Norman Wielsch goes through the security checkpoint at the Contra Costa County Superior Court for a hearing in Walnut Creek in April. Wielsch is accused of stealing drugs from evidence lockers and handing them off to fellow defendant Christopher Butler, who then illegally resold them.

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shutting them down, Gagen said.

"When Wielsch busted those places, he saw firsthand all the cash they took in," Gagen said. "So he came up with the plan - he knew how to run the business and he knew he could keep the competitors away. He just needed someone to lease a space for him."

## Wielsch denial

**(05-12) 17:31 PDT**  
**PLEASANT HILL -- A**  
 Concord private investigator at the center of a law enforcement scandal admits he helped run a house of prostitution in Pleasant Hill, but says the former commander of a Contra Costa County anti-drug task force was the architect of the operation and shut down competing brothels, the investigator's attorney said Thursday.

19

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Christopher Butler, 49, leased office space for a massage parlor on Gregory Lane in Pleasant Hill beginning in summer 2009 at the request of then-state narcotics agent Norman Wielsch, 50, said Butler's attorney, William Gagen.

Wielsch and Butler were friends who once served on the Antioch police force together. Now they are co-defendants in a case charging them with stealing drugs from law enforcement evidence lockers.

Wielsch is the one who came up with the idea for the brothel after learning the business from years of

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Gagen spoke after KPIX-TV reported Wednesday that Butler had admitted his role in the operation to prosecutors, which prompted Wielsch's attorney to tell several media outlets that his client was not involved.

The attorney, Michael Cardoza, told The Chronicle that Wielsch had "nothing to do with starting, running or protecting a brothel."

He characterized Butler's admission as an effort to reduce whatever time he may serve in prison by shifting blame to Wielsch.

"Butler is spinning tales to save himself," Cardoza said. "He'd rat out his mother and father if he had to."

Gagen said Wielsch had told Butler to lease the spot in a small office park at 670 Gregory Lane and employ a 36-year-old Oakland woman to manage the brothel. Court records in unrelated criminal cases show that Wielsch had arrested the woman for prostitution when he headed the multi-agency Central Contra Costa Narcotics Enforcement Team.

The attorney said Butler had made weekly cash collections from the woman and delivered the money to Wielsch, though he did not say how much.

"It didn't do as well as they'd hoped," Gagen said. The brothel closed sometime last year, he said.

When the parlor attracted the attention of neighboring tenants who complained to Wielsch's task force, Gagen said, Wielsch sent an agent to investigate - but only after he provided a photograph of the agent to Butler and the female manager to make sure the undercover officer received a legitimate massage.

"That solved their problem for the time being," Gagen said.

Wielsch also arranged raids on competing massage parlor-brothels to cut down on the competition, Gagen said.

## String of cases

The accusations are the latest aimed at Wielsch and Butler, who were arrested Feb. 16 after investigators said Wielsch stole drugs from evidence lockers and passed them on to the private eye. The men pleaded not guilty to drug and theft charges.

Butler was later charged with bribing a Contra Costa County sheriff's deputy to make drunken-driving arrests of men he was investigating, so-called "dirty DUI" stings. Butler has admitted to arranging the arrests, according to interview transcripts released by the district attorney's office.

On March 17, Butler submitted a 36-page statement to investigators that outlined many of his alleged illegal practices, including his and Wielsch's role in the Pleasant Hill brothel.

## San Ramon cop

According to those familiar with the document, Butler also alleged that Louis Lombardi, a San Ramon police officer who worked under Wielsch on the task force, was aware of the massage parlor's true purpose.

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Lombardi, 38, was arrested May 4 on felony charges that he sold drugs seized from raids, stole guns and embezzled cash. He is due to be arraigned today. His attorney did not respond to a message.

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**millbraeguy** 12:28 PM on May 12, 2011  
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