

Cops Caught Eating Pot During Raid, Claim They Were Illegally Recorded By CCTV

In what has to be one of the most ignorant and bizarre attempts to cover up illegal actions committed by police during a raid, a lawsuit has been filed seeking to squash CCTV video – the same video showing officers stealing and eating marijuana edibles at a marijuana dispensary.



Masked Officer Destroying Surveillance Equipment

The lawsuit, which was filed by three unidentified Santa Ana police officers, seeks to prevent Internal Affairs from using the video footage as evidence against the same police that took part in the raid.

Sky High Holistic, a marijuana dispensary in Santa Ana, had been the **subject of police bullying** since they opened shop. To help protect them and their business from the police, they installed a state-of-the-art CCTV system. Unfortunately for Sky High, it didn't take very long to catch the criminals in the act during another raid.

Moments after initiating the raid, the police sought out and disabled and destroyed security cameras. Fortunately for the shop owners, the inept officers missed at least two cameras that continued to record their illegal actions. The estimated damage to the store, equipment, safes, furniture, and the security **system is over \$100,000**.

Video Link

The basis for the lawsuit is that the officers involved “didn't know they were on camera” and thus “shouldn't be used as evidence”.

Matthew Pappas, Sky High's attorney, said the claims are baseless, adding that the officers "knew they were on video" and that "Just because they missed one camera doesn't make it illegal."

How many times have you entered a business and noticed a sign stating that you are being recorded? Surveillance or security systems, commonly referred to as CCTV, are very affordable and are installed in a majority of businesses. It not only protects the businesses that use them from frivolous lawsuits, but they can also protect you against the police. Let's hope the Courts rule against these officers. Just because they thought they had destroyed all of the cameras, that shouldn't be a 'legal' defense to their illegal actions.

Los Angeles Times

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An Orange County marijuana dispensary and its members have filed a federal lawsuit accusing Santa Ana police officers of excessive force during a raid last month.

The suit, filed Monday by the nonprofit marijuana collective Sky High Holistic, further alleges that city officials, including Mayor Miguel Pulido, have solicited bribes in exchange for favorable treatment of dispensaries.

According to the complaint, police officers in the May 26 raid on Sky High Holistic -- captured on surveillance video that went viral after its release last week -- trampled over the constitutional rights of dispensary volunteers and members by arresting members for an "excessive" period of time, causing significant property damage, and making derogatory comments about a disabled woman.

The edited video, which was released by Matthew Pappas, the same attorney who filed the lawsuit on behalf of the dispensary, shows Santa Ana police entering the dispensary and later, playing darts. At one point, an officer surveys what appears to be an edible, then tosses it into his mouth.

The Santa Ana Police Department is investigating the conduct of the officers in the video.

The lawsuit situates last month's raid in the context of the city's passage and implementation of a ballot initiative that imposed strict regulations on medical marijuana dispensaries.

Measure BB was one of two initiatives concerning medical marijuana on the November ballot, and the City Council-backed initiative imposed tougher regulations than the citizen-proposed measure, including limited business hours and a lottery system for dispensaries to get one of 20 permits to operate in the city.

Sky High Holistic did not receive a permit in the lottery.

According to the suit, Pulido and other city officials received lavish dinners, money and limousine rides around the time that Measure BB was presented to the council. An unnamed person also solicited \$25,000 payments from existing collectives in exchange for a guarantee to be included in the lottery, according to the complaint.

The suit also claims Pulido has a financial stake in an unnamed medical marijuana collective that won a permit in the lottery.

In an interview with The Times, Pulido flatly denied the allegations in the lawsuit and said the lottery system was conducted entirely independently of the city through the accounting and consulting firm White, Nelson, Diehl & Evans LLP.

"Let me just state on the record, the allegations are unequivocally and categorically false," Pulido said. "To allege there was some influence of the lottery and therefore it's unfair is absolutely false."

Pulido said the goal of the measure was to protect neighborhoods and commercial businesses by confining dispensaries to industrial areas. He denied having a financial stake in a marijuana business and said he did not receive lavish dinners or other perks for supporting Measure BB.

"The only limo I've been in is at my daughter's 13th birthday party," Pulido said.

He alleged that Sky High Holistic filed the suit in a bid to keep an illegally operating collective open.

The city's police department sent a cease-and-desist order Feb. 26 to the dispensary, but it remained open, prompting the May raid, Santa Ana Police Chief Carlos Rojas said.

No medical marijuana dispensaries are allowed to legally operate in Santa Ana after a ruling earlier this month in a separate lawsuit in Orange County Superior Court. In that suit, filed by three prospective dispensary operators, Judge David Chaffee issued a temporary restraining order that bars the city from granting permits.

Chaffee is scheduled to hold a hearing Friday over whether to issue a preliminary injunction prohibiting the city from moving ahead with the permitting process.