

Major distributor of mislabeled Viagra/Cialis pills target of false advertising lawsuit

San Diego County company supplies pharmaceutical-laced drugs to Southern California convenience markets, gas stations, smoke shops and liquor stores

SAN DIEGO, CALIF., USA, July 8, 2019 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A manufacturer of dietary supplements filed a federal lawsuit in San Diego against a major distributor of over-the-counter pills found by the FDA to secretly contain Viagra and Cialis. Sold under various brand names such as Rhino and Libigrow, the products are marketed as "all natural" male enhancement pills and do not disclose the presence of the hidden drugs. Men who took the pills have suffered medical emergencies including heart attacks and penis surgeries, the complaint alleges.

Trepco Imports and Distribution, Inc., of Poway, Calif., distributes more than two dozen of these male enhancement products — calling them "vitamins" — through various DBA entities, selling them to hundreds of gas stations, convenience markets, liquor stores and smoke shops in Southern California. The pills are intentionally mislabeled as "herbal" or "natural" and consumers are not informed they contain the regulated pharmaceuticals.

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Attorney Robert Tauler

Viagra and Cialis can only be prescribed by a physician. Due to an increase in reports of consumer harm from adulterated male enhancement pills, federal agencies have intensified efforts against their proliferation. Federal authorities believe a South Korean national arrested in October 2018 was a ringleader in an international scheme to import, package, and distribute Rhino, Libigrow and similar products.

Nam Hyun Lee, 60, of Fullerton, Calif. was named in the 12-count [grand jury indictment](#) alleging conspiracy, three counts of smuggling misbranded drugs into the country and eight counts of introducing misbranded drugs into interstate commerce. It is unknown whether federal agents have concluded their investigation into the criminal conspiracy.

Despite the government's increased efforts to police the marketplace, and despite numerous

VITAMINS

404772	BIG RICHARD 1 TAB	1
404673	BLUE MONSTER 1 TAB	1
404533	FRESH START VITMNS PP1.69 12CT	12
404541	GREAT START VITAMINS PP1.29 12CT	12
404665	LIBI XPLODE 3X POWER 1 TAB	1
425041	MELATONIN TAB 60'S 3MG	1
404657	PEGASUS LIBIDO 1 TAB	1
404764	PEGASUS 21000 1 TAB	1
404699	RHINO HORNY 66000 1 TAB	1
404723	RHINO HORNY 69000 1 TAB	1
404756	RHINO MEGA 82000 1 TAB	1
408112	SUPER START VITAMINS PP2.19	12
404558	ULTRA START VITAMINS PP1.89	12

5-HOUR ENERGY

404624	DRINKADE LIMEADE BLUE 6/3.4Z	6
404616	DRINKADE LIMEADE RED 6/3.4Z	6

Illicit male enhancement products sold as "vitamins" in this Trepco subsidiary's product catalogue.

warnings to Trepco's lawyers, the lawsuit alleges that Trepco knowingly continues to offer these pills for sale to convenience stores. Given the gap in law enforcement and the impact on the marketplace for supplements in this niche, federal unfair competition law provides a way to protect the public, according to the lawsuit filed July 1 in federal district court in San Diego.

"Trepco continues to distribute products the FDA has identified as dangerous, despite warnings from the federal government and my office," said Los Angeles Attorney Robert Tauler, of [Tauler Smith LLP](#). "Sworn affidavits my office has obtained as part of our investigation say that Trepco generates over \$250 million a year in revenue. They should just stop selling this stuff."

Tauler is a nationally recognized authority on adulterated health supplements and false advertising law who represents Houston-based Outlaw Laboratory, which makes a natural male enhancement supplement that follows the law and all FDA guidelines.

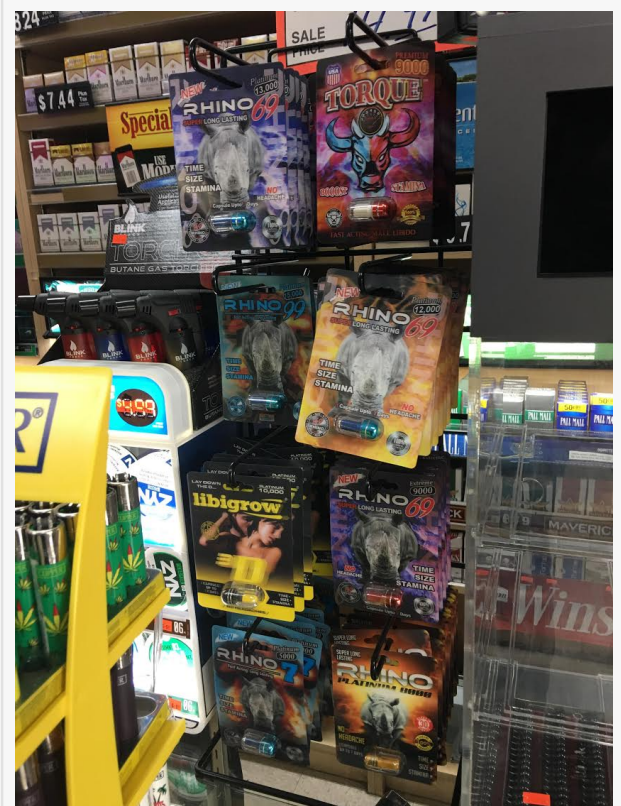
Trepco Vice President Wiam Paulus in June told [a San Diego magazine](#) that a religious vision inspired her to create a nonprofit to help widows, orphans and sexually abused girls from the Yazidi refugee community in Iraq, which suffered greatly from ISIS terrorism. "Ms. Paulus clearly believes in helping innocent people, which makes Trepco's continued distribution of dangerous pills — against FDA warnings — all the more surprising," Tauler said.

The case number is 19CV1229CABKSC, filed in the Southern District of California, U.S. District Court.

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Illicit male enhancement pills on sale in a San Diego cigar store.