



# News Release

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## Tax Recovery and Criminal Enforcement (TRaCE) Task Force

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact: California Department of  
Tax and Fee Administration  
Office of Public Affairs  
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### **Counterfeit Viagra Sales by Cell Phone Retailer Deceives Unsuspecting Customers**

**Sacramento** – An investigation by the California Department of Justice’ Bureau of Investigation’s Tax Recovery and Criminal Enforcement (TRaCE) task force led to the arrest and conviction of Maykiya Mayze (Mayze), 37, of Sacramento for not only possessing and selling counterfeit Viagra but for selling an unregulated and potentially life-threatening product. The investigation by TRaCE revealed that Mayze sold counterfeit Viagra for years out of his cell phone business in Sacramento. Unsuspecting buyers lived with unknown or harmful results, while Mayze pocketed \$25 per pill, duping hopeful customers and cheating legitimate pharmaceutical manufacturers.

In 2016, the U.S. Customs and Border Protection seized several shipments of Viagra tablets mailed from China, one addressed to Mayze’s Sacramento business and one to his Antelope area residence. Both shipments carried the well-known “Pfizer” label, but both contained only counterfeit products. Through a search warrant, TRaCE agents seized computers, the counterfeit Viagra pills, and counterfeit Pfizer holograms which made the Viagra packaging appear legitimate to purchasers. Consumers should be advised that many counterfeit pharmaceuticals contain harmful ingredients such as arsenic, mercury, sheet rock, antifreeze and paint thinner, which poses a significant health and safety risk to the people of California.

“Homeland Security Investigation (HSI) is committed to investigating criminals like Mayze and the larger organizations that supply counterfeit substances and contraband that endanger people’s health,” said Ryan L. Spradlin, Special Agent in Charge for HSI in northern California and northern Nevada. “This work is important because the American public should be confident in knowing they are buying safe, approved and authentic prescription medications.”

Following Mayze’s arrest in March 2018, the California State Attorney General’s office charged Mayze with counterfeiting. On June 28, 2018, Mayze pleaded guilty to one felony count of counterfeiting and was sentenced to five years’ formal probation, 30 days alternative sentencing, and ordered to pay restitution to Pfizer.

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The TRaCE Task Force is made up of investigators and special agents from the California Department of Justice, California Department Tax and Fee Administration, California Attorney General’s Office, Franchise Tax Board, Employment Development Department, Department of Motor Vehicles, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Internal Revenue Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s Homeland Security Investigations. The partnership was formed in 2014 to

investigate criminal elements of the underground economy engaged in manufacturing, importation, distribution, and the sale of pirated intellectual property, as well as other crimes resulting from the evasion of business and income taxes.

The mission of the TRaCE Task Force is to combat organized elements of the underground economy engaged in the manufacture, importation, distribution, and sale of pirated intellectual property, and other economic crimes resulting in the evasion of business, payroll and/or income taxes.

TRaCE's central intake system for reporting a crime related to tax evasion, labor fraud, piracy, counterfeiting, and human trafficking is accessible via the Web or any mobile device instantly. Help TRaCE take down the underground economy – Report it, don't ignore it!

For more information on other taxes and fees in California, visit [TRaCE's Home page](#).

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