



## Police say felon posing as doctor claimed to have cured STDs, been a porn actor

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Metro Police

Rick Van Thiel

Rick Van Thiel, who was arrested last week for allegedly practicing medicine without a license, described himself as a man of many talents on websites advertising his services, according to an arrest report released Wednesday.

Underneath a graphic photo of himself on one website, police said he wrote this: “Prior to becoming a professional doctor, I was a sex machine inventor, swinger, BDSM master, porn actor and producer.”

And this: “I’ve seen and cured pretty much every type of infection and STD.”

Law enforcement officials say Van Thiel was never a doctor but was a convicted felon with a record including attempted battery, assault, burglary, attempted robbery and robbery in Nevada and California. Now, he's in custody again and authorities are investigating the scope of his alleged phony medical operation in the northeast valley.

The investigation started in August with a tip from a citizen concerned about Van Thiel's medical claims and practices, including throwing away medical waste in the trash, the report states. It ultimately led Metro Police and the FBI to 4928 E. Monroe Ave., where they found a trailer in the back with a makeshift medical bed and clinic.

Police arrested Van Thiel, 52, a week ago and, on Friday, he was booked into the Clark County Detention Center on counts of acting as medical practitioner without a license, owning or possessing a gun by a prohibited person, possessing illegal drugs and furnishing dangerous drugs without prescriptions. He remains in custody without bail, according to jail records.

His arrest came to light this morning when the Southern Nevada Health District, Metro Police and FBI issued a joint news release asking victims who may have received services from Van Thiel to come forward.

The Health District has launched an investigation to assess the public health risks and determine the need for testing, officials said. That includes determining whether people were at risk for contracting infectious diseases and, if so, ensuring proper follow-up care.

Ed Cousineau, executive director of the Nevada Board of Medical Examiners, said Van Thiel did not have a license to practice medicine in the state. He declined to further comment on the case, citing the FBI's ongoing investigation.

During the course of the criminal investigation, detectives interviewed a woman who said Van Thiel had offered to perform "D&C" — short for dilation and curettage, a procedure to remove tissue from the uterus — after she suffered a miscarriage, the report states.

Detectives also found three websites promoting Van Thiel's services at "unbeatable prices" and Craigslist advertisements for "D&C post miscarriage and abortions under 49 days gestation," the report states. His advertised cost for performing abortions: \$200.

Another website, which included photos of Van Thiel standing outside the trailer in various states of nudity, focused on treatments for diseases such as HIV, herpes, cancer and HPV, police said. The arrest report also noted that Van Thiel promoted that he wouldn't disclose anything to insurance companies or list information in medical records.

A notice at the bottom of one site hints at an anti-establishment mindset: "For the purposes of this website the term 'doctor' or 'Doctor Rick' is a nick name and not intended to infer state sanction or Rockefeller drug pushing training. The purpose of this site is not to beg for FDA endorsement or to diagnose or treat disease, it is to help you make informed decisions necessary to take control of your own life and health, and now to care for it in the manor you decide is best for you."

The arrest report indicates Van Thiel had been on police radar since at least August 2013, when a detective interviewed a woman who visited the trailer but chose not to receive treatment offered by the suspect.

Law enforcement served a search warrant at the trailer Sept. 30 and recovered 140 items of evidentiary value, such as vials of controlled substances, intravenous bags believed to be filled with blood, medical equipment, syringes and scalpels, the report states. Investigators also found 83 patient forms, many with the suspect's signature, and a waiver from a potential patient.

Based on further review of the paperwork, it appears 23 "patients" received documented medical treatment and two received documented injections of Heparin, a blood thinner, police said. Van Thiel's alleged "medical procedures" included everything from circumcisions and tooth extractions to cancer and HIV treatment. Authorities also found two firearms and ammunition in a safe inside the trailer.

"This paperwork and evidence review is ongoing and dynamic," police noted in the report.

Officials from Nevada's Board of Medical Examiners, the state Board of Pharmacy and the city of Las Vegas' Code Enforcement Division were on hand during law enforcement's execution of the search warrant.

Anyone who may have received services from Van Thiel — also known as "Dr. Rick" — is asked to call 800-506-1435 or report online at [fbi.gov](https://www.fbi.gov). All information provided to law enforcement will be handled in accordance with medical privacy laws.

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