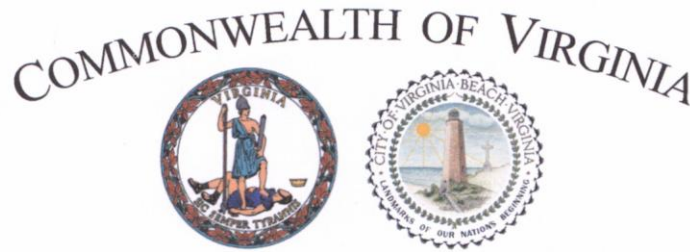


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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Commonwealth v. Bowen Lee Lajesse
Former Massage Therapist Sentenced to 8 Years for Sexually Assaulting Client**

Virginia Beach, Va. – Colin D. Stolle, Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Virginia Beach, announced that Bowen Lee Lajesse, age 48, of the 2900 block of Mars Street in Virginia Beach, Virginia, was sentenced today on charges of Object Sexual Penetration and Battery as Treatment Not Recognized in Profession. Circuit Court Judge Afshin Farashahi, who presided over Bowen's jury trial in October 2024, sentenced Lajesse to thirty (30) years with 22 years suspended, leaving eight (8) years to serve. Lajesse must also register as a sex offender, complete sex offender treatment, and remain on good behavior for thirty (30) years.

The Commonwealth's evidence proved that on January 29, 2023, the victim booked a massage at the Fuller School for Massage Therapy with Bowen Lee Lajesse. Lajesse was working as a contractor massage therapist at multiple places, to include the Fuller School of Massage. While the victim had been a client at Fuller School on multiple occasions, she had never had a massage appointment with Lajesse and she had never met him before. During the massage, the victim fell asleep, and Lajesse sexually assaulted her. When she awoke, she pushed Lajesse's hand away from her and raised up on the table. The massage ended abruptly. The victim paid her bill at the front desk and hurried to her car. She placed a phone call to her best friend within 16 seconds of leaving the front desk. She also immediately called her mother to tell her about the assault and went to her mother's home. The victim then told her husband and returned to the Fuller School with her husband to confront Lajesse. Lajesse admitted that he touched the victim inappropriately, but claimed there must have been a misunderstanding. He was immediately terminated by the Fuller School and a police investigation ensued. Lajesse has since forfeited his massage therapy license.

The Commonwealth provided testimony from an expert in massage therapy, the ethics of massage therapy, and the recognized forms of massage. She testified that any sexual contact between a

massage therapist and client is unethical and can result in revocation of the massage therapist's license. She also testified about the power differential that exists between a massage therapist and a client, making clients increasingly vulnerable.

Chief Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney Scott M. Lang and Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Megan M. Lang prosecuted this case. Please contact Macie Allen if additional information is desired.

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