



Department of Justice

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DULUTH COUPLE SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR LAUNDERING MILLIONS IN DRUG MONEY

ATLANTA, GA - HOANG NGUYEN, 41, and TERRI NGUYEN, 34, both of Duluth, Georgia, were sentenced today by United States District Judge Beverly B. Martin for laundering in excess of fifteen million dollars in drug money. The investigation, named "Operation Candybox," established the existence of an extensive money laundering operation, both in Atlanta and in Canada, that used domestic and international financial institutions to try to legitimize the illicit funds.

United States Attorney David E. Nahmias said, "This case demonstrates our continued commitment to take away drug dealers' incentive to sell drugs: profit. The defendants are professional money launderers. They worked with and for drug dealers and by doing so attempted to legitimize the drug-dealing proceeds and invest them for the dealers, thereby keeping the drug business going and concealing the source of the funds. We will not tolerate the proliferation of illegal drugs in our society in any manner, and the conviction and sentencing of Hoang and Terri Nguyen will show others what can happen when you traffic in drugs and drug money."

HOANG NGUYEN was sentenced to 19 years, 7 months in prison, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release.

TERRI NGUYEN was sentenced to 3 years, 5 months in prison, to be followed by 2 years of supervised release.

According to United States Attorney Nahmias, the charges and other information presented in court: In early 2002, as part of an ecstasy investigation in Toronto, Canada, Canadian officials intercepted calls to a group of people who laundered money for numerous drug organizations in Canada and the United States. A separate Canadian investigation was initiated which targeted the money launderers. Through the money laundering investigation, Canadian authorities determined that drug money was being laundered through an extensive network of business entities, couriers, and money remitters within Canada and the United States. Based upon investigation and the information from Canadian authorities, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) received court authorization to intercept the telephone

calls of HOANG and TERRI NGUYEN in Atlanta. Those calls detailed an extensive money laundering organization centered here in Atlanta, which used businesses in the Asian community here to transfer large sums of illicit cash out of the United States.

Further investigation revealed that the organization was also operating in other major cities in the United States, namely, Boston, Massachusetts; Dallas, Texas; Houston, Texas; Chicago, Illinois; Los Angeles, California; Charlotte, North Carolina; Washington, DC; Jacksonville, Florida; Birmingham, Alabama; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and New York, New York. In these cities, as in Atlanta, the organization was broken down into what HOANG NGUYEN referred to as “the drug side” and the “money side.” The “money side” was composed of older individuals who had established business contacts in the Asian community so that the vast amount of money HOANG and TERRY NGUYEN delivered to them to be laundered could be explained and would be less likely to attract the attention of law enforcement. They in turn were responsible for the movement of drug proceeds to places such as Vietnam, Cambodia, Dubai, Panama, Switzerland, Israel, Canada, Japan, Mexico, Singapore, Latvia and the United States.

On March 31, 2004, HOANG and TERRI NGUYEN were arrested during a nationwide takedown. In the takedown, agents seized approximately \$2.5 million in cash, real estate and vehicles, all of which have been forfeited to the United States. The evidence showed a total of approximately \$15 million dollars in laundered drug proceeds were attributed to HOANG and TERRI NGUYEN between January 2003 and March 2004.

This case was investigated by Special Agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration and the Internal Revenue Service.

Assistant United States Attorneys Stephanie Gabay-Smith and Jenny Turner prosecuted the case.

For further information please contact David E. Nahmias (pronounced NAH-me-us), United States Attorney or Charysse L. Alexander, Executive Assistant United States Attorney, through Patrick Crosby, Public Affairs Officer, U.S. Attorney's Office, at (404) 581-6016. The Internet address for the HomePage for the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Northern District of Georgia is www.usdoj.gov/usao/gan.