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**TRUCKING OWNER ARRESTED FOR ALLEGEDLY PAYING
\$4,000 BRIBE TO FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY OFFICIAL**

CHICAGO -- The owner of a Chicago trucking company was arrested today on federal bribery charges for allegedly attempting to pay a \$2,000 bribe, and later paying a \$4,000 bribe, to a federal transportation safety official in exchange for improving an unsatisfactory rating on the company's safety compliance review. The defendant, **Hei Yeng Kwok**, owned and operated K&W Trading Co., located at 1419 West 15th St., which employed more than 10 truck drivers. The company was ordered to cease all inter-state trucking operations on May 7. The arrest was announced by Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Dieter Harper, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Midwest Office of U.S. Department of Transportation's Office of Inspector General. The case stems from the *Operation Safe Road* investigation of public corruption that compromised the safety of nation's roads and highways, they said.

Kwok, 43, of 501 West 24th Place, Apt. 802, Chicago, was charged with bribery in a criminal complaint. He had an initial appearance today before U.S. Magistrate Nan Nolan in U.S. District Court.

According to the complaint, a specialist with the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) began performing a full safety compliance review of K&W Trading in January. The review was not completed, however, because K&W did not produce certain documents -- such as driver qualification files, driver logs, daily vehicle inspection reports, and vehicle maintenance files -- necessary to properly evaluate K&W's compliance with federal regulations. K&W failed to produce any documents whatsoever relating to approximately 10 truck drivers that, according to Kwok, were employed by K&W. On March 5, Kwok signed a form acknowledging that K&W has been given an "unsatisfactory" rating by the FMCSA based on its failure to provide the required safety-related information.

On April 22, the FMCSA specialist visited K&W to determine whether it had taken any corrective action and reviewed documents in an office. Kwok allegedly approached the official from behind, grabbed the official's shoulder with one hand, and with his other hand, tried to place approximately \$2,000 in \$20 denominations against the official's side or into the official's coat or pants pocket. The official discovered the cash and asked Kwok, "What are you trying to do?," or words to that effect. Kwok did not respond, at which time the official instructed Kwok to retrieve the money. Kwok then replied, "Put the money in your pocket, it for you, I know you will take care of me," or words to that effect. The official stated that he would not accept a bribe and that such a payment was illegal. Kwok left the office without retrieving the \$2,000.

While still at K&W, the official, by telephone, alerted a colleague at the FMCSA as to Kwok's actions and discretely photocopied the \$20 bills that he had received from Kwok. The official subsequently attempted to return the bills to Kwok, but Kwok refused to accept the money. The official nevertheless put the money against Kwok's chest in such a manner as to

require Kwok to retake possession of it. FMCSA managers contacted DOT OIG, which immediately initiated an investigation.

The next day, on April 23, the specialist returned to K&W and, during a recorded conversation with Kwok, discussed the payment that Kwok had attempted to make to the official the preceding day. Eventually, Kwok allegedly agreed to pay the official \$4,000 if it would resolve the unsatisfactory rating, and Kwok allegedly paid that amount to the official in a remote area of K&W's facility that day.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Theodore Chung and Patrick M. Collins.

Upon conviction, bribery of a public official carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed under the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The public is reminded that a complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the United States has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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