

NEWS RELEASE



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For Immediate Release

**FOURTEEN DEFENDANTS WITH TIES TO CHINA INDICTED
FOR CONSPIRACY TO DISTRIBUTE ECSTASY**

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - December 11, 2008

United States Attorney Karen P. Hewitt, announced the unsealing yesterday of a six-count indictment charging 14 defendants with conspiracy to distribute thousands of tablets of 3-4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), commonly known as “Ecstasy,” a mind-altering illegal drug. A federal grand jury sitting in San Diego handed up the indictment on July 10, 2008, which was then sealed until yesterday’s arrests. Some of the defendants, Henry Huynh, Tony Nguyen, Yi Cheong Ho, Michael Hoai Tran, Duy The Nguyen, Yang Jiang, Charles David Nguyen, Vi Kien Tang, Down George Yang, David Van Pham, Phinath Khvann, Melissa Sue Morand, Harlan Jarard Edison, and Edward H. Chien, were arrested in San Diego, Los Angeles, and Phoenix, Arizona. In addition to the conspiracy charge in Count 1, defendants Phinath Khvann and Harlan Jarard Edison, are charged with separate offenses of distribution of ecstasy in connection with “controlled purchases” by cooperating witnesses.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Edward C. Weiner, who is prosecuting this case, the indictment alleges that in May 2006, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) began investigating the role of Asian individuals in the distribution of large quantities of ecstasy and that DEA initiated wire and electronic interceptions, which confirmed that several defendants made trips to China purportedly to arrange for shipments of the illegal drugs to locations in Southern California. The overt acts listed in Count 1 of the indictment chronicle several round trips from Los Angeles International Airport to Guangzhou, China (formerly known as Canton).

The indictment further alleges that some of the defendants attempted to obtain firearms for the apparent purpose of protecting their drug trafficking operations and that agents seized six handguns from one defendant driving from Phoenix, Arizona to Southern California on September 1, 2007.

United States Attorney Hewitt said, "Ecstasy destroys individual lives and corrodes communities. Those who profit from its sale and distribution will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law."

"This successful investigation of these MDMA traffickers, is the result of true law enforcement partnerships," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Ralph W. Partridge. "The DEA is committed to keeping our communities safe from those who engage in the illegal sale and distribution of controlled substances. DEA and all our law enforcement partners will continue to ensure that those individuals intent on trafficking drugs are identified, located and put out of business."

Several defendants are scheduled to be arraigned in federal court in San Diego today before United States Magistrate Judge Anthony J. Battaglia.

DEFENDANTS

Criminal Case No. 08cr2288-BTM

Henry Huynh, aka "Evil"
Tony Nguyen, "Ruthless"
Yi Cheong Ho, "Tall Andy"
Michael Hoai Tran, "Michael Viet Tran"
Duy The Nguyen, aka "Johnny"
Yang Jiang, aka "Bobbie"
Charles David Nguyen, aka "Cloudy"

Vi Kien Tang, aka "Ken"
Down George Yang, aka "Downy"
David Van Pham, "GQ"
Phinath Khvann, aka "Peanut"
Melissa Sue Morand
Harlan Jarard Edison, aka "Harlie"
Edward H. Chien

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Conspiracy to distribute a controlled substance - Title 21, United States Code, Sections 846 and 841(a)(1) - maximum penalty 20 years in prison and \$250,000 fine (Count 1).

Distribution of a controlled substance - Title 21, United States Code, Section 841(a)(1) - maximum penalty 20 years in prison and \$250,000 fine (Counts 2-6).

INVESTIGATING AGENCIES

Drug Enforcement Administration (Carlsbad Resident Office)
Drug Enforcement Administration (Riverside District Office)
Federal Bureau of Investigation
San Diego Police Department
Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Los Angeles Interagency Metropolitan Police Apprehension Crime Task Force (L.A. IMPACT)
Pasadena Police Department

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.