



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Pennsylvania

615 Chestnut Street
Suite 1250
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106-4476
(215) 861-8200

December 17, 2010

PHILADELPHIA WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO IMPORTING ILLEGAL DIET PILLS

PHILADELPHIA – Mimi Trieu, 46, of Philadelphia, pleaded guilty today to an 18-count indictment¹ charging her with the illegal importation and distribution of more than four million diet pills that contained a controlled substance, unapproved drugs, and a possible carcinogen, announced United States Attorney Zane D. Memeger. Trieu was the owner of Hong Kong Beauty International, located at 5520 Whitaker Avenue, Philadelphia, which was in the business of importing and distributing a variety of beauty products, including diet pills. Trieu pleaded to 11 counts of mail fraud, one count of conspiracy to smuggle illegal merchandise, and six counts of distribution of Sibutramine, a schedule IV controlled substance. A sentencing hearing is scheduled for March 10, 2011. Trieu faces a maximum sentence of 243 years in prison and a \$4.5 million fine.

Trieu imported and sold diet pills between October 2008 and May 2009 and continued to import the pills until March 2010, even after learning that the capsules contained Sibutramine and other dangerous substances, and that the pills did not have approval from the Food and Drug Administration (“FDA”). The FDA had issued warnings to consumers that, in addition to the Sibutramine, the drugs contained an anti-seizure medication and a chemical solvent that is considered a possible carcinogen. According to the FDA, these drugs could cause serious side effects in some people, including nausea, vomiting, elevated blood pressure, heart attacks, and strokes.

Trieu was charged with conspiring to smuggle the diet pills from China through the mail, using packages with customs declarations that falsely described the capsules as “gifts,” worth minimal amounts. Trieu falsely advertised the illegal diet capsules as containing natural ingredients while failing to disclose to customers that the pills contained Sibutramine and other dangerous ingredients. Trieu told some customers that the drugs were manufactured in Japan, and told one customer that the FDA warning was not true.

The case was investigated by the Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations, the United States Postal Inspection Service, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations. It is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Judy Goldstein Smith and Sarah L. Grieb.

¹An Indictment is an accusation. A defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Page 2

**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
EASTERN DISTRICT, PENNSYLVANIA
Suite 1250, 615 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106**

**Contact: Patricia Hartman
Media Contact
215-861-8525**