



United States Attorney District of New Jersey

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 2, 2010

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PHILADELPHIA COCAINE DEALER SENTENCED TO OVER 17 YEARS IN FEDERAL PRISON FOR HEADING DRUG CONSPIRACY

TRENTON, N.J. – Philadelphia-based cocaine dealer Phong Q. Trinh was sentenced today to 210 months in federal prison for his role in a Philadelphia-based drug conspiracy that distributed over \$1 million worth of cocaine in Philadelphia and Trenton.

Trinh, 38, pleaded guilty on May 27, 2008, before Judge Wolfson to one count of conspiracy to distribute and possess with the intent to distribute more than five kilograms of cocaine. Judge Wolfson also imposed the sentence today in Trenton federal court.

According to documents filed in this case and statements made in court:

Trinh admitted that he conspired with others to distribute between 50 and 150 kilograms of cocaine, which was sold in multi-kilogram quantities by Trinh to other cocaine distributors in Philadelphia and Trenton at a wholesale price. The government estimated that Trinh distributed between \$1 million and \$3 million worth of cocaine during the course of the conspiracy – based on a wholesale value of between \$20,000 and \$25,000 per kilogram.

Trinh purchased multi-kilogram shipments of cocaine from a supplier in the Riverside, Calif., area and arranged the transport of the cocaine back to the Philadelphia area, at times using couriers driving vehicles equipped with hidden compartments that could hide large amounts of narcotics and cash. After the arrest of one of these couriers in July 2005 and the seizure of 22 kilograms of cocaine, Trinh's California-based supplier took over the transportation of the cocaine, delivering it to Trinh and his associates in Philadelphia.

Trinh paid and directed couriers, who then distributed the drugs to other cocaine dealers who were his customers. Trinh and a co-conspirator collected the proceeds from the other dealers, communicating using multiple, pre-paid cellphones. Their communications included text messaging using an alpha-numeric code, and they switched cell phones and numbers repeatedly in an effort to avoid detection.

In addition to the prison term, Wolfson sentenced Trinh to five years of supervised release and ordered him to pay a \$5,000 fine. As part of his plea agreement, Trinh agreed to forfeit approximately \$25,000 in cash and several luxury watches which were seized from his Philadelphia apartment on January 12, 2007, the day of his arrest.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the Drug Enforcement Administration's

Camden Resident Office and intelligence analysts from DEA's Newark Field Division, under the direction of Acting Special Agent in Charge John G. McCabe Jr., and the Mercer County Prosecutor's Office, under the direction of Prosecutor Joseph L. Bocchini, Jr., for the investigation of the case.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Patrick C. Askin of the U.S. Attorney's Office Criminal Division in Camden.

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Defense counsel: Jack McMahon, Esq., Philadelphia