



*United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
DECEMBER 5, 2008**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
YUSILL SCRIBNER  
REBEKAH CARMICHAEL  
JANICE OH  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**ECSTASY TRAFFICKER SENTENCED TO 72 MONTHS IN PRISON FOR  
IMPORTING HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF ECSTASY PILLS INTO  
THE UNITED STATES FROM CANADA**

LEV L. DASSIN, the Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that THUONG TRI TANG was sentenced today to 72 months in prison on charges stemming from a conspiracy to import hundreds of thousands of pills of MDMA, known commonly as "Ecstasy," into the United States from Canada, and to distribute them in New York and other cities on the eastern seaboard. United States District Judge JOHN G. KOELTL imposed the sentence today in Manhattan federal court.

The sentence follows TANG's guilty plea earlier this year to an Information charging him with one count of conspiracy to import MDMA into the United States, one count of conspiracy to distribute MDMA in the United States, one count of conspiracy to launder the proceeds of narcotics trafficking, one count of conspiring to distribute marijuana, and one count of conspiring to traffic in counterfeit watches. According to the Information, other court documents in the case, and statements made in court proceedings:

TANG was the criminal organization's primary distributor of Ecstasy in the United States, and had direct dealings with the sources of supply in Canada, receiving tens of thousands of Ecstasy pills at a time for distribution in the United States. After the Ecstasy pills were secretly smuggled across the border from Canada, TANG arranged for the distribution of the pills to the organization's cells located in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, North Carolina, and Georgia, among other places. The distribution cells then sold the Ecstasy to retail drug dealers for resale to users on the street, in clubs, and in brothels. Once the Ecstasy was sold in the United States, members of the organization arranged for the drug proceeds to be collected and laundered back to the organization's sources of supply in Canada.

The criminal organization stored the pills at self-storage facilities located in New Jersey. On July 14, 2006, law enforcement officers seized approximately 53,000 Ecstasy pills -- worth more than \$1 million on New York City streets -- from the organization that were hidden at a storage facility in Edison, New Jersey. The Ecstasy pills were labeled with many different stamps or markings, including, among others, pills known as: "cherry," "Versace," "Louis Vuitton," and "6-point star."

Among the defendants arrested in connection with this case in September of 2006 and prosecuted in Manhattan are the following:

- SOMNATH MUKHERJEE a/k/a "Uncle Eli," a/k/a "Satishkum Patel," a transporter of Ecstasy for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 34 months in prison.
- PHONG DOC NGUYEN, a wholesale distributor of Ecstasy for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 33 months in prison.
- TAIDE TAN, a/k/a "Kyaw T. Paine," a wholesale distributor of Ecstasy for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 37 months in prison.
- XIA WU HU, a/k/a "Tiger," a wholesale distributor of Ecstasy for the organization, pled guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 20 months in prison.
- ZHANG OU, an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 30 months in prison.
- LILLY QUANG NGUYEN, a/k/a "Lilly," an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 3 months in prison.
- THANH KIM, an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 12 months and one day in prison.
- YUTHIEN TRANS, a/k/a "TEETHIEN TRANS," an Ecstasy

retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 3 years of probation.

- ERIC HAN, an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 12 months and one day in prison.
- MINH NGUYEN, an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 21 months in prison.
- DANH THAN VU, a/k/a "Inkman," an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 30 months in prison.
- JAE KANG a/k/a "Jae Won Kang," a wholesale distributor of Ecstasy for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 87 months in prison.
- VU P. LE a/k/a "Lee," an Ecstasy retailer for the organization, pleaded guilty to conspiring to distribute Ecstasy and was sentenced by Judge KOELTL to 16 months in prison.

Two additional individuals, JUNG CHAO and CHUNG MY HUONG NGUYEN, are being prosecuted in Canada for their participation in the conspiracy.

Mr. DASSIN praised the work of the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Homeland Security's U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the Greater Toronto Area Drug Section, Royal Canadian Mounted Police in conducting this investigation.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's International Narcotics Trafficking Unit. Assistant United States Attorneys JEFFREY BROWN and MARC P. BERGER are in charge of the prosecution.

08-314

###