



For Immediate Release

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**RINGLEADER OF INTERNATIONAL DRUG TRAFFICKING ORGANIZATION  
SENTENCED IN CONSPIRACY**

PHILADELPHIA - Phuong Thi Tran, 39, of Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, was sentenced today to 70 months in prison for her role in two drug trafficking conspiracies, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Criminal Division, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania Zane Memeger, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan Barbara L. McQuade, and Director for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement John Morton.

Tran was the ringleader of an international drug trafficking organization which smuggled millions of ecstasy pills and other drugs from Canada into the United States between 2002 and her arrest in April 2008. The drugs were manufactured in Canada by various Asian organized crime groups and were distributed to drug dealers across the United States. Tran and her associates often smuggled 100,000 ecstasy pills into the United States per week.

Tran's role in this drug smuggling conspiracy initially came to light during the course of an investigation by special agents with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in Detroit after they had seized several shipment of drugs which Tran had arranged to smuggle into the United States. In October 2006, a grand jury in the Eastern District of Michigan indicted Tran for conspiring to distribute ecstasy pills.

At the same time, ICE special agents in Philadelphia were conducting a separate but related investigation. This investigation culminated in September 2007, when Tran and her associates sent two couriers, Jessica McNeill and Krystal Grant, to deliver 100,000 ecstasy pills to customers in Philadelphia and Boston. Unbeknownst to Tran and her associates, ICE special agents learned of this shipment and, with the assistance of Philadelphia Police, stopped the couriers' vehicle and seized the drugs. In December 2009, Tran was charged by the U.S. Attorney in the Eastern District of Pennsylvania with conspiracy to distribute ecstasy pills. The charges from Detroit were then transferred to Philadelphia.

For the past several years, the U.S. Department of Justice Organized Crime & Racketeering Section in conjunction with the U.S. Attorney's Offices have been working closely with Immigrations and Customs Enforcement, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), and various Canadian law enforcement agencies, to crack down on these Asian organized crime groups which smuggle billions of dollars worth of drugs into the United States from Canada each

year.

The case was prosecuted in Detroit by Assistant United States Attorney Kathryn McCarthy. The case was prosecuted in Philadelphia by Trial Attorney Robert Livermore of the United States Department of Justice Organized Crime and Racketeering Section. The case was investigated by special agents with the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) . The investigation also received assistance from: the Drug Enforcement Administration, Philadelphia Police, Pennsylvania State Police, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Ontario Provincial Police Department, and the Toronto Metropolitan Police Department.

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