

**United States Attorney's Office  
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**HOUSTON MONEY REMITTANCE BUSINESS OWNER  
CONVICTED OF MONEY LAUNDERING AND  
FAILING TO FILE CTRs**

(Houston, TX) -- On Fri. evening, July 18<sup>th</sup>, Dong Dang Huynh, the owner of a money remittance company, was convicted by a jury's verdict for his involvement in an international narcotics money laundering scheme. Huynh was convicted of conspiring to commit money laundering, eight counts of violating the money laundering spending statute, and failing to file Currency Transaction Reports.

During the course of a three week trial, the United States presented evidence which proved that Dong Dang Huynh (Huynh) used his money remittance company, U.S. Tours and Remittance, Inc. (U.S. Tours) in Houston, and in various cities throughout California, to: (1) receive proceeds from the sale of ecstasy manufactured in Canada and sold throughout the United States; (2) send those proceeds to Vietnam under the guise of being legitimate remittance deposits from individuals in the Vietnamese community in Texas and elsewhere; and (3) eventually move the illegal proceeds back to the drug manufacturers in Canada. A remittance company is a business licensed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and various state agencies to accept cash from individuals in the U.S. who seek to transfer to relatives or friends out of the country. U.S. Tours catered to the Vietnamese community and was exclusively engaged in transferring money from the U. S. to Vietnam. In order to facilitate his money laundering operation, Huynh also conspired to violate the federal Currency Transaction Report (CTR) requirements by accepting large sums of cash and breaking them down to numerous smaller deposits with the intent to avoid the filing of a CTR and to avoid collecting customer information as required by Texas law for each cash transaction over \$3000. A CTR must be filed with the IRS for deposits over \$10,000.

To accomplish the scheme, Huynh employed a family member at U.S. Tours in Houston, Texas, and instructed the family member to accept large cash deposits from particular individuals, including funds that were demonstrated at trial to be profits from the sale of narcotics, without obtaining identification or filing CTRs. Deposits from these “special customers” sometimes reached amounts as large as \$500,000 cash in a single transaction. Huynh further instructed his employee to: (1) break down the large deposits into sums under \$3,000; (2) assign fictitious names to the smaller deposits; and (3) create and maintain the false receipts for the broken down amounts in the event U.S. Tours, as a licensed money remittance company, were to be audited or examined by the IRS or the Texas Department of Banking. Defendant Huynh then had the large cash sums deposited evenly over a series of days into domestic U.S. Tours bank accounts so as to avoid the scrutiny of a single large cash deposit. Finally, Huynh would have the proceeds periodically wired to a money remitting agency in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, owned and operated by his brother.

Additionally, evidence proved that funds associated with a co-defendant, Thi Phuong Mai Le, were subsequently sent back to Canada for delivery to individuals involved in the manufacture and distribution of ecstasy. During the course of the conspiracy, Jan. 2003 through March 2004, the “special customers” for whom Huynh laundered money and failed to file CTRs deposited a total of over \$24 million at U.S. Tours’ Houston location and that all of those funds were subsequently transmitted to Vietnam.

Thi Phuong Mai Le stands convicted in Houston of money laundering after pleading guilty in Houston, as well as other charges pending in the Central District of California, the Southern District of New York and the District of Massachusetts.

At sentencing, Huynh faces up to twenty (20) years imprisonment and a fine of either \$500,000 or twice the value of the funds laundered, whichever is greater, for his money laundering conspiracy conviction. He also faces up to ten (10) years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for each of his eight counts of conviction for money laundering spending. Lastly, defendant Huynh may receive up to five years imprisonment and a \$250,000 fine for conspiring to fail to file CTRs.

All of the criminal charges are the result of a multi-agency, multi-jurisdictional investigation led by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Department of Treasury, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigations (IRS-CI). This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Jason Varnado and Joe Magliolo.

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