



STATE OF WASHINGTON
GAMBLING COMMISSION

"Protect the Public by Ensuring that Gambling is Legal and Honest"

Media Release

12 Individuals Indicted on Gambling Related Crimes

Released Thursday, May 24, 2007: Two Federal grand jury indictments were unsealed today in Seattle charging 12 defendants of Conspiracy, Theft of Funds from Gaming Establishment on Indian Lands, and Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property.

According to the indictments, from in or about March 2002, through the date of the indictments, the defendants formed and participated in a racketeering enterprise by cheating at casinos across the United States. 18 casinos were allegedly targeted by members of the conspiracy, including 10 casinos that are owned and operated by Indian Tribes.

The first indictment returned under seal by a Seattle grand jury in February 2006, names the following defendants: PHUONG QUOC TRUONG, MARTIN ARONSON, GEORGE LEE, SON HONG JOHNSON, HA GIANG, all of California, VAN THU TRAN, of Canada and THONGSOK SOVAN and PHEAP NORNG of Western Washington. **The indictment charges** a group of players traveled from California and colluded with table game dealers to cheat at the game of mini-baccarat and steal more than \$1 million from the Emerald Queen Casino operated by the Puyallup Tribe. The cheating involves colluding players tracking and recording the order and point value of the cards. Once all cards have been played the colluding dealer would then perform a "false wash and shuffle" in which a "slug" of cards would be kept in the exact same order in which they were previously played. This allowed the colluding players to know the order and point value of the "slug" of cards when they were played a second time. The colluding player would place and win several wagers when the "slug" of cards would return to play.

A second indictment returned under seal by a Seattle grand jury in March 2007, names the following defendants: TIEN DUC VU of California, and LEVI SETH MAYFIELD, KASEY JAMES McKILLIP, and JACOB DYSON NICKELS of Western Washington. **The indictment charges** the defendants with Conspiracy and four counts of Theft of Funds from a Gaming Establishment on Indian Lands in connection with a similar scheme to cheat at the game of mini-baccarat and steal more than \$90,000 from the Nooksack River Casino operated by the Nooksack Tribe.

Seven of the defendants have also been indicted in the Southern District of California. The four-count indictment returned in San Diego charges PHUONG QUOC TRUONG, VAN THU TRAN, MARTIN ARONSON, GEORGE LEE, TIEN DUC VU, and SON HONG JOHNSON, among others, with one count of Conspiracy to Participate in the affairs of a racketeering enterprise; one count of operating an illegal gambling business; one count of conspiracy to commit several offenses against the United States, including Conspiracy to steal money and other property from Indian Tribal casinos; and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

The conspiracy charge relating to commission of several offenses against the United States carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison. Theft from a Gaming Establishment on Indian Land and Interstate Transportation of Stolen Property are punishable by up to ten years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

The charges stem from investigations conducted by the Washington State Gambling Commission and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Puyallup Tribal Gaming Agency and the Nooksack Tribal Gaming Agency as well as other out of state federal and state law enforcement agencies assisted in the investigation.

The defendants will be summoned to court for arraignment on the charges on June 1, 2007, and June 7, 2007.

An indictment itself is not evidence that the defendants committed the crimes charged. The defendants are presumed innocent until the Government meets its burden in court proving guilt beyond reasonable doubt.

The case is being prosecuted in the Western District of Washington by Assistant United States Attorney J. Tate London.

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