



Department of Investigation

Press Release

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NYC INMATE ARRESTED ON ESCAPE ATTEMPT CONSPIRACY AND BRIBERY CHARGES

--Offered Correction Officer \$70,000 To Escape; Fiancée Previously Arrested In Same Plot--

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), and ROBERT M. MORGENTHAU, Manhattan District Attorney, announced the felony arrest and indictment, unsealed late yesterday afternoon, of VINCENT NGUYEN, a Department of Correction (DOC) inmate currently housed at Rikers Island, for offering a \$70,000 bribe to a DOC Correction Officer to help him escape from custody. NGUYEN was being held on homicide charges in connection with a New Jersey shooting; on robbery, assault and weapons charges pending against him in California; and on Reckless Endangerment charges in Manhattan, and in Brooklyn arising from a March 2002 incident in which he held his 3-year old son hostage in a standoff with police.

DOI investigators previously arrested NGUYEN's fiancée, HAI NGUYEN, on June 28th in connection with her role in the escape plan. HAI NGUYEN gave an undercover DOI detective posing as a Correction Officer \$10,000 cash as a "down payment" on the bribe and promised to pay the rest after the escape. DOI's investigation was triggered by a report from a Correction Officer that VINCENT NGUYEN offered the officer \$70,000 to allow him to escape.

Commissioner Gill Hearn said, "Mr. Nguyen is now facing serious criminal charges in three states. His escape attempt failed thanks to the integrity and cooperation of law enforcement officers in the Department of Correction, who enabled DOI investigators to swiftly thwart Mr. Nguyen's conspiratorial plan to flee." Commissioner Gill Hearn thanked DOC Commissioner William J. Fraser and members of his staff, especially the Correction Officer who reported the bribe offer and Deputy Wardens Nancy Acevedo and Larry Davis, for their assistance in the investigation.

DOC Commissioner Fraser added, "We are extremely proud of our Correction Officer, who is a true hero. He prevented an escape by his honesty, integrity, and professionalism. For his heroic actions, he will be highly recognized by this Department."

Commissioner Gill Hearn said that the investigation began in June, when a DOC supervisor advised DOI that a Correction Officer, who had transported VINCENT NGUYEN on June 11, 2002, from Kings County Hospital to a court appearance in Brooklyn, reported that, during the transport, NGUYEN had offered the officer \$70,000 to allow him to escape during his next court date, by running to a waiting car, with the officer

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pretending to chase him. On June 19, 2002, at the Criminal Court building at 100 Centre Street in Manhattan, where NGUYEN was scheduled for another court appearance, he again spoke with the Correction Officer, who was now wearing a concealed recording device in cooperation with DOI. In that conversation, the Officer gave NGUYEN a telephone number to further the arrangements.

On June 20, 2002, HAI NGUYEN spoke by telephone with an undercover DOI detective posing as the Correction Officer, and on June 24, 2002, the parties agreed to meet and arranged an "up-front payment" of \$10,000 in exchange for the officer's assistance in helping VINCENT NGUYEN escape from custody. On June 26, 2002, as part of that plan, HAI NGUYEN met with the undercover detective at a restaurant in lower Manhattan, discussed details of the escape plan with him, and promised to give him the first \$10,000 installment of the bribe two days later, and the remaining balance of \$60,000 after the escape, which was planned for July 2, 2002. As arranged, HAI NGUYEN met with the undercover detective on June 28, 2002, in the vicinity of Morningside Drive in upper Manhattan, gave him \$10,000 and finalized the escape plan with him. Immediately after that meeting, HAI NGUYEN was arrested by DOI detectives.

VINCENT NGUYEN, 22, has been charged with Bribery in the Second Degree, a Class C felony, and Conspiracy in the Fifth Degree, a Class A misdemeanor. If convicted, he faces up to 15 years in prison.

The investigation was conducted by Michael Caruso, DOI's Assistant Commissioner and Inspector General for DOC, and members of his staff, including Deputy Inspector General Louis Marano, Correction Officer/Investigator Roger Chappelle, and Special Investigator William Injeian, and by DOI's Investigative Squad, particularly NYPD Detective Vinessa Toyer.

Assistant District Attorneys Brenda Correa and Judith Weinstock have been assigned to handle the prosecution of NGUYEN.

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