



U.S. Department of Justice

United States Attorney

Eastern District of Virginia

*Paul J. McNulty
United States Attorney*

*2100 Jamieson Avenue (703)299-3700
Alexandria, Virginia 22314*

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For Further Information

Contact

Sam Dibbley 703-842-4050

**ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA
October 8, 2004**

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Cuong Gia Le, 27, of Springfield, Virginia, pleaded guilty today before the Honorable T.S.Ellis, III, United States District Court Judge, Alexandria Division, to racketeering, conspiracy to commit murder, two counts of murder in aid of racketeering, attempted murder in aid of racketeering, assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering, conspiracy to commit robbery, and two counts of use of a firearm resulting in murder. Le is facing multiple life sentences for his role in the May 13, 2001, shootings at the Majestic Restaurant in Fairfax County, Virginia, which resulted in the death of two individuals and the wounding of two others. His sentencing is set for January 7, 2005.

Cuong Le's guilty plea is the sixteenth conviction resulting from a three-year investigation of racketeering activity and related violent crimes committed by an Asian racketeering organization led by Le and known as the "Oriental Playboys," or "OPB". Cuong Le and other OPB members and associates have admitted to participating in a number of crimes including murder, attempted murder, and armed robbery, including numerous armed home invasion robberies, as well as burglaries, the distribution of "ecstasy" and crack cocaine, and credit card fraud.

Mr. McNulty stated: "Law enforcement agencies throughout Virginia are united in their focus on gang violence. This defendant, like many before him, will now be held accountable for the vicious crimes he has committed."

At his plea, Le admitted that as a member and leader of OPB, he participated in an April 6, 2001, home invasion robbery in Montgomery County, Maryland; an April 9, 2001, conspiracy to murder and attempted murder in Falls Church, Virginia; and the May 13, 2001, murder of Binh Anh Luu and Long Phi Nguyen at the Majestic Restaurant in Fairfax County, Virginia. Le also admitted to participating in the January 21, 1997, shooting at the Hi Au pool hall at the Eden Center in Falls Church, Virginia, which resulted in the death of Long Hung Nguyen and the wounding of another individual. Le fled Northern Virginia after the May 13, 2001, Majestic shootings and, with the assistance of OPB members, avoided capture until he was arrested by U.S. Marshals in July 2003 near Seattle, Washington.

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On October 5, 2004, in a related matter, Lam Nguyen Chau, age 28, of Cary, North Carolina, pled guilty before the Honorable Claude M. Hilton, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, Alexandria, Division, to one count of murder in the course of a firearms offense. Chau pled guilty to his involvement in the January 21, 1997, shooting at the Hi Au pool hall at the Eden Center in Falls Church, Virginia. Chau is scheduled to be sentenced on January 21, 2005. He faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

These cases are two of several related cases involving Asian organized crime and gang activity that have been investigated by federal, state and local authorities and prosecuted by the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia over the past nine years. This concerted effort has resulted in the arrest and conviction of over 70 individuals involved in dozens of violent crimes, drug trafficking, gun offenses, and other related criminal activities.

This investigation has involved special agents, officers, and analysts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, United States Marshals Service, the police departments from the City of Falls Church, Fairfax County, Montgomery County (Maryland), Virginia Beach, City of Alexandria, Arlington County, Baltimore County, Chesterfield County (Virginia), and the Virginia State Police. The Arlington County and Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorneys, and the Montgomery County State's Attorney also provided valuable assistance during the investigation. The Cuong Le and Lam Chau cases are being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys James L. Trump, Kimberly Riley Pedersen and Michael Leiter.

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