

# Press Release

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## **SOPHISTICATED INDOOR MARIJUANA GROW OPERATIONS SEIZED IN RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS**

*Thousands of Marijuana Plants Seized; Electricity Bypassed at Nearly All Grow Sites*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Assistant Special Agent in Charge Gordon Taylor and Elk Grove Police Department Chief Robert Lehner, announced today the culmination of two indoor marijuana grow investigations and the arrest of seven individuals from the Sacramento area. This two-day enforcement operation resulted in the seizure of six sophisticated indoor marijuana growing operations, over 4,300 marijuana plants, approximately \$82,600 U.S. Currency, and one vehicle. All search warrants were served without incident.

In November 2009, the Elk Grove Police Department and the DEA Sacramento District Office identified a suspected marijuana cultivator, Tac Che, 50, of Sacramento. According to the affidavit in support of the criminal complaint, law enforcement learned of several residences tied to this organization, with suspected indoor marijuana grows. Based on their investigation, officers believe power theft was occurring at many of the grow sites. Agents also identified Bob An, 52, Cuong Hoang, 54, Lien Truong, 49, Kenny Lu, 22, and Julia Saechao, 22, all of Sacramento, as being involved in the marijuana growing operations.

DEA Assistant Special Agent in Charge Gordon Taylor stated, “The indoor cultivation of marijuana continues to pose a serious problem in the Sacramento region. These people moved into our residential areas, set up illegal marijuana factories, and endangered the lives of everyone in the neighborhood. DEA will continue to work with our partners in law enforcement in pursuing individuals who put our communities at risk.”

On April 20, 2010, federal search warrants were served at the following locations associated with the above individuals:

- 8208 Cliffe Way, Sacramento, CA (372 marijuana plants seized)
- 1782 Highbridge Way, Sacramento, CA (807 marijuana plants seized)

- 150 Stone Valley Circle, Sacramento, CA (993 marijuana plants seized; residence of Kenny Lu and Julia Saechao)
- 8653 Prairiewoods Drive, Sacramento, CA (residence of Tac Che)
- 7901 Scottsdale Drive, Sacramento, CA (80 marijuana plants seized; residence of Cuong Hoang and Lien Truong)
- 8211 Cliffe Way, Sacramento, CA (residence of Bob An)

Law enforcement seized indoor marijuana grows at the residences located at 150 Stone Valley Circle, 1782 Highbridge Way, 8208 Cliffe Way, and 7901 Scottsdale Drive. Agents confirmed that electricity was bypassed at the grow sites on Stone Valley Circle, Highbridge Way and Cliffe Way.

Tac Che, Bob An, Cuong Hoang, Lien Truong, Kenny Lu, and Julia Saechao were each charged with conspiracy to manufacture at least 1,000 marijuana plants, manufacturing marijuana, and knowingly maintaining a place for manufacturing marijuana. All defendants appeared in Sacramento Federal Court on April 21, 2010.

Another indoor grow investigation began in December 2009, when Elk Grove Police Department and DEA were conducting surveillance on a suspicious residence in Sacramento. According to the affidavit in support of the criminal complaint, law enforcement identified Vinh Hoang, 44, of Sacramento, as a suspected marijuana cultivator and multiple residences associated with Hoang. Through their investigative efforts, agents believed two of the residences were indoor marijuana grow sites, with power theft occurring at both locations.

This investigation culminated on April 21, 2010, when law enforcement served federal search warrants at the following locations:

- 5415 Elderdown Way, Sacramento, CA (944 marijuana plants seized)
- 9244 Earl Fife Drive, Elk Grove, CA (513 marijuana plants and 624 clone marijuana plants seized)
- 7836 51<sup>st</sup> Avenue, Sacramento, CA (believed to be the residence of Vinh Hoang)

Officers seized indoor marijuana grows at the residences located on Elderdown Way, Sacramento, and Earl Fife Drive, Elk Grove. Agents confirmed that electricity was bypassed at both of these grow sites. Vinh Hoang was arrested at the residence on Elderdown Way without incident.

Vinh Hoang was charged with manufacturing at least 1,000 marijuana plants, and knowingly maintaining a place for manufacturing marijuana. Hoang appeared in Sacramento Federal Court on April 22, 2010.

Based on this investigation law enforcement believes these indoor marijuana grows had the capacity to produce nearly two tons of marijuana annually, with an estimated street value of \$17,920,000.

The DEA Sacramento District Office and Elk Grove Police Department conducted this investigation with the assistance of the Internal Revenue Service – Criminal Investigations Division, U.S. Marshals Service, Immigration Customs Enforcement, and the DEA offices in Fresno, San Jose, Oakland, Bakersfield, and Redding.

If convicted of conspiracy to manufacture marijuana and manufacturing marijuana, the defendants face a mandatory minimum prison sentence of 10 years, a maximum prison term of life, and a fine of up to \$4,000,000. If convicted of maintaining a place for manufacturing marijuana, the defendants face a maximum prison term of 20 years and a fine of up to \$500,000. The actual sentence, however, will be determined at the discretion of the court after consideration of the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, which take into account a number of variables and any applicable statutory sentencing factors.

The charges are only allegations and the defendants are presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

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