



# Department of Investigation

## *Press Release*

Release # 040-2002

TUESDAY, JULY 2, 2002

### **INMATE'S FIANCEE ARRESTED FOR BRIBERY** ***-- Offered Correction Officer \$70,000 To Help Inmate Escape--***

ROSE GILL HEARN, Commissioner of the Department of Investigation (DOI), today announced the arrest of HAI NGUYEN for offering a \$70,000 bribe to an undercover DOI detective posing as a New York City Correction Officer to help her fiancée, inmate Vincent Nguyen, escape from custody. On June 28, 2002, in upper Manhattan, HAI NGUYEN gave the undercover detective a \$10,000 cash 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 had offered him \$70,000 to allow Mr. Nguyen to escape. Vincent Nguyen remains in custody on pending criminal charges.

Commissioner Gill Hearn praised the Correction Officer: "The Correction Officer's integrity and professionalism enabled DOI to slam the door on this escape plot," she said. Commissioner Gill Hearn also thanked Department of Correction (DOC) Commissioner William J. Frasier and his staff, especially Deputy Wardens Nancy Acevedo and Larry Davis for their assistance in the investigation.

DOC Commissioner William J. Frasier said, " I am proud of the professionalism displayed by the Correction Officer who brought this case to the attention of investigators. By his actions, the officer has kept a potential menace off our streets and reaffirmed the vital service that Correction Officers perform in law enforcement. I would like to thank the Department of Investigation, and Michael Caruso, DOI's Inspector General at the Department of Correction, for their outstanding work on this case."

Commissioner Gill Hearn said that the investigation began in June 2002, when a DOC supervisor advised DOI that a Correction Officer who had transported Vincent Nguyen to court had reported that Nguyen had offered the officer \$70,000 to allow Nguyen to escape by running to a car that would be waiting for him while the officer would pretend to chase him. Later, at DOI's direction, the Correction Officer spoke with Vincent Nguyen, who told the officer that Nguyen's girlfriend would call him.

According to the felony complaint filed in the Criminal Court in Manhattan, between June 22 and 28, 2002, in several telephone conversations, HAI NGUYEN, Vincent Nguyen's fiancée, arranged to give the DOI undercover detective posing as the Correction Officer an "up-front payment" of \$10,000 in exchange for the officer's helping Vincent Nguyen escape from custody. The felony complaint further charges that HAI NGUYEN met with the undercover detective on June 26, 2002 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. Finally, the complaint charges, HAI NGUYEN met again with the undercover detective on June 28, 2002, in the vicinity of Morningside Drive in upper Manhattan, gave him \$10,000 and discussed the escape plan with him. DOI detectives arrested HAI NGUYEN immediately after that meeting.

HAI NGUYEN, age 23, gave her address as 210 Stonebrook Lane, Pelham, Alabama, and said that her occupation was as a manicurist. She has been charged with Bribery in the Second Degree, a class C felony,

and Conspiracy in the Fourth Degree, a class E felony. If convicted, she faces up to 15 years in prison.

Inmate Vincent Nguyen, age 22, is being held by DOC on charges of Reckless Endangerment in the First Degree, pending in both Brooklyn and Manhattan, arising out of separate incidents; on homicide charges pending against him in New Jersey; and on armed robbery, assault and weapons charges pending against him in California.

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

The office of New York County District Attorney Robert M. Morgenthau is prosecuting the case, which has been assigned to Assistant District Attorneys Brenda Correa and Judith Weinstock.

The charges against HAI NGUYEN are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless convicted in court.