



U.S. Department of Justice

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NEWS RELEASE

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Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Lam Nguyen Chau, age 28, of Cary, North Carolina, pled guilty today before the Honorable Claude M. Hilton, United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia, to one count of murder in the course of a firearms offense. Chau is facing a maximum sentence of life imprisonment for his role 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. Sentencing is scheduled for January 21, 2005.

In 1997 Lam Chau was associated with an Asian gang in Northern Virginia known as "Dragon Family" or "DF." This gang was engaged in various criminal activities, such as the distribution of cocaine, robbery and other crimes of violence. In January 1997 Chau drove three other DF members, all of whom were armed and wearing masks, to the Hi Au pool hall to shoot Long Nguyen in retaliation for earlier gang-related fights. One of these three other DF members, Thiet Phan, was convicted for his role in this murder by a jury in Arlington County Circuit Court in 1997; Phan is currently serving a 98-year sentence in a Virginia state prison.

"This conviction is a major accomplishment in our attack on violent gangs. Another ruthless killer has been caught and convicted, proving once again that gang violence will not be tolerated," said US Attorney McNulty.

This case is part of an investigation into Asian gang activity by DF and other gangs by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the City of Falls Church Police Department, the Fairfax County Police Department, the Montgomery County (Maryland) Police Department, the Virginia State Police, the Arlington County Commonwealth's Attorney, the Fairfax County Commonwealth's Attorney, and the Montgomery County (Maryland) State's Attorney. This investigation is ongoing.

The case is being prosecuted for the United States by Assistant United States Attorneys James L. Trump and Kimberly Riley Pedersen.

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