



## Illegal Gambling Operation Bust

Just after 8 am on April 12, 2017, TCSO and HIS (Homeland Security Investigations) served search warrants at “The Daily Stop” Convenience Store at 10500 East 11<sup>th</sup> Street and at the home of store owner Ashraf Salim at 5839 East 86<sup>th</sup> Street. Investigators seized potential evidence of illegal gambling activity, money and guns from the home.



Salim was arrested in 2014 in connection with the bust of multi state K2 ring. He is accused of selling K2 (synthetic marijuana) from the same store where the four illegal video gaming machines were confiscated today.

Attached below is a press release from the Dept. of Justice regarding the recent sentencing of the suspected king pen of the 2014 K2 ring bust.



# Department of Justice

Acting United States Attorney Loretta F. Radford

Northern District of Oklahoma

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
FRIDAY, MARCH 31, 2017  
[WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/OKN](http://WWW.JUSTICE.GOV/USAO/OKN)

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## **DEFENDANT SENTENCED IN INTERNATIONAL MULTI- MILLION K2 CONSPIRACY**

TULSA, OKLAHOMA—Tim Minh Tran, 44, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, was sentenced today by United States District Judge Claire V. Eagan to 30 months in prison for conspiracy to smuggle and conspiracy to commit money laundering, announced Acting U.S. Attorney Loretta F. Radford. The conviction stemmed from his role in leading an organization responsible for smuggling more than 200 kilograms of synthetic cannabinoids into the United States from China, which Tran used to manufacture and sell more than \$21 million of synthetic marijuana, also known as K2. The distribution network spanned more than six states, including, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico, Nevada and California. Tran also laundered millions of dollars derived from the sale of the illegal synthetic cannabinoids.

In addition to his sentence of incarceration, a \$3,675,000 criminal forfeiture money judgment was entered against Tran. In lieu of forfeiture of real property commonly known as 16750 Centurion Avenue, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Tran forfeited \$1,000,000; in lieu of real property commonly known as 8556 Scotland Avenue, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Tran forfeited \$150,000; in lieu of forfeiture of real property commonly known as 4000 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana Tran forfeited \$50,000. Tran also forfeited \$25,525 in United States Currency seized from 8556 Scotland Avenue, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, \$15,773 in United States Currency seized from 4000 Florida Boulevard, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, a 2007 Ferrari and a 2008 Isuzu Truck.

In April 2011, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) and the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) launched the large-scale investigation that had connections to multiple states. The organization falsified invoices and waybills in order to smuggle the synthetic cannabinoids from China, which Tran and others then used to make the synthetic marijuana.

HSI, IRS-CI and TCSO conducted enforcement actions in 8 cities across 5 different states resulting in the indictment of 13 individuals involved in the conspiracy. To date, 8 codefendants have been sentenced. Tran was the most recent co-conspirator to be sentenced.

“This long-term investigation took down several large synthetic drug manufacturers throughout the United States. The manufacture and distribution of synthetic drugs are a serious health threat that is especially dangerous to the young people of our communities,” said Acting U.S. Attorney Radford. “These synthetic

drugs are sold with harmless sounding names such as 'Mr. Happy,' to youth who are typically unaware of the harmful chemicals they are ingesting. The chemicals in these drugs imported from China are not approved for human consumption and have led to psychotic episodes, kidney failure, brain damage, suicidal thoughts and even death."

"Tran and his coconspirators got rich by importing thousands of pounds of dangerous drugs into the United States," said Katrina Berger, special agent in charge of Homeland Security Investigations in Dallas. "Our multi-agency investigation with IRS and the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office puts Tran and other dope smugglers on notice that their crimes will not go unnoticed or unpunished."

Tulsa County Sheriff Vic Regalado stated, "The successful conclusion of this investigation represents what can be achieved when law enforcement, the medical community, educators and concerned parents come together for the welfare of our children. Synthetic cannabinoids are unpredictably dangerous and can be deadly. The Tulsa County Sheriff's Office values our partnership with HSI. We are dedicated to continuing this partnership to ensure the safety of the citizens we serve."

IRS-CI Special Agent in Charge for the Dallas Field Office, Tamera Cantu, stated, "Synthetic drugs represent a serious public health problem and are generally marketed toward teens and young adults. The consumption of these illegal substances endangers young people around the country and can result in serious health issues, including death. IRS-CI is committed to working with our law enforcement partners to protect the public and to dismantle the drug organizations that promote the use of these toxic chemicals for their own financial gain."

The prosecution is part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) and High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) programs. Homeland Security Investigations, Internal Revenue Service-Criminal Investigation and the Tulsa County Sheriff's Office investigated the case. Acting U.S. Attorney Loretta Radford, Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph F. Wilson and Catherine J. Depew are prosecuting on behalf of the United States.

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