



The United States Department of Justice

District of Montana

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, June 25, 2009

LARY SUDCHILD VONGSAVANH SENTENCED IN U.S. DISTRICT COURT

Bill Mercer, United States Attorney for the District of Montana, announced today that during a federal court session in Great Falls, on June 25, 2009, before U.S. District Judge Sam E. Haddon, LARY SUDCHILD VONGSAVANH, a 35-year-old resident of Cotati, California and Lander, Wyoming, appeared for sentencing. VONGSAVANH was sentenced to a term of:

- Probation: 2 years
- Special Assessment: \$100
- Restitution: \$38.71

VONGSAVANH was sentenced in connection with his guilty plea to theft of mail and contents by a postal employee.

In an Offer of Proof filed by the United States, the government stated it would have proved at trial the following:

In the fall of 2007, VONGSAVANH was hired as the Postmaster Relief at the Zortman Post Office. The Postmaster Relief acts as a substitute awaiting the appointment of a permanent Postmaster.

In August of 2008, a complaint was made that VONGSAVANH was opening packages from the VA Hospital at Fort Harrison. In this instance, the complainant believed that VONGSAVANH was stealing morphine from mail addressed to her husband and also from packages containing morphine addressed to another Zortman area veteran.

The U.S. Postal Inspection Service prepared a "test" package to verify the allegations. The test package, which indicated a return address of the VA Medical Center at Fort Harrison, was delivered to the Zortman Post Office through the regular mail delivery system.

Soon after delivery, two agents entered the Zortman facility and determined that the package had been tampered with. VONGSAVANH was confronted and admitted that he had opened the package, determined its contents, and set it aside with the intention of taking the package out of the Post Office at the end of his work day.

VONGSAVANH also admitted that he had opened other packages looking for prescription pain medications and had, on several occasions, either stolen mail containing morphine or opened the mail and removed the contents.

Because there is no parole in the federal system, the "truth in sentencing" guidelines mandate that VONGSAVANH will likely serve all of the time imposed by the court. In the federal system, VONGSAVANH does have the opportunity to earn a sentence reduction for "good behavior."

However, this reduction will not exceed 15% of the overall sentence.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Carl E. Rostad prosecuted the case for the United States.

The investigation was conducted by the U.S. Postal Service - Office of Inspector General.