

GANG: Gambling, Drug Charges

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whose members were from the Pomona Boys gang.

In addition to the gambling counts, gang members were charged with running an international trafficking ring dealing in the "club drug" Ecstasy. Nguyen was also charged with weapons possession in connection with a plot to kill rival gang members.

The investigation focused on wiretapped conversations between Nguyen and an Anaheim video game dealer allegedly used by the ring to rig regular video games with illicit electronic components. With a flip of a remote control switch, normal video games like "Pac-Man" would be replaced on the screen by illegal games of chance with names like "Dancing Dolls."

The machines accepted quarters and bills up to \$20; winners normally claimed the money from the cafe or restaurant operator because the machines do not dispense cash.

Authorities say the machines were big money makers. They say Nguyen bought them for \$2,300, and each apparatus can generate as much as \$150,000 annually.

A major break in the case came when FBI agents were able to build identical remote controls to activate the machines. Gambling screens switched to video games by merchants at the sight of police were quickly flipped back.

"We were able to mimic their frequency," said Assistant U.S. Atty. Marc Greenberg. "When a merchant hit remote to 'Pac-Man,' we would switch it back to the

'Because of the refugee settlement in our city, the Little Saigon area, the tentacles of crime from that area spread out across the country and around the world.'

JAMES COOK
Westminster police chief

gambling game."

In Little Saigon, leaders said the arrests were important to improve the community's image and transform the area into a tourist hub.

"They're just a few bad apples who created a very bad image to the Vietnamese community," said Council Member Tony Lam. "They want to get rich overnight, and they should be prosecuted and punished."

The suspects face possible five-year prison terms on the gambling charges. The drug charges also carry potential five-year terms.

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