

**Department of Justice**  
U.S. Attorney's Office  
Central District of California

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Manager of Clothing Factory Sentenced to Prison after Offering Bribe to Federal Labor Investigator in Exchange for Closing Investigation**

*LOS ANGELES* – The general manager of a La Puente garment factory, who was found guilty of offering to pay bribes to an investigator with the United States Department of Labor in exchange for the investigator closing an investigation into wage violations, has been sentenced to 18 months in federal prison.

Howard Quoc Trinh, 43, of Arcadia, the manager of Seven-Bros. Enterprises, was sentenced yesterday by United States District Judge Christina A. Snyder.

In April 2016, a federal jury, which deliberated for only about one hour, convicted Trinh of two counts of bribery, finding that he offered to pay \$10,000 in bribes – and actually paid \$3,000 – to a Department of Labor Wage and Hour investigator. As part of the bribery scheme, Trinh promised to pay the balance when the investigation was closed.

The Labor Department investigator was investigating Seven-Bros. for violating the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), which sets standards for minimum wage and overtime pay. The Wage and Hour investigator led a team that conducted an unannounced visit to Seven-Bros on March 10, 2015. The investigation into wage violations covered a period from May 2012 through March 10, 2015 and found that Seven-Bros owed approximately \$100,000 to compensate employees for FLSA violations over that period. As part of the investigation, the Labor Department issued a “hot goods” Notice to Restrain the Shipment of Goods, which prevented the company from shipping certain inventory until the back wages were paid to employees.

The investigator returned to Seven-Bros on March 18, at which time Trinh said he did not owe his employees any back wages and that he wanted to “take care” of the investigator. In response to Trinh’s statements, the Labor Department’s Office of Investigator General (OIG) initiated an investigation and outfitted the investigator with recording equipment. On the evening of March 18, during a recorded meeting, Trinh offered the investigator \$10,000 to close out the investigation without finding any violations and to lift the hot goods notice. Trinh told the investigator that he wanted a “clean case” with “no violations” and ““I would say to you \$10,000...in your pocket.”

The next day, during another recorded meeting, Trinh gave the investigator an initial payment of \$3,000 in cash in an unmarked manila envelope. Before he gave the cash to the investigator, Trinh patted the envelope and said “we never met...we never sat at this table...we never had any of this.” On March 20, 2015, Trinh was arrested.

Trinh’s “criminal conduct reflects a complete disregard for the law,” prosecutors wrote in a sentencing memorandum filed with the court. “Rather than pay his employees (most of whom earned minimum wage) the back wages that they were owed for overtime, [the] defendant tried to buy his way out of trouble by bribing” the Labor Department investigator.

Judge Snyder ordered Trinh to begin serving his prison sentence by September 6.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the United States Department of Labor, Office of Investigator General, Office of Labor Racketeering and Fraud Investigations.

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Julian L. André of the Major Frauds Section.