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**Hieu John Phung receives probation sentence for intentionally driving his SUV inside the Lady of Lavang Church**

Today, Multnomah County District Attorney Rod Underhill announced that 36-year-old Hieu John Phung received a 36-month probation sentence after a jury convicted him of intentionally driving his vehicle inside the Lady of Lavang Church.

"The damage done to Lady of Lavang Church was disastrous. This situation could have been deadly had anybody been inside. Thankfully, no one was hurt, but hundreds of parishioners were heartbroken to find their place of worship destroyed the day before one of their most sacred holidays," said Multnomah County Deputy District Attorney Mariel Mota, who prosecuted this case. "The community support and collaboration we saw in the days and weeks after this event was truly uplifting, and representative of a nurturing, diverse, and engaged community we are proud to serve and represent."

During the two-day trial, the state presented evidence that showed on December 24, 2018, Phung left his residence and drove to the Lady of Lavang Church, a Vietnamese Catholic church, located in the 5400 block of Northeast Alameda Street, in a full-size SUV and crashed through the closed gate. Phung intentionally smashed his vehicle into the exterior of the church multiple times. As a result, his vehicle entered the church, destroying the pews and doors.

The church had to spend more than \$324,000 to repair the damage caused during this incident.

As Phung exited the interior of the church, he drove through another closed gate, causing more damage.

When police arrived, they located extensive damage and debris strewn about the property. Amidst the wreckage, police located a license plate, which was registered to Phung, and the front grill to his SUV.

Phung left the area before police arrived. Officers started doing an area check around the church looking for either him or the vehicle.

Several hours after the crash, Phung made two 9-1-1 calls about the incident. Law enforcement eventually located and arrested him without incident.

During the investigation, law enforcement learned Phung intentionally drove his vehicle into the church following a family dispute that had peripheral ties to the church. There was no evidence that this was a bias crime.

The jury convicted Phung of one count of criminal mischief in the first degree, one count of failure to perform the duties of a driver and one count of criminal trespass in the second degree.

As part of his sentencing, the court ordered Phung undergo a mental health evaluation and complete any treatment that may be ordered. The court also imposed 75 hours of community service, ordered that he have no contact and not enter the church while on probation, and suspended his driving privileges for one year. A hearing on restitution will be held at a later date.

Five still photos, which were entered as exhibits during trial, are being released with a copy of this press release.

The Multnomah County District Attorney's Office recognizes the work of the Portland Police Bureau for their dedicated efforts investigating this matter.

#MCDA#

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