



To Research, Document & Promote Vietnamese Culture

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A COUNTRY  
STAYS ALIVE  
WHEN ITS  
CULTURE IS  
ALIVE.

HOPE NEVER  
DIES IN THE  
INDOMITABLE  
VIETNAMESE  
MIND.

- SACEI Newsletter updates you on the latest news about Vietnamese-America.
- It serves as a link between SACEI members and those who are interested in the Vietnamese or Vietnamese-American culture.

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Editorial Note: Nguyen Huu Cau: Prisoner of Conscience

A prisoner of conscience

Nguyễn Hữu Cầu has been languishing in communist jails for 37 out of the 38 years since the communists took over South Vietnam. At age 67, he has spent more than half of his life in jail. A former captain in the territorial forces of the Republic of South Vietnam, he spent six years in reeducation camps following the Fall of Saigon. Released in 1981, he was sentenced to death for having collected “allegations of rape and bribery” committed by two high level Vietnamese officials. His sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on appeal.

According to PEN’s information, Nguyễn Hữu Cầu, 67, is a poet, songwriter, human rights defender and anti-corruption activist. He was arrested by public security police on 9 October 1982 for having authored an ‘incriminating’ manuscript of songs and poems. Nguyen Huu Cau had reportedly noted allegations of rape and bribery committed by the two high level officers on the back of the pages of the original manuscript.

Nguyễn Hữu Cầu was accused of committing ‘destructive acts’ that were supposedly ‘damaging’ to the government’s image and on 23 May 1983, he was sentenced to death. His mother submitted an appeal on his behalf and a year later, on 24 May 1985, the Court of Appeals commuted his capital sentence into life imprisonment. The manuscript was reportedly not used as evidence in the trial against him, in order to protect the two officers concerned.

In the many years since, Nguyễn Hữu Cầu has reportedly been held in harsh solitary confinement. He has apparently now lost most of his vision and is almost completely deaf. Nguyễn Hữu Cầu suffers from a serious heart condition, which is worsening because of the lack of adequate medical attention and the deplorable prison conditions. He was recently reported to be in very poor health, according to his daughter returning from an authorized periodical visit to the camp deep in the jungle. Concerns for his well-being are acute. Nguyễn Hữu Cầu is being held at forced labour camp K2 Z30A Xuan Loc, Dong Nai province, Vietnam. <http://www.pen-deutschland.de/en/2013/03/28/vietnam-sorge-um-gesundheit-des-inhaftierten-journalisten-nguyen-huu-cau/>

Nguyễn Hữu Cầu's personal life was no less tragic than his civilian one. While being jailed, his wife left him for another man and took with her their young son. The latter was adopted by his stepfather and was given the name of Trần Ngọc Bích. The two siblings from then on lived apart. Nguyen Huu Cau's daughter, Nguyễn Thị Anh Thư was left to be raised her grandmother. Anh Thư went through difficult times during her childhood. While growing up, she had to sell odds and ends to bring money home so that her grandmother could raise her or buy bus tickets to pay visit to her father in jail. The ‘orphan’ girl did get to know her father in jail and slowly got attached to him. Over the years, she became his confidante and strongest supporter. She spread news about his health status and was his link to the outer world.

As his eye sight was decreasing, she noticed it and sounded the alarm. “Since when did you have this problem?” she asked.

“It has been a long time. But I did not want to tell you to cause you to worry. I had some eye surgery some-time ago; but my eyesight keeps getting worse with time.”

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Jack Truong: Head of Electrolux North America

The Swedish group Electrolux AB named Jack Truong as the new President and CEO of Electrolux Major Appliances North America on August 1, 2011.

Truong, a member of the management group, previously held the position of Vice President and General Manager of the Global Construction and Home Improvement Division of the 3M Company, a global leader active in a wide range of markets from health care and personal safety to office products and electronics.

“We are pleased to welcome Jack Truong to Electrolux,” said CEO Keith McLoughlin. “At 3M he demonstrated the ability to accelerate growth by applying innovative technologies and marketing to meet ever-changing consumer needs. His experience and track record will be crucial in helping to ensure our long-term growth with an intense focus on strong brands, high-impact new products and cost efficiency – all of which are key elements of the Electrolux strategy.”

Truong, born in 1962, holds a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York.



## Viet Pham: New Chef



Viet Pham is the award-winning chef and owner of Forage Restaurant in Salt Lake City, Utah. Viet Pham has lived the American Dream. He was born in Malaysia in 1979 as his parents left Vietnam as “boat people” refugees. Pham credits his parents with giving him a love for food and cooking. “Just watching them in the kitchen,” Pham recalls, “and seeing how much they enjoyed cooking together and how much everyone enjoyed their food at family gatherings really resonated with me.”

Pham grew up in the San Francisco Bay Area and graduated from California Culinary Academy in 2002. While attending the California Culinary Academy, Pham interned at Michelin-starred Fifth Floor Restaurant in San Francisco, CA under Food & Wine Best New Chef 2002, Laurent Gras. He went on to cater local private events before taking a leap of faith and making the decision to relocate to Provo, UT to secure an opportunity as Executive Chef at Spark Restaurant Lounge. There, Pham met and befriended business partner Bowman Brown, and the pair opened Forage Restaurant in Salt Lake City, UT in July of 2009.

## Tina Lai: Restaurant Owner



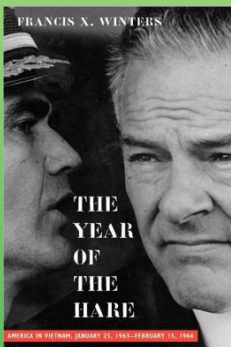
Eagles owner Jeffrey Lurie married Philadelphia resident Tina Lai in a private ceremony this weekend. Lurie, 61, announced last July that he and Christina Weiss Lurie were getting divorced after 20 years of marriage. Lai will have no official role in the Eagles organization. The wedding was attended by family and close friends. “I am happy and excited as Tina and I begin our lives together,” Lurie said in a statement.

Lai, 39, is from a family that owns restaurants in Philadelphia, including the Vietnam Restaurant in Chinatown and the Vietnam Cafe in University City. Her family immigrated from Vietnam in 1978. She was involved in starting the cafes, although she no longer has a direct role in the restaurants, according to a restaurant spokeswoman.

Lurie bought the Eagles in 1994 for a then-record \$195 million. The franchise is now worth \$1.26 billion, according to Forbes' 2012 valuation. Lurie maintained full control over the team in his divorce settlement, although Christina remains a part owner and serves as president of the Eagles Youth Partnership.

[http://articles.philly.com/2013-05-07/sports/39067320\\_1\\_jeffrey-lurie-tina-lai-vietnam-restaurant](http://articles.philly.com/2013-05-07/sports/39067320_1_jeffrey-lurie-tina-lai-vietnam-restaurant)

## Francis Winters: The Year of the Hare



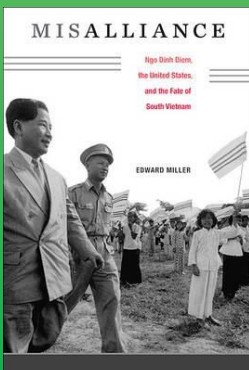
Why did Kennedy and his colleagues choose this perilous course in the midst of an uncertain civil war? To answer this question, *The Year of the Hare* takes us inside the Kennedy administration, where the State Department largely supported the coup while the Pentagon and the CIA consistently resisted it. Francis X. Winters' research is based on in-depth interviews with high-ranking members of the Kennedy administration, including Dean Rusk, McGeorge Bundy, and George Ball, along with the newly issued multivolume compilation *Foreign Relations and the United States, 1961-1964*, Vietnam and the recently opened General Records of the U.S. State Department for 1963.

The reasons for American support of the coup in Vietnam, Winters asserts, lie both in the ethos of the era, with its dynamic confidence in the superiority of American ideals, and in Kennedy's political aspirations. *The Year of the Hare* explores the synergy between the idealism and personal ambition that were at the root of the war that haunts us still.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Year-Hare-America-Vietnam-1963-February/dp/0820321214>

## Ed Miller: Misalliance: Ngo Dinh Diem, The US and the Fate of South Vietnam



For Diem and U.S. leaders, Miller argues, the alliance was more than just a joint effort to contain communism. It was also a means for each side to pursue its plans for nation building in South Vietnam. Miller's definitive portrait of Diem—based on extensive research in Vietnamese, French, and American archives—demonstrates that the South Vietnamese leader was neither Washington's pawn nor a tradition-bound mandarin. Rather, he was a shrewd and ruthless operator with his own vision for Vietnam's modernization. In 1963, allied clashes over development and reform, combined with rising internal resistance to Diem's nation building programs, fractured the alliance and changed the course of the Vietnam War.

In depicting the rise and fall of the U.S.–Diem partnership, *Misalliance* shows how America's fate in Vietnam was written not only on the battlefield but also in Washington's dealings with its Vietnamese allies.

Available on Amazon

<http://www.amazon.com/Misalliance-United-States-South-Vietnam/dp/0674072987>

In August 2009, after visiting her father in jail, Anh Thu cried out:

"I insistently beg uncles and aunts to love (sob)...love my father; to speak up so that he could be released home. I would be very grateful to you (sob). A normal person (sob) who stayed in jail for ten years would already be miserable (sob); and we are not talking about his 28 years. He cannot stand it (sob)."

During all this time, her brother, Trần Ngọc Bích, did not know his real father as no one told him. As he wanted to further his life, he applied for membership to the communist party. It was then that the Cong An broke the news to him. From then on, he started visiting his father in jail and also noticed his gradual health deterioration.

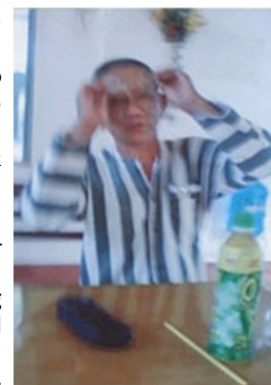
As Anh Thu was crying out for help, the Cong An went on the defensive and said, "We told him to write and ask the government for clemency."

"I have written and sent out five hundred letters, but have not gotten any answer," claimed Nguyễn Hữu Cầu.

[http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in\\_depth/health-condition-of-decades-long-prisoner-nguyen-hau-cau-is-worse-08092010151643.html](http://www.rfa.org/vietnamese/in_depth/health-condition-of-decades-long-prisoner-nguyen-hau-cau-is-worse-08092010151643.html)

This is the story of a brave man who has dared to challenge the communist regime for 37 years and counting after the war ended. Unluckily, there is NO justice for him in that decadent and corrupt country for the party would crush him and others with impunity and without regrets like it did to millions of others before him.

He is the image of un-bowing TRUTH, COURAGE, and RESILIENCE in the face of adversity. He gives us the example and the moral courage to continue to fight for FREEDOM in Vietnam. Our prayers are with him and his family.



Nguyễn Hữu Cầu

### The Tamexco affair

This leads us to the problem of corruption in post war Vietnam, which is **"serious, blatant, and omnipresent"** according to **Le Van Lan, deputy office chief of the Central Steering Committee for Anti-Corruption.** (<http://tuoitrenews.vn/features-news/1411/corruption-in-vietnam-is-serious-blatant-rampant>)

Corruption is everywhere from top to bottom. It has spread to education, healthcare, charity, social policy, humanitarian, anti-epidemic activities, even in law protection agencies like police, prosecutor's office, court...

Lan categorized corruption into 6 sectors: in the management of land and natural resources (take bribes to grant title deeds); in the finance banking sector; in construction (inflate building costs); in management of state assets (embezzlement, faking invoices); in human resource management (bribery for jobs, promotion); and in judicial sector (judges take bribes to alter verdicts).

And when people like Nguyễn Hữu Cầu, Nguyen Van Hai, Phan Thanh Hai, and Ta Phong Tan try to record, fight, and unmask corruption in Vietnam, they are locked in jails for years or forever. Blamed for 'conducting propaganda against the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, they face up to 20 years in prison or life if convicted. This is how serious corruption is under communist Vietnam: it is much worse than in the war-years. People have no choice but to pay bribes, otherwise they would be jailed: jailed for not paying bribes, jailed for reporting bribes.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/vietnam/9561075/Vietnam-launches-drive-to-censor-anti-corruption-bloggers.html>

To understand the depth of corruption, one needs to analyze the "small" Tamexco case. Small here denotes the fact that there were bigger cases than Tamexco. Tamexco or Tan Binh Production Service Trading and Export Company, launched in 1989, was a state company founded by interests connected to the party committee in HCMC's Tan Binh district. Among the big wigs were Truong My Hoa, party secretary of Tan Binh district 1986-1991 and Le Thi Van, People's Committee chairman. Hoa became Central Committee member in 1991 and Vietnam's Vice President. Van became chairman HCMC's People's Committee in 1991. Although Pham Huy Phuoc was Tamexco's director, everything had to be cleared by Hoa and Van in that state bank.

Tamexco dealt with import-export, tourism and real estate. Products imported included fertilizers, construction material and cars. It also exported seafood. Tamexco later set up a bank, Tacombank, of which Phuoc became Chairman of the management board. Tamexco also listed Cosimex and the Tan Binh Investment and Development Company as part of the group.

In 1996, seven years after Tamexco's launch, Phuoc was arrested on charges of corruption with company losses valued at US\$25 million. (This was a huge sum of money considering that Vietnam personal GDP was only US\$1,300 a year. Extrapolated to a US GDP of \$40,000 that US\$25 million loss would be equal to US\$750 million). Also arrested was Le Minh Hai, director of Dolphin, a company closely linked to Tamexco for bribing Le Duc Canh, head of Notary in Vung Tau. Other people involved included Tran Quang Vinh, head of Binh Gia Co and four bankers Nguyen Duy Lo, Nguyen Van De, Tran Vinh, Nguyen Manh Thuy.

Trial began in January 1997 and Phuoc was reported to have embezzled US\$10 million, spending money on lavish foreign trips and gambling. He also gave US\$200,000 to his mistress to buy a luxury villa in HCMC. When Nguyen Duy Lo, deputy general director at the state owned Vietcombank, was asked why he lent money to Tamexco, given the circumstances of its debts, Lo answered that he acted according to Document 8. The latter was signed by deputy State Bank governor, Chu Van Nguyen and the Standing Committee of the HCMC party committee. Lo, however, did not say who had signed for the party and to this day it remained a mystery.

At the end of the trial, Phuoc, Hai, Vinh, and Canh were sentenced to death. Sixteen other accused received prison terms ranging from 3 years to life. Lo and Linh were jailed for 15 years. Le Thi Van and Truong My Hoa were never convicted of anything, although they were censured by the local party committee. No central politician was ever implicated in this case, although Politburo member Nguyen Ha Phan had been expelled for "abuse of power, authoritarianism and fanaticism." Tamexco Pham Huy Phuoc was reportedly "close" to Phan. Why if such high connections did exist, they did not come to light at the trial? Asked why did Phuoc not blow the whistle, one informant said to do so "would ruin little chance their families and children had for a future."

While there is much that remains hidden in relation to Tamexco, what seems clear is that the center was not clamping down on corruption "in the public interest" but rather was representing one side in a struggle for influence between different levels of the state, where the prize is control over economic resources. The investigation process was designed to prove guilt, but not to search for the truth. The "rule of law" is to utilize law selectively to pursue the interests of one particular arm of the state, in this case the center. In other words, the small would pay so that the big ones could get away. (Gainsborough. *Vietnam. Rethinking the State*, Zed Books, 2010: 59-70)