

It was 33 days before Mr Prasertchang returned to Australia in the company of Vichan Saepang who was believed to be the overseer of the visit. On 2 July the men collected the frames from the hotel and went to a Chinese restaurant in Potts Point, followed by an AFP surveillance team. The officers then had to decide whether to enter and search the premises or wait and see whether someone attempted to transfer the frames elsewhere.

The risk in waiting was that someone could remove the heroin from the frames and it would be difficult to know whether people leaving the restaurant were carrying part or all of the consignment. A decision was made to enter.

### Arrests

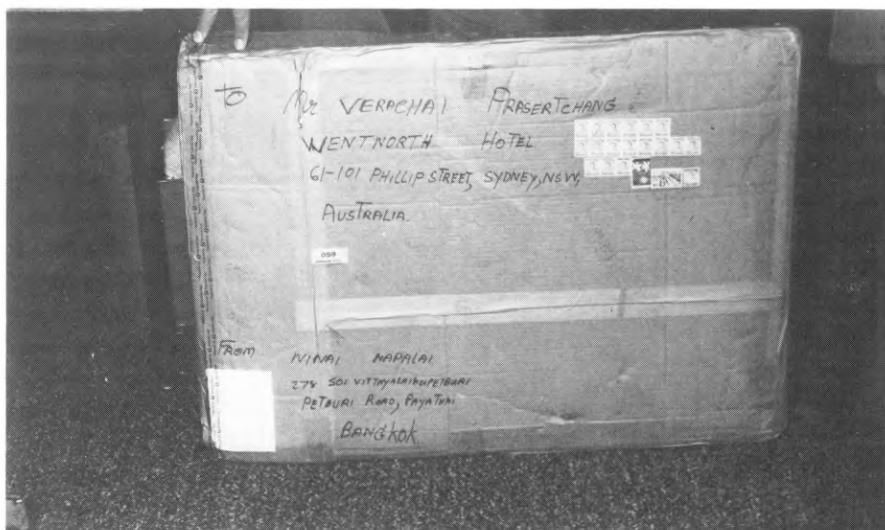
As luck would have it, it was the wrong decision. The frames were sitting in a corner of the restaurant, still wrapped. Prasertchang was arrested. He was tried and sentenced to eight years gaol.

Saepang got ten years.

Another Thai, Phongthep Keowkanchanaskul, who was in the restaurant was the fifth Thai, who was found to have been a passenger on the same flight which brought Prasertchang and Saepang to Australia. He was also on the same flight which brought in Traimas and the 7.3 kgs of heroin in January. Ingram found that this was Keowkanchanaskul's sixth trip to Australia since 1981. He had turned up in Australia unobserved. His discovery proved the theory of his central position in a highly active heroin importing syndicate.

Inquiries through Interpol revealed that Keowkanchanaskul had been arrested in Paris approximately one year before as part of a group of eight Asians suspected of importing heroin into Europe. Information suggested that they were members of the Ah Ming syndicate. All were released due to a lack of evidence.

Ah Ming is in gaol in Singapore. As the alleged leader of an international heroin syndicate based in Singapore, he is believed to have pioneered the system by which heroin remained in the hands of the one syndicate from its acquisition in Northern Thailand to its delivery to the purchasing country.



*The pictures of the King and Queen of Thailand used by the heroin traffickers.*

### Operation Toggle Becomes Priority One

Phillips was convinced that Keowkanchanaskul was central to a Thai-based international heroin syndicate that regularly was shipping heroin into Australia using couriers who delivered direct to the purchaser, and other couriers who took the proceeds back to Thailand. He directed that the operation known as "Toggle" be listed as the Drug Unit's number one priority.

Because of the difficulty in pronouncing the names of many of the suspects, Drug Unit members decided to identify suspects by the first and last letters of their names.

It was decided in August 1982 to convene a meeting between AFP headquarters units and Toggle team members, and representatives of NSW Police, Customs, and the Joint Drugs Task Force. The meeting identified AFP targets and how each agency could assist.

Over the next three years a series of investigations were mounted by Drug Unit members of the Toggle

team into a number of heroin importations involving Keowkanchanaskul's Thai-based syndicate. Two of the many notable investigations were the Toggle Bravo and Toggle Juliet operations.

### Toggle Bravo

Through intelligence information from Thailand the Toggle team was aware of a shipment of 19 kgs of heroin due in Sydney on 1 September 1983. On its arrival the heroin was substituted and a controlled delivery took place to a Kings Cross hotel where it was split for delivery to the Australian buyer.

The courier had booked two rooms and was under instructions from the syndicate to leave the 'heroin' in a suitcase in one of the rooms, which he did. The overseer of the group collected the suitcase and returned to his room in the same hotel. At that point the Toggle team moved on the overseer and seized the suitcase, only to discover that 12 blocks of the heroin substitute were missing. Somehow a portion of the consignment had already been collected.