

Man gets two years for electricity meter tampering scam after absconding for 14 years

19 August 2016

A man, who was charged by the ICAC after absconding for about 14 years, was today (Friday) sentenced to two years' imprisonment at the District Court for having conspired with other persons to defraud two electricity companies of over \$465,000 in charges by tampering with meters of 18 commercial and residential premises.

Woo Hang-foo, 52, a cleaning worker, earlier pleaded guilty to 17 counts of conspiracy to defraud, contrary to Common Law.

In sentencing, Deputy District Judge Ms Bina Chainrai said she meted out a custodial sentence to the defendant to reflect the seriousness of his offences lasting a long period of time.

The judge added that despite the defendant's guilty plea and his remorse, she could only reduce his jail term by one-fifth to two years since he had absconded for about 14 years.

The case arose from corruption complaints. Subsequent ICAC enquiries revealed the above offences.

The court heard that at the material time, Woo was an electricity technician.

As public utility companies, Hong Kong Electric Company Limited (HK Electric) and CLP Power Hong Kong Limited (CLP Power) supply electricity to Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories respectively.

CLP Power and HK Electric install electricity meters at the premises of their customers to measure the amount of electricity consumed for billing purposes.

The court heard that between June 29 and October 29, 2001, Woo conspired with other persons to tamper with the electricity meters of four eateries and a flat of a residential building on Hong Kong Island, causing HK Electric to lose electricity charges of about \$229,000.

Between October 29, 2000 and October 29, 2001, Woo also conspired with other persons to tamper with the electricity meters of a unit of a public housing estate and 12 commercial premises, namely six eateries, two companies, a night club, a bakery, a fitness centre and a car services centre, in Kowloon and the New Territories.

As a result, those premises were undercharged for the units of electricity actually consumed, resulting in CLP Power to lose over \$236,000 in electricity charges.

When interviewed under caution by ICAC officers, Woo admitted that he had obtained monetary gains amounting to \$133,500, the court was told.

On October 29, 2001, ICAC officers arrested Woo for his alleged role in an electricity meter tampering scam. He was then released on bail pending further enquiries.

Woo absconded from ICAC bail on August 14, 2002. A warrant of arrest was subsequently issued against him.

On May 29, 2016, Woo was arrested by ICAC officers at the Lo Wu Control Point when he returned to Hong Kong from the Mainland.

CLP Power and HK Electric had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during its investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by Public Prosecutor Kasmine Hui, assisted by ICAC officer Angel Lui.

男子非法干擾電錶詐騙電費潛逃十四年後回港判囚兩年

2016年8月19日

一名男子串謀其他人士非法干擾十八個商業及住宅單位的電錶，以詐騙兩間電力公司電費共逾四十六萬五千元，棄保潛逃約十四年後返港後被廉政公署起訴。被告今日(星期五)在區域法院被判入獄兩年。

胡恒富，五十二歲，清潔工人，早前承認十七項串謀詐騙罪名，違反普通法。

暫委法官錢禮判刑時表示，被告於長時間內干犯有關罪行，故判處監禁刑期以反映罪行嚴重。

法官續稱，雖然被告承認控罪及有悔意，但考慮到他棄保潛逃約十四年，故只能將其刑期扣減五分之一至兩年。

廉署接獲貪污投訴，調查其後揭發上述罪行。

案情透露，胡恒富於案發時任職電力技工。

香港電燈有限公司(港燈)及中華電力有限公司(中電)為公用事業公司，分別為香港島、九龍及新界供電，並在其客戶的處所安裝電錶，紀錄用電量以徵收費用。

案情透露，胡恒富於二〇〇一年六月二十九日至十月二十九日期間，與其他人士串謀干擾位於港島區的四間食肆及一個住宅大廈單位的電錶，因而導致港燈少收約二十二萬九千元電費。

胡恒富於二〇〇〇年十月二十九日至二〇〇一年十月二十九日期間，又與其他人士串謀干擾分別位於九龍及新界的一個公屋單位及十二個商業處所，即六間食肆、兩間公司、一間夜總會、一間麵包店、一間健身中心及一間汽車服務中心的電錶。

涉案處所因而被徵收少於其實際用電量的費用，導致中電少收二十三萬六千多元。

案情透露，胡恒富在警誡下接受廉署人員問話時，承認從中獲取金錢利益達十三萬三千五百元。

胡恒富於二〇〇一年十月二十九日因涉嫌參與非法干擾電錶勾當被廉署人員拘捕，其後他獲准保釋以待進一步調查。

胡恒富於二〇〇二年八月十四日棄保潛逃，法庭其後發出手令緝拿他歸案。他於二〇一六年五月二十九日經羅湖管制站從內地回港，遭廉署人員拘捕。

中電及港燈在廉署調查案件期間提供全面協助。

控方今日由檢控官許熙晴代表出庭，並由廉署人員呂珮珊協助。

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