

## Former Phillips 66 Scientist Sentenced to 2 Years for Trade Secret Theft

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Hongjin Tan, a Chinese national and former scientist at Phillips 66, was sentenced to 2-years imprisonment following [his guilty plea in November](#) for stealing trade secrets from his former employer. Tan was also required to pay \$150,000 in restitution to his former employer per the sentencing order.

According to the Department of Justice's press release, Tan admitted to copying files containing trade secret information related to battery technology worth over \$1 billion. Tan was [indicted in December 2018](#) for allegedly downloading hundreds of restricted files to a flash drive before tendering his resignation. Some of those files were later discovered on an external hard drive in Tan's home, according to the Department's statement.

Tan's sentencing underscores the Department's commitment to prosecuting economic espionage by Chinese actors under its [China Initiative](#). Tan's case is just one among many recent cases involving the attempted theft of U.S. technology by Chinese actors.

**TIP: Individual employees can face jail time and financial penalties for stealing trade secrets from their employers.**

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### Authors

[Steven Grimes](#)

[Linda Greene](#)

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Steven Grimes



Linda Greene

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