



U.S. Department of Justice

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EVENT: Indictment

Defendant: Gary Yee

SOUTHFIELD JEWELER CHARGED WITH MONEY LAUNDERING

Terrence Berg, Acting United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan, announced today that Gary Yee, 32, of West Bloomfield, Michigan was arrested today and will be appearing in court this afternoon on an indictment charging him with two counts of money laundering and criminal forfeiture of all real and personal property involved in these offenses, as well as a request for a money judgment against him.

Berg was joined in the announcement by Maurice M. Aouate, Special Agent in Charge, Internal Revenue Service, Criminal Investigation and Robert Corso, Special Agent in Charge, Drug Enforcement Administration.

According to court records, for more than eight years Gary Yee has operated Golden Sun Jewelry, a business located in the Advance Building in Southfield, Michigan which sells luxury watches and expensive customized jewelry. Those records reveal that Gary Yee laundered more than \$1.5 million in cash for narcotics traffickers, including a list of the most notorious dealers in the Detroit area, as well as criminals from as far away as Arizona. Yee's criminal clients sought out Golden Sun Jewelers to buy items such as diamond encrusted

watches for as much as \$80,000 in cash based on Yee's reputation for dealing 'under the table' and his agreement not to file required reports, including IRS Form 8300, Cash Received in a Trade or Business, required for any transactions involving more than \$10,000.

In the early months of 2008, the Detroit offices of IRS CI and DEA ran a successful undercover operation during which two federal agents, posing as marijuana dealers, made separate purchases of a \$32,000 watch and a \$40,000 watch in cash from Gary Yee in the back offices of Golden Sun Jewelers. In both instances, Gary Yee accepted cash payments of over \$10,000 while assuring the undercover agents that 'no paperwork' would be filed. A search of records showed that Golden Sun Jewelers failed to file the required IRS Form 8300s for the cash purchases of the watches.

Agents from IRS CI and DEA also executed three search warrants today, which included Golden Sun Jewelry, and two West Bloomfield residential homes of Yee and his parents. The United States District Court also granted the government's request for a temporary restraining order to allow the IRS to preserve the inventory of Golden Sun Jewelry that is currently or potentially subject to forfeiture to the United States.

Acting United States Attorney Berg said, "Defendants who deal in high-end goods like expensive jewelry , luxury cars, or real estate are prohibited by federal money laundering laws from shrouding the ill-gotten gains of narcotics dealers. Obviously, a business owner who hides the sales of luxury goods to dope dealers is aiding the criminal enterprise by allowing it to enjoy the fruits of the crime. Through aggressive prosecution, my office will continue to try to disrupt narcotics dealing profits by following dirty money wherever it leads and prosecuting those who traffic in it."

IRS CI Special Agent in Charge Aouate stated that, "Narcotic traffickers, having a need for the 'bling,' will seek out jewelers with the reputation to break the law and help conceal their illegal drug profits. At least that is what they think until IRS Criminal Investigation, in partnership with DEA and the United States Attorney's Office, starts to follow the money trail, identifies all the guilty parties, and dismantles their financial empire for good."

DEA Special Agent in Charge Corso stated that, “Unfortunately, illegal drug profits are very enticing for some business owners, and the chance to get their hands on that dirty money is hard to pass up. It comes as no surprise that drug traffickers were drawn to a person like Mr. Yee, who was more than willing to assist drug traffickers in hiding their illegal profits. Individuals who decide to participate in schemes to launder illegal drug money can clearly see from this indictment that DEA and our partners are focused on investigating *all* aspects of illegal drug trafficking.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to a fair trial in which it will be the government’s burden to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. Acting U.S. Attorney Berg thanks IRS CI and DEA for their assistance in this investigation. The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Bruce C. Judge and Philip Ross.