

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 22, 2009

Monmouth County Man Pleads Guilty to Using Counterfeit Postage Meter Stamps to Ship Counterfeit Merchandise

(More)

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TRENTON – A Millstone man pleaded guilty today to a charge of counterfeiting postage meter stamps in connection with his sale of counterfeit Hervé Chapelier handbags and purses through the Internet site eBay, Acting U.S. Attorney Ralph J. Marra, Jr., announced.

Steven Sul, 32, made his first appearance in federal court and pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Freda L. Wolfson to a one-count Information, which charges he made, printed, used, sold, and possessed with the intent to use and sell approximately 2,468 forged and counterfeited postage meter stamps of varying amounts between \$5.45 and \$5.60 per stamp. Judge Wolfson released the defendant on a \$100,000 bond pending sentencing, which is scheduled for Oct 29.

At his plea hearing, Sul admitted that from Oct. 27, 2008, through May 14, 2009, he engaged in the business of selling counterfeit Hervé Chapelier handbags and purses on eBay. As part of that business, Sul admitted that he created approximately 2,468 counterfeit postage meter stamps, using his computer, to ship the packages containing counterfeit Hervé Chapelier bags to customers, thereby defrauding the government of approximately \$14,954.

Sul admitted that he charged the eBay buyers for shipping costs, but then simply kept the money due to the fact that he was using a counterfeit postage meter. Sul admitted that he altered the dollar value of the counterfeited postage meter stamp to satisfy the current applicable shipping rate.

The charge of postage meter counterfeiting carries a maximum penalty of 5 years in prison and a fine of \$250,000 or twice the aggregate loss to the victims or gain to the defendant.

In determining an actual sentence, Judge Wolfson will consult the advisory U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges that take into account the severity and characteristics of the offense, the defendant's criminal history, if any, and other factors. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

Parole has been abolished in the federal system. Defendants who are given custodial terms must serve nearly all that time.

Marra credited Postal Inspectors with the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, under the direction of Inspector in Charge David L. Collins, with investigation of the case.

The Government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney James T. Kitchen, of the U.S. Attorney's Criminal Division in Trenton.

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Defense Attorney: Arthur R. Carmano, Esq. Englewood