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From the Baltimore Sun

Reisterstown man pleads guilty to counterfeiting

He admits to importing \$120,000 in phony bills from Israel

By a Sun Reporter

January 19, 2007, 3:57 PM EST



A 57-year-old Reisterstown man pleaded guilty today in federal court to charges related to an international counterfeiting ring, the Maryland U.S. Attorney's office announced.

Mordechai Mizrahi admitted in court to importing \$120,000 in counterfeit \$100 bills from co-conspirators in Israel, prosecutors said. The bills were smuggled into Maryland and used primarily in the Baltimore area in 2003. Prosecutors said Mizrahi paid \$32,500 in legitimate money for every \$100,000 of the counterfeit currency.

U.S. Secret Service agents tracked 11 of the counterfeit bills to a transaction at a Randallstown grocery store, where they were used to purchase money orders that Mizrahi deposited into a bank account. The bills were also exchanged for legitimate currency through cashiers at Atlantic City casinos and at various department stores -- where he would purchase merchandise and return it for legitimate currency, prosecutors said.

Howard County police arrested Mizrahi in October 2003 for using several of the bills at a Marriottsville golf course.

Mizrahi faces a maximum prison sentence of five years followed by two years' probation and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing has been scheduled for April 27.

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