

SOUTHFIELD: JEWELER ACCUSED OF LAUNDERING CASH TIED TO DRUGS

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A 32-year-old Southfield jeweler was arrested and charged Wednesday on federal charges of laundering more than \$1.5 million in drug proceeds for some of metro Detroit's most notorious drug dealers.

Gary Yee, owner of Golden Sun Jewelry, was arrested after agents for the Drug Enforcement Agency and Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation executed search warrants at the West Bloomfield homes of Yee and his mother. Agents also searched his business on Greenfield near Nine Mile.

Yee, dressed in blue bermuda shorts, a green T-shirt and socks and sandals, stood mute to the charges during an arraignment before U.S. Magistrate Judge Virginia Morgan. He was released on a \$10,000 unsecured bond. The twin money laundering counts carry a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

Yee's lawyer, Mitchell Ribitwer of Royal Oak, said he didn't want to comment until he talked with Yee.

Authorities said drug dealers sought out Yee to buy expensive diamond-studded watches for up to \$80,000 each because of his reputation for agreeing not to file the required IRS currency reports for transactions exceeding \$10,000.

They said he was sentenced to three years of probation in 2004 following his conviction for lying to a federal grand jury when he denied selling \$150,000 worth of jewelry to a convicted marijuana trafficker.

His clients included members of the Tommy Hodges marijuana **gang** and **Puritan Avenue** Boys cocaine **gang** , authorities said.

Between February and July, court papers said, two undercover IRS Criminal Investigation agents aided by information provided by informants made separate purchases totaling \$72,000 from Yee, after telling him that the money came from selling marijuana. In both cases, authorities said, he assured the buyers he wouldn't file IRS forms.

Although court papers said Yee's mother, Mei Lai Gabe, participated in one of the drug transactions, Assistant U.S. Attorney Bruce Judge declined to say whether she or other family members would be charged.

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Correction: * A Thursday Local News article about Southfield jeweler Gary Yee, who is facing federal money laundering charges, incorrectly identified Yee's mother. She is Lai Chi Yee. * A Thursday Local News article about Southfield jeweler Gary Yee, who is charged with laundering money for drug dealers, incorrectly identified Mei Lai Gabe as Yee's mother. Mei Lai Gabe is Yee's aunt and was not accused of any wrongdoing. The article also should have said that Yee's mother participated in a jewelry sale involving an undercover agent who posed as a drug dealer, according to court papers.

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