

' King of Bling ' seeks to move case - Manhattan celebrity jeweler cites prejudice, costs of trial with accused drug dealers in Detroit.

Detroit News, The (MI) - Tuesday, October 24, 2006

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The Manhattan celebrity jeweler sometimes called the " **King of Bling** " has asked a federal judge in Detroit to move his money-laundering trial to New York City, where he could be tried separately from the alleged cocaine dealers who are his co-accused.

A lawyer for Jacob Arabov said in a motion filed Friday that it would be prejudicial to Arabov's case to be tried alongside accused drug dealers and too costly to have to defend himself in Detroit.

Arabov, who has sold watches and other jewelry to Madonna, Elton John and much of the hip-hop world, also filed a sealed affidavit, which his lawyer said contained personal information about celebrity clients who would testify for him at trial.

Arabov, 41, was indicted in June, accused of helping to launder some of the more than \$270 million in drug profits allegedly reaped by the "Black Mafia Family" gang allegedly run by brothers Terry and Demetrius Flenory, two former Detroiters. In all, 41 people are charged in the case.

Arabov pleaded not guilty when he was arraigned in U.S. District Court in Detroit in July.

Benjamin Brafman, Arabov's lawyer, outlined in an affidavit what calls Arabov's "Horatio Alger" story.

Arabov arrived in the United States in 1979 as a 14-year-old refugee from Uzbekistan in the former Soviet Union and through genius and hard work became "one of the most successful and widely respected jewelers in the country, and indeed, the world," Brafman said in the affidavit.

Caption: Arabov

Section: Metro

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Company Name: #keywords2#

Index Terms: DRUG TRAFFIC ; TRIALS

Record Number: det26934506

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