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eBAY AUCTION SCAM NETS SACRAMENTO MAN 24 MONTHS IN PRISON

DEFENDANT FAILED TO DELIVER SEASON TICKETS TO SPORTING EVENTS AND ROLEX WATCHES WORTH MORE THAN $93,324.52

SACRAMENTO--United States Attorney McGregor W. Scott announced today that GILBERT VARTANIAN, 37, formerly of Sacramento, was sentenced to 24 months in prison. The sentencing follows his conviction by a jury on August 7, 2007, of committing fraud on eBay, a popular Internet auction house. The jury found the defendant guilty of nine counts of mail fraud for selling sporting tickets and Rolex watches, which he failed to deliver. The defendant was ordered to make restitution to the victims of the fraud. Prior to sentencing, the defendant liquidated his retirement account and deposited approximately $27,500 with the district court to pay restitution.

The case is the product of an extensive investigation by the United States Postal Inspection Service.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Robin Taylor, who prosecuted the case, the defendant offered tickets to attend games played by teams such as the New York Knicks, Pittsburgh Steelers, New England Patriots, New York Giants, Green Bay Packers, Philadelphia 76ers, and the New York Jets. He also offered Rolex watches. Although he received payment for the items, he failed to deliver the items as promised. The fraud victims testified at trial, most traveling from the East Coast to appear in court.

According to the evidence at trial, the defendant created multiple eBay user identifications, which he used to carry out the fraud. After bidding on the listings, and being identified as the winner, the victim purchasers sent their checks and money orders to the defendant's post office mail box and other addresses used by him to carry out the fraud. A few victims received packages from the defendant, only to find they were empty. Others received nothing at all. After sending and receiving e-mail about the status of their purchases and a few phone calls with the defendant, the purchasers stopped hearing anything at all. The defendant cashed and deposited the checks and used the money for personal expenses.

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