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SOUTH FLORIDA THE BUSINESS JOURNAL

Coin dealer found guilty of fraud

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A former Florida attorney has received a 63-month prison sentence in relation to his activities on eBay.

The U.S. Attorney's office said Martin Eugene Haber owned and operated **South Dixie Rare Coins**, a business that operated for more than 20 years in Miami. He also sold collectibles and rare coins on the Internet.

The investigation into his activities began after the Internet Fraud Complaint Center received more than 50 complaints from buyers who said they did not receive merchandise they purchased from Haber on the eBay online marketplace.

Including additional complaints to the Consumer Sentinel and local police departments, more than 188 complaints for merchandise purchased between May 2001 and January 2005 logged about \$1 million in consumer losses.

Despite two prior arrests by local law enforcement for similar activities - in April and May 2003 - the government said Haber continued to sell items on the Internet using a variety of names, including those of his family and friends.

While some complainants - especially those who called law enforcement, confronted Haber at his place of business or threatened to contact an attorney - received their merchandise or a refund from Haber months after the original sale, prosecutors said many victims received nothing.

Prosecutors said Haber used newer fraudulent transactions to refund the more aggressive victims, perpetuating a cycle of fraud.

He entered a guilty plea on June 13 to seven counts of mail and wire fraud.

A hearing to determine restitution to more than 100 victims is scheduled for Jan. 4, 2007.

Haber has resigned from The Florida Bar.

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