



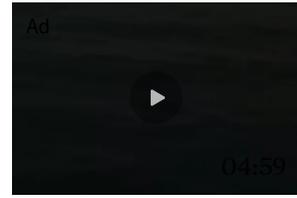
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Supervisor at airport shop jailed for taking watches worth \$1.3m



Elena Chong
Court
Correspondent

A senior supervisor with Changi Airport's duty-free shop misappropriated \$1.3 million worth of luxury watches and pawned them for about \$490,000, a district court heard yesterday.

To cover his tracks, Tan Wei Shen, 32, would indicate in the shop's stock-count list that the watches had been sent out to the service centre for repairs.

He was sentenced to five years and eight months behind bars yesterday for criminal breach of trust of 46 watches, and six charges of disposing of the items by pawning them at pawnshops.

Tan stole the watches between December 2015 and June last year when he was working for Shilla Travel Retail at a Maison de Chronus shop in Changi Airport's Terminal 3.

Deputy Public Prosecutor Vikneswaran Kumaran said Tan misappropriated the 46 watches - comprising one Chopard, 16 Jaeger-LeCoultre, six IWC, three Piaget, 12 Breguet and eight Blancpain models - over the six-month period. He pawned them at two pawnshops.

Investigations showed that some time in May last year, Tan handed a stolen Jaeger-LeCoultre watch to a representative of Bedok Pawnshop and received \$25,000 for it.

Shilla Travel Retail discovered a shortfall of watches during its stock checks in December 2015 and April last year. But the company trusted his account when he lied that the watches had been sent for servicing.

In June last year, a retail manager of the shop became suspicious when he discovered a shortfall of Breguet watches.

He checked the stock list, which indicated that Tan had sent the watches for servicing. But he found out from the service centre that it did not have the watches.

When he confronted Tan on June 17 the same year, Tan admitted to misappropriating the watches and was arrested.

He claimed that he spent most of the money on gambling. Forty-five watches were recovered.

Tan's lawyer, Mr K. Jayakumar Naidu, said in mitigation that his client had initially misplaced some watches which he was supposed to send out for repair. In order not to let the management know, counsel said, Tan borrowed from friends and his father took loans from loan sharks.

He said his client continued to take watches from the shop, and used the money he received to redeem them every month.

Thirty-two similar charges under the Corruption, Drug Trafficking and Other Serious Crimes (Confiscation of Benefits) Act were taken into consideration.

Tan could have been jailed for up to 15 years and fined for criminal breach of trust as a servant; and fined up to \$500,000 and/or jailed for up to 10 years for each of the other offences.

Elena Chong

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