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Man Jailed in Rape, Assault

May 16, 2001

Man Jailed in Assault on Woman

November 7, 1998

Wife Revokes Bail; Man Jailed

July 06, 1990 | FRANK MESSINA

LAGUNA NIGUEL — After standing by her husband, Joseph (Mac) Duffy, the reputed con man charged with swindling women out of their savings to lead a life of luxury, Sylvianne Lestringant had his bail revoked so she could use the money for an investment, her private investigator said Thursday.

Reclaiming her Laguna Niguel home that had backed the \$40,000 bond she posted for Duffy's bail, Lestringant watched as private investigators and Orange County sheriff's deputies led him away Wednesday.

Duffy, 29, was taken to Orange County Jail. He is due for a Superior Court hearing on Monday.

Prosecutors say the handsome Scotsman romanced several women in their late 30s to 50s, then talked them into giving him their money so he could invest it for them in the European stock market. But, instead of investing the funds, they say, Duffy used the money to support an extravagant lifestyle that included expensive cars, fancy clothes and high-priced watches. He is charged with grand theft.

Lestringant, 41, had put up \$4,000 in cash and used her house as collateral.

Lestringant was not available for comment. However, Thomas G. Martin, a private investigator representing her who accompanied sheriff's deputies on Wednesday, said his client needed the money for investment purposes.

"She had a business opportunity that was placed before her and she needed to use that money. I think she was relieved to not have it tied up with a bail bondsman."

Martin said Duffy was taken aback when several investigators from Martin Investigative Services of Orange showed up at the Lestringant residence accompanied by two sheriff's deputies.

"He was surprised but fairly stoic," Martin said. "After the initial shock he appeared resigned, and he said that he would go without causing any problems."

Lestringant married Duffy in Las Vegas last January in order to avoid testifying against him, but those hopes were dashed when a Harbor Municipal Court judge ruled that, as an alleged victim, Lestringant must take the stand.

She was one of several women who have alleged that Duffy swindled them out of money by promising to invest their funds in the European stock market. Police have estimated that Duffy took about \$100,000 from at least nine women in Orange County and in cities around the world.

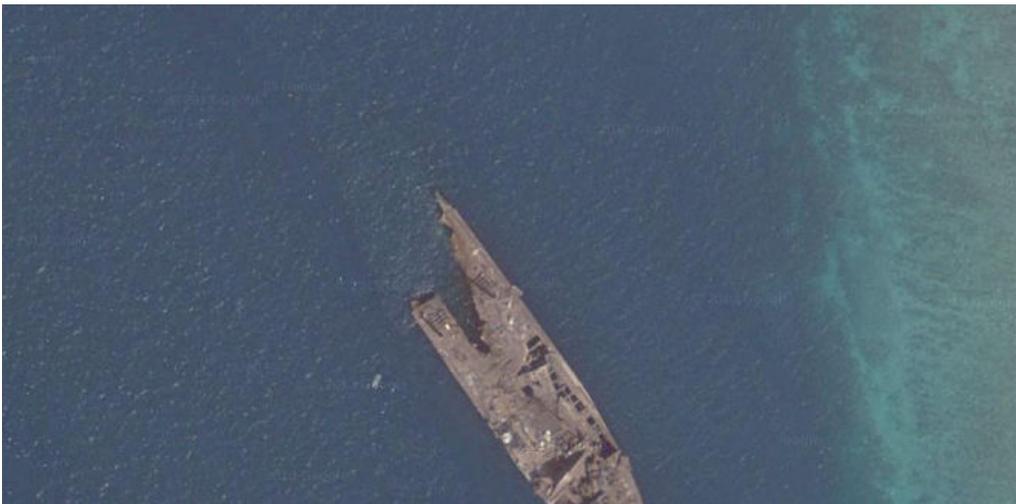
Attorneys representing Duffy say that he has returned cash and several items bought with some of the money given him, including a gold Rolex watch and a 1969 white Rolls-Royce.

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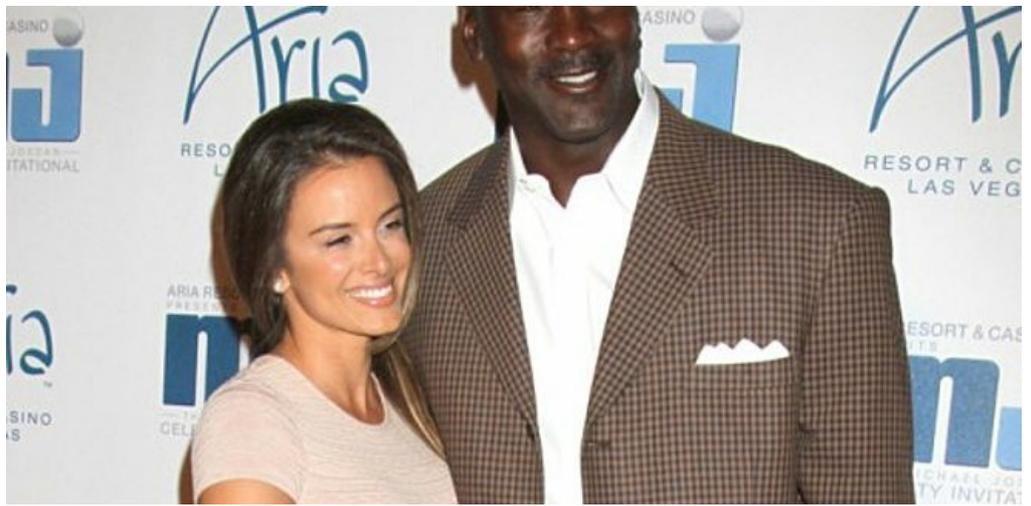
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