

Teacher who used fake notes gets 3 years' jail

He made counterfeit money allegedly for maths class, but used it to pay masseuse

Shaffiq Alkhatib

A secondary school teacher who made two counterfeit \$100 notes before using them to pay a Vietnamese masseuse was sentenced to three years' jail yesterday.

On Oct 5, District Judge Terence Tay found Daniel Wong Mun Meng, now 44, guilty of counterfeiting money and using the fake notes as genuine currency.

Before handing out the sentence, the judge said that Wong's offences were "unbecoming of a teacher" and that his career as an educator had been "greatly jeopardised".

Judge Tay added: "The seriousness of the offences is reflected in their maximum sentence."

Offenders convicted of dealing with counterfeit notes can be jailed for up to 20 years and fined for each charge.

During his eight-day trial, Wong had said: "In late July 2015, I photocopied two \$100 notes of the same serial number using my home printer and ordinary A4-size paper. It was an experiment to use (them) as a teaching tool, to excite and engage students during my maths class because I believed many of them had not seen a \$100 note before."

Deputy Public Prosecutor Asoka Markandu said Wong had the two fake notes in his wallet when he went to Orchard Towers at around 2am on Aug 3, 2015.



The judge said Daniel Wong Mun Meng's offences were "unbecoming of a teacher" and his career as an educator had been "greatly jeopardised". He has been suspended from duty since December 2015. ST PHOTO: WONG KWAI CHOW

Wong met Ms Nguyen Nhu Trang and they negotiated a price for her services. They were later sitting in Wong's car when he held the two fake notes in his hand, DPP Asoka said. The teacher showed the counterfeit notes to Ms Trang before placing them in her handbag.

The guest registration records of a Fragrance Hotel branch in Balestier Road revealed that Wong and Ms Trang checked in at 2.45am on Aug 3, 2015, and checked out about an hour later. According to Wong, he returned home after dropping Ms Trang off near River Valley Road that morning.

The case came to light after Ms Trang unwittingly tried to use one of the fake notes at a supermarket

and was caught by an alert cashier.

Police officers arrested Wong at Bukit Batok Secondary School on Aug 20, 2015, and he has been suspended from duty since December that year.

Yesterday, his lawyer Melanie Ho told the court "months of jail" will serve as sufficient deterrence for Wong. She added: "He was not keeping a stock of counterfeit notes."

But DPP Asoka urged the judge to sentence Wong to 3½ years' jail, stressing that counterfeiting money is a very serious offence.

Wong will be appealing against his conviction and sentence.

He was offered bail of \$30,000.

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The fire which broke out in a fifth-floor rental unit in Tampines is believed to have started from a storage cabinet. It was put out by the SCDF with the use of a water jet. PHOTO: LIANHE WANBAO

Fire in Tampines flat; woman, 46, arrested

Fabian Koh

A 46-year-old woman has been arrested for setting fire to the main gate and door of an HDB flat in Tampines yesterday morning, the police said in a press release.

The Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) was alerted to the fire at Block 240, Tampines Street 21, at about 6.35am.

The Straits Times understands that the fire, which broke out in a fifth-floor rental unit, started from a storage cabinet.

Three women, aged between 19 and 31, were taken to Changi Gen-

eral Hospital to be treated for smoke inhalation. They are said to be Malaysians – two air stew-ardesses and an engineer.

The police arrested the suspect within 10 hours of the report. Preliminary investigations showed that one of the residents in the unit was a former tenant of the suspect who had moved out earlier this year, causing her to be disgruntled.

She will be charged today with mischief by fire. Anyone found guilty can be jailed up to seven years, and fined.

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