

Ex-Md. casino dealer gets prison for role in cheating plot

Written by Administrator

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A man who worked as a baccarat dealer at a Maryland casino has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for his role in a scheme to cheat the house out of just over \$1 million, according to prosecutors.

GREENBELT, Md. (AP) — A man who worked as a baccarat dealer at a Maryland casino has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for his role in a scheme to cheat the house out of just over \$1 million, according to prosecutors.

U.S. District Judge Paul Grimm also on Wednesday sentenced Ming Zhang, 32, of Alexandria, Virginia, to three years of supervised release after his prison term and ordered him to pay full restitution, U.S. Attorney Robert Hur's office said in a news release.

Zhang had faced a maximum sentence of five years in prison after he pleaded guilty in September 2018 to one count of conspiring to transport stolen funds.

Zhang worked for MGM National Harbor near Washington, D.C.

Zhang's role in the plot to cheat the casino was to notify an alleged co-conspirator when he was scheduled to deal baccarat. When that person arrived at his table in September 2017, Zhang exposed part of a baccarat deck to the player, who photographed the unshuffled cards before placing large bets on hands, a court filing said. Knowing the order of cards in a deck allows bettors to predict the outcome of baccarat hands with near-perfect accuracy.

MGM National Harbor, one of six casinos in Maryland, opened on the banks of the Potomac River in December 2016.

A court filing that accompanied Zhang's guilty plea says the cheating scheme targeted at least one other Maryland casino. Sometime between July 2017 and September 2017, Zhang was present when an alleged co-conspirator executed the cheating scheme at a different casino. Zhang accepted a payment of \$1,000 after meeting with that person at a hotel near the other

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casino, the filing says.

After they carried out the cheating scheme, Zhang contacted one of his alleged co-conspirators to arrange for more compensation, investigators said. That person, who was returning to New York, promised to contact him later.

The next day, however, investigators confronted Zhang, who lied to them about the scheme, according to a court filing.

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