



Wednesday, July 7, 1999

Police: Money made here

By Anita Perkins and □ Jason B. Grosky
Eagle-Tribune Writers

HAVERHILL -- Police said they found what appeared to be a counterfeit money operation in a Vine Street apartment, after phony bills were passed in Merrimac.

Merrimac police arrested Jeremy S. Coito, 22, 20 Park St., Haverhill, on Saturday at 1:47 a.m. He was arraigned in Newburyport District Court yesterday on charges of possessing counterfeit notes and two counts of uttering. He is being held on \$5,000 cash bail.

Merrimac police said a clerk at the Richdale convenience store, 107 W. Main St., Merrimac, noticed the fake \$20 bill that a man used to buy a gallon of milk. Police traced the bill to Mr. Coito.

Haverhill Police Detective John J. Rosario said a copying and printing machine and counterfeit bills were found in an apartment at 16 Vine St., Haverhill. Haverhill police said Mr. Coito lives there. Merrimac police listed his home as 20 Park St.

A second Haverhill man faces a federal indictment for his role in the case, investigators said. Police would not identify the man because he has not been charged.

Mr. Coito and the man were part of a "joint enterprise," said Assistant District Attorney Murat Erkan, who is handling the case.

The Secret Service is handling the investigation, which has also involved both Merrimac and Haverhill police.

No charges were filed against the man who used the fake bill at the Merrimac convenience store, police said. The man told police he knew nothing about the fake bill. He and other people who received some of the bills cooperated with police, said Mr. Erkan.

Mr. Coito circulated four batches of \$10 and \$20 bills totaling about \$350 in the area, Mr. Erkan said. Mr. Coito paid someone in fake bills for painting the bumper of a car, the assistant district attorney said.

Police said Mr. Coito also gave some bills to other people. Some of these people were unknowingly passing the bills, police said.

Mr. Erkan said many of the recovered bills had the same serial number and did not feel like a real bill.

Haverhill police said Mr. Coito passed a fake \$5 bill to a man delivering Chinese food to 16 Vine St., Apt. 1, about 1:30 a.m. Friday.

When the delivery man returned to Wah Sang, at 290 Main St., he realized the bill was a phony, police said. He went back to the apartment to receive real money and then called police.

Mr. Coito told police he was handed the fake \$5 with change from a convenience store.

Haverhill Detectives Capt. Donald E. Thompson said the phony bill was "awful looking."

"It didn't look like a \$5 bill to me," he said yesterday.

According to Haverhill police reports, Mr. Coito has been arrested on other charges dating back to 1996. They included breaking and entering and larceny. According to Haverhill District Court records, Mr. Coito was arraigned last week on motor vehicle violations.

In what police call an unrelated incident, a city man tried to pay for gasoline at the Merit gas station with a counterfeit \$20 bill. Police seized the bill and are investigating.

Next Story: No fines yet for ban violators 
