

## Jail for former Singapore Customs officer convicted of attempted bribery



Jonathan Sasayiah, a former Singapore Customs officer, was charged in court with trying to obtain a bribe from a woman caught with contraband cigarettes, on Nov 13, 2014. ST PHOTO: WONG KWAI CHOW

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SINGAPORE - A former Singapore Customs investigation officer (IO) was sentenced to three months' jail on Monday (May 15) for attempting to obtain from a woman bribes in the form of intimate acts.

A district court found Jonathan Sasayiah, now 31, guilty of the offence after a 10-day trial.

The court heard it happened after the woman was fined \$500 for having two sticks of contraband cigarettes. The woman, who cannot be named due to a gag order, was in serious financial difficulties at that time.

Court papers did not state when and where she was caught with the contraband cigarettes.

In his submissions, Deputy Public Prosecutor (DPP) Navin Naidu said the former IO called her on July 2, 2014, to ask her out on a date.

He followed up the call with another on July 15, 2014, saying he could help reduce her fine.

According to the mother of four, Jonathan asked what he would receive in return for his assistance.



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She suggested that they have dinner together but he rejected the idea.

She added that he then asked if they could "make out".

DPP Navin said the woman understood that "make out" meant to have sex and she made a police report the next day.

Officers from the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau arrested Jonathan on Aug 13, 2014.

DPP Navin said in one of the conversations, Jonathan suggested to the woman that they go to Johor Baru to club and consume alcohol.

He added: "He has also suggested that anything could happen when both of them got drunk in JB."

DPP Navin urged District Judge Michelle Yap to sentence Jonathan to at least five months' jail.

Stressing that the former IO had abused his position, DPP Navin added: "The accused knew that the complainant was a young single mother... who was in dire financial straits and his corrupt conduct served to exploit this."

Defence lawyer **Patrick Fernandez** asked the judge to impose a \$10,000 fine on Jonathan instead.

He said: "From (July 15, 2014) to the date he was arrested... Jonathan did not make any arrangements to meet the victim, including fixing a specific date, time and location.

"Jonathan failed to obtain intimacy from the victim."

Before handing out the sentence on Monday, Judge Yap noted that Jonathan did not receive the gratification that he had sought from the woman.

Jonathan is now out on a bail of \$15,000 to settle some personal matters and will surrender to the court on May 29.

For attempting to obtain the bribe, he could have been jailed for up to five years and fined up to \$100,000.

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