

September 14, 2005

Would-Be Princess Headed to Hospital, Not Jail

By [ANDREW JACOBS](#)

Antoinette Millard, a Buffalo-born investment banker who posed as a Saudi princess, tried to bilk an insurance company out of a small fortune and stiffed American Express with \$1 million in unpaid charges, will spend a year in a psychiatric hospital for her misdeeds.

Ms. Millard, a society-page staple who sometimes wore a diamond tiara to back up her claims of royal blood, could have received a 15-year jail sentence yesterday. She had pleaded guilty to grand larceny and insurance fraud.

Justice Renee A. White of State Supreme Court in Manhattan heeded the recommendation of the Manhattan district attorney that Ms. Millard receive psychiatric confinement rather than prison time because her crime spree was the result of mental infirmity, not unbridled greed.

Dr. Jason E. Hershberger, a psychiatrist who often serves as a prosecution expert, submitted a report to Justice White stating that Ms. Millard, 42, suffers from bipolar disorder, depression and anorexia. Her lawyers attributed her condition partly to the trauma she suffered witnessing the attacks on the World Trade Center. Later this week, Ms. Millard will be admitted to the psychiatric unit at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia hospital, where the doors, her lawyers said, will be securely locked.

"You deceived a great number of people over a substantial period of time and stole a significant amount of money during this criminal activity," Justice White told Ms. Millard yesterday. "If you fail to get this treatment, the court will not hesitate to sentence you to prison."

In addition to a three-month, \$1 million shopping spree using an American Express card, Ms. Millard bought jewelry with price tags totaling \$492,000 from Cellini, Bulgari and Van Cleef & Arpels in 2003. She promptly had the baubles insured and then claimed 23 of them were lost to a mugger.

But, according to prosecutors, Ms. Millard had already sold 12 of the supposedly stolen pieces to a Midtown jewelry store. As part of a fraudulent claim to the Chubb insurance company, Ms. Millard also suggested that some pieces were heirlooms handed down by her Saudi mother, whom she described as deceased. There were two problems however, prosecutors said: Ms. Millard's mother was neither Saudi nor dead. Acting on a tip from the insurance company, the authorities arrested Ms. Millard at her apartment on East 89th Street in Manhattan.

American Express later agreed not to seek restitution. In exchange, Ms. Millard, who once worked as an investment banker for Brown Brothers Harriman & Company, agreed to drop a counterclaim in which she blamed American Express for issuing excessive credit to someone of such questionable sanity.

Looking emotionally wrought and physically frail, Ms. Millard, her long hair tinged with blond highlights and her nails painted pink, declined to address the court yesterday before the sentence was handed down. She bit her lip, shook her head in disbelief and occasionally glanced down at her white-strapped sandals.

In addition to the hospital stay, Justice White ordered that Ms. Millard pay \$540 in court fees. Speaking through her lawyer, Ms. Millard told the court she did not have the money. Justice White gave her another two weeks to come up with the cash.