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Guilty plea in scams of \$1.8 million

Peter D. Bistran, a former broker, also admitted to trying to avoid prosecution by fleeing to Canada.

By Joseph A. Slobodzian
Inquirer Staff Writer

Ten years ago, a federal judge called Peter D. Bistran a "consummate con man," and sentenced him to 30 months in prison for his role in a \$1.5 million loan scam.

As of yesterday, Bistran admitted to another federal judge, nothing much had changed.

Bistran, 49, a onetime University of Delaware football player who has worked as a loan broker and investment counselor, pleaded guilty to fraud charges in two cons that cheated victims of a total of \$1.8 million.

He also pleaded guilty to trying to avoid prosecution by fleeing to Canada last August.

Bistran, bespectacled and pony-tailed and wearing an olive prison jumpsuit, pleaded guilty to two counts of wire fraud and two counts of failing to appear for court.

He said little except to respond to the judge's questions and to quibble about some minor facts involving his admitted crimes.

U.S. District Judge Jan E. DuBois set sentencing for Oct. 26.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael J. Bresnick said he and **defense attorney Rocco C. Cipparone Jr.** did not agree on Bistran's likely federal sentencing guideline range, although either version would be more than twice what he got in 1996.

Bresnick said he believed the applicable range was 92 months to 115 months and that **Cipparone** argues for a 78- to 97-month sentence.

In pleading guilty, Bistran also agreed to pay \$1.4 million in restitution to his victims, including a \$270,000 first payment at sentencing.

Bistran's current legal problems began in 2003 when he and Sandy Glucksman, 48, a West Palm Beach, Fla., business associate, were charged by a federal grand jury with wire fraud.

The pair were accused of defrauding Penmark Auto Group Inc., trading as Brandywine Motor Cars in West Chester, of a total of \$392,374 in a scheme in 2000 and 2001 in which they bought three Mercedes-Benz autos and a Porsche 911 Cabriolet with checks that bounced.

According to court records, Glucksman fled at indictment and remains a fugitive.

While released on bail and awaiting trial in the Penmark case, Bistran was indicted alone in February 2005 in a second alleged wire fraud in which a South African steel company, Columbus Stainless Ltd., lost \$1.4 million after Bistran arranged for a wire transfer of money to Citibank in New York City to pay a bogus invoice.

Bistran was to appear in federal court in Philadelphia for hearings Aug. 3 and Aug. 5 but did not.

According to Bresnick, Bistran was arrested Aug. 20 trying to cross into Canada from Buffalo, N.Y. Bistran was searched, Bresnick said, and had \$3,700 in cash, four cell phones, several pieces of false identification, and a MapQuest printout of a route to Toronto International Airport.

Contact staff writer Joseph A. Slobodzian at 215-854-2985 or jslobodzian@phillynews.com.
