# The Counterfeit Problem in Retail

Retail Council of Canada Retail Secure Conference

> Mississauga, Ontario March 21, 2023

Lorne M. Lipkus Lipkus Law LLP www.lipkus.law Mobile: 416-984-9992 Counterfeiting is the illegal production and sale of goods, including packaging, bearing without authorization a trademark which is identical to a validly registered trademark or which cannot be distinguished from such a trademark.





- A trademark is a combination of letters, words, sounds or designs that distinguishes one company's goods or services from those of others in the marketplace.
- By registering your trademark, you have exclusive rights to use it throughout Canada for 10 years (a term that you can renew).
- It gives a <u>legal monopoly</u> to its owner.
- Use it or lose it
- connected to specific goods or services

### What Does a Trademark Do?



- Copyright is the exclusive legal right to produce, reproduce, publish or perform an original literary, artistic, dramatic or musical work. The creator is usually the copyright owner.
- Only the owner of a copyright is allowed to produce or reproduce a work, or to permit someone else to do so.





- I don't care about foreign owners of intellectual property rights?
- I am not hurting these big companies by buying a "fake".
- I can't afford a "real one".
- These companies are just ripping me off anyways!"
- "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery".



- 1985
- Late 1985-late 1990's
- Early 2000's
- Welcome to today

# Evolution of Modern Day Counterfeiting



- <u>OECD:</u> 'Trade in fake goods is now
  3.3% of world trade and rising' ...
  puts the value of imported fake goods
  worldwide at USD 461 billion in 2013, USD
  509 billion in 2016 OECD & EUIPO
- <u>https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/trade-in-fake-goods-is-now-33-of-world-trade-and-rising.htm</u>
- NC State University: Supply Chain Resource Cooperative – September 29, 2021
   "Counterfeiting is on the rise and projected to exceed \$3 trillion in 2022
- <u>https://scm.ncsu.edu/scm-</u> <u>articles/article/counterfeiting-is-on-the-rise-</u> <u>projected-to-exceed-3-trillion-in-2022 Robert</u> <u>Handfield Ph.D</u>.
- Example: Charlie Hebdo attacks
- Example: Toronto gang related activity
- Example: 9/11

# Is it really a big deal?



# 2<sup>ND</sup> LARGEST SOURCE OF CRIMINAL INCOMES WORLDWIDE

(According to the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice ... Held on the 12th of May 2014.)

(See Counterfeiting & Terrorism Report 2016 of UNIFAB)





#### Money Laundering

- The scale of money laundering is difficult to assess, but it is considered to be significant. The <u>United Nations Office on Drugs and</u> <u>Crime</u> (UNODC) <u>estimates</u> that between 2 and 5% of global GDP is laundered each year. That's between EUR 715 billion and 1.87 trillion each year
- <u>https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/economic-crime/money-</u> <u>laundering</u>

# What is being Counterfeited



- Aircraft Parts
- Apparel
- Accessories
- Automotive parts
- Automotive accessories
- Batteries
- Blankets
- Cameras
- Cellular Phones
- Cellular phone cases
- Cellular Phone Accessories
- Cigarettes
- Computers
- Consumer Products of all kinds •
- Cosmetics

- Handbags
- Electrical Products
- Movies
- Electronic Products
- Exercise Equipment
- Eyewear, most without UV protection
- Food
- Footwear
- Gas
- Health & Beauty Products
- Hockey Sticks
- Other Sports Equipment
- Ink Cartridges and Toners
- Jewelry
- Leather Goods
- ds Liquor
  - Motor Vehicle

- Music
- NFT's
- Novelty items
- Optical Disks
- Perfumes
- Petroleum
- Pharmaceuticals
- PPE
- Refrigerant
- Software
- Video
- Satellite Decoders
- Tablets
- Toys
- Trading Cards
- Video Games
- Watches





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COLLACEN RE-PLUMPER with Collagen Day

& PUBLICITY PICTURE











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# How can you tell?



- What's the goal?
  - Removing content online
  - Locating a seller (investigation)
  - Process a transaction
- Evidence Preservation
- Cost-effective enforcement strategies

## Internet Based Counterfeit Issues



- 1. Social Media
- 2. Third Party Marketplace
- 3. Websites
- 4. Live Sales
- 5. Apps, etc.
- 6. Dark Web







Social media is online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies.

# Social Media



#### **Social Media Takedowns**





- Many social media platforms offer their own shopping platforms
- It has become very easy for even unsophisticated sellers to sell online
- Marketplace platforms add additional social networking features





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Facebook Marketplace Instagram Shopping





Wanelo "Digital Mall" Letgo Online classified ads app and site

# Marketplaces



#### Marketplaces





- Forms
- Review policies carefully
- Follow-up





- Popularized by Snapchat
- Content that disappears after a brief period of time
- Continues to increase in popularity
- Proper preservation of evidence even more important for investigators





#### • Looking for?

- Phone number/e-mail address
- Username
- Address
- Friends/Likes
- What am I really looking for?
  - IP ADDRESS?
  - Real person?
  - Physical location?

# What are you Investigating?



# Websites



- Takedown Request
- C & D
- Registrar/ISP go to web site
- Reach out to the Target •
- Terminate Payment Processor
- Complain to Law Enforcement ۲
- Litigation



## **Enforcement Options**



Owners of Canadian trade-mark registrations or copyrights can now seek assistance/information from the Canada Border Services Agency to detain suspected counterfeit and pirated goods at the border and proceed with civil enforcement of their rights.

## **Border Enforcement**



- The CBSA works with other government departments (eg: Health Canada, Food Inspection Agency) to interdict counterfeit goods that raise health, safety or security concerns.
- If a shipment of counterfeit goods presents health, safety and security risks, those risks could be dealt with before the IPR Border Regime is applied.
- Rights Holder can provide information to CBSA about a dangerous goods shipment that they suspect is counterfeit and/or pirated.

# What does CBSA do to detect counterfeits


- Rights holders/owners may file a Request for Assistance (RFA) with the CBSA re registered Canadian trademark or geographical indication and copyrights.
- 2. Complete the RFA form and submit it to the CBSA.
- 3. CBSA will confirm enrollment and send approval letter/email outlining program specific details.
- 4. 2 years

# Procedure



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# Request for Assistance (RFA)



- The CBSA can provide information to the rights holder/owner who filed an RFA including importer, exporter particulars
- The rights holder/owner may be able to examine the detained shipment.
- Rights holders/owners can pursue civil proceedings in court based on information provided by the CBSA.

If there are Suspected counterfeit or pirated products in a shipment





- The CAFC is jointly managed by the RCMP, Competition Bureau, and the OPP.
- CAFC is receiving approximately 20,000 complaints involving cyber-related fraud per year
- Works with payment processors cancelling merchant accounts.
- Purchasing counterfeit/pirated works through credit/debit card, PayPal etc.
- Project Chargeback



#### Additional Resources in Canada

#### The Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre



A Canadian not-for-profit organization that represents a coalition of individuals, companies, firms and industry associations united in the fight against product counterfeiting and copyright piracy in Canada and internationally.



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## Canadian Anti-Counterfeiting Network



- Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)
- CBSA
- Department of Homeland Security Homeland Security Investigations (HSI)
- IPR Center
- A2C2
- IPIC (Intellectual Property Institute of Canada)
- IACC (International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition)
- INTA (International Trademark Association)
- International Cases Interpol Europol Country specific contacts

### **Other Partners**



#### Reporting of Counterfeit or Pirated Goods that are Dangerous Customs Notice 17-27

#### Ottawa, September 13, 2017

1. The purpose of this notice is to inform interested parties that the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) Border Watch Line accepts information ("intelligence") on shipments of counterfeit or pirated goods that are dangerous (i.e. goods that represent a health, safety or security threat) destined to Canada.

2. Information regarding a shipment may include:

- · a description of the goods and their intended end use;
- · the reason that the goods are dangerous, and supporting documentary evidence;
- · countries of origin and export;
- · names and addresses of the exporter, shipper, importer, and consignee; and
- · mode of transport, expected date of arrival, and port of entry.
- 3. The Border Watch Toll-free Line may be reached at 1-888-502-9060 within the United States and Canada.



- Investigator attends, warns counterfeiter to stop
- If counterfeiter continues, obtain Court Order and serve on counterfeiter
- If counterfeiter continues, investigator conducts surveillance, makes evidentiary buys, sends report to either assist further civil proceedings or file criminal complaint

# Yesterdays Counterfeiting Case



# Today's Counterfeiting Case



- Identify the problem
  - TM or Copyright or Grey Market or Industrial Design/Patent
- Investigate
  - Online Tools
  - Surveillance
  - Government database searches
  - Paid subscription services searches
- Obtain the Evidence
  - Online purchase
  - Physical Purchase
  - Credit Card CAFC
- Evidence Continuity
- Authenticate the Evidence
  - Pictures vs. Shipping Evidence to authenticator
  - <u>http://ksllaw.smugmug.com/NAME OF</u> <u>TARGET/</u>Password

# Steps to a Successful Enforcement



- Brand Commitment to support criminal Enforcement
  - Provide what is required to obtain the search warrant
    - Prior information on target
    - Proof of IP Rights
      - Copies of registered TM's/Copyrights
    - Affidavits of Authenticity
    - Statements from IPO's investigators
    - Up-to-date purchases/evidence of continued counterfeiting
  - Provide assistance at the execution of the search warrant
    - Identification onsite
    - Exhibit cataloguing
    - Segregating of exhibits
    - Cartage
    - Storage
    - Destruction



- Provide assistance post-execution of the search warrant
  - Statements of those in attendance
    - Remember: You are now a witness
  - Affidavits of authenticity
  - Victim impact statements
  - Review of evidence seized
- Be Creative
  - CBSA
  - DHS HSI
  - Foreign law enforcement/customs
  - Non-compliance with a Canadian Court Order
  - Government representatives
  - Health Canada
  - Food Inspection Agency
  - FINTRAC
  - CRA
  - GST
  - Municipal codes Fire, Hydro, Gas etc



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# Questions, Comments & Thanks

