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July 5, 2006

EVENT: Sentencing

Defendant: Marshall Cousens

CHESTERFIELD TOWNSHIP RETAILER
SENTENCED FOR SALE OF COUNTERFEIT PRODUCTS

Marshall Cousens, age 59, of Macomb, Michigan, formerly doing business as MC Trading, 30494 23 Mile Road, Chesterfield Township, Michigan, was sentenced to serve 18 months imprisonment for charges related to trafficking counterfeit goods United States Attorney Stephen J. Murphy announced today.

Cousens was sentenced today in U.S. District Court by the Honorable Julian Abele Cook.

Murphy was joined in the announcement by Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

On March 21, 2006, Cousens pleaded guilty to trafficking or attempting to traffic in counterfeit trademarked merchandise. In particular, Cousens offered for sale over 1,500 handbags which were purportedly manufactured by such designers as Prada, Kate Spade, Coach, Louis Vuitton, Burberry and Gucci, but were, in fact, fakes bearing imitation trademarks that were virtually indistinguishable from those registered by the designers in the United States

Patent and Trademark office. The evidence presented at the time of the plea showed that, on the date of his arrest, Cousens possessed with the intent to sell handbags and other counterfeit items with a retail value of over $182,000, based on the discounted prices he charged for the counterfeit merchandise.

In addition to serving 18 months in prison, Cousens was also ordered to pay $600 in special assessments and must serve two years of supervised release upon the completion of his custodial term. The Court also ordered the destruction of the seized counterfeit merchandise.

“Those who traffic in counterfeit merchandise are not only robbing businesses and their workers of their profits, they are stealing the goodwill, the reputation, and the public image that they have built through their hardwork and dedication to quality. These charges underscore the seriousness with which my office and the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement, as well as other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, view allegations of trafficking in counterfeit merchandise,” United States Attorney Murphy said. “Retailers and consumers alike must recognize that the knowing sale of counterfeit merchandise is a crime which may result in the incarceration of the offenders."

“It’s estimated that U.S. industry alone loses $200 to $250 billion annually in lost revenue due to counterfeiting,” said Brian M. Moskowitz, Special Agent in Charge of the ICE Office of Investigations in Detroit. “That’s a major reason why we pursue counterfeiters such as Cousens. However, these investigations also help to protect the American consumer from inferior and unsafe products, and ensure that the interests of legitimate trademark holders are addressed.”

This matter was initiated by the Chesterfield Township Police Department, whose personnel executed a search warrant at MC Trading on February 9, 2005 and seized the counterfeit goods. The case was then turned over to the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement for further investigation and prosecution.