Department of Justice

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2011
WWW.JUSTICE.GOV

CRM
(202) 514-2007
TTY (866) 544-5309

VIRGINIA STORE OWNER ARRESTED FOR SELLING COUNTERFEIT GOODS

WASHINGTON – The owner of two Petersburg, Va., retail stores was arrested today on charges related to his alleged sale of counterfeit goods, announced Assistant Attorney General Lanny A. Breuer of the Justice Department's Criminal Division and U.S. Attorney Neil H. MacBride for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Belal Amin Alsaidi, 30, of Petersburg, was charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury yesterday in Richmond, Va., with one count of conspiracy and three counts of trafficking in counterfeit goods. According to the indictment, between May 2007 and April 2009, Alsaidi allegedly purchased apparel and shoes that he knew were counterfeit from an individual in New York and then sold this merchandise at his two stores in Petersburg. The indictment alleges that he sold goods bearing fake trademarks for companies such as Nike, NFL, Lacoste, True Religion and Coogi.

Alsaidi was arrested in Buffalo, N.Y., and is scheduled to make his initial appearance tomorrow at 2:00 p.m. in the Western District of New York. His arraignment in the Eastern District of Virginia will be scheduled for a future date.

The conspiracy charge carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a $250,000 fine. Each count of trafficking in counterfeit goods carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a $2 million fine. The indictment also seeks forfeiture of profits from illicit trafficking in counterfeit goods as well as the seizure of the goods.

Criminal indictments are only charges and are not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed to be innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

The indictment announced today is an example of the type of efforts being undertaken by the Department of Justice Task Force on Intellectual Property (IP Task Force). Attorney General Eric Holder created the IP Task Force to combat the growing number of domestic and international intellectual property crimes, protect the health and safety of American consumers, and safeguard the nation's economic security against those who seek to profit illegally from American creativity, innovation and hard work. The IP Task Force seeks to strengthen intellectual property rights protection through heightened criminal and civil enforcement, greater coordination among federal, state and local law enforcement partners, and increased focus on international enforcement efforts, including reinforcing relationships with key foreign partners

and U.S. industry leaders. To learn more about the IP Task Force, go to www.justice.gov/dag/iptaskforce/.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney David T. Maguire and Trial Attorney Kendra R. Ervin of the Criminal Division's Computer Crime & Intellectual Property Section. The investigation was conducted by the FBI's Richmond Division.

###

11-1224

DO NOT REPLY TO THIS MESSAGE. IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, PLEASE USE THE CONTACTS IN THE MESSAGE OR CALL THE OFFICE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AT 202-514-2007.