



IPRC CONNECTIONS

Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center

DECEMBER 2019

“Operation Holiday Hoax” seizes counterfeit toys worth more than \$5 million



CARTAGENA – In a port that is capable of handling more than 2.4 million tons of cargo in a year, you would think a containerized cargo shipment of toys could easily get lost in the daily shuffle. Not so, when a suspicious shipment arrives from China containing counterfeit toys, some of which tested positive for lead content.

The discovery was part of “Operation Holiday Hoax,” a multi-agency enforcement effort involving U.S. Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Cartagena’s Transnational Criminal Investigative Unit, U.S. Customs and Border Protection’s (CBP) Container Security Initiative, the Colombian Police Fiscal and Customs Unit, and the National

Directorate of Tax and Customs (DIAN). The team seized a total of 155,000 units of toys suspected of trademark infringement involving Disney, Marvel Characters Inc., Peppa Pig and L.O.L. Surprise! brands that – if genuine – would retail for more than \$5.4 million.

Additionally, HSI-Cartagena, in conjunction with DIAN, targeted a suspicious shipment of more than 500 cartons from Hong Kong said to contain mostly toys last August. Four more containers were targeted for inspection in September and October. An inspection of the shipments revealed more counterfeit toys including some that were collected for further lead testing. The seizure came on the heels of Operation Firefox, as agents seized nearly 36,000 pairs of counterfeit athletic shoes and more than 1,000 other miscellaneous items.



Three-state IP surge involves federal, state, local IP enforcers



HSI New Orleans conducted a month-long intellectual property rights surge operation that overlapped the Halloween and holiday shopping seasons leading to the seizure of more than 33,000 counterfeit items valued at more than \$8 million.

The operation, which began prior to Halloween, focused on area business locations where numerous vendors engaged in the illegal sale of counterfeit goods, including cosmetic contact lenses and makeup that pose a potential public safety threat due to possible bacterial and heavy metals contamination.

As the operation shifted to the holiday gift-buying season, agents seized cosmetics, perfumes, pharmaceuticals, cell phones and cell phone accessories, DVDs, music CDs, sports memorabilia, designer clothing, shoes, sunglasses, handbags and wallets. The three-state HSI-led operation in Louisiana, Arkansas and Mississippi was supported by CBP, Food and Drug Administration, and state and local law enforcement authorities.

Oregon man pleads guilty in \$8 million scheme

A cooperative investigation involving HSI and IRS Criminal Investigation (IRS-CI) Division has resulted in an Oregon man pleading guilty to criminal infringement of copyright and tax evasion charges in a scheme to reproduce and distribute for sale thousands of copyrighted movies and television shows. Here’s the full story: [Movies](#)

International delegation looks to IPR Center for enforcement strategies



The IPR Center met with a 13-member International Visitor Leadership Program delegation from Europe, representing customs, commerce, revenue, justice and police departments in Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Netherlands, Romania and Spain, as well as the European Commission's Anti-Fraud Office and Taxation and Customs Union. Their U.S. visit was part of a project entitled *Intellectual Property and Customs Enforcement*, sponsored by the Department of State and developed by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Discussions with the IPR Center and partners focused on the best practices in intellectual property and customs enforcement; interagency information

sharing; foreign trade zones; cooperation with China; raising public awareness; data protection issues; and future cooperation with the IPR Center.

Los Angeles-CPI Center recognized for global criminal network investigation



A five-year counter-proliferation investigation that led to the arrest and conviction of a major international arms broker has brought recognition from the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of the Secretary.

The HSI Counter Proliferation Investigations (CPI) Center in Los Angeles received the secretary's Meritorious Service Silver Medal for superior performance, collaboration and operational innovation in a counter-proliferation investigation that led to the arrest and conviction of a major international arms broker identified as Rami Ghanem. The award was presented during a special ceremony in Washington, D.C. Here's more on the case that earned this award: [Arms Broker](#). CPI is teamed with the IPR Center and the Export Enforcement Coordination Center as part of the Global Trade Investigations Division.

HSI Detroit hosts training fair to sharpen skills at counterfeit detection

More than 70 HSI and CBP personnel from the Detroit area recently converged at the first-ever Anti-Counterfeiting Issues and Product ID Training Fair to learn more about counterfeiting and how to observe fakes.

HSI Detroit hosted the event cooperatively with the International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition to create a better understanding of counterfeiting and how to prepare frontline law enforcement personnel to address it. HSI Detroit Special Agent in Charge Vance Callender noted that the timing of the event coincided with the announcement of HSI's FY 2020 Goals and Priorities, which highlighted IPR enforcement as a key investigate priority.

Nearly two dozen brand holders provided attendees hands-on product training on what to look for in a range of consumer goods which included apparel, e-cigarettes, perfumes, watches and other items.



Did you know... that since its launch in 2008, Operation Pangea has removed more than 105 million pills, ampoules, sachets, bottles and other paraphernalia from circulation leading to more than 3,000 arrests. Here's more: [INTERPOL](#)



The IPR Center encourages companies and private industry organizations to help fight (IP) theft and trade law violations by displaying the "Report IP Theft" button on websites that will link users with a form to detail their allegations. For more information on how to obtain this tool, please visit our website: <https://www.iprcenter.gov>.

For more information on these stories, or to submit information for stories in future editions of *IPRC Connections*, please contact Chuck Jackson, charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov, or (703) 603-3941. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter: [@IPRCenter](#)