



# IPRC CONNECTIONS

*Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center*

MARCH 2020

## Uganda hosts workshop on strengthening national task force on wildlife crime



A three-day multi-agency workshop brought 30 key law enforcement officers together from various agencies represented within the National Task Force on Wildlife Crime in Uganda, Lusaka Agreement Task Force (LATF), National Task Force Anti-Poaching (NTAP) of Tanzania and Grace Farms Foundation (GFF).

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) Assistant Attaché in Nairobi, John Brown III, attended the conference, whose main objective focused on strengthening the task force on

wildlife crime in Uganda and the work of its members. The workshop was coordinated by GFF, LATF, Uganda Wildlife Authority, and NTAP of Tanzania. HSI oversees the Environmental Crimes Program based at the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center (IPR Center), which was represented at the workshop by the HSI assistant attaché. The group focused on multiple objectives to better understand the duties of task force members and measures to prevent and combat poaching and illegal trade in wild fauna and flora. Additionally, the group expressed interest in the development of standard operating procedures for investigating wildlife crime while promoting inter-agency coordination during intelligence gathering, investigations, and prosecutions.

## Counterfeit merchandise worth \$2.5M seized during 2020 NBA All Star Game



The IPR Center has announced the results of Operation Team Player during the 2020 National Basketball Association (NBA) All-Star Game in Chicago that show the seizure of counterfeit sports and entertainment-related items worth an estimated \$2.5 million.

The enforcement actions, led by Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) in Chicago, were conducted with assistance from the Chicago, Wheeling, and Alsip police departments, that led to the arrest of five individuals for violations of the Illinois Counterfeit Trademark Act and money laundering. Two others were arrested for attempting to sell counterfeit NBA All-Star game tickets.

During the week leading up to the NBA All Star Game weekend and during the game itself, HSI-Chicago, along with industry representatives and state and local law enforcement partners, made several observations of individuals selling counterfeit trademarked merchandise. The nearly 126,000 counterfeit sports and entertainment-related items seized were either falsely branded with NBA, NFL, MLB and NHL markings or were awaiting such markings.

## Adobe piracy prevention team visits IPR Center

The Adobe team is expanding efforts to prevent piracy of Adobe products globally. The IPR Center welcomed Adobe's Teresa Davies and Tim Tyre, managers within Adobe's fraud prevention and investigations group. The team observed the IPR Center's operations and discussed IP prevention programs, including Operation In Our Sites, which targets websites and their operators that distribute counterfeit and pirated items over the internet, including counterfeit pharmaceuticals and pirated movies, television shows, music, software, electronics and other merchandise that threatens public health and safety.



## IPR Center introduces newest members of the team



Brian Weinhaus is the new unit chief for the IPR Center Intellectual Property Unit. With more than 25 years in law enforcement, he was most recently assigned as a group supervisor in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Prior to that, he was assigned to Domestic Operations at HSI Headquarters as an operations manager. His work as an HSI special agent includes stops in Detroit, the Diplomatic Security Service, U.S. Border Patrol, and the Wayne County Sheriff's Office.

Richard Wilson, also an HSI special agent, has been promoted from commercial fraud section chief to unit chief, managing all traditional customs/trade fraud investigative portfolios other than IP crimes and forced labor. Before returning to HSI headquarters, Wilson was a group supervisor in the HSI Cleveland office overseeing commercial fraud, child exploitation, and counter-proliferation investigative portfolios. He began his federal career in 1991 as an import specialist with the U.S. Customs Service.



Tracie Uchida, the new Global Trade Investigations Division chief of staff, arrived from San Antonio where she served as an HSI group supervisor. She began her federal career as a customs inspector at HSI-Los Angeles/Long Beach Seaport. She's held positions in the Office of Professional Responsibility, Domestic Operations at headquarters, the office of the executive assistant director, and Trade Transparency Unit.

Donya Jackson joined the IPR Center team as a program manager in the tobacco smuggling program. Prior to his arrival at HSI, he worked as an investigator for five years looking into regulatory and compliance issues, primarily focused on fighting to protect consumers from unfair business practices. Jackson holds bachelor's and master's degrees in criminal justice.



## IPR Center bids farewell to Operation Chain Reaction liaison



IPR Center Director Steve Francis presented Ann Kathryn-So, the Center's liaison to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS), with a plaque recognizing her for her work with Operation Chain Reaction (OCR), a program that combats the proliferation of counterfeit goods into the Department of Defense and federal government supply chains. Ann was cited for her exceptional dedication to the advancement efforts to significantly reduce the threat of counterfeit materials while promoting collaboration and partnership between NCIS, HSI, and OCR task force members.

## Women in International Trade conference convenes in California



Supervisory Special Agents Greg Manack and Pete Narensky were joined by Special Agent Scott Wittmier in representing HSI at the Women in International Trade-Orange County, International Trade and Customs Symposium in Costa Mesa, California. SSA Manack spoke to the attendees about the HSI mission, how to report suspicious trade practices and red-flag indicators of trade fraud. Agents staffed an HSI display and conducted outreach to partner government agencies, customs brokers, trade lawyers and importers at the event.

## Did you know...

Data collected by CBP between 2000 and 2018 shows that seizures of infringing goods at U.S. borders – much of it trafficked through e-commerce – has increased ten-fold. And, over 85 percent of the contraband seized by CBP arrived from China and Hong Kong, according to information collected in the *Report to the President of the United States: Combating Trafficking in Counterfeit and Pirated Goods*. You can find the complete report on [www.iprcenter.gov](http://www.iprcenter.gov)



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](mailto:charles.e.jackson@ice.dhs.gov), or (703) 603-3941. In the meantime, you can follow us on Twitter: [@IPRCenter](https://twitter.com/IPRCenter)