



NEWS RELEASE

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THREE ASSOCIATED WITH L.A. JEWELRY STORE SENTENCED FOR SELLING LEAD-TAINTED COUNTERFEIT DESIGNER JEWELRY

LOS ANGELES – A husband and wife who own a downtown Los Angeles jewelry store each were sentenced this afternoon to 37 months in federal prison for illegally importing and selling counterfeit designer jewelry, some of which tested positive for hazardous levels of lead. A third person who worked at the store was sentenced to 30 months in prison.

The three defendants pleaded guilty in June 2010 to one count of conspiracy and one count of introducing and delivering a hazardous substance. The hazardous substance charge was lodged after lab tests showed some of the counterfeit jewelry seized in the case contained nearly 20 times the amount of lead deemed safe by the Consumer Product Safety Commission for handling by children. Despite that, the items were labeled as “lead-free.”

The defendants sentenced today are:

- Il Keun Oh, also known as James Ken Oh, 58, of the Hancock Park District of Los Angeles, the co-owner of Elegance Fashion Mart on East Olympic Blvd, who was sentenced to 37 months in prison;
- Il Oh’s wife, Jacqueline Oh, 56, also of Hancock Park, the co-owner of Elegance Fashion Mart, who was sentenced to 37 months; and
- Jacqueline Oh’s brother, Joon Yeop Kim, 48, of Koreatown, a manager at Elegance Fashion Mart, who was sentenced to 30 months.

All three defendants were sentenced by United States District Judge Margaret M.

Morrow.

Today's sentencings are the culmination of an investigation that began in 2007 when U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) received a tip that the jewelry store was selling counterfeit designer merchandise. During the course of the investigation, ICE HSI agents seized more than 25,000 counterfeit pieces of jewelry and accessories, including necklaces, rings, bracelets, watches, hair ornaments and cell phone charms. The investigation revealed that the counterfeit goods were manufactured in Qingdao, China.

The fakes were purportedly made by well-known designer labels, including Tiffany and Co., Bulgari, Louis Vuitton, Baby Phat, Chanel, Tous, Bebe, Christian Dior, Van Cleef and Arpels, Hello Kitty and Juicy Couture. If the seized products had been genuine, they would have had an estimated retail value of more than \$18 million.

"This sentence is a reminder about the high price retailers will pay if they bolster their bottom lines by selling counterfeit goods that put the public at risk," said Claude Arnold, Special Agent in Charge for ICE HSI in Los Angeles. "It should also make consumers think twice before buying fakes and knock-offs. You may save some money up front, but at what cost?"

Sales records recovered during an execution of a search warrant at the business in April 2008 indicated the defendants were distributing counterfeit items to merchants in at least four other states – Texas, Florida, Georgia and Illinois.

ICE HSI received assistance with the investigation from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP); the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Office of the Inspector General; and Investigative Consultants, a Los Angeles-area private investigative company that specializes in intellectual property investigations.

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