

Department of Justice

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AMHERST MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO TRAFFICKING COUNTERFEIT SPORTS JERSEYS

BUFFALO, N.Y.– U.S. Attorney William J. Hochul, Jr. announced today Brian E. Bartoe, 36, of Amherst, N.Y., pleaded guilty to trafficking in counterfeit goods before U.S. District Judge Richard J. Arcara. The charge carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison, a fine of \$2,000,000 or both. The Government is also seeking the forfeiture of \$50,000 in profits derived from the illicit trafficking of these goods as well as the counterfeit merchandise which was seized.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles B. Wydysh, who is handling the case, stated that Bartoe is accused of selling NFL, NHL, NBA and MLB counterfeit sports jerseys between September 2009 and April 2010 at the Jersey Junkie on Bailey Avenue in Amherst and on his Jersey Junkie website. The sports jerseys, principally Bills and Sabres, were manufactured in China and bore counterfeit trademarks registered to the NFL and NHL. The investigation began after U.S. Customs & Border Protection intercepted shipments of the merchandise from China that were addressed to Bartoe in Buffalo. Shipments were intercepted in Cleveland, Ohio, Los Angeles, California and the JFK Airport in New York City.

“It’s important to recognize that those who traffic in counterfeit merchandise are in reality stealing the creative ideas and products of others,” said U.S. Attorney Hochul. “To the extent our economy depends on such American ingenuity, we and our law enforcement partners intend to utilize federal law to investigate and prosecute those who would harm our country and our citizens through this type of conduct.”

The plea is the culmination of an investigation on the part of Special Agents of the U.S. Immigration & Customs Enforcement, under the direction of Special Agent in

Charge James C. Spero and U.S. Customs and Border Protection under the direction of Acting Port Director Randy Howe.

Sentencing is scheduled for May 3, 2012, at 1:00 p.m., before Judge Arcara.