



Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



11th August 2010

Press Release

These Boots are made for Prison

Two traders caught selling fake goods pleaded guilty and were sentenced at Harrow Crown Court on 6th August 2010 for a number of trade mark offences.

Habib Melloul (aged 28) of Shrewsbury Street, Kensington and Chelsea was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment and ordered to pay £2,000 in prosecution costs to the London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service.

His wife, Aisha Melloul (aka Caryl Hubbard), aged 28, who was also involved in the business, was given a six month prison sentence suspended for two years and ordered to perform 80 hours of unpaid community work. In addition, she was ordered to pay £3,000 towards the cost of the prosecution,

The court heard Habib Melloul and Aisha Melloul were jointly involved in the purchase, storing and onward distribution of counterfeit shoes, clothing and bags. The goods were sold at Wembley and Portobello markets and on e-Bay and Amazon websites.

Habib Melloul came to the attention of Trading Standards following an inspection at Wembley Market in November 2008 when Officers were conducting routine checks in order to regulate the sale of counterfeit goods. On that occasion, Officers found 67 pairs of counterfeit 'Ugg Boots' hidden in laundry bags behind a food stall.

The boots were seized and later in the day, Habib Melloul enquired of their whereabouts and admitted that they were his and that he had been selling them for £70 a pair.

Following the seizure, Mr Melloul changed his story by stating that there had been a mistake and the seized goods had nothing to do with him.

However, as a result of further investigations, it came to light that he had continued selling fakes on his website (*Amazon.co.uk*) and was linked to an online store called “*UGG Love*” which specialised in counterfeit UGG boots. This was confirmed by the officers following a test purchase of a counterfeit pair UGG boots from his website at a cost of £88.50.

Entry warrants were executed at addresses linked to Habib Melloul. At Shrewsbury Street, a search of the premises revealed a large quantity of high-end fashion clothing, handbags, jewellery and further stocks of “UGG” boots exactly the same as those previously seized from Wembley Market..

In addition, Officers found numerous invoices in the name of Aisha Hubbard which related to the importation of the counterfeit goods from China at a cost of over £10,000. Officers also found business cards and documents in relation to a website “*www.I want that replica*”, which appeared to be operated largely by Aisha Hubbard. Two computers that were seized contained over 5,000 pictures of designer shoes, handbags and Ugg boots, along with emails and other documents which proved the couple’s involvement in the manufacture and sale of the counterfeit goods.

Evidence obtained from Paypal, an online banking facility, identified four accounts linked to the defendants, which showed that over £81,000 had been earned by them just from their web based businesses that specialised in the sale of counterfeit goods.

Speaking after the case, Bill Bilon, Head of Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service said, “These two individuals’ ran a sophisticated business importing and then selling counterfeit goods from a number of outlets. This was a substantial business enterprise which was set up solely for making profits from the sale of counterfeit goods. I hope that these convictions will act as a reminder to those who might be tempted to get involved in any form of illegal trading that they will be caught and the likely consequence will be a criminal record and a lengthy prison sentence.

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

1) Under the Trade Marks Act 1994, it is an offence to possess for sale or sell any goods bearing marks which have not been authorised by the registered trade mark owner.

2) The maximum sentence that a court may impose under the Trade Marks Act 1994 on indictment is 10 years imprisonment and / or an unlimited fine.

3) For more information please contact Simon Martin or Simon Legg of Brent and Harrow Trading Standards Service on 020 8937 5533 or 020 8937 5522.