

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE NORTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS
EASTERN DIVISION**

CALVIN KLEIN TRADEMARK TRUST,
CALVIN KLEIN, INC., and TOMMY
HILFIGER LICENSING LLC,

Plaintiffs,

v.

THE PARTNERSHIPS and
UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATIONS
IDENTIFIED ON SCHEDULE “A”,

Defendants.

Case No. 23-cv-15543

COMPLAINT

Plaintiffs Calvin Klein Trademark Trust, Calvin Klein, Inc., and Tommy Hilfiger Licensing LLC (collectively, “Plaintiffs”) hereby bring the present action against the Partnerships and Unincorporated Associations identified on attached Schedule A (collectively, “Defendants”) and allege as follows:

I. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the claims in this action pursuant to the provisions of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1051, *et seq.*, 28 U.S.C. § 1338(a)-(b) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

2. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391, and this Court may properly exercise personal jurisdiction over Defendants since each of the Defendants directly targets business activities toward consumers in the United States, including Illinois, through at

least the fully interactive e-commerce stores¹ operating under the seller aliases identified in Schedule A attached hereto (the “Seller Aliases”). Specifically, Defendants have targeted sales to Illinois residents by setting up and operating e-commerce stores that target United States consumers using one or more Seller Aliases, offer shipping to the United States, including Illinois, accept payment in U.S. dollars and/or funds from U.S. bank accounts and, on information and belief, have sold products using infringing and counterfeit versions of Plaintiffs’ federally registered trademarks to residents of Illinois. Each of the Defendants is committing tortious acts in Illinois, is engaging in interstate commerce, and has wrongfully caused Plaintiffs substantial injury in the State of Illinois.

II. INTRODUCTION

3. This action has been filed by Plaintiffs to combat e-commerce store operators who trade upon Plaintiffs’ reputations and goodwill by offering for sale and/or selling unauthorized and unlicensed products using infringing and counterfeit versions of Plaintiffs’ federally registered trademarks (the “Counterfeit Products”). Defendants create e-commerce stores operating under one or more Seller Aliases that are advertising, offering for sale and selling Counterfeit Products to unknowing consumers. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases share unique identifiers, establishing a logical relationship between them and that Defendants’ counterfeiting operation arises out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences. Defendants attempt to avoid and mitigate liability by operating under one or more Seller Aliases to conceal both their identities and the full scope and interworking of their counterfeiting operation. Plaintiffs are forced to file this action to combat Defendants’ counterfeiting of their registered trademarks, as well as to protect unknowing consumers from purchasing Counterfeit Products over

¹ The e-commerce store URLs are listed on Schedule A hereto under the Online Marketplaces and Domain Names.

the Internet. Plaintiffs have been and continue to be irreparably damaged through consumer confusion, dilution, and tarnishment of their valuable trademarks as a result of Defendants' actions and seeks injunctive and monetary relief.

III. THE PARTIES

Plaintiffs

4. Plaintiffs Tommy Hilfiger Licensing LLC and Calvin Klein, Inc. are wholly-owned subsidiaries of PVH Corp.

5. Plaintiffs design, source, distribute, sell and market throughout the United States, including Illinois, quality apparel, accessories and other products, all of which prominently display its famous, internationally-recognized, and federally-registered CALVIN KLEIN and TOMMY HILFIGER trademarks (collectively, the "Plaintiffs' Products"). Plaintiffs' Products have become enormously popular and even iconic, driven by Plaintiffs' arduous quality standards and innovative design. Among the purchasing public, Plaintiffs' Products are instantly recognizable as such.

6. Plaintiffs' Products have been continuously sold under the CALVIN KLEIN and TOMMY HILFIGER trademarks in the United States for many years. Plaintiffs' Products are distributed and sold to consumers through department stores, retail stores, and authorized e-commerce sites throughout the United States and in Illinois, including through the official e-commerce websites at calvinklein.com and tommy.com.

7. Plaintiffs incorporate a variety of distinctive marks in the design of the various Plaintiffs' Products. As a result of this long-standing use, Plaintiffs own common law trademark rights in their trademarks. Plaintiffs have also registered their trademarks with the United States Patent and Trademark Office. Plaintiffs' Products typically include at least one of Plaintiffs' federally registered trademarks. Plaintiffs use their trademarks in connection with the marketing

of Plaintiffs' Products, including the following marks which are collectively referred to as the "Plaintiffs' Trademarks."

Registration Number	Trademark
1,993,879	CALVIN KLEIN
1,418,226	
2,069,292	CK CALVIN KLEIN JEANS
2,314,144	CK
1,932,699	
1,819,048	
1,633,261	Calvin Klein
1,604,663	
2,483,764	
2,454,886	
2,080,100	
2,076,377	
2,074,471	
2,064,064	CK
2,192,526	
2,144,299	
2,142,329	
1,951,987	
1,810,850	Calvin Klein
1,398,612	
1,738,410	
1,833,391	
1,995,802	
2,103,148	TOMMY HILFIGER
2,162,940	
2,485,457	
2,617,339	
2,389,024	
2,475,142	TOMMY
2,772,857	
3,164,348	HILFIGER
2,899,046	HILFIGER DENIM
2,563,735	
2,612,455	
2,697,281	
3,084,022	TH

1,460,988	
1,727,740	
2,030,406	
2,213,511	
2,063,504	
1,808,520	
4,745,262	TOMMY HILFIGER
3,264,718	
3,264,715	

8. The above U.S. registrations for Plaintiffs' Trademarks are valid, subsisting, in full force and effect, and many are incontestable pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1065. The registrations for Plaintiffs' Trademarks constitute *prima facie* evidence of their validity and of Plaintiffs' exclusive right to use Plaintiffs' Trademarks pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1057(b). True and correct copies of the United States Registration Certificates for the above-listed Plaintiffs' Trademarks are attached hereto as **Exhibit 1**.

9. The Plaintiffs' Trademarks are exclusive to Plaintiffs and are displayed extensively on Plaintiffs' Products and in Plaintiffs' marketing and promotional materials. Plaintiffs' Products have long been among the most popular and recognizable of their kind and have been extensively promoted and advertised at great expense. In fact, Plaintiffs have expended millions of dollars annually in advertising, promoting, and marketing featuring the Plaintiffs' Trademarks. Because

of these and other factors, the Plaintiffs' Trademarks are famous marks as that term is used in 15 U.S.C. § 1125(c)(1).

10. The Plaintiffs' Trademarks are distinctive when applied to the Plaintiffs' Products, signifying to the purchaser that the products come from Plaintiffs and are manufactured to Plaintiffs' quality standards. Whether Plaintiffs manufacture the products themselves or license others to do so, Plaintiffs have ensured that products bearing their trademarks are manufactured to the highest quality standards. The Plaintiffs' Trademarks have achieved tremendous fame and recognition, which has only added to the inherent distinctiveness of the marks. As such, the goodwill associated with the Plaintiffs' Trademarks is of incalculable and inestimable value to Plaintiffs.

11. For many years, Plaintiffs have operated websites at calvinklein.com and tommy.com where Plaintiffs promote and sell genuine Plaintiffs' Products. The websites feature proprietary content, images, and designs exclusive to Plaintiffs' brands.

12. Plaintiffs have expended substantial time, money, and other resources in developing, advertising, and otherwise promoting and protecting the Plaintiffs' Trademarks. As a result, products bearing the Plaintiffs' Trademarks are widely recognized and exclusively associated by consumers, the public, and the trade as being high-quality products sourced from Plaintiffs.

The Defendants

13. Defendants are individuals and business entities of unknown makeup who own and/or operate one or more of the e-commerce stores under at least the Seller Aliases identified on Schedule A and/or other seller aliases not yet known to Plaintiffs. On information and belief, Defendants reside and/or operate in the People's Republic of China or other foreign jurisdictions

with lax trademark enforcement systems, or redistribute products from the same or similar sources in those locations. Defendants have the capacity to be sued pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 17(b).

14. On information and belief, Defendants, either individually or jointly, operate one or more e-commerce stores under the Seller Aliases listed in Schedule A attached hereto. Tactics used by Defendants to conceal their identities and the full scope of their operation make it virtually impossible for Plaintiffs to learn Defendants' true identities and the exact interworking of their counterfeit network. If Defendants provide additional credible information regarding their identities, Plaintiffs will take appropriate steps to amend the Complaint.

IV. DEFENDANTS' UNLAWFUL CONDUCT

15. The success of Plaintiffs' brands has resulted in significant counterfeiting of Plaintiffs' Trademarks. Consequently, Plaintiffs have a worldwide anti-counterfeiting program and regularly investigate suspicious e-commerce stores identified in proactive Internet sweeps and reported by consumers. In recent years, Plaintiffs have identified numerous fully interactive e-commerce stores offering Counterfeit Products on online marketplace platforms such as Amazon, eBay, AliExpress, Alibaba, Walmart, Wish.com, Etsy, DHgate, and Temu, including the e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases. The Seller Aliases target consumers in this Judicial District and throughout the United States. According to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) report, in 2021, CBP made over 27,000 seizures of goods with intellectual property rights (IPR) violations totaling over \$3.3 billion, an increase of \$2.0 billion from 2020 *Intellectual Property Rights Seizure Statistics, Fiscal Year 2021*, U.S. Customs and Border Protection ([Exhibit 2](#)). Of the 27,000 in total IPR seizures, over 24,000 came through international

mail and express courier services (as opposed to containers), most of which originated from China and Hong Kong. *Id.*

16. Third party service providers like those used by Defendants do not adequately subject new sellers to verification and confirmation of their identities, allowing counterfeiters to “routinely use false or inaccurate names and addresses when registering with these e-commerce platforms.” **Exhibit 3**, Daniel C.K. Chow, *Alibaba, Amazon, and Counterfeiting in the Age of the Internet*, 40 NW. J. INT’L L. & BUS. 157, 186 (2020); *see also* report on “Combating Trafficking in Counterfeit and Pirated Goods” prepared by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Office of Strategy, Policy, and Plans (Jan. 24, 2020) attached as **Exhibit 4** and finding that on “at least some e-commerce platforms, little identifying information is necessary for a counterfeiter to begin selling” and recommending that “[s]ignificantly enhanced vetting of third-party sellers” is necessary. Counterfeitors hedge against the risk of being caught and having their websites taken down from an e-commerce platform by preemptively establishing multiple virtual storefronts. **Exhibit 4** at p. 22. Since platforms generally do not require a seller on a third-party marketplace to identify the underlying business entity, counterfeiters can have many different profiles that can appear unrelated even though they are commonly owned and operated. **Exhibit 4** at p. 39. Further, “E-commerce platforms create bureaucratic or technical hurdles in helping brand owners to locate or identify sources of counterfeits and counterfeiters.” **Exhibit 3** at 186-187.

17. Defendants have targeted sales to Illinois residents by setting up and operating e-commerce stores that target United States consumers using one or more Seller Aliases, offer shipping to the United States, including Illinois, accept payment in U.S. dollars and/or funds from

U.S. bank accounts and, on information and belief, have sold Counterfeit Products to residents of Illinois.

18. Defendants concurrently employ and benefit from substantially similar advertising and marketing strategies. For example, Defendants facilitate sales by designing the e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases so that they appear to unknowing consumers to be authorized online retailers, outlet stores, or wholesalers. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases appear sophisticated and accept payment in U.S. dollars and/or funds from U.S. bank accounts via credit cards, Alipay, Amazon Pay, and/or PayPal. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases often include content and design elements that make it very difficult for consumers to distinguish such stores from an authorized retailer. Plaintiffs have not licensed or authorized Defendants to use any of Plaintiffs' Trademarks, and none of the Defendants are authorized retailers of genuine Plaintiffs' Products.

19. Many Defendants also deceive unknowing consumers by using Plaintiffs' Trademarks without authorization within the content, text, and/or meta tags of their e-commerce stores to attract various search engines crawling the Internet looking for websites relevant to consumer searches for Plaintiffs' Products. Other e-commerce stores operating under Seller Aliases omit using Plaintiffs' Trademarks in the item title to evade enforcement efforts while using strategic item titles and descriptions that will trigger their listings when consumers are searching for Plaintiffs' Products.

20. E-commerce store operators like Defendants commonly engage in fraudulent conduct when registering the Seller Aliases by providing false, misleading and/or incomplete information to e-commerce platforms to prevent discovery of their true identities and the scope of their e-commerce operation.

21. E-commerce store operators like Defendants regularly register or acquire new seller aliases for the purpose of offering for sale and selling Counterfeit Products. Such seller alias registration patterns are one of many common tactics used by e-commerce store operators like Defendants to conceal their identities and the full scope and interworking of their counterfeiting operation, and to avoid being shut down.

22. Even though Defendants operate under multiple fictitious aliases, the e-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases often share unique identifiers, such as templates with common design elements that intentionally omit any contact information or other information for identifying Defendants or other Seller Aliases they operate or use. E-commerce stores operating under the Seller Aliases include other notable common features such as use of the same registration patterns, accepted payment methods, check-out methods, keywords, advertising tactics, similarities in price and quantities, the same incorrect grammar and misspellings, and/or the use of the same text and images. Additionally, Counterfeit Products for sale by the Seller Aliases bear similar irregularities and indicia of being counterfeit to one another, suggesting that the Counterfeit Products were manufactured by and come from a common source and that Defendants are interrelated.

23. E-commerce store operators like Defendants are in constant communication with each other and regularly participate in QQ.com chat rooms and through websites such as sellerdefense.cn and kuajingvs.com regarding tactics for operating multiple accounts, evading detection, pending litigation, and potential new lawsuits.

24. Counterfeitors such as Defendants typically operate under multiple seller aliases and payment accounts so that they can continue operation in spite of Plaintiffs' enforcement. E-commerce store operators like Defendants maintain off-shore bank accounts and regularly move

funds from their financial accounts to off-shore accounts outside the jurisdiction of this Court to avoid payment of any monetary judgment awarded to Plaintiffs. Indeed, analysis of financial account transaction logs from previous similar cases indicates that off-shore counterfeiters regularly move funds from U.S.-based financial accounts to off-shore accounts outside the jurisdiction of this Court.

25. Defendants are working in active concert to knowingly and willfully manufacture, import, distribute, offer for sale, and sell Counterfeit Products in the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences. Defendants, without any authorization or license from Plaintiffs, have jointly and severally, knowingly and willfully used and continue to use Plaintiffs' Trademarks in connection with the advertisement, distribution, offering for sale, and sale of Counterfeit Products into the United States and Illinois over the Internet.

26. Defendants' unauthorized use of Plaintiffs' Trademarks in connection with the advertising, distribution, offering for sale, and sale of Counterfeit Products, including the sale of Counterfeit Products into the United States, including Illinois, is likely to cause and has caused confusion, mistake, and deception by and among consumers and is irreparably harming Plaintiffs.

COUNT I
TRADEMARK INFRINGEMENT AND COUNTERFEITING (15 U.S.C. § 1114)

27. Plaintiffs hereby re-allege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs.

28. This is a trademark infringement action against Defendants based on their unauthorized use in commerce of counterfeit imitations of the federally registered Plaintiffs' Trademarks in connection with the sale, offering for sale, distribution, and/or advertising of infringing goods. Plaintiffs' Trademarks are highly distinctive marks. Consumers have come to

expect the highest quality from Plaintiffs' Products offered, sold, or marketed under Plaintiffs' Trademarks.

29. Defendants have sold, offered to sell, marketed, distributed, and advertised, and are still selling, offering to sell, marketing, distributing, and advertising products using counterfeit reproductions of Plaintiffs' Trademarks without Plaintiffs' permission.

30. Plaintiffs are the exclusive owners of their respective Plaintiffs' Trademarks. Plaintiffs' United States Registrations for Plaintiffs' Trademarks (**Exhibit 1**) are in full force and effect. On information and belief, Defendants have knowledge of Plaintiffs' rights in Plaintiffs' Trademarks, and are willfully infringing and intentionally using counterfeits of Plaintiffs' Trademarks. Defendants' willful, intentional, and unauthorized use of Plaintiffs' Trademarks is likely to cause and is causing confusion, mistake, and deception as to the origin and quality of the Counterfeit Products among the general public.

31. Defendants' activities constitute willful trademark infringement and counterfeiting under Section 32 of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1114.

32. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law, and if Defendants' actions are not enjoined, Plaintiffs will continue to suffer irreparable harm to their reputations and the goodwill in the well-known Plaintiffs' Trademarks.

33. The injuries and damages sustained by Plaintiffs have been directly and proximately caused by Defendants' wrongful reproduction, use, advertisement, promotion, offering to sell, and sale of Counterfeit Products.

COUNT II
FALSE DESIGNATION OF ORIGIN (15 U.S.C. § 1125(a))

34. Plaintiffs hereby re-allege and incorporate by reference the allegations set forth in the preceding paragraphs.

35. Defendants' promotion, marketing, offering for sale, and sale of Counterfeit Products has created and is creating a likelihood of confusion, mistake, and deception among the general public as to the affiliation, connection, or association with Plaintiffs or the origin, sponsorship, or approval of Defendants' Counterfeit Products by Plaintiffs.

36. By using Plaintiffs' Trademarks in connection with the sale of Counterfeit Products, Defendants create a false designation of origin and a misleading representation of fact as to the origin and sponsorship of the Counterfeit Products.

37. Defendants' false designation of origin and misrepresentation of fact as to the origin and/or sponsorship of the Counterfeit Products to the general public involves the use of counterfeit marks and is a willful violation of Section 43 of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1125.

38. Plaintiffs have no adequate remedy at law and, if Defendants' actions are not enjoined, Plaintiffs will continue to suffer irreparable harm to their reputations and the goodwill of their respective brands.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiffs pray for judgment against Defendants as follows:

- 1) That Defendants, their affiliates, officers, agents, servants, employees, attorneys, confederates, and all persons acting for, with, by, through, under, or in active concert with them be temporarily, preliminarily, and permanently enjoined and restrained from:
 - a. using Plaintiffs' Trademarks or any reproductions, counterfeit copies, or colorable imitations thereof in any manner in connection with the distribution, marketing, advertising, offering for sale, or sale of any product that is not a genuine Plaintiffs' Product or is not authorized by Plaintiffs to be sold in connection with Plaintiffs' Trademarks;

- b. passing off, inducing, or enabling others to sell or pass off any product as a genuine Plaintiffs' Product or any other product produced by Plaintiffs, that is not Plaintiffs' or not produced under the authorization, control, or supervision of Plaintiffs and approved by Plaintiffs for sale under the Plaintiffs' Trademarks;
- c. committing any acts calculated to cause consumers to believe that Defendants' Counterfeit Products are those sold under the authorization, control, or supervision of Plaintiffs, or are sponsored by, approved by, or otherwise connected with Plaintiffs;
- d. further infringing Plaintiffs' Trademarks and damaging Plaintiffs' goodwill; and
- e. manufacturing, shipping, delivering, holding for sale, transferring, or otherwise moving, storing, distributing, returning, or otherwise disposing of, in any manner, products or inventory not manufactured by or for Plaintiffs, nor authorized by Plaintiffs to be sold or offered for sale, and which bear any of Plaintiffs' trademarks, including the Plaintiffs' Trademarks, or any reproductions, counterfeit copies, or colorable imitations thereof;

2) Entry of an Order that, at Plaintiffs' choosing, the registrant of the Domain Names shall be changed from the current registrant to Plaintiffs, and that the domain name registries for the Domain Names, including, but not limited to, VeriSign, Inc., Registry Services, LLC, Afilias Limited, CentralNic, Nominet, and the Public Interest Registry, shall unlock and change the registrar of record for the Domain Names to a registrar of Plaintiffs' selection, and that the domain name registrars, including, but not limited to, GoDaddy.com, LLC ("GoDaddy"), Name.com, PDR LTD. d/b/a PublicDomainRegistry.com ("PDR"), and Namecheap, Inc. ("Namecheap") shall take any steps necessary to transfer the Domain Names to a registrar

account of Plaintiffs' selection; or that the same domain name registries shall disable the Domain Names and make them inactive and untransferable;

- 3) Entry of an Order that, upon Plaintiffs' request, those with notice of the injunction, including, without limitation, any online marketplace platforms such as eBay, AliExpress, Alibaba, Amazon, Walmart, Wish.com, Etsy, DHgate, and Temu (collectively, the "Third Party Providers") shall disable and cease displaying any advertisements used by or associated with Defendants in connection with the sale of counterfeit and infringing goods using the Plaintiffs' Trademarks;
- 4) That Defendants account for and pay to Plaintiffs all profits realized by Defendants by reason of Defendants' unlawful acts herein alleged, and that the amount of damages for infringement of Plaintiffs' Trademarks be increased by a sum not exceeding three times the amount thereof as provided by 15 U.S.C. § 1117;
- 5) In the alternative, that Plaintiffs be awarded statutory damages for willful trademark counterfeiting pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117(c)(2) of \$2,000,000 for each and every use of Plaintiffs' Trademarks;
- 6) That Plaintiffs be awarded their reasonable attorneys' fees and costs; and
- 7) Award any and all other relief that this Court deems just and proper.

Dated this 1st day of November 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Justin R. Gaudio

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