

Feds Seize Fake Handbags At JFK

Queens District Attorney Richard A. Brown has announced the seizure by U.S. Customs agents of nearly 1,900 counterfeit Chanel handbags at Kennedy Airport.

Hyuk Bong Kwon, 30, of 63 Van Reypen St., Jersey City, was arrested at a freight forwarder's office in Jamaica where he had gone to claim the handbags. Kwon is the owner of the Home Boy Company, 147-40 41st Ave., Flushing, through which the counterfeit bags allegedly were to be sold.

D.A. Brown said that after U.S. Customs agents inspected the seized shipment of handbags, they contacted representatives of Chanel, Inc., who confirmed that the bags were not the genuine item. Further investigation by Customs revealed that the Home Boy Co., to which the shipment was addressed, was owned and operated by the defendant. When Kwon went to pay for and claim the handbags at the freight forwarder's office, he was placed under arrest by Detective Dennis Harrington from the D.A.'s Office Squad.

A spokesperson for Chanel, Inc. explained how the seized handbags differed from the company's product: "The main difference is that all Chanel handbags are made in either France or Italy, and are clearly marked as such on each handbag. These bags were all made in Korea." The spokesperson cited other differences as well.

According to the company, the resale value for the counterfeit bags ranged from \$75,000 to approximately \$600,000, depending on the place of sale.

Kwon was charged with two counts of criminal simulation and one count of conspiracy.

Special Agents Robert Merwyn and James Whelan from the U.S. Customs Service assisted in the investigation of this case. Assistant D.A. Joseph Lobosco, of D.A. Brown's Rackets Bureau, was assigned to prosecute the case.

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