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NEWS RELEASE

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MAN INDICTED FOR SELLING KNOCK OFF MERCHANDISE

A man accused of illegally selling knock-off purses and other merchandise for years has been indicted by a Denver Grand Jury for trademark counterfeiting and tax crimes. The indictment was unsealed yesterday, and is the result of work by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) Homeland Security Investigations (HSI), the Denver Police Department and the Denver DA's Office.

Randy Lynn Hastings (dob: 02-13-56) is charged with two counts of *tax violation* (F5), two counts of *tax evasion* (F5) and five counts of *trademark counterfeiting* (M1).

The indictment alleges that between January 1, 2013 and November 4, 2015, Hastings promoted himself as the "Randy The Purse Guy" and unlawfully sold counterfeit merchandise including purses, wallets, watches and sunglasses, and that during the same time frame he unlawfully failed to collect and pay taxes.

In 2008, Hastings was the target of an undercover HSI investigation in Denver that resulted in the seizure of hundreds of items of counterfeit merchandise. In 2010, Hastings was arrested in Lone Tree, CO for trademark counterfeiting and was given a deferred judgment in that case.

"Selling counterfeit merchandise is not a victimless crime," said David A. Thompson, special agent in charge of HSI Denver. "Counterfeits steal jobs from Americans, they support organized crime, and they produce tainted or substandard merchandise — some of which may be harmful to the consumer."

The local investigation began in July 2014, when the manager of the Louis Vuitton store in Cherry Creek notified Denver Police that counterfeit Vuitton merchandise was being sold out of a van at University Boulevard and 2nd Avenue. The investigation was taken into the Grand Jury in May 2015, resulting in an indictment that was unsealed today.

Hastings fled Colorado earlier this year, and was located in the Minneapolis area last week. He was taken into custody by HSI agents.