

The American Bridal & Prom Industry Association (ABPIA) has filed multiple lawsuits over the past several months in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, seeking damages and injunctive relief against the owners of nearly 1,100 websites, enjoining and restraining those website owners from marketing and selling counterfeit dresses and other formalwear. ABPIA is pleased to announce that on February 10, 2014, the Court entered several preliminary injunctions which enjoined the website owners from marketing and selling such counterfeit dresses and formalwear. The Court's Preliminary Injunction Order in each of these lawsuits is broad, and in addition to enjoining the website owners from selling counterfeit formalwear, each Order also: 1) freezes any merchant accounts of the websites maintained by third-party payment providers such as PayPal; and 2) directs the registrars of the domains to disable them and render them untransferable until the further Order of the Court. The PayPal and other accounts will remain frozen until the further directive of the Court. To date, none of the defendants named in any of these additional lawsuits has filed any response or otherwise opposed the relief sought by ABPIA.

Although the large number of websites named in these initial lawsuits is staggering, this is by no means the end of the road. In fact, it is only a beginning. ABPIA's investigation has uncovered thousands of additional websites which are marketing and selling knockoff goods, and ABPIA will be filing additional lawsuits in the coming weeks to continue the fight against counterfeits.

ABPIA's anti-counterfeiting efforts are not limited to litigation against the websites. ABPIA's counsel is continuing to pursue the cooperation of Google, Inc. and other search engines in this campaign, and is engaged in a dialogue with Google in an effort to convince the internet service provider that it should preclude illegitimate merchants from using Google's Sponsored Ads, Sponsored Images and AdWords to generate traffic to sites using the protected trademarks and images of ABPIA members.

ABPIA urges the members of the formalwear industry to continue to support the efforts of the non-profit organization in achieving its principal objectives: 1) to take any and all appropriate and lawful action against the marketing and sale of counterfeit formalwear products; 2) to educate consumers, retailers and members of the formal industry and the general public about the harm to consumers and fair competition in the formalwear industry caused by the marketing and sale of counterfeit products; and 3) to lobby governmental entities

to aid the formalwear industry in the fight against the marketing and sale of counterfeit products. Members of the industry can join the effort by contacting ABPIA through its website, www.abpia.org, or by contacting Stephen Lang, ABPIA President and CEO of member company, Mon Cheri Bridals, LLC at slang@mcbridals.com.