

Mystic Shop Owners Sold Fake Jeans

By Joe Wojtas

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No longer available on their Web site so we are reprinting it.

NOTE: This shop is NOT a NARTS member.

Mystic - Stonington police have arrested the owners of the Pennywise Consignment Shop on Greenmanville Avenue and charged them with knowingly selling counterfeit jeans to an undercover officer for far less than the \$170 cost of the real item.

Police seized 500 items from the store, including additional counterfeit jeans and Lacoste polo shirts.

Daniel Madden, 54, and his wife Donna, 52, of 40 Pearl St. were charged by police on Jan. 26 with two counts each of knowingly selling items with counterfeit labels without disclosing that information to the buyer. They each face a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison and a \$500,000 fine. They were released on a promise to appear in New London Superior Court on Feb. 9. Police said they are continuing their investigation.

Police said the manufacturing and selling of counterfeit jeans that resemble popular name brands such as Rock & Republic, Seven for All Mankind and True Religion is an increasing problem. While the real jeans cost from \$170 to more than \$1,000 a pair, shops selling the counterfeit items charge as little as \$50 to \$60.

"They're not only ripping off the consumer but the companies that make the items and the stores that sell them," Detective Cody Floyd said.

He said one local store that gets hurt by the selling of counterfeit jeans is DNA Jeans on Whitehall Avenue, an exclusive area retailer of some of the authentic brands. Daniel Madden declined to comment Tuesday citing the pending case against him and his wife. The police investigation began after a Hartford-based WFSB Channel 3 Eyewitness News broadcast a report last fall about the counterfeit jeans a reporter had bought at Pennywise. In that report, Madden said he was not aware the items were fakes and said he had bought them as overstock items.

Police said that one of the jean companies had sent a letter to Pennywise ordering the Maddens to stop selling the items or face further action including prosecution.

Police said they then made an undercover buy of two pairs of the counterfeit jeans for about \$60 each. They also traveled to New York City and met with representatives of the jeans companies, who determined the ones police bought were fakes.

Police executed a search-and-seizure warrant at the store in December and confiscated 500 items of clothing that also included jackets and T-shirts. Floyd said the companies whose names are on the fake merchandise often donate them to organizations that help the needy.

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