

# Warwick man gets 50 months for trafficking counterfeit NFL jerseys, other goods

June 20, 2014 11:17 AM

BY KATIE MULVANEY

[kmulvane@providencejournal.com](mailto:kmulvane@providencejournal.com)

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – A Warwick man will serve 50 months in federal prison for trafficking counterfeit goods from China that included knockoff NFL jerseys, fake name-brand perfumes and North Face apparel.

In addition, U.S. District Court Chief Judge William E. Smith ordered Norman Cipriano, 41, to serve three years of supervised release upon the completion of his prison term. Restitution has not yet been determined.

Federal agents in September 2012 raided Cipriano's house at 200 Bend St., seizing thousands of jerseys, patches and other gear smuggled from China and worth an estimated \$1 million, authorities said. In addition, agents confiscated beauty products.

Homeland Security agents in Rhode Island were alerted by Customs and Border Protection authorities in Anchorage, Alaska, about a package from China addressed to Cipriano, according to U.S. Attorney Peter F. Neronha. The shipment was identified as "man coats," but a check revealed that sports jerseys affixed with NFL and Nike logos. The agents then conducted a controlled delivery to Cipriano's home with the assistance of Boston agents and Warwick police.

At the time, Cipriano was under surveillance by Homeland Security agents in Boston because of his activities at a flea market in Raynham, Mass., Neronha's office said.

A grand jury indicted Cipriano, a convicted felon whose criminal history dates to the 1990s, on a single count of trafficking and attempting to traffic counterfeit products. He pleaded guilty to the crime in August.

The items Cipriano is accused of trafficking include knock-off NFL, Major League Baseball, NBA, and NHL jerseys, North Face apparel, UGG slippers, Marlboro cigarettes, and colognes by Abercrombie, Calvin Klein, Carolina Herrera, Kenneth Cole, Chloe, Gwen Stefani, Marc Jacobs and Vera Wang. Prosecutors said the items were virtually indistinguishable from trademark products.

"Trafficking in other counterfeit goods, such as apparel and other consumer products, may seem more innocuous, but nevertheless demands the same aggressive attention from law enforcement. Such criminal misconduct causes irreparable economic harm to the companies that make the real article, including such companies' ability to maintain and create jobs for every-day Americans," Neronha said in a statement.

Melissa Larsen, a lawyer for Cipriano, had argued for leniency.

"Even though we feel it is quite a lengthy sentence for a non-violent property crime, we are grateful to the court for giving a below guideline sentence and credit for time served," Larsen said.

Cipriano served 22 months in state prison for violating the terms of his suspended sentence on state drug and assault convictions from the 1990s.

Cipriano, former owner of a Warwick sports-card store, spent nearly four years in state prison for conspiracy and fraudulently receiving stolen goods and selling them on the Internet, including thousands of over-the-counter drugs, perfumes, colognes and replacement toothbrush heads stolen from CVS and Victoria's Secret.

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**A counterfeit Rob Gronkowski shirt was among the shirts confiscated from Cipriano's home.**

**Photo: Mary Murphy / The Providence Journal file**

