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## Amazon Fakes, Fraud and Scams Await Black Friday Shoppers

Consumers easily deceived by counterfeit products, phony reviews and fraudulent deals.

**November 14, 2018, Los Angeles, CA** – Black Friday shoppers looking for a good deal on Amazon may get much less than they bargained for. Consumers can no longer expect that Amazon is a safe and honest marketplace to buy authentic, safe goods – it's not. When shopping on Amazon, the mantra of the day is clearly "buyer beware."

Amazon's marketplace is a free-flowing conduit that enables and facilitates the exact same "bad actors" who have long polluted China's e-commerce ecosystem to flood Amazon with counterfeit, fake and replica products.

*The Counterfeit Report*, an award winning consumer advocate and counterfeit watchdog, has removed **over 43,000 counterfeit items** on behalf of brand owners from Amazon's 13 global websites. Shockingly, counterfeit listings could remain for weeks, even months, despite hundreds of repeat infringement notices. Sellers often remained and relisted the items. Manufacturers simply don't have the time or resources to struggle with Amazon's dysfunctional system, and consumers are left unprotected.

Still, Amazon takes a transaction fee for each counterfeit item sold, while skirting secondary liability for the sales. And, while Amazon collects half of every U.S. retail dollar spent online, Amazon didn't pay any federal income taxes after topping **\$5.6 billion in profit** in 2017.

- Amazon is direct retailer of counterfeit goods; "ships from and sold by Amazon.com." Apple® reported that **90% of Apple products** it purchased directly from Amazon were counterfeit.
- Amazon Prime membership, Amazon Warehouse Deals, and the Fulfilled by Amazon ("FBA") offerings are also plagued with counterfeit, fake and replica items. Even the coveted "Amazon's Choice" endorsement may be promoting a counterfeit product.
- The U.S. Government Accountability Office ("GAO") recently conducted an undercover investigation of e-commerce counterfeit goods sales. The GAO reported that about 50% of the items it purchased from Amazon (AMZN), were counterfeit.
- 50% of Amazon's sales are from 2-million unvetted global third-party "Marketplace" sellers that are allowed to sell just about anything they want, including an inexhaustible supply of counterfeit, fake and replica books and merchandise. The products include items that do not exist in the authentic manufacturer's product line but bear their registered trademark, and even inarguable counterfeit police badges and ID and counterfeit OTC drugs.
- Search results and product reviews are no indication of authenticity or quality, and may not even be related to the product searched. Worldwide scammers work to outsmart and trick Amazon's automated ranking systems with fake reviews and ratings, while some sellers pay off workers inside Amazon to gain competitive information reports the Wall Street Journal.
- Amazon's seller evaluations (feedback) and product reviews are virtually worthless. Negative reviews may be removed by Amazon, while sellers hire businesses to create dummy accounts, purchase products, and write fictitious reviews.

Amazon offers its illusory policy; "Products offered for sale on Amazon must be authentic. The sale of counterfeit products is strictly prohibited." However, Amazon reports that they receive an infringement notice for **1 of every 100** customer page views, and over **100,000 brands** have signed in to fight counterfeits on Amazon – a shocking revelation of the enormity of Amazon's counterfeit problem.

Consumers may place confidence in Amazon's guarantee; "We stand behind the products sold on our site with our A-to-z Guarantee." That could be true, but only if consumers were informed by Amazon (or knew) they received a counterfeit product. However, Amazon does not notify consumers they received a fake, even after being notified by the brand owner.

Consumers would be better served to shop online with the major retailers (Kroger, Costco, Home Depot, Target, Lowes, Best Buy, etc.) who offer consumers competitive online purchase options.