

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT1

II. STATEMENT OF FACTS.....4

A. PLAINTIFFS’ TRADEMARK AND PRODUCTS4

B. DEFENDANTS’ UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES.....5

i. Defendants Operate Legitimate-Looking Internet Stores.....6

ii. Defendants Illegitimately Optimize the Defendant Internet Stores for Search Engines...7

iii. Defendants Use Fictitious Aliases and Common Tactics to Evade Shut Down7

iv. Defendants Use Common Tactics to Evade Enforcement.....8

III. ARGUMENT.....9

A. THIS COURT MAY EXERCISE PERSONAL JURISDICTION OVER DEFENDANTS.....11

B. STANDARD FOR TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER AND PRELIMINARY INJUNCTION.....13

C. PLAINTIFFS WILL LIKELY SUCCEED ON THE MERITS14

i. Plaintiffs Will Likely Succeed on Their Trademark Infringement and Counterfeiting Claim.....14

ii. Plaintiffs Are Likely to Succeed on Their False Designation of Origin Claim17

iii. Plaintiffs Are Likely to Succeed on Their Illinois Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act Claim18

D. THERE IS NO ADEQUATE REMEDY AT LAW, AND PLAINTIFFS WILL SUFFER IRREPARABLE HARM IN THE ABSENCE OF PRELIMINARY RELIEF.....18

E. THE BALANCING OF EQUITIES TIPS IN PLAINTIFFS’ FAVOR20

F. ISSUANCE OF THE INJUNCTION IS IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.....21

IV. THE EQUITABLE RELIEF SOUGHT IS APPROPRIATE.....22

A. A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER IMMEDIATELY ENJOINING DEFENDANTS’ UNAUTHORIZED AND UNLAWFUL USE OF PLAINTIFFS’ MARKS IS APPROPRIATE22

B. TRANSFERRING THE DEFENDANT DOMAIN NAMES TO PLAINTIFFS’ CONTROL IS APPROPRIATE.....23

C. PREVENTING THE FRAUDULENT TRANSFER OF ASSETS IS APPROPRIATE24

D. PLAINTIFFS ARE ENTITLED TO EXPEDITED DISCOVERY26

E. SERVICE OF PROCESS BY E-MAIL AND/OR ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION IS WARRANTED IN THIS CASE.....27

V. A BOND SHOULD SECURE THE INJUNCTIVE RELIEF32

VI. CONCLUSION32

TABLE OF AUTHORITIES

Cases

<i>Abbott Labs. v. Mead Johnson & Co.</i> , 971 F.2d 6, 11 (7th Cir. 1992).....	13
<i>All Star Championship Racing, Inc. v. O'Reilly Auto. Stores, Inc.</i> , 2013 WL 1701871, *10 (C.D. Ill. Apr. 18, 2013).....	18
<i>Am. Broad. Co. v. Maljack Prods., Inc.</i> , 34 F. Supp. 2d 665, 681 (N.D. Ill. 1998).....	18
<i>Animale Grp. Inc. v. Sunny's Perfume Inc.</i> , 256 F. App'x 707, 709 (5th Cir. 2007).....	24, 25
<i>Board of Directors of Sapphire Bay Condos. W. v. Simpson</i> , 129 F. App'x 711 (3d Cir. 2005).....	24
<i>Burger King Corp. v. Majeed</i> , 805 F. Supp. 994, 1006 (S.D. Fla. 1992).....	20
<i>CAE, Inc. v. Clean Air Eng'g Inc.</i> , 267 F.3d 660, 681 (7th Cir. 2001).....	16
<i>Charter Nat'l Bank & Trust v. Charter One Fin., Inc.</i> , No. 1:01-cv-00905, 2001 WL 527404, *1 (N.D. Ill. May 15, 2001).....	13
<i>Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"</i> , No. 1:15-CV-03491 (N.D. Ill.).....	3, 12, 23, 32
<i>Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"</i> , No. 1:15-CV-03491, 2015 WL 5307609 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 9, 2015).....	3
<i>Columbia Pictures Indus., Inc. v. Jasso</i> , 927 F. Supp. 1075, 1077 (N.D. Ill. 1996).....	11
<i>CSC Holdings, Inc. v. Redisi</i> , 309 F.3d 988 (7th Cir. 2002).....	25
<i>Deckert v. Independence Shares Corp.</i> , 311 U.S. 282 (1940).....	25
<i>Dorr-Oliver, Inc. v. Fluid-Quip, Inc.</i> , 94 F.3d 376, 381 (7th Cir. 1996).....	15
<i>Eli Lilly & Co. v. Natural Answers, Inc.</i> , 233 F.3d 456, 461, 462, 469 (7th Cir. 2000)...	13, 15, 19, 21
<i>Ford Motor Co. v. Lapertosa</i> , 126 F. Supp. 2d 463, 467 (E.D. Mich. 2001).....	23, 24
<i>G. Heileman Brewing Co., Inc. v. Anheuser-Busch, Inc.</i> , 873 F.2d 985, 999 (7th Cir. 1989).....	15
<i>Gateway Eastern Railway Co. v. Terminal Railroad Assoc. of St. Louis</i> , 35 F.3d 1134, 1140 (7th Cir. 1994).....	20
<i>Gillespie v. Civiletti</i> , 629 F.2d 637, 642 (9th Cir. 1980).....	26
<i>Grupo Mexicano de Desarrollo, S.A. v. Aliance Bond Fund</i> , 527 U.S. 308 (1999).....	25
<i>Helene Curtis Industries, Inc. v. Church & Dwight Co., Inc.</i> , 560 F.2d 1325, 1332 (7th Cir. 1977).	19
<i>Hoechst Diafoil Co. v. Nan Ya Plastics Corp.</i> , 174 F.3d 411, 421 (4th Cir. 1999).....	32
<i>Ideal Indus., Inc. v. Gardner Bender, Inc.</i> , 612 F.2d 1018, 1026 (7th Cir. 1979).....	19
<i>In re LDK Solar Secs. Litig.</i> , 2008 WL 2415186,*2 (N.D. Cal. Jun. 12, 2008).....	31
<i>In re Potash Antitrust Litig.</i> , 667 F. Supp. 2d 907, 930 (N.D. Ill. 2009).....	31
<i>In re Vuitton et Fils, S.A.</i> , 606 F.2d 1 (2d Cir. 1979).....	3
<i>Int'l Kennel Club of Chicago, Inc. v. Mighty Star, Inc.</i> , 846 F.2d 1079, 1092 (7th Cir. 1988).....	19

Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A", No. 1:18-CV-1098 (N.D. Ill.) 3, 12, 23, 32

Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A", No. 1:18-CV-1098, 2018 WL 2077732 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 6, 2018)..... 3

James Burrough Ltd. v. Sign of the Beefeater, Inc., 540 F.2d 266, 274 (7th Cir. 1976) 21

Johnny Blastoff, Inc. v. Los Angeles Rams Football Co., 188 F. 3d 427, 436 (7th Cir. 1999)..... 18

Juniper Networks, Inc. v. Bahattab, No. 1:07-cv-01771-PLF-AK, 2008 WL 250584, *1-2, (D.D.C. Jan. 30, 2008)..... 29

Kraft Food Holdings, Inc. v. Helm, 205 F. Supp. 2d 942, 956 (N.D. Ill. 2002)..... 23

Krause Int’l Inc. v. Reed Elsevier, Inc., 866 F. Supp. 585, 587-88 (D.D.C. 1994) 20

Levi Strauss & Co. v. Sunrise Int’l Trading Inc., 51 F.3d 982, 987 (11th Cir. 1995) 24, 25

Libman Co. v. Vining Indus., Inc., 69 F.3d 1360, 1363 (7th Cir.1995) 17

Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Montrose Wholesale Candies, 2005 WL 3115892, at *13 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 8, 2005) 25

MacLean-Fogg Co. v. Ningbo Fastlink Equip. Co., Ltd., No. 1:08-cv-02593, 2008 WL 5100414, *2 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 1, 2008) 29

Malarkey-Taylor Assocs., Inc. v. Cellular Telecomms. Indus. Ass’n, 929 F. Supp. 473, 478 (D.D.C. 1996). 20

Meridian Mut. Ins. Co. v. Meridian Ins. Group, Inc., 128 F.3d 1111, 1114 (7th Cir. 1997) 19

Nanya Tech. Corp. v. Fujitsu Ltd., No. 1:06-cv-00025, 2007 WL 269087, *6 (D. Guam Jan. 26, 2007) 31

Neopost Industrie B.V. v. PFE Int’l Inc., 403 F. Supp. 2d 669, 684 (N.D. Ill. 2005)..... 14, 18

Oppenheimer Fund, Inc. v. Sanders, 437 U.S. 340, 351, 98 S.Ct. 2380 (1978)..... 26

Philip Morris U.S.A., Inc. v. Otamedia Ltd., 331 F. Supp. 2d 228, 246 (S.D.N.Y. 2004) 24

Polaroid Corp. v. Polarad Electronics Corp., 287 F.2d 492, 495 (2d Cir. 1961)..... 15

Polo Fashions, Inc. v. Craftex, Inc., 816 F.2d 145, 148 (4th Cir.1987) 15

Popular Enters., LLC v. Webcom Media Group, Inc., 225 F.R.D. 560 (E.D. Tenn. 2004)..... 29, 31

Promatek Industries, Ltd. v. Equitrac Corp., 300 F.3d 808, 813 (7th Cir. 2002)..... 19

Purdue Research Found. v. Sanofi-Sythelabo, S.A., 338 F.3d 773, 782 (7th Cir. 2003)..... 12

Rathmann Grp. v. Tanenbaum, 889 F.2d 787, 789 (8th Cir. 1989)..... 32

Re/Max N. Cent., Inc. v. Cook, 272 F.3d 424, 432 (7th Cir. 2001) 19

Reebok Int’l Ltd. v. Marnatech Enters., Inc., 970 F.2d 552, 559 (9th Cir. 1992) 24, 25

Rio Props., Inc. v. Rio Int’l Interlink, 284 F.3d 1007 (9th Cir. 2002) 29, 30

Sands, Taylor & Wood Co. v. Quaker Oats Co., 978 F.2d 947, 960 (7th Cir. 1992) 17

See Ty, Inc. v. The Jones Group, Inc., 237 F.3d 891, 895 (7th Cir. 2001) 13

Shashi, Inc. v. Ramada Worldwide, Inc., No. 7:05-cv-00016-JGW-mfu, 2005 WL 552593, *4 (W.D. Va. Mar. 1, 2005)..... 21

Spex, Inc. v. Joy of Spex, Inc., 847 F. Supp. 567, 579 (N.D. Ill. 1994) 18

Stahly, Inc. v. M.H. Jacobs Co., 183 F.2d 914, 917 (7th Cir. 1950)..... 21

Topps Co., Inc. v. Gerrit J. Verburg Co., 41 U.S.P.Q.2d 1412, 1417 (S.D.N.Y.1996)..... 15

Trans Union LLC v. Credit Research, Inc., 142 F. Supp. 2d 1029, 1043 (N.D. Ill. 2001)..... 16

Ty, Inc., 237 F.3d at 895 20

uBID, Inc. v. GoDaddy Group, Inc. 623 F.3d 421, 423 (7th Cir. 2010)..... 12

Vance v. Rumsfeld, No. 1:06-cv-06964, 2007 WL 4557812, *6 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 21, 2007)..... 26

Wesley–Jessen Division of Schering Corp. v. Bausch & Lomb Inc., 698 F.2d 862, 867 (7th Cir.1983) 19

Statutes

15 U.S.C. § 1051 et seq..... 11

15 U.S.C. § 1057..... 14

15 U.S.C. § 1114..... 14

15 U.S.C. § 1116..... 4, 22

15 U.S.C. § 1117..... 4, 25

15 U.S.C. § 1125..... 17

28 U.S.C. § 1331..... 11

28 U.S.C. § 1338..... 11

28 U.S.C. § 1367..... 11

28 U.S.C. § 1391..... 11

735 ILCS 5/2-209 12

Fed. R. Civ. P. 26..... 26

Fed. R. Civ. P. 4..... 27, 31

Fed. R. Civ. P. 65 4, 10, 22, 27, 32

Other Authorities

4 Callmann on Unfair Competition, Trademarks and Monopolies § 88.3(b) at 205 (3d ed. 1970) ... 19

Extra Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Matters (the “Hague Convention”), Article 1 .. 31

J. Thomas McCarthy, *McCarthy on Trademarks and Unfair Competition* § 30:40 (4th ed. 2013) ... 25

MEMORANDUM OF LAW

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Plaintiffs CREATIVE IMPACT INC., ZURU LLC, and ZURU INC. (collectively “Plaintiffs”) bring this action against the Defendants identified on Schedule A to the Complaint (collectively, the “Defendants”) for federal trademark infringement and counterfeiting (Count I), false designation of origin (Count II), and violation of the Illinois Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act (Count III). As alleged in the Complaint, Defendants are promoting, advertising, marketing, distributing, offering for sale, and selling counterfeit products in connection with Plaintiffs’ federally registered trademark (collectively, the “Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products”), through various fully interactive commercial Internet websites operating under at least the Defendant Domain Names and Online Marketplace Accounts listed in Schedule A to the Complaint (collectively, the “Defendant Internet Stores”). In short, Defendants run a counterfeiting operation with disregard for anything except generating profits.

The Defendants create numerous Defendant Internet Stores with an intent to have them appear to be selling genuine products, while actually selling unauthorized and unlicensed Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products to unknowing consumers. The Defendant Internet Stores share unique identifiers, such as design elements and similarities of the counterfeit products offered for sale, establishing a logical relationship between them and suggesting that Defendants’ counterfeiting operation arises out of the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences. Defendants attempt to avoid liability by concealing both their identities and the full scope and interworking of their counterfeiting operation. Plaintiffs have filed this action to combat Defendants’ infringement and counterfeiting of Plaintiffs’ registered trademark, as well as to protect unknowing consumers from purchasing Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products

over the Internet.

This Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendants because each Defendant targets Illinois residents and has offered to sell, and on information and belief, has sold and continues to sell Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products to consumers within the United States, including the State of Illinois. Specifically, Defendants are reaching out to do business with Illinois residents by operating one or more commercial, interactive Internet Stores through which Illinois residents can purchase products being sold in connection with Plaintiffs' BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark. Defendants directly target unlawful business activities toward consumers in Illinois, cause harm to Plaintiffs' business within this Judicial District, and have caused and will continue to cause irreparable injury to Plaintiffs. Defendants deceive the public by trading upon Plaintiffs' reputation and goodwill by using their commercial, interactive Internet Stores to sell and/or offer for sale unlicensed Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products in connection with Plaintiffs' trademark.

Defendants' ongoing unlawful activities should be restrained, and Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court issue an *ex parte* Temporary Restraining Order. Specifically, Plaintiffs seek an order: (1) temporarily restraining Defendants' continued manufacture, importation, distribution, offering for sale, and sale of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products; (2) temporarily transferring the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs so that the continued use of the domains in carrying out acts of infringement can be temporarily disabled; and (3) temporarily restraining Defendants' assets to preserve Plaintiffs' right to an equitable accounting. Ancillary to and as part of the TRO, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court (4) authorize expedited discovery allowing Plaintiffs to inspect and copy Defendants' records relating to the manufacture, distribution, offering for sale, and sale of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products and

Defendants' financial accounts; and (5) authorize service by electronic mail and/or electronic publication at the Defendant Domain Names.

In light of the covert nature of offshore counterfeiting activities and the vital need to establish an economic disincentive for trademark infringement, courts regularly issue such orders. *See, e.g., Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:18-CV-1098, Document #: 14 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 20, 2018) (Alonso, J.) (granting *ex parte* temporary restraining order) (copy included in Exhibit 7 to the Declaration of Nicholas A. Kurtz filed in support of Plaintiffs' Motion for Temporary Restraining Order); *Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:15-CV-03491, Document #: 21 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 27, 2015) (Kendall, J.) (same) (same); *see also Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:18-CV-1098, 2018 WL 2077732 (N.D. Ill. Mar. 6, 2018) (Court granting preliminary injunction order in same case as above); *Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:15-CV-03491, 2015 WL 5307609 (N.D. Ill. Sept. 9, 2015) (Court denying defendant's motion to intervene in same case as above); *In re Vuitton et Fils, S.A.*, 606 F.2d 1 (2d Cir. 1979) (holding that *ex parte* temporary restraining orders are indispensable to the commencement of an action when they are the sole method of preserving a state of affairs in which the court can provide effective final relief).

Plaintiffs' well-pleaded factual allegations, which must be accepted as true, and evidence submitted through declarations, establishes that issuing a temporary restraining order against Defendants is necessary and proper. Plaintiffs can demonstrate a strong likelihood of success on the merits. Plaintiffs are the owner of a valid trademark registration and are distributors of valid BUNCH O BALLOONS products, and Defendants' use of Plaintiffs' trademark to sell Counterfeit

BUNCH O BALLOONS Products is causing consumer confusion.

In addition, Defendants have and continue to irreparably harm Plaintiffs through diminished goodwill and damage to Plaintiffs' reputation. Monetary damages are inadequate to Plaintiffs for these damages. This makes injunctive relief particularly appropriate in this matter.

Issuance of an injunction is also in the public interest because it will prevent confusion among the public and prevent unknowing consumers from being deceived into purchasing Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products.

In addition, an order authorizing the transfer of the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs' control so that the continued use of the domains in carrying out acts of infringement can be temporarily disabled is warranted pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1116(a) which authorizes this Court "to grant injunctions ... to prevent the violation of any right of the registrant of a mark...." Moreover, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2)(C), this Court has the power to bind any third parties, such as domain name registries and financial institutions, who are in active concert with the Defendants or who aid and abet Defendants and are given actual notice of the order. Similarly, a prejudgment asset freeze is also proper since Plaintiffs seek an equitable remedy in the accounting of Defendants' profits pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a). Finally, an order authorizing service of process by email and/or electronic publication is proper since as a result of Defendants' intentional efforts to conceal their identities and operate their business online. Serving Defendants electronically is the best method for notifying them of this action and providing them the opportunity to defend and present their objections.

II. STATEMENT OF FACTS

A. Plaintiffs' Trademark and Products

Plaintiff CREATIVE IMPACT INC. is the registered owner of the BUNCH O

BALLOONS trademark (U.S. Trademark Registration No. 4709630) via a recorded assignment from TINNUS ENTERPRISES, LLC. Declaration of Jens Schott Knudsen filed concurrently herewith (“Knudsen Decl.”), ¶ 5 and Ex. 1 thereto. Plaintiffs ZURU LLC and ZURU INC. are members of the ZURU Group of companies, which has grown into a diversified global enterprise (collectively “ZURU”). Knudsen Decl., ¶ 5. ZURU has earned an international reputation for quality, reliability, and value and is credited for many breakthroughs that have occurred in the toy industry. *Id.* ZURU is an exclusive licensee and official source of BUNCH O BALLOONS products in the United States. *Id.*

Since at July 2014, the BUNCH O BALLOONS mark is and has been the subject of substantial and continuous marketing and promotion by Plaintiffs. *Id.* at ¶ 6. Plaintiffs have and continue to widely market and promote the BUNCH O BALLOONS mark in the industry and to consumers. *Id.* Plaintiffs’ promotional efforts include — by way of example but not limitation — substantial print media, the BUNCH O BALLOONS website and social media sites, and point of sale materials. *Id.*

Plaintiffs have expended substantial time, money, and other resources in advertising and otherwise promoting the BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark. *Id.* at ¶ 7. As a result, products bearing the BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark are widely recognized and exclusively associated by consumers, the public, and the trade as being products sourced from Plaintiffs. *Id.*

The success of the BUNCH O BALLOONS brand has resulted in its significant counterfeiting. Knudsen Decl., ¶ 8.

B. Defendants’ Unlawful Activities

Plaintiffs have identified numerous fully interactive commercial Internet stores operating under the Defendant Domain Names and/or the Online Marketplace Accounts identified in

Schedule A attached to the Complaint (collectively, the “Defendant Internet Stores”) to sell counterfeit products in connection with counterfeit versions of the federally registered BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark (the “Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products”) from foreign countries such as China to consumers in this Judicial District. Declaration of Jessica Arnaiz filed concurrently herewith (“Arnaiz Decl.”), ¶ 5 and Ex. 1 thereto.

Internet websites like the Defendant Internet Stores are estimated to receive tens of millions of visits per year and cost legitimate businesses billions in lost revenue annually. Declaration of Nicholas A. Kurtz filed concurrently herewith (“Kurtz Decl.”), ¶ 3 and Ex. 1 thereto. According to an intellectual property rights seizures statistics reports issued by Homeland Security, the manufacturer’s suggested retail price (MSRP) of goods seized by the U.S. government in fiscal year 2017 was over \$1.2 billion. *Id.* at ¶ 4 and Ex. 2. Internet websites like the Defendant Internet Stores are also estimated to contribute to tens of thousands of lost jobs for legitimate businesses and broader economic damages such as lost tax revenue every year. *Id.* at ¶ 5 and Ex. 3.

i. Defendants Operate Legitimate-Looking Internet Stores

Defendants typically facilitate sales by designing the Defendant Internet Stores so that they appear to unknowing consumers to be authorized online retailers, outlet stores, or wholesalers selling genuine BUNCH O BALLOONS products. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 6. Many of the Defendant Internet Stores look sophisticated and accept payment in U.S. dollars via credit cards, Western Union, Amazon and PayPal. *Id.* The Defendant Internet Stores often include images and design elements that make it very difficult for consumers to distinguish such counterfeit sites from an authorized website. *Id.* Defendants further perpetuate the illusion of legitimacy by offering “live 24/7” customer service and using indicia of authenticity and security that consumers have come to associate with authorized retailers, including the McAfee® Security, VeriSign®, Visa®,

MasterCard®, and PayPal® logos. *Id.* Plaintiffs have not licensed or authorized Defendants to use the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark, and none of the Defendants are authorized retailers of genuine BUNCH O BALLOONS products. *Id.*

ii. Defendants Illegitimately Optimize the Defendant Internet Stores for Search Engines

Defendants also typically deceive unknowing consumers by using the BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark without authorization within the content, text, and/or meta tags of their web sites in order to attract various search engines crawling the Internet looking for websites relevant to consumer searches for BUNCH O BALLOONS products. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 7. Additionally, Defendants typically use other unauthorized search engine optimization (SEO) tactics and social media spamming so that the Defendant Internet Stores listings show up at or near the top of relevant search results and misdirect consumers searching for genuine BUNCH O BALLOONS products. *Id.* Further, Defendants typically utilize similar illegitimate SEO tactics to propel new domain names to the top of search results after others are shut down. *Id.*

iii. Defendants Use Fictitious Aliases and Common Tactics to Evade Shut Down

Defendants go to great lengths to conceal their identities and often use multiple fictitious names and addresses to register and operate their massive network of Defendant Internet Stores. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 8. For example, many of Defendants' names and physical addresses used to register the Defendant Domain Names are incomplete, contain randomly typed letters, or fail to include cities or states. *Id.* Other Defendant Domain Names use privacy services that conceal the owners' identity and contact information. *Id.* Defendants regularly create new websites and online marketplace accounts on various platforms using the identities listed in Schedule A to the Complaint, as well as other unknown fictitious names and addresses. *Id.* Such Defendant Internet

Store registration patterns are one of many common tactics used by the Defendants to conceal their identities, the full scope and interworking of their massive counterfeiting operation, and to avoid being shut down. *Id.*

Even though Defendants operate under multiple fictitious names, there are numerous similarities among the Defendant Internet Stores. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 9. For example, many of the Defendant websites have virtually identical layouts, even though different aliases were used to register the respective domain names. *Id.* In addition, Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products for sale in the Defendant Internet Stores bear similar irregularities and indicia of being counterfeit to one another, suggesting that the Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products were manufactured by and come from a common source and that, upon information and belief, Defendants are interrelated. *Id.* The Defendant Internet Stores also include other notable common features, including use of the same domain name registration patterns, unique shopping cart platforms, accepted payment methods, check-out methods, meta data, illegitimate SEO tactics, user-defined variables, domain redirection, lack of contact information, identically or similarly priced similar hosting services, similar name servers, and the use of the same text and images. *Id.*

iv. Defendants Use Common Tactics to Evade Enforcement

In addition to operating under multiple fictitious names, Defendants in this case and defendants in other similar cases against online counterfeiters use a variety of other common tactics to evade enforcement efforts. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 10. For example, counterfeiters like Defendants will often register new domain names or online marketplace accounts under new aliases once they receive notice of a lawsuit. *Id.*; *see also* Kurtz Decl., ¶6. Counterfeiters also often move website hosting to rogue servers located outside the United States once notice of a lawsuit is received. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 10; Kurtz Decl., ¶ 7. Rogue servers are notorious for ignoring take down demands

sent by brand owners. *Id.* Counterfeiters also typically ship products in small quantities via international mail to minimize detection by U.S. Customs and Border Protection. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 10.

Additionally, counterfeiters such as Defendants typically operate multiple credit card merchant accounts as well as Amazon and PayPal accounts behind layers of payment gateways so that they can continue operation in spite of Plaintiffs' enforcement efforts. Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 11. Further, Defendants typically maintain off-shore bank accounts and regularly move funds from their PayPal accounts to off-shore bank accounts outside the jurisdiction of this Court. *Id.*

Overall, Plaintiffs' well-pleaded allegations regarding registration patterns, similarities among the Defendant Internet Stores and the Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products for sale thereon, and common tactics employed to evade enforcement establish a logical relationship among the Defendants suggesting that Defendants are an interrelated group of counterfeiters. Upon information and belief, Defendants are working in active concert to knowingly and willfully manufacture, import, distribute, offer for sale, and sell products in connection with counterfeit versions of the BUNCH O BALLOONS trademark in the same transaction, occurrence, or series of transactions or occurrences. As indicated above, the tactics used by Defendants to conceal their identities and the full scope of their counterfeiting operation make it virtually impossible for Plaintiffs to discover the true identities of the Defendants, the exact interworking of the Defendants' counterfeit network, and the relationship among Defendants. In the event that Defendants provide additional credible information regarding their identities, Plaintiffs will take appropriate steps to amend the Complaint.

III. ARGUMENT

Defendants' purposeful, intentional, and unlawful conduct is causing and will continue to

cause irreparable harm to Plaintiffs' reputation and the goodwill symbolized by the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark. *See* Knusden Decl., ¶¶ 10-14. To stop Defendants' sale of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court issue a temporary restraining order ordering, among other things, the transfer of the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs to redirect to a website providing notice of these proceedings and the freezing of Defendants' assets. Without the relief requested by Plaintiffs' instant Motion, Defendants' unlawful activity will continue unabated, and Plaintiffs and consumers will suffer irreparable harm.

Rule 65(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that the Court may issue an *ex parte* temporary restraining order where immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to the applicant before the adverse party or that party's attorney can be heard in opposition. Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(b). The Defendants here fraudulently promote, advertise, offer to sell, and sell goods in connection with counterfeits of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark via the Defendant Internet Stores. Defendants are creating a false association in the minds of consumers between the Defendants and Plaintiffs by deceiving consumers into believing that the Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products for sale on Defendants' websites are sponsored or endorsed by Plaintiffs. The entry of a temporary restraining order is appropriate because it would immediately stop the Defendants from benefiting from their wrongful use of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark and preserve the status quo until such time as a hearing can be held.

In the absence of a temporary restraining order without notice, the Defendants can and likely will modify registration data and content, change hosts, redirect traffic to other websites in their control, and move any assets from U.S.-based bank accounts, including PayPal accounts. Courts have recognized that civil actions against counterfeiters present special challenges that

justify proceeding on an *ex parte* basis. See *Columbia Pictures Indus., Inc. v. Jasso*, 927 F. Supp. 1075, 1077 (N.D. Ill. 1996) (observing that “proceedings against those who deliberately traffic in infringing merchandise are often useless if notice is given to the infringers”). As such, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court issue the requested *ex parte* temporary restraining order. This Court has original subject matter jurisdiction over the claims in this action pursuant to the provisions of the Lanham Act, 15 U.S.C. § 1051 et seq., 28 U.S.C. §§ 1338(a)-(b), and 28 U.S.C. § 1331. This Court has jurisdiction over the claims in this action that arise under the laws of the State of Illinois pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1367(a), because the state law claims are so related to the federal claims that they form part of the same case or controversy and derive from a common nucleus of operative facts. Venue is proper in this Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391.

A. This Court May Exercise Personal Jurisdiction over Defendants

This Court may properly exercise personal jurisdiction over Defendants because Defendants directly target business activities toward consumers in the United States, including Illinois, by directly offering for sale products into this Judicial District as well as through at least the fully interactive, commercial Defendant Internet Stores. Specifically, Defendants are reaching out to do business with Illinois residents by operating one or more commercial, interactive Defendant Internet Stores through which Illinois residents can purchase products bearing counterfeit versions of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark. Each Defendant has targeted sales from Illinois residents by operating online stores that offer shipping to the United States, including Illinois, and has offered to sell, and on information and belief, has sold and continues to sell Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products to consumers within the United States, including the State of Illinois. See Complaint at ¶¶ 2, 5, 14, 23 and 24. Without the benefit of an evidentiary hearing, Plaintiffs bears only the burden of making a prima facie case for personal jurisdiction; all

of Plaintiffs' asserted facts should be accepted as true and any factual determinations should be resolved in their favor. *See uBID, Inc. v. GoDaddy Group, Inc.* 623 F.3d 421, 423 (7th Cir. 2010); *see also, Purdue Research Found. v. Sanofi-Syhelabo, S.A.*, 338 F.3d 773, 782 (7th Cir. 2003) ("When determining whether a Plaintiffs has met his burden, jurisdictional allegations pleaded in the complaint are accepted as true unless proved otherwise by defendants' affidavits or exhibits.").

The Northern District regularly exercises personal jurisdiction over websites using registered trademarks without authorization in connection with the offering for sale and selling of infringing and counterfeit merchandise to Illinois residents over the Internet. 735 ILCS 5/2-209(a)(2). *See, e.g., Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:18-CV-1098, Document #: 14 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 20, 2018) (granting *ex parte* temporary restraining order); *Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:15-CV-03491, Document #: 21 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 27, 2015) (same).

Through at least the fully interactive commercial Internet websites operating under the Defendant Domain Names and the marketplace listings operated using the Online Marketplace Accounts, each of the Defendants has targeted sales from Illinois residents by offering shipping to the United States, including Illinois, and, on information and belief, has sold or offered to sell Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products to residents of the United States, including Illinois. Each of the Defendants is committing tortious acts in Illinois, is engaging in interstate commerce, and has wrongfully caused Plaintiffs substantial injury in the State of Illinois. Specifically, as shown on the screenshot printouts showing the active Defendant Internet Stores, Plaintiffs have confirmed that Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products are available from Defendants to be shipped to cities in this District, including without limitation Chicago, Northbrook, Skokie, and

Winnetka. Arnaiz Decl., Ex. 1.

B. Standard for Temporary Restraining Order and Preliminary Injunction

District Courts within this Circuit hold that the standard for granting a temporary restraining order and the standard for granting a preliminary injunction are identical. *See, e.g. Charter Nat'l Bank & Trust v. Charter One Fin., Inc.*, No. 1:01-cv-00905, 2001 WL 527404, *1 (N.D. Ill. May 15, 2001) (citation omitted). A party seeking to obtain a preliminary injunction must demonstrate: (1) that its case has some likelihood of success on the merits; (2) that no adequate remedy at law exists; and (3) that it will suffer irreparable harm if the injunction is not granted. *See Ty, Inc. v. The Jones Group, Inc.*, 237 F.3d 891, 895 (7th Cir. 2001).

If the Court is satisfied that these three conditions have been met, then it must consider the harm that the nonmoving party will suffer if preliminary relief is granted, balancing such harm against the irreparable harm the moving party will suffer if relief is denied. *Id.* Finally, the Court must consider the potential effect on the public interest (non-parties) in denying or granting the injunction. *Id.* The Court then weighs all of these factors, “sitting as would a chancellor in equity,” when it decides whether to grant the injunction. *Id.* (quoting *Abbott Labs. v. Mead Johnson & Co.*, 971 F.2d 6, 11 (7th Cir. 1992)). This process involves engaging in what the Court has deemed “the sliding scale approach” – the more likely the Plaintiffs will succeed on the merits, the less the balance of harms need favor the Plaintiffs’ position. *Id.* The sliding scale approach is not mathematical in nature, rather “it is more properly characterized as subjective and intuitive, one which permits district courts to weigh the competing considerations and mold appropriate relief.” *Id.* at 895-896. The greater the movant’s likelihood of succeeding on the merits, the less the balancing of harms need be in his favor. *See Eli Lilly & Co. v. Natural Answers, Inc.*, 233 F.3d 456, 461 (7th Cir. 2000).

C. Plaintiffs Will Likely Succeed on the Merits

i. Plaintiffs Will Likely Succeed on Their Trademark Infringement and Counterfeiting Claim

A defendant is liable for trademark infringement and counterfeiting under the Lanham Act if it, “without the consent of the registrant, uses in commerce any reproduction, copy, or colorable imitation of a registered mark in connection with the sale, offering for sale, distribution, or advertising of any goods ... which such use[s] is likely to cause confusion, or to cause mistake, or to deceive.” 15 U.S.C. § 1114(1). To prove a prima facie case of infringement, Plaintiffs must show (1) the mark is distinctive enough to be worthy of protection; (2) Defendants are not authorized to use the trademark; and (3) Defendants’ use of the trademark causes a likelihood of confusion as to the origin or sponsorship of Defendants’ products. *See Neopost Industrie B.V. v. PFE Int’l Inc.*, 403 F. Supp. 2d 669, 684 (N.D. Ill. 2005) (citation omitted). Plaintiffs satisfy all three requirements of the Lanham Act to successfully bring a trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim.

Regarding the first two elements, Plaintiffs’ BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark is inherently distinctive and is registered with the United States Patent and Trademark Office on the Principal Register. The BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark has been continuously used since at least July 2014. Knudsen Decl., ¶ 6. The registration for the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark is valid, subsisting, and in full force and effect. *See id.* at Ex.1. The registration for the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark constitutes prima facie evidence of its validity and of Plaintiffs’ exclusive right to use the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark pursuant to 15 U.S.C. § 1057(b). Furthermore, Plaintiffs have not licensed or authorized Defendants to use any of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark, and none of the Defendants are authorized retailers of genuine BUNCH

O BALLOONS Products. *See* Arnaiz Decl., ¶ 5.

Plaintiffs satisfy the third factor, as well. Some courts do not undertake a factor-by-factor analysis under *Polaroid Corp. v. Polarad Electronics Corp.*, 287 F.2d 492, 495 (2d Cir. 1961) because counterfeits, by their very nature, cause confusion. *See Topps Co., Inc. v. Gerrit J. Verburg Co.*, 41 U.S.P.Q.2d 1412, 1417 (S.D.N.Y. 1996) ("Where the marks are identical, and the goods are also identical and directly competitive, the decision can be made directly without a more formal and complete discussion of all of the Polaroid factors."); *Polo Fashions, Inc. v. Craftex, Inc.*, 816 F.2d 145, 148 (4th Cir. 1987) ("Where, as here, one produces counterfeit goods in an apparent attempt to capitalize upon the popularity of, and demand for, another's product, there is a presumption of a likelihood of confusion.").

The Seventh Circuit, however, has enumerated seven factors to determine whether there is a likelihood of confusion: (1) similarity between the marks in appearance and suggestion; (2) similarity of the products; (3) area and manner of concurrent use; (4) degree of care likely to be exercised by consumers; (5) strength of complainant's mark; (6) actual confusion; and, (7) intent of the defendants to palm off their products as that of another. *Eli Lilly*, 233 F.3d at 461-462 (citation omitted). These factors are not a mechanical checklist, and "[t]he proper weight given to each of [the] factors will vary from case to case." *Dorr-Oliver, Inc. v. Fluid-Quip, Inc.*, 94 F.3d 376, 381 (7th Cir. 1996). At the same time, although no one factor is decisive, the similarity of the marks, the intent of the defendant, and evidence of actual confusion are the most important considerations. *G. Heileman Brewing Co., Inc. v. Anheuser-Busch, Inc.*, 873 F.2d 985, 999 (7th Cir. 1989).

In this case, Plaintiffs plainly satisfy the likelihood of confusion test. The Defendants are selling Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products using counterfeit marks identical to the

BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark. As such, the first and second likelihood of confusion factors weigh heavily in favor of Plaintiffs.

Plaintiffs also satisfy the third factor, namely, the area and manner of concurrent use. When considering the third factor, a court looks at “whether there is a relationship in use, promotion, distribution or sales between the goods or services of the parties.” *CAE, Inc. v. Clean Air Eng’g Inc.*, 267 F.3d 660, 681 (7th Cir. 2001). A court also looks to whether the parties used the same channels of commerce, targeted the same general audience, and/or used similar marketing procedures. *Id.* Here, both Plaintiffs and Defendants show the same products using the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark to the same consumers. Compare Complaint, ¶ 9 with Arnaiz Decl., Ex. 1. Thus, because Defendants target the same consumers as Plaintiff, this factor also weighs in favor of Plaintiffs.

Regarding the fourth factor, degree of consumer care, potential consumers purchasing BUNCH O BALLOONS Products are not restricted to a certain specialized, sophisticated group of people. Rather, the consumer base is a diverse group of people. “[W]hen a buyer class is mixed, the standard of care to be exercised by the reasonably prudent purchaser will be equal to that of the least sophisticated consumer in the class.” *Trans Union LLC v. Credit Research, Inc.*, 142 F. Supp. 2d 1029, 1043 (N.D. Ill. 2001) (citation omitted). As such, BUNCH O BALLOONS brand consumers are very likely to be confused, so this factor favors Plaintiffs.

Due to their long-standing use and wide acceptance by the public, the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark has become famous and associated with high quality BUNCH O BALLOONS Products. The BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark is distinctive when applied to the BUNCH O BALLOONS Products. The marks signify to consumers that the products come from Plaintiffs and are manufactured to the highest quality standards. Thus, the fifth factor, the

strength of the marks, also weighs heavily in favor of Plaintiffs.

As for the sixth factor, Plaintiffs do not need to prove likelihood of confusion with evidence of actual confusion; instead, it merely needs to show **some** evidence of potential confusion. *See Libman Co. v. Vining Indus., Inc.*, 69 F.3d 1360, 1363 (7th Cir.1995); *see also Sands, Taylor & Wood Co. v. Quaker Oats Co.*, 978 F.2d 947, 960 (7th Cir. 1992) (the Seventh Circuit has consistently found that “Plaintiffs need not show actual confusion in order to establish likelihood of confusion.”). In this case, actual confusion can be inferred because Defendants are selling counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products in connection with the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark. Because the goods are similar and have identical and similar uses, consumers will be confused and think that Defendants’ products are genuine BUNCH O BALLOONS Products or are sponsored or endorsed by Plaintiffs. This factor weighs in favor of Plaintiffs.

Regarding the seventh and final factor, Defendants are intentionally using the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark to confuse and deceive the consuming public into thinking that Defendants’ Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products are manufactured by or emanate from Plaintiffs. Defendants are purposefully attempting to benefit and trade off Plaintiffs’ goodwill and reputation. Therefore, the final factor regarding Defendants’ intent also weighs heavily in Plaintiffs’ favor.

In sum, each of the seven likelihood of confusion factors weighs heavily in favor of Plaintiffs, and, therefore, Plaintiffs have proved that they have a reasonable likelihood of success on the merits for their trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim.

ii. Plaintiffs Are Likely to Succeed on Their False Designation of Origin Claim

A plaintiff bringing a false designation of origin claim under 15 U.S.C. § 1125(a) must show that: (1) the plaintiff has a protectable trademark; and (2) a likelihood of confusion will exist

as to the origin of the plaintiff's products. *All Star Championship Racing, Inc. v. O'Reilly Auto. Stores, Inc.*, 2013 WL 1701871, *10 (C.D. Ill. Apr. 18, 2013) (citing *Johnny Blastoff, Inc. v. Los Angeles Rams Football Co.*, 188 F. 3d 427, 436 (7th Cir. 1999)). This is the same test that is used for determining whether trademark infringement has occurred under the Lanham Act. *See Neopost*, 403 F. Supp. 2d at 684. Because the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark is a registered mark, and Plaintiffs have established a likelihood of success on the merits of their trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim against Defendants, as shown above, a likelihood of success on the merits for Plaintiffs' false designation of origin claim is also established.

iii. Plaintiffs Are Likely to Succeed on Their Illinois Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act Claim

In Illinois, courts resolve unfair competition and deceptive trade practices claims "according to the principles set forth under the Lanham Act." *Spex, Inc. v. Joy of Spex, Inc.*, 847 F. Supp. 567, 579 (N.D. Ill. 1994). Illinois courts look to federal case law and apply the same analysis to state infringement claims. *Id.* at 579 (citation omitted). The determination as to whether there is a likelihood of confusion is similar under both the Lanham Act and the Illinois Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act. *Am. Broad. Co. v. Maljack Prods., Inc.*, 34 F. Supp. 2d 665, 681 (N.D. Ill. 1998). Because Plaintiffs have established a likelihood of success on the merits of their trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim against Defendants, as shown above, and the standard is the same under Illinois law, Plaintiffs have established a likelihood of success on the merits for their Illinois Uniform Deceptive Trade Practices Act claim.

D. There Is No Adequate Remedy at Law, and Plaintiffs Will Suffer Irreparable Harm in the Absence of Preliminary Relief

The Seventh Circuit has "clearly and repeatedly held that damage to a trademark holder's

goodwill can constitute irreparable injury for which the trademark owner has no adequate legal remedy.” *Re/Max N. Cent., Inc. v. Cook*, 272 F.3d 424, 432 (7th Cir. 2001) (citing *Eli Lilly & Co. v. Natural Answers, Inc.*, 233 F.3d 456, 469 (7th Cir. 2000)); *Meridian Mut. Ins. Co. v. Meridian Ins. Group, Inc.*, 128 F.3d 1111, 1114 (7th Cir. 1997); *Wesley–Jessen Division of Schering Corp. v. Bausch & Lomb Inc.*, 698 F.2d 862, 867 (7th Cir.1983). Irreparable injury “almost inevitably follows” when there is a high probability of confusion because such injury “may not be fully compensable in damages.” *Helene Curtis Industries, Inc. v. Church & Dwight Co., Inc.*, 560 F.2d 1325, 1332 (7th Cir. 1977) (citation omitted). “The most corrosive and irreparable harm attributable to trademark infringement is the inability of the victim to control the nature and quality of the defendants’ goods.” *Int’l Kennel Club of Chicago, Inc. v. Mighty Star, Inc.*, 846 F.2d 1079, 1092 (7th Cir. 1988); *see also 4 Callmann on Unfair Competition, Trademarks and Monopolies* § 88.3(b) at 205 (3d ed. 1970). As such, monetary damages are likely to be inadequate compensation for such harm. *Ideal Indus., Inc. v. Gardner Bender, Inc.*, 612 F.2d 1018, 1026 (7th Cir. 1979).

Defendants’ unauthorized use of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark has and continues to irreparably harm Plaintiffs through diminished goodwill and brand confidence, damage to Plaintiffs’ reputation, loss of exclusivity, and loss of future sales. *See Knudsen Decl.*, ¶¶ 10-14.

The extent of the harm to Plaintiffs’ reputation and goodwill and the possible diversion of customers due to loss in brand confidence are both irreparable and incalculable, thus warranting an immediate halt to Defendants’ infringing activities through injunctive relief. *See Promatek Industries, Ltd. v. Equitrac Corp.*, 300 F.3d 808, 813 (7th Cir. 2002) (Finding that damage to Plaintiffs’ goodwill was irreparable harm for which Plaintiffs had no adequate remedy at law); *Gateway Eastern Railway Co. v. Terminal Railroad Assoc. of St. Louis*, 35 F.3d 1134, 1140 (7th

Cir. 1994) (“[S]howing injury to goodwill can constitute irreparable harm that is not compensable by an award of money damages.”). Plaintiffs will suffer immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage if an *ex parte* Temporary Restraining Order is not issued in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(b)(1). *See* Knudsen Decl., ¶¶ 10-14. As such, Plaintiffs should be granted preliminary relief.

E. The Balancing of Equities Tips in Plaintiffs’ Favor

As noted above, if the Court is satisfied that Plaintiffs have demonstrated (1) a likelihood of success on the merits, (2) no adequate remedy at law, and (3) the threat of irreparable harm if preliminary relief is not granted, then it must next consider the harm that Defendants will suffer if preliminary relief is granted, balancing such harm against the irreparable harm Plaintiffs will suffer if relief is denied. *Ty, Inc.*, 237 F.3d at 895.

As willful infringers, Defendants are entitled to little equitable consideration. “When considering the balance of hardships between the parties in infringement cases, courts generally favor the trademark owner.” *Krause Int’l Inc. v. Reed Elsevier, Inc.*, 866 F. Supp. 585, 587-88 (D.D.C. 1994). This is because “[o]ne who adopts the marks of another for similar goods acts at his own peril since he has no claim to the profits or advantages thereby derived.” *Burger King Corp. v. Majeed*, 805 F. Supp. 994, 1006 (S.D. Fla. 1992) (internal quotation marks omitted). Therefore, the balance of harms “cannot favor a defendant whose injury results from the knowing infringement of the Plaintiffs’ trademark.” *Malarkey-Taylor Assocs., Inc. v. Cellular Telecomms. Indus. Ass’n*, 929 F. Supp. 473, 478 (D.D.C. 1996).

As Plaintiffs have demonstrated, Defendants have been profiting from the sale of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products. Thus, the balance of equities tips decisively in Plaintiffs’ favor. As such, equity requires that Defendants be ordered to cease their unlawful

conduct.

F. Issuance of the Injunction Is in the Public Interest

An injunction in these circumstances is in the public interest because it will prevent consumer confusion and stop Defendants from violating federal trademark law. The public is currently under the false impression that Defendants are operating their Defendant Internet Stores with Plaintiffs' approval and endorsement. An injunction serves the public interest in this case "because enforcement of the trademark laws prevents consumer confusion." *Eli Lilly*, 233 F.3d at 469.

Federal courts have long held that "the trademark laws ... are concerned not alone with the protection of a property right existing in an individual, but also with the protection of the public from fraud and deceit." *Stahly, Inc. v. M.H. Jacobs Co.*, 183 F.2d 914, 917 (7th Cir. 1950) (citations omitted). The public interest is further served by protecting "the synonymous right of a trademark owner to control his product's reputation." *James Burrough Ltd. v. Sign of the Beefeater, Inc.*, 540 F.2d 266, 274 (7th Cir. 1976); *see also Shashi, Inc. v. Ramada Worldwide, Inc.*, No. 7:05-cv-00016-JGW-mfu, 2005 WL 552593, *4 (W.D. Va. Mar. 1, 2005) ("It is in the best interest of the public for the court to defend the integrity of the intellectual property system and to prevent consumer confusion").

In this case, the injury to the public is significant, and the injunctive relief that Plaintiffs seek is specifically intended to remedy that injury by dispelling the public confusion created by Defendants' actions. The public has the right not to be confused and defrauded as to the source of the goods and services offered by Defendants, or as to the identity of the owner of trademarks and service marks used in connection with those goods and services. Unless Defendants' unauthorized use of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark is enjoined, the public will continue to be confused

and misled by Defendants' conduct.

For these reasons, it is respectfully submitted that granting Plaintiffs' Motion for Entry of a Temporary Restraining Order is in the public interest.

IV. THE EQUITABLE RELIEF SOUGHT IS APPROPRIATE

In addition to this Court's inherent authority to issue injunctive relief, the Lanham Act authorizes courts to issue injunctive relief "according to the principles of equity and upon such terms as the court may deem reasonable, to prevent the violation of any right of the registrant of a mark" 15 U.S.C. § 1116(a). Furthermore, Rule 65(b) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure provides that a court may issue a temporary restraining order without notice where facts show that the movant will suffer immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage before the adverse party can be heard in opposition. Moreover, under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2)(C), this Court has the power to bind any third parties, such as domain name registries and financial institutions, who are in active concert with the Defendants or who aid and abet Defendants and are given actual notice of the order. Fed. R. Civ. P. 65. The facts in this case warrant such relief.

A. A Temporary Restraining Order Immediately Enjoining Defendants'

Unauthorized and Unlawful Use of Plaintiffs' Marks Is Appropriate

Plaintiffs requests a temporary injunction requiring the Defendants to immediately cease all use of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark or substantially similar marks on or in connection with all Defendant Internet Stores. Such relief is necessary to stop the ongoing harm to the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark and associated goodwill, as well as harm to consumers, and to prevent the Defendants from continuing to benefit from their unauthorized use of the BUNCH O BALLOONS Trademark.

The need for *ex parte* relief is magnified in today's global economy where counterfeiters

can operate over the Internet in an anonymous fashion. Plaintiffs are currently unaware of both the true identities and locations of the Defendants, as well as other Defendant Internet Stores used to distribute Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products.

Many courts have authorized immediate injunctive relief in similar cases involving the unauthorized use of trademarks and counterfeiting. *See, e.g. Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:18-CV-1098, Document #: 14 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 20, 2018) (granting *ex parte* temporary restraining order); *Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:15-CV-03491, Document #: 21 (N.D. Ill. Apr. 27, 2015) (same); *see also, Ford Motor Co. v. Lapertosa*, 126 F. Supp. 2d 463 (E.D. Mich. 2001) (enjoining Defendant from “using in any way the Internet domain name ‘fordrecalls.com’”); *Kraft Food Holdings, Inc. v. Helm*, 205 F. Supp. 2d 942, 956 (N.D. Ill. 2002) (granting preliminary injunction requiring defendant to “immediately” remove all references to versions of Plaintiffs’ mark, including removing all references “from metatags, metanames or any other keywords on his websites”).

B. Transferring the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs’ Control Is Appropriate

As a part of the Temporary Restraining Order, Plaintiffs also seek temporary transfer of the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs’ control in order to disable the counterfeit websites and electronically publish notice of this case to Defendants. Defendants involved in domain name litigation easily can, and often will, change the ownership of a domain name or continue operating the website while the case is pending. Accordingly, to preserve the status quo and ensure the possibility of eventual effective relief, courts in trademark cases involving domain names regularly grant the relief requested herein. *See, e.g., Board of Directors of Sapphire Bay Condos. W. v.*

Simpson, 129 F. App'x 711 (3d Cir. 2005) (affirming District Court's granting of the preliminary injunction ordering defendant to "cancel his registration of the domain name and refrain from using the name, or any derivative thereof, for any Web site under his ownership or substantial control"); *Philip Morris U.S.A., Inc. v. Otamedia Ltd.*, 331 F. Supp. 2d 228, 246 (S.D.N.Y. 2004) (granting order transferring ownership of Defendant's Internet domain names to Plaintiff); *Ford Motor Co.*, 126 F. Supp. 2d at 466 (granting Plaintiffs' preliminary injunction because, among other things, "Defendant's misappropriation of the goodwill [Plaintiff] has developed in the mark by registering the [infringing] Internet domain name ... significantly tarnishes [Plaintiffs'] reputation").

As such, Plaintiffs respectfully request that, as part of the Temporary Restraining Order, the Court require the relevant registries and/or registrars for the Defendant Domain Names to transfer the Defendant Domain Names to Plaintiffs.

C. Preventing the Fraudulent Transfer of Assets Is Appropriate

Plaintiffs request an *ex parte* restraint of Defendants' assets so that Plaintiffs' right to an equitable accounting of Defendants' profits from sales of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products is not impaired. Issuing an *ex parte* restraint will ensure Defendants' compliance. If such a restraint is not granted in this case, Defendants may disregard their responsibilities and fraudulently transfer financial assets to overseas accounts before a restraint is ordered. Specifically, it appears that the Defendants in this case hold most of their assets in China, making it easy to hide or dispose of assets, which will render an accounting by Plaintiffs meaningless.

Courts have the inherent authority to issue a prejudgment asset restraint when plaintiffs' complaint seeks relief in equity. *Animale Grp. Inc. v. Sunny's Perfume Inc.*, 256 F. App'x 707, 709 (5th Cir. 2007); *Levi Strauss & Co. v. Sunrise Int'l Trading Inc.*, 51 F.3d 982, 987 (11th Cir. 1995); *Reebok Int'l Ltd. v. Marnatech Enters., Inc.*, 970 F.2d 552, 559 (9th Cir. 1992). In addition,

Plaintiffs have shown a strong likelihood of succeeding on the merits of their trademark infringement and counterfeiting claim, so according to the Lanham Act 15 U.S.C. § 1117(a)(1), Plaintiffs are entitled, “subject to the principles of equity, to recover ... defendant’s profits.” Plaintiffs’ Complaint seeks, among other relief, that Defendants account for and pay to Plaintiffs all profits realized by Defendants by reason of Defendants’ unlawful acts. Therefore, this Court has the inherent equitable authority to grant Plaintiffs’ request for a prejudgment asset freeze to preserve the relief sought by Plaintiffs.

The Northern District of Illinois previously entered an asset restraining order in a trademark infringement case brought by a tobacco company against owners of a store selling counterfeit cigarettes. *Lorillard Tobacco Co. v. Montrose Wholesale Candies*, 2005 WL 3115892, at *13 (N.D. Ill. Nov. 8, 2005). The Court, citing *Grupo Mexicano de Desarrollo, S.A. v. Alliance Bond Fund*, 527 U.S. 308 (1999), recognized that it was explicitly allowed to issue a restraint on assets for lawsuits seeking equitable relief. *Id.* (citing *Grupo Mexicano*, 527 U.S. at 325 (citing *Deckert v. Independence Shares Corp.*, 311 U.S. 282 (1940))). Because the tobacco company sought a disgorgement of the storeowner’s profits, an equitable remedy, the Court found that it had the authority to freeze the storeowner’s assets. *Id.*; *see also Animale Grp. Inc. v. Sunny’s Perfume Inc.*, 256 F. App’x 707, 709 (5th Cir. 2007); *Levi Strauss & Co. v. Sunrise Int’l Trading Inc.*, 51 F.3d 982, 987 (11th Cir. 1995); *Reebok Int’l Ltd. v. Marnatech Enters., Inc.*, 970 F.2d 552, 559 (9th Cir. 1992); *CSC Holdings, Inc. v. Redisi*, 309 F.3d 988 (7th Cir. 2002) (“since the assets in question ... were the profits of the [defendants] made by unlawfully stealing [the plaintiffs’] services, the freeze was appropriate and may remain in place pending final disposition of this case.”); *accord* 5 J. Thomas McCarthy, *McCarthy on Trademarks and Unfair Competition* § 30:40 (4th ed. 2013).

Plaintiffs have shown a likelihood of success on the merits, an immediate and irreparable

harm suffered as a result of Defendants' activities, and that, unless Defendants' assets are frozen, Defendants will likely hide or move their ill-gotten funds to offshore bank accounts. Accordingly, the granting of an injunction preventing the transfer of Defendants' assets is proper.

D. Plaintiffs Are Entitled to Expedited Discovery

The Supreme Court has held that "federal courts have the power to order, at their discretion, the discovery of facts necessary to ascertain their competency to entertain the merits." *Vance v. Rumsfeld*, No. 1:06-cv-06964, 2007 WL 4557812, *6 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 21, 2007) (quoting *Oppenheimer Fund, Inc. v. Sanders*, 437 U.S. 340, 351, 98 S. Ct. 2380 (1978)). A district court has wide latitude in determining whether to grant a party's request for discovery. *Id.* (citation omitted). Furthermore, courts have broad power over discovery and may permit discovery in order to aid in the identification of unknown defendants. *See* Fed. R. Civ. P. 26(b)(2); *Gillespie v. Civiletti*, 629 F.2d 637, 642 (9th Cir. 1980).

As described above, Defendants are using third-party payment processors such as Visa, PayPal, and Western Union, which helps to increase their anonymity by interposing a third party between the consumer and Defendants. Without being able to discover Defendants' bank and payment system accounts, any asset restraint would be of limited value because Plaintiffs would not know the entities upon whom to serve the order.

Plaintiffs respectfully request expedited discovery to discover bank and payment system accounts Defendants use for their counterfeit sales operations. The discovery requested on an expedited basis in Plaintiffs' Proposed Temporary Restraining Order has been limited to include only what is essential to prevent further irreparable harm. Discovery of these financial accounts so that they can be frozen is necessary to ensure that these activities will be contained.

Under Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 65(d)(2)(C), this Court has the power to bind any

third party who is in active concert with the Defendants that is given notice of the order to provide expedited discovery in this action. Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(d)(2)(C). Plaintiffs' counsel is aware that the same third parties, in previous lawsuits, have worked with trademark owners and is not aware of any reason that Defendants or third parties cannot comply with these expedited discovery requests without undue burden. Kurtz Decl., ¶ 8. Further, third parties have in fact complied with similar requests in previous similar cases. *Id.* More importantly, as Defendants have engaged in many deceptive practices in hiding their identities and accounts, Plaintiffs' seizure and asset restraint in the Temporary Restraining Order may have little meaningful effect without the requested relief. Accordingly, Plaintiffs respectfully request that expedited discovery be granted.

E. Service of Process by E-mail and/or Electronic Publication Is Warranted in this Case

Pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(f)(3), Plaintiffs request this Court's authorization to serve process by electronically publishing a link to the Complaint, the Temporary Restraining Order, and other relevant documents on a website to which the Defendant Domain Names that are transferred to Plaintiffs' control will redirect, and/or by sending an e-mail to all e-mail addresses identified by Plaintiffs and any e-mail addresses provided for Defendants by third parties that includes a link to said website. Plaintiffs submit that providing notice via electronic publication and/or e-mail, along with any notice that Defendants receive from domain name registrars and payment processors, is reasonably calculated under all circumstances to apprise Defendants of the pendency of the action and afford them the opportunity to present their objections.

Electronic service is appropriate and necessary in this case because the Defendants: (1) have provided false names and physical address information in their registrations for the Defendant

Domain Names in order to conceal their locations and avoid liability for their unlawful conduct; and (2) rely primarily on electronic communications to communicate with their registrars and customers, demonstrating the reliability of this method of communication by which the registrants of the Defendant Domain Names may be apprised of the pendency of this action. Authorizing service of process solely via e-mail and/or electronic publication will benefit all parties and the Court by ensuring that Defendants receive prompt notice of this action, thus allowing this action to move forward expeditiously. Absent the ability to serve Defendants in this manner, Plaintiffs will almost certainly be left without the ability to pursue a final judgment.

According to Section 4.1 of the Registrar Accreditation Agreement established by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (“ICANN”), an individual or entity that registers a domain name is required to “provide to ICANN and publish on its website its accurate contact details including a valid email and mailing address.” *See* Kurtz Decl., ¶ 10. An investigation of the WhoIs information for each of the respective Defendant Domain Names for which registration information is available reveals that Defendants appear to have ignored the applicable ICANN regulations and provided false physical address information to the domain name registrars in order to avoid full liability. Kurtz Decl., ¶ 11. For example, many of Defendants’ names and physical addresses used to register the Defendant Domain Names are incomplete, contain randomly typed letters, fail to include cities or states, or use privacy services that conceal this information. *Id.* Identical contact information among multiple domain names also suggests that many of the aliases used to register the Defendant Domain Names are used by the same individual or entity. *Id.*

Despite providing false physical addresses, the registrants of the Defendant Domain Names must generally provide an accurate e-mail address so that their registrars may communicate with

them regarding issues related to the purchase, transfer, and maintenance of the various accounts. Likewise, Online Marketplace Account operators accepting PayPal must provide a valid email address to customers for completing payment. Moreover, it is necessary for merchants, such as the registrants of the Defendant Domain Names, who operate entirely online, to visit their Internet Store to ensure it is functioning and to communicate with customers electronically. As such, it is far more likely that Defendants can be served electronically than through traditional service of process methods.

Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(f)(3) allows this Court to authorize service of process by any means not prohibited by international agreement as the Court directs. *Rio Props., Inc. v. Rio Int'l Interlink*, 284 F.3d 1007, 1014 (9th Cir. 2002). The Ninth Circuit in *Rio Properties* held, “without hesitation,” that e-mail service of an online business defendant “was constitutionally acceptable.” *Id.* at 1017. The Court reached this conclusion, in part, because the defendant conducted its business over the Internet, used e-mail regularly in its business, and encouraged parties to contact it via e-mail. *Id.*

Similarly, a number of Courts, including this Court, have held that alternate forms of service pursuant to Rule 4(f)(3), including e-mail service, are appropriate and may be the only means of effecting service of process “when faced with an international e-business scofflaw.” *Id.* at 1018; see e.g. *MacLean-Fogg Co. v. Ningbo Fastlink Equip. Co., Ltd.*, No. 1:08-cv-02593, 2008 WL 5100414, *2 (N.D. Ill. Dec. 1, 2008) (holding e-mail and facsimile service appropriate); *Popular Enters., LLC v. Webcom Media Group, Inc.*, 225 F.R.D. 560, 563 (E.D. Tenn. 2004) (quoting *Rio*, 284 F.3d at 1018) (allowing e-mail service); see also *Juniper Networks, Inc. v. Bahattab*, No. 1:07-cv-01771-PLF-AK, 2008 WL 250584, *1-2, (D.D.C. Jan. 30, 2008) (citing *Rio*, 284 F.3d at 1017-1018; other citations omitted) (holding that “in certain circumstances ...

service of process via electronic mail ... is appropriate and may be authorized by the Court under Rule 4(f)(3) of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure”).

Plaintiffs submit that allowing service solely by e-mail and/or electronic publication in the present case is appropriate and comports with constitutional notions of due process, particularly given the decision by the registrants of the Defendant Domain Names to conduct their Internet-based activities anonymously.

Furthermore, Rule 4 does not require that a party attempt service of process by other methods enumerated in Rule 4(f) before petitioning the court for alternative relief under Rule 4(f)(3). *Rio Props. v. Rio Intern. Interlink*, 284 F.3d at 1014-15. As the *Rio Properties* Court explained, Rule 4(f) does not create a hierarchy of preferred methods of service of process. *Id.* at 1014. To the contrary, the plain language of the Rule requires only that service be directed by the court and not be prohibited by international agreement. There are no other limitations or requirements. *Id.* Alternative service under Rule 4(f)(3) is neither a “last resort” nor “extraordinary relief,” but is rather one means among several by which an international defendant may be served. *Id.* As such, this Court may allow Plaintiffs to serve the Defendants via electronic publication and/or e-mail.

Additionally, Plaintiffs are unable to determine the exact physical whereabouts or identities of the registrants of the Defendant Domain Names due to their provision of false and incomplete street addresses. Plaintiffs, however, have good cause to suspect the registrants of the respective Defendant Domain Names are residents of China. The United States and the People’s Republic of China are both signatories to the Hague Convention on the Service Abroad of Judicial and Extra Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Matters (the “Hague Convention”). *See Kurtz Decl.*, ¶ 12. The Hague Convention does not preclude service by email, and the declarations to the Hague

Convention filed by China do not appear to expressly prohibit email service. *Id.* Additionally, according to Article 1 of The Hague Convention, the “convention shall not apply where the address of the person to be served with the document is not known.” Kurtz Decl., ¶ 12 and Ex. 5.

As such, United States District Courts, including in this District, routinely permit alternative service of process notwithstanding the applicability of the Hague Convention. *See e.g.*, *In re Potash Antitrust Litig.*, 667 F. Supp. 2d 907, 930 (N.D. Ill. 2009) (“plaintiffs are not required to first attempt service through the Hague Convention.”); *see also In re LDK Solar Secs. Litig.*, 2008 WL 2415186,*2 (N.D. Cal. Jun. 12, 2008) (authorizing alternative means of service on Chinese defendants without first attempting “potentially fruitless” service through the Hague Convention’s Chinese Central Authority); *Nanya Tech. Corp. v. Fujitsu Ltd.*, No. 1:06-cv-00025, 2007 WL 269087, *6 (D. Guam Jan. 26, 2007) (Hague Convention, to which Japan is a signatory, did not prohibit e-mail service upon Japanese defendant); *Popular Enters., LLC v. Webcom Media Group, Inc.*, *supra*, 225 F.R.D. at 562 (recognizing that, while “communication via e-mail and over the internet is comparatively new, such communication has been zealously embraced within the business community”).

In addition, the law of the People’s Republic of China does not appear to prohibit electronic service of process. *See* Kurtz Decl., ¶ 13 and Ex. 6. The proposed Temporary Restraining Order provides for issuance of single original summons¹ in the name of THE INDIVIDUALS, CORPORATIONS, LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES, PARTNERSHIPS, AND UNINCORPORATED ASSOCIATIONS IDENTIFIED ON SCHEDULE A HERETO” that shall

¹ The Advisory Committee Notes to the 1993 Amendment to Rule 4(b) states, “If there are multiple defendants, the Plaintiffs may secure issuance of a summons for each defendant, or may serve copies of a single original bearing the names of multiple defendants if the addressee of the summons is effectively identified.” Fed. R. Civ. P. 4(b) advisory committee notes (1993).

apply to all Defendants in accordance with Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 4(b). As such, Plaintiffs respectfully request this Court's permission to serve Defendants via e-mail and/or electronic publication.

V. A BOND SHOULD SECURE THE INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

The posting of security upon issuance of a temporary restraining order or preliminary injunction is vested in the Court's sound discretion. *Rathmann Grp. v. Tanenbaum*, 889 F.2d 787, 789 (8th Cir. 1989); *Hoechst Diafoil Co. v. Nan Ya Plastics Corp.*, 174 F.3d 411, 421 (4th Cir. 1999); Fed. R. Civ. P. 65(c). Because of the strong and unequivocal nature of Plaintiffs' evidence of counterfeiting, infringement, and unfair competition, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court require Plaintiffs to post a bond of no more than Ten Thousand U.S. Dollars (\$10,000.00). *See, e.g., Iron Maiden Holdings Ltd. v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:18-CV-1098, Docket Entry #: 19 (N.D. Ill. Feb. 27, 2018) (\$10,000.00 bond) (document not scanned); *Chrome Hearts LLC v. Partnerships & Unincorporated Associations Identified on Schedule "A"*, No. 1:15-CV-03491, No Docket Entry # (N.D. Ill. May 4, 2015) (same) (same).

VI. CONCLUSION

Plaintiffs' business, their BUNCH O BALLOONS brand, and consumers are being irreparably harmed. Without entry of the requested relief, the sale of Counterfeit BUNCH O BALLOONS Products will continue to lead prospective purchasers and others to believe that Defendants' products have been manufactured by or emanate from Plaintiffs. Therefore, entry of an *ex parte* order is necessary to protect Plaintiffs' trademark rights, to prevent further harm to Plaintiffs and the consuming public, and to preserve the status quo. In view of the foregoing and consistent with previous similar cases, Plaintiffs respectfully request that this Court enter a

Temporary Restraining Order in the form submitted herewith and set a status hearing before the expiration of the Temporary Restraining Order at which hearing Plaintiffs intends to present a motion for preliminary injunction.

Dated: November 14, 2018

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, the undersigned attorney, certify that I electronically filed the foregoing document with the Clerk of the Court using the CM/ECF system on November 14, 2018.

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