The Case of the Counterfeit Nike™

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Abstract

These two sets of partial concentric circles with the inter-pigging straight base and a perimeter of small square elements are immediately recognizable by any experienced forensic examiner as the Nike Air Force XXV (AFI ’82) model. This model was introduced in 1982 by Nike, Inc. and was marketed heavily in the 1980s. Thus, it is associated with a high profile in the Counterfeit Trade. The shoe was manufactured in China and was copied by the Counterfeiters in 2003. It was the first Nike model to feature the Nike Air cushioning technology.

Case Overview

In the particular case, several photographs of questioned footwear impressions were received into the laboratory along with three (3) pairs of suspect shoes. Analysis of some of the questioned footwear impressions revealed that similar design elements of the Nike Air Force XXV (AFI ’82) were present. All three (3) suspect shoes were labeled as “Nike” brand shoes, size 10 US, or the equivalent size. One (1) pair of suspect shoes was from a retailer, and the other two (2) pairs were from a suspect. The suspect, a member of a street gang, was wearing one (1) pair of the suspect Nike Air Force XXV shoes when he was arrested. The retailer was wearing the same manufacturer, model, and size. It is understood that in order to have a particular shoe “match,” one will need to look beyond the gross design characteristics that may differ in shoes of the same manufacturer. Other characteristics, such as wear and defect manufacturer characteristics, especially when the questioned impression is different from, may be looked into in order to establish a particular characteristic for the suspect pair of shoes.

The tests were conducted on the pair of shoes in the case. The similar design elements were determined. Some of the questionable footwear impressions revealed similar design elements and characteristics of the Nike Air Force XXV shoes. The examiner would like to establish a complex pattern, but the examiner is aware that this is impossible to be accurate. The examiner is aware that the Nike Air Force XXV shoes were manufactured to have similar design elements. The examiner is aware that the Nike Air Force XXV shoes were manufactured to have similar design elements. The examiner is aware that the Nike Air Force XXV shoes were manufactured to have similar design elements. The examiner is aware that the Nike Air Force XXV shoes were manufactured to have similar design elements.

Information was received from the manufacturer that the Nike Air Force XXV shoes were manufactured to have similar design elements. This information was used to determine if the questioned footwear impressions were consistent with the Nike Air Force XXV shoes.

Conclusion

As an examiner, it is important not to get carried away with something that may not be of the same style. Care must be taken to ensure that the examiner does not overstep the boundaries of the case. By having a clear understanding of the case, the examiner can make the correct decisions.

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