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# Lakewood man arrested after probe links him to \$1.6M counterfeit shirt scheme

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Written by **Charles Webster** | Staff Writer

**LAKEWOOD** — A township man was nabbed Tuesday with a warehouse full of counterfeit Ralph Lauren Polo shirts valued at about \$1.6 million after he tried selling much of the merchandise to an undercover agent working for the popular fashion designer according to prosecutors.

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Steven Marc Binder, 35, from the first block of Hillside Boulevard, was arrested on Tuesday by detectives from the Prosecutor's Office and township police department with the assistance of the undercover agent working for Ralph Lauren Polo outside the Prospect Street warehouse where they discovered he had more than 13,000 counterfeit Ralph Lauren short-sleeved Polo shirts, according to Deputy Chief Michael Mohel of the Ocean County Prosecutor's Office.

Binder was arrested at the culmination of an investigation that was started in late March by an undercover agent contracted by Polo Ralph Lauren after he was linked to a lot of counterfeit shirts offered for sale through a LinkedIn account, Mohel said.

Binder declined to comment about the charges lodged against him when he was reached by phone Wednesday afternoon.

The undercover agent told investigators, Binder represented the items at a cost of \$13 per item when he attempted to negotiate the sale of 7,500 counterfeit shirts for \$85,000,

with a \$937,500 retail value, Mohel said.

The undercover also agent told investigators, Binder indicated the counterfeit items were manufactured in a factory in Pakistan, Mohel added.

"There are no Ralph Lauren Polo shirts being produced in a Pakistan factory," Mohel said.



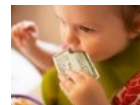
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Investigators found hundreds of boxes containing about 13,000 counterfeit shirts with a \$1.6 million retail value inside the Prospect Street warehouse, Mohel said.

Binder was released after posting a \$200,000 bond with no option to post 10 percent as set by state Superior Court Judge Stephanie Wauters on Wednesday.

Anyone with any information is asked to call Ocean County Detective Mark Malinowski at 732-729-2027 or Lakewood Detective Steve Wexler at 732-363-0200.

**Charles Webster: 732-643-4255; [cwebster@njpressmedia.com](mailto:cwebster@njpressmedia.com)**

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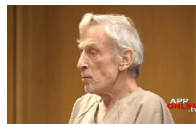
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