

TRUE GRIT

The general counsel of True Religion, which makes the jeans du jour, takes aim at knockoffs.

DON'T EXPECT TO FIND DEBORAH

Greaves chained to her desk resolving contract disputes. The general counsel for True Religion Apparel, Inc., also tours factories in China and raids warehouses alongside police. Her unusual responsibilities reflect Greaves's growing stature in the global campaign to end counterfeiting.

When she isn't managing the Vernon, California-based denim company's three-person legal department, Greaves devotes time to the International AntiCounterfeiting Coalition (IACC), a Washington, D.C.-based advocacy group. She serves as a member of its board of directors and, since 2010, has chaired the organization's task force on China, which is formulating new approaches to curbing Chinese counterfeiting.

As a longtime lawyer to the fashion industry, Greaves has seen firsthand the harm that knockoffs can cause. Prior to joining True Religion in 2007,

she was general counsel at Blue Holdings, Inc., a now-defunct designer and manufacturer of high-end fashions. At both companies she's seen counterfeiters tarnish brands and siphon off revenue. Losing profits to counterfeiters is a particularly big problem for True Religion. Its coveted jeans are made almost exclusively in the United States, which isn't cheap.

Counterfeiting is a daunting problem, but Greaves has arrived at some practical solutions. She trains police officials on how to spot fakes and gather evidence against counterfeiters. She accompanies them on raids. As a leading member of trade organizations, she lobbies Congress to reform trademark and copyright laws. She's even flown to China, where she met with local government officials and toured factories and markets with private investigators.



**GC DEBORAH GREAVES
WORKS WITH LAW
ENFORCEMENT AND
TRADE GROUPS TO ATTACK
COUNTERFEITING IN THE U.S.
AND ABROAD.**

"There are a lot of different cultural, economic, and legal issues that play into why China is such a hotbed for counterfeiting," she says. "I don't think you can appreciate how huge the problem is until you go over there."

Her efforts have won Greaves accolades from law enforcement. "She's been one of the best advocates in seeking legislative change," says Sergeant Janice Munson of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, who is part of a special anticounterfeiting team. "It's very key to us that we have the support of various brands. Without them, we wouldn't be as successful as we are."

Now, through the IACC's task force, Greaves is speaking out on behalf of not just True Religion, but a wide range of American manufacturers. Her attention is increasingly focused on the Internet, which has become a popular way for counterfeiters to ply their wares. "There's more anonymity online," Greaves says. And, because online customers typically only buy a few items, "the shipments are smaller, so it's easier to fly under the radar of law enforcement."

To clamp down on the trend, Greaves and other members of her task force are lobbying Chinese officials to support laws that would make it easier to shut

countries, including the United States, that put ISPs on the hook if they ignore so-called takedown notices from copyright holders.

Another reform that Greaves is backing would require Chinese ISPs to respond to those takedown notices from U.S. companies in English. That's only fair, Greaves says, because many of these Chinese Web site scams are in English and cater to English-speaking markets. "It's interesting that all the content is in English, but when the infringement notice arrives, they can't respond [in English]," she says.

When battling phony Web sites, Greaves says she sometimes "brings in the big guns"—brand

Monitor. "If your attention wanders for a moment, they will find a way to attack you at your most vulnerable point."

Both Greaves and Felman acknowledge that until China advances as an innovator and fully embraces the idea of intellectual property, eradicating counterfeiting will be an uphill battle. In the meantime, they call for constant vigilance. Greaves sums it up this way: "If you keep whacking for long enough and hard enough, [counterfeiters] are going to say, 'You know what, it's just not worth the hassle to deal with this brand. Let's just go on to somebody who is not going to be so persistent.' "

—JAN WOLFE

It's key "that we have **THE SUPPORT OF VARIOUS BRANDS,**" says Sergeant Janice Munson of the L.A. sheriff's department.

down scam Web sites based in the country. "We'd like Chinese laws to give brand owners the ability to take more proactive measures against infringing Web sites," she says. "Right now it's very difficult to get responses to notices of infringement."

One proposed reform would hold Chinese Internet service providers (ISPs) liable for copyright infringement on the Web sites they host. If passed, it would bring China in line with other

protection firms like MarkMonitor, Inc. "They have relationships with different Internet hosts, and so the types of notices they send are taken with more professional respect," she says.

To Greaves's dismay, even successful takedown notices can't prevent Internet operators from moving to a different domain name or a different ISP. "Online counterfeiters are very adaptive animals," says Frederick Felman, chief marketing officer of Mark-