



# Coupon Counterfeiters Arrested

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[www.couponinformationcenter.com](http://www.couponinformationcenter.com)

Contact: Bud Miller (703) 684-5307

PHOENIX, Arizona- Robin Ramirez, Amiko (Amy) Fountain, and Marilyn Johnson were arrested by the Phoenix Police Department which executed search warrants at three locations as part of a multi-agency investigation of an alleged organized criminal enterprise that sold counterfeit coupons via [www.savvyshoppersite.com](http://www.savvyshoppersite.com), eBay, and other Internet venues. Four properties and 21 vehicles were seized during the raid. If convicted on all charges, the defendants face prison time and numerous financial penalties, including, but not limited to, fines and restitution.

Bud Miller, CPP, Executive Director of the Coupon Information Center said, "We'd like to thank Chief Daniel Garcia and Sergeant David Lake of the Phoenix Police Department for their leadership on this case, as well as the Federal Bureau of Investigation, ICE, FinCen, US Postal Inspectors, and Maricopa County Attorney's Office for their efforts on this case. This investigation is an excellent example of the public-private partnership made possible by the efforts of CIC, The Hershey Company, PepsiCo, Procter & Gamble, and other CIC Members. We look forward to all the facts coming to light and for justice being served to any individuals and organizations who may have created, sold or used counterfeit coupons or otherwise violated the victims' intellectual property rights."

"This case clearly demonstrates the dangers of purchasing coupons on the Internet, whether it is from independent websites, e-mail or from online auctions," Miller added. "Coupon buyers expose themselves to the possibility of becoming involved with counterfeits, stolen property or other criminal activities. They may also expose themselves to additional risk by providing their names, home addresses and financial information to organized crime rings."

Coupons are a great way to save money, but, as with anything of value, can be subject to abuse from time-to-time. Fortunately, consumers can easily protect themselves by following a few simple guidelines:

1. Never pay money for coupons or coupon related "opportunities"
2. Beware of invalid disclaimers, such as "You are not paying for the coupons, but for the time and effort it took to clip them."
3. Be wary of any coupon emailed to you by anyone but the manufacturer or its authorized distributor.
4. If a coupon is visible on a computer screen, it is probably counterfeit.
5. Free product coupons are seldom, if ever, distributed on the Internet.
6. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.

More information about coupon fraud is available at the Federal Trade Commission: <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/pubs/consumer/invest/inv06.shtm>) or the Coupon Information Center (CIC), the coupon industry's watchdog group: [www.couponinformationcenter.com](http://www.couponinformationcenter.com).