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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 15, 2016

**FBI WARNS CHICAGO SPORTS FANS TO BE ON THE
LOOKOUT FOR FAKE SPORTS MEMORABILIA**

CHICAGO – As we head into the holiday season, items commemorating the Chicago Cubs historic World Series win are sure to be popular gifts. The FBI is asking the public to be aware of consumer schemes selling counterfeit Cubs memorabilia.

“Following the great season the Chicago Cubs just had, counterfeiters may see this time as a good opportunity to take advantage of the fans’ excitement and distribute questionable items to the public. These items can include everything from autographs to game used items such as jerseys, bats, balls and caps. We can also see a flood of unlicensed t-shirts and other items commemorating this special year,” said FBI Chicago Special Agent (SA) Brian Brusokas, a member of the FBI’s Art Crimes team which investigates fraud regarding collectibles.

Before purchasing any limited edition item like a photo, card set or display item, SA Brusokas says consumers should know the edition size because some limited edition memorabilia is only limited by the level of consumer interest in the item. Buyers of game used items such as jerseys should know what a genuine Cubs on-field

jersey looks like, paying close attention to details such as the stitching patterns used to affix nameplates and patches to the jersey. Photographs can prove helpful in researching such details. With respect to autographed baseballs, buyers should consider comparing the signature on the ball to known signatures of that player and, if the signature has been authenticated, buyers should also consider the qualifications of the authenticator.

No matter what collectible item you are looking to buy, SA Brusokas recommends the following:

- Before you buy, know who you are buying from and what their refund policy is.
- Always be mindful that if an item seems too good to be true, it probably is.

The FBI works in conjunction with all four major sports leagues to try to keep counterfeit items from reaching the memorabilia market. For more tips on how to protect yourself from buying fake sports memorabilia, go to www.ic3.gov, www.fbi.gov, or www.mlb.com/authentication.

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