



The E-Sylum

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COUNTERFEIT CANADIAN 'CAMEL TOE' TOONIES

Allan Behul submitted this article on the counterfeit Canadian two-dollar coin, also known as the "camel toe toonie". Thank you. -Editor

Counterfeit Coins in Canada: The Story of the "Camel Toe Toonie"

A.J. Behul



Genuine and Counterfeit "Toonies"

If you stopped an average Canadian on the street, and asked about counterfeiting in Canada, (s)he would probably think of \$50 or \$100 dollar bills; the thought of the "toonie" (or Canadian two-dollar coin) probably not the first thing to come to mind, yet it is this particular denomination, that has made its way into news headlines for the last two to three years.

Specifically, the "camel toe toonie"; the self-explanatory moniker, quickly made apparent, after looking closely at the right forepaw of the polar bear image, located on the reverse side of the bi-

metallic coin.

According to Brent W.J. Mackie, Treasurer of the Waterloo Coin Society, and dedicated researcher of the “camel toe toonie”, the counterfeit coins were first reported in coin chats and forums in July 2020, and specimens continue to be discovered in circulation across the country up to present-day; the GTA (or Greater Toronto Area) identified, among others, as one of the counterfeiting hotspots.

Counterfeit coins have been found dated: 1996, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2010.

Identifiable characteristics of the “camel toe toonie” consist of the “split-toe” on the right forepaw previously mentioned, extra lines on the left side of the ice floe, located behind the bear’s right hind paw, and font differences on a number of legends and dates.



Closeups: Genuine and Counterfeit "Toonies"

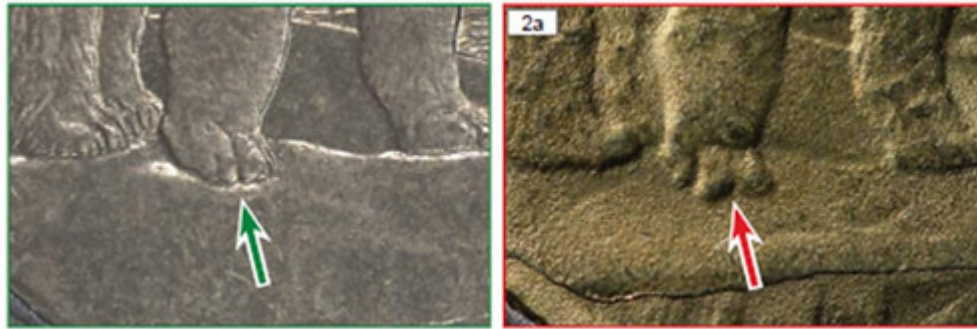
Others include the omission of the initials “SB” (representing the artist Susanna Blunt), usually found on the neckline of the effigy of the Queen on the obverse side, on counterfeits dated 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, and 2010, and “softer”, less defined initials “BT” (for the artist Brent Townsend), on the reverse side.

It is interesting to note, that the number of “camel toe toonie” types and varieties that have been identified is so extensive, that Mackie decided to create a user-friendly numbering system, to assist with cataloging, which can be found on his webpage cameltoetoonies.ca.

At this point, we may find ourselves asking, “O.K. but how big of a problem could it really be...I mean it's only a toonie, right?”

Actually, significant.

Mackie (conservatively) estimates that there could be five million counterfeit toonies in circulation, but the actual number is probably much higher; taking into consideration an overall saturation rate of 0.5% against a cumulative mintage of genuine toonies issued by the RCM (Royal Canadian Mint).



The genuine coin on the left versus the counterfeit on the right. Genuine: Fine details of the bear's paws. 2a: The polar bear's paw is misshapen.

In a press release dated May 9, 2022, the RCMP (Royal Canadian Mounted Police) stated that approximately 10,000 counterfeit toonies were identified and seized, following an investigation conducted by the GTA-TSOC (Greater Toronto Area Trans-National Serious & Organized Crime) Section, which resulted in charges being laid against a Richmond Hill, Ontario resident, including “Uttering counterfeit money” and “Possession of counterfeit money”, contrary to Section 452 and 450 respectively, of the Canadian Criminal Code.

The RCMP also commented that “it is suspected that there are additional counterfeit coins in the currency system and that the coins originate from China”.

Perhaps a subsequent question that we may have would be, “Is it really worth it to the counterfeiters?” (Aside from the inherent risk of being involved in unlawful activity and facing criminal prosecution of course).

Apparently so.

If the cited volume of counterfeit “camel toe toonies” in circulation is any indication, then it may be a question of “economy of scale”, through which production costs on a per-unit basis decrease, as the output (or volume) increases. In other words, the more you make, the cheaper it becomes to make that product (in this case, each counterfeit toonie).

It is quite likely that we will have to wait for some time, to see where this story ends, who the criminal author(s) were, and what methods were used to introduce the “camel toe toonie” into circulation, so as to prevent future recurrences.

In the meantime, the next time you are waiting in line for a coffee or beverage (living in, or visiting Canada), have a look at the two-dollar coin that may be lying innocuously in between your pocket change; you may just find the now infamous “camel toe toonie”.

P.S. If you do chance upon a counterfeit toonie, or believe someone has attempted to pass along counterfeit currency to you, as indicated by the RCMP, it should be reported to the local police, the Ontario RCMP, or anonymously through Crime Stoppers.

To read the RCMP press release, see:

[RCMP investigation leads to counterfeit currency charges](https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2022/rcmp-investigation-leads-counterfeit-currency-charges) (<https://www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca/en/news/2022/rcmp-investigation-leads-counterfeit-currency-charges>)