IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Cookies Creative Consulting &

Promotions LLC

Serial No.: 88316398

Law Office: 123

Examining Attorney: Collier L. Johnson II

Intl. Class: 41

Filed: February 26, 2019

Mark: RUNTZ

Docket No: 48340-0020001

RESPONSE TO OFFICE ACTION

On February 26, 2019, an application was filed to register the term RUNTZ as a standard-character word mark for Class 41 "entertainment services, namely, organizing social entertainment events and musical performances in the field of cannabis culture; Educational services, namely, providing educational information in the field of cannabis." *See* U.S. Serial No. 88316398 (the "Application"). On July 9, 2019, the Examining Attorney issued a §2(e)(1) refusal, finding that the word RUNTZ was merely descriptive of the applied-for Class 41 services.

First, the evidence does not establish that the mark is merely descriptive. The Examining Attorney relied on two articles from the websites Weedmaps.com and Hytiva.com, both of which use the term RUNTZ as a trademark associated with Applicant. Notably, the article the Examining Attorney cited from Weedmaps.com (https://weedmaps.com/brands/tasty-farms/products/tasty-farms-products/tasty-farms-runtz) is no longer available. In fact, it has been replaced with an article with specific references to Applicant (i.e., Cookies). See https://weedmaps.com/strains/runtz, a copy of which is attached as Exhibit 1. While the Hytiva article does not attribute the RUNTZ strain to any particular person or entity, it is an outlier, as the majority of articles that refer to this strain identify the source as "Cookies" or the "Cookies Family." See Exhibit 2 (additional articles from several third-party websites that attribute the RUNTZ strain to the Applicant). Because both of

the articles relied upon for the § 2(e)(1) refusal use RUNTZ as a trademark and not merely as the name of the goods themselves, they do not establish that RUNTZ is merely descriptive.

Second, the evidence does not establish that the mark is merely descriptive in the context of the applied-for Class 41 services. It is well-established that the determination of whether a mark is merely descriptive cannot be made in the abstract, but rather, "must be made in relation to the goods or services for which registration is sought." TMEP §1209.01(b). Here, the evidence supporting the descriptiveness finding consists of two articles where the term RUNTZ is used as a trademark to identify a specific cannabis strain. Yet, even if the evidence showed that RUNTZ was descriptive of a cannabis strain (which it does not, for the reasons noted above), it would not establish that RUNTZ is merely descriptive of the Class 41 entertainment and educational services described in the Application.

Third, the evidence does not establish that the mark is "merely" descriptive. The TTAB construes the word "merely" to have its ordinary meaning of "only" or "solely." A mark is "merely" descriptive when it does *nothing more* than describe the goods or services. *In re Colonial Stores, Inc.*, 394 F. 2d 549 (CCPA 1963); *In re Quik-Print Copy Shop, Inc.*, 616 F. 2d 523 (CCPA 1980). Or, as Chief Judge Marky put it: "The ultimate in descriptiveness is the name of a thing." *In re Abcor Dev. Corp.*, 200 USPQ 215, 219 (CCPA 1978) (Marky, C.J., concurring). Here, there is no evidence showing that consumers view the term RUNTZ as *only* referring to applied-for Class 41 services. In fact, the Examining Attorney's evidence shows that the opposite is true.

Fourth, the §2(e)(1) refusal is improper since the RUNTZ mark is a fanciful term. "[A] mark is considered merely descriptive if it *immediately* conveys knowledge of a quality, feature, function, or characteristic of an applicant's services." TMEP §1209.01(b). In contrast, fanciful

marks are "terms that have been invented for the sole purpose of functioning as a trademark or service mark." TMEP §1209.01(a). In this case, Applicant searched several dictionaries and found no entries for the term RUNTZ. *See* Exhibit 3 (search results from Dictionary.com, Merriam-Webster, Cambridge English Dictionaries, and Wikipedia, none of which have entries for RUNTZ). Moreover, the Applicant was unable to find any evidence of the term RUNTZ being used in a descriptive manner within its industry or by its competitors. In sum, because RUNTZ is a made-up term with no established meaning, it cannot be merely descriptive.

Fifth, the §2(e)(1) refusal is improper since the RUNTZ mark is *at least* suggestive of Applicant's services. "[I]f some imagination, thought or perception is required to determine the nature of the goods or services from the mark, the mark is suggestive." *See e.g., In re Gyulay,* 3 U.S.P.Q.2d 1009 (Fed. Cir. 1987); *In re Shutts,* 217 U.S.P.Q. 363 (TTAB 1983). Here, the Examining Attorney found that RUNTZ is merely descriptive of a cannabis strain based on two articles that show the term RUNTZ being used *as a trademark.* Evidence attached as Exhibits 1–2 shows that this strain is uniquely associated with the Applicant. *See e.g.,* www.leafly.com/strains/runtz (referring to the RUNTZ strain as part of the "Cookies Family"). Thus, it requires a mental leap to find that RUNTZ is merely descriptive of Applicant's Class 41 services, which are not mentioned in any of these articles. There is simply no basis to conclude that consumers would *immediately* understand the term RUNTZ as communicating information about Applicant's services.

<u>Finally</u>, it is well-settled that the USPTO bears the burden for establishing the propriety of a descriptiveness refusal. It is equally well-settled that "there is a thin line of demarcation between a suggestive mark and a merely descriptive one." *See e.g.*, *In re Atavio*, 25 USPQ2d 1361 (TTAB 1992). As a result, *any doubt* on the issue of distinctiveness <u>must</u> be resolved in the

Applicant's favor. See e.g., In re Box Solutions Corp., 79 U.S.P.Q.2d 1953 (TTAB 2006); In re Grand Metropolitan Foodservice Inc., 30 U.S.P.Q.2d 1974, 1976 (T.T.A.B. 1994). Here, the Examining Attorney provided no evidence showing any connection between the term RUNTZ and the Class 41 services described in the application, and the evidence the Examining Attorney did submit shows RUNTZ being used as a trademark. Therefore, because the USPTO has not met its burden for the descriptiveness refusal in this case, it must be withdrawn.

In conclusion, Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner approve the application for publication. Please apply any charges or credits to Deposit Account No. 06 1050 (48340-0020001).

EXHIBIT 1





Description

Coming out of LA, this strain's candy-like smelling sweetness and colorful nugs lead to its naming. A mix of Zkittlez and Gelato #33, this strain has a smooth flavor that mostly matches the smell, with additional

With a few different phenotypes, this hybrid strain can lean to either a more dominant sativa or indica. These nugs produce thick resin layers which make it extremely potent in any form. Perhaps that is why this strain is so elusive. Make sure to get your hands on this if you can; it'll have you feeling like a kid in a candy store.

Top reported effects*







Euphoric

Top reported flavors*







Grow information

This strain is adaptable to both indoor and outdoor growing conditions. While outdoor cultivation provides a slightly better yield, greater than 600 grams per plant, this strain will still do well indoors. With an indoor flowering time of 63 days, this strain from Apothecary Genetics produces dense nugs that can yield up to 450 grams per square meter.

41 Runtz products



A. Black Runtz - Quality Rating 9/10 - House Exclusive Reserve

\$32









Speedy Weedy Delivery Powered by Golden Juniper 5.4mi • Del Mar, California • Delivery



Runtz CBD

OGX The Hemp CBD ONLY 87.7mi • Loma Linda, California • Dispensary

Wind Cannabis - Runtz

Empire Connect 89.2mi • San Bernardino, California • Dispensary

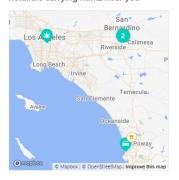
Headstash | Runtz

\$60 \$120 \$240

Insane | Hawaiian Runtz

Cookies LA

Retailers carrying Runtz near you





Speedy Weedy Delivery Powered by Golden Juniper



87.7mi • Loma Linda, Californi OGX The Hemp CBD ONLY



89.2mi • San Bernardino, California **Empire Connect**



THC/A 22.0%

Cookies LA ★★★☆☆ 3.6

GIVE FEEDBACK



Synergy | Banana Runtz

Cookies LA 100.9mi • Maywood, California • Dispensary

Runtz by Green Earth Co.

1G 2G 1/8 1/4 1/2 \$13.50 \$27 \$40 \$80 \$135

Green Earth Delivery 108.7mi • Los Angeles, California • Delivery



WEST COAST RUNTZ

West Coast Holistic Center 124.8mi • Mission Hills, CA • Dispensary



Dr. Greenthumb's - Insane Hawaiian Runtz (22.03% THC) - *Special Pricing (\$...

Cana Farms 125.5mi • Calabasas, California • Delivery



BANANA RUNTZ, 1/8

\$68.10

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*Reported effects and flavors are generated from user reviews on our site. This page is for informational purposes only and not intended as medical advice. Please consult your physician before changing any medical treatment.



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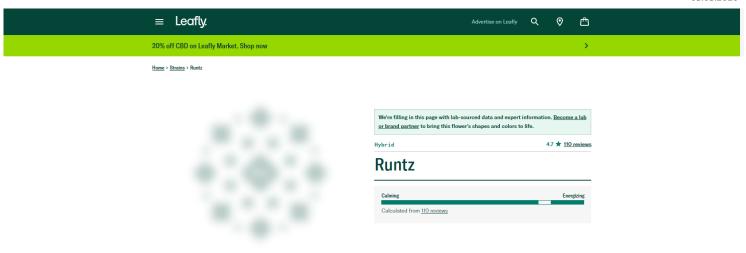
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EXHIBIT 2

screenshot-www.leafly.com-2020.03.05-11_18_11 https://www.leafly.com/strains/runtz 05.03.2020

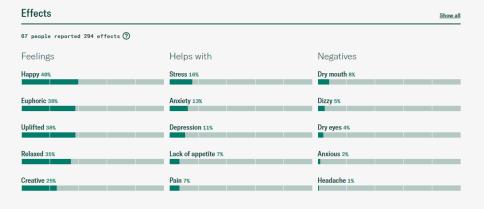




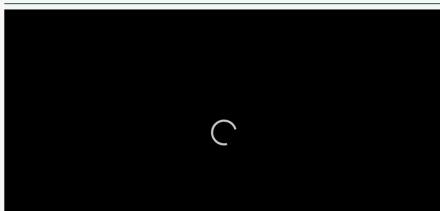
Runtz

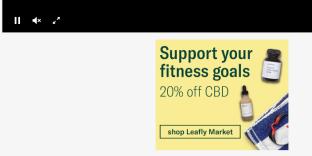
A hyped Cookies Family strain, Runtz is a cross of Zkittlez and Gelato that is rare and sought-after. Celebrated for its incredibly fruity profile that smells just like a bag of the sugary candy, the strain has resin-drenched buds that range in color from rich purple to lime green. Runtz is also noted for its creamy smoke that is smooth and welcoming

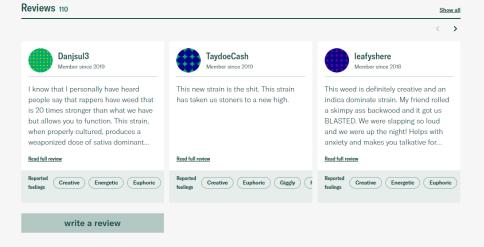
alongside a euphoric and elevating high that lasts for



Strain spotlight





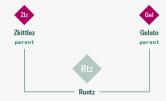


Find Runtz nearby

Oh no! This strain is not available within 20 miles of your location.

<u>Change your location</u> to find cannabis.

Lineage



Products with Runtz

Oh no! This strain is not available within 20 miles of your location.

Change your location to find cannabis.



Most popular in

Seattle, WA Detroit, MI Tulsa, OK Los Angeles, CA Wenatchee, WA Portland, OR Denver, CO Mount Vernon, WA Phoenix, AZ San Francisco, CA

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Dispensaries in Los Angeles Seattle Portland San Francisco Detroit

Leafly Market

Shop the largest selection of lab tested CBD products.

Connect

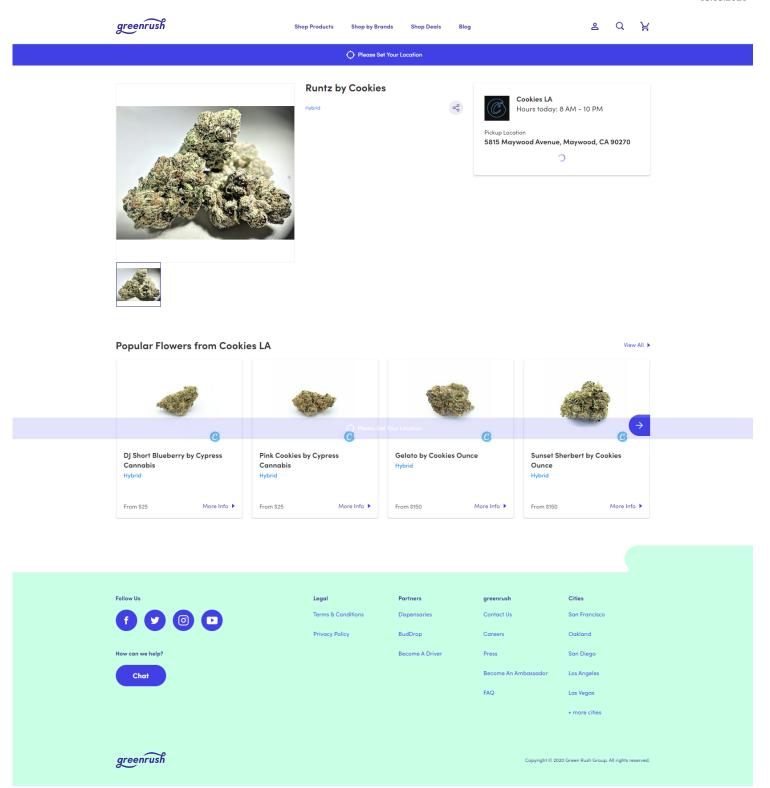




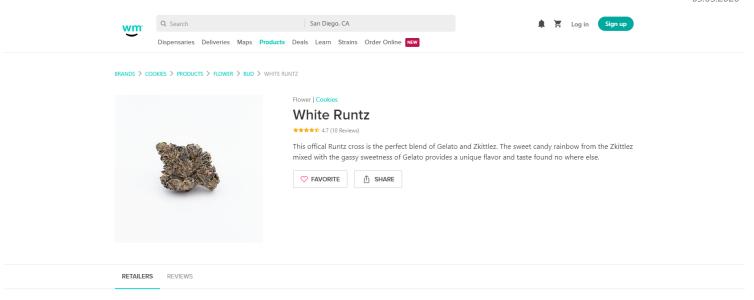




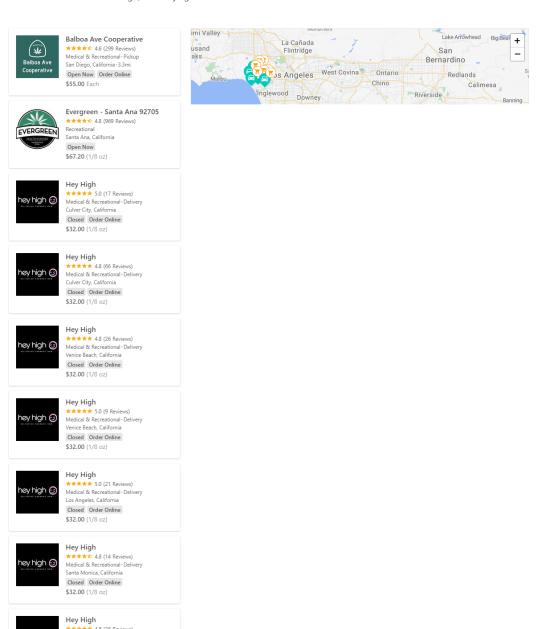
screenshot-www.greenrush.com-2020.03.05-11_18_56 https://www.greenrush.com/dispensary/cookies-la/menu/runtz-by-cookies 05.03.2020

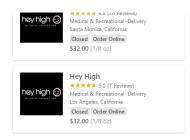


screenshot-weedmaps.com-2020.03.05-11_19_43 https://weedmaps.com/brands/cookies/products/cookies-white-runtz 05.03.2020



10 Closest Retailers to San Diego, CA Carrying White Runtz









A community connecting cannabis consumers, patients, retailers, doctors, and brands since 2008.









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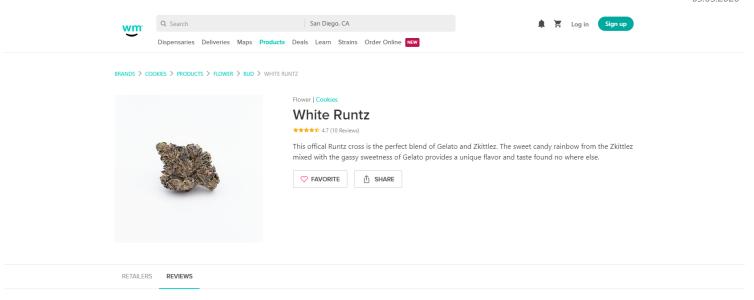
Business

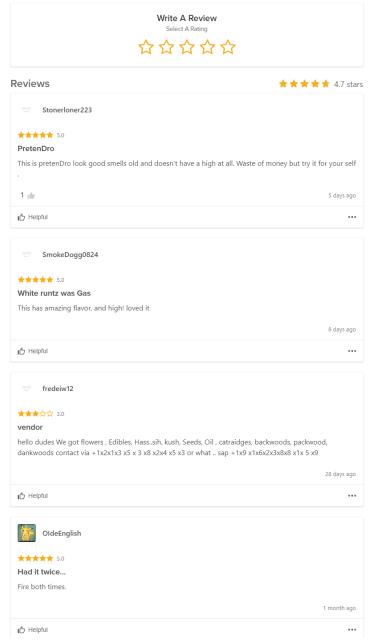
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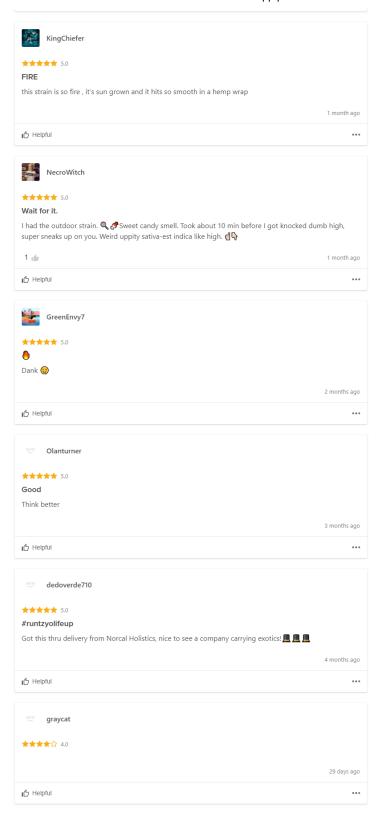
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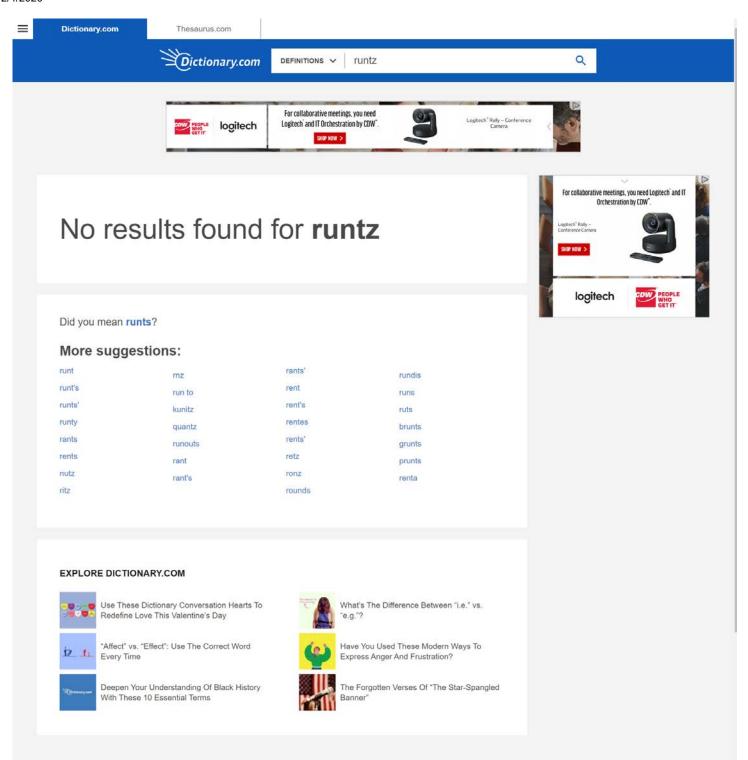
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EXHIBIT 3





"runtz"

The word you've entered isn't in the dictionary. Click on a spelling suggestion below or try again using the search bar above.

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