IFA©T-GC

INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT – GREATER CHINA

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OPERATION OCTOPUS SQUEEZES HONG KONG PIRATE MANUFACTURER AND RETAILERS

Customs Officers Arrest 19 People and Bust Biggest DVD Burner Lab This Year

Hong Kong – Between October 15 and 19, the International Federation Against Copyright Theft – Greater China (IFA©T-GC) joined force with over 100 officers from the Hong Kong Customs Intellectual Property Investigation Bureau (IPIB) and Special Task Force (STF) in a territory-wide anti-piracy operation against a series of distribution and retail outlets selling pirated optical discs in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The places busted included seven DVD shops and seven street hawkers. Coupled with a sizeable DVD burning laboratory smashed by the Customs investigators, the week-long raids netted nearly 64,000 pirated optical discs and some thousands of pornographic discs. The majority of the infringing DVDs seized were Hollywood, Hong Kong and Japanese movie titles, including such blockbuster movies as "Evan Almighty", "Knocked Up", "Transformers" as well as TV series "Friends" and "The O.C.". The total retail value of the seized DVDs was about HK$2 million (US$256,410).

The burner lab, with 97 DVD-R burners operating at full speed at the time of the Customs raid, is the largest one detected in Hong Kong this year. If it were allowed to continue with such illegal business for a year, it could have produced over 5 million pirated DVDs and generated a potential revenue of about HK$104 million (US$13 million) by this pirate syndicate.

The joint investigation targeted at shops that sell pirated movies disguised as legitimate products. The shops charged HK$35 – HK$70 a copy, versus HK$20 they usually charged for a pirated movie DVD. Some shops accepted credit card payment, a rather unusual way of doing business by traditional pirate shops.

IFA©T-GC Executive Director and General Manager Sam Ho said: “Hong Kong Customs are to be congratulated and thanked for their excellent work especially in relation to the raid against burner laboratories. These crooks were not only cheating the owners of the pirated movies, but were also cheating consumers into spending their hard-earned cash on what they thought were legitimate movies. IFA©T-GC is committed to stamping out this kind of criminal exploitation and, as their prompt and decisive action shows, so are the Hong Kong authorities.”

“Hong Kong Customs acknowledge the support and co-operation given by the copyright industry in fighting the battle against piracy. We will continue to take stringent action to bring the copyright pirates to justice,” said Mr. Y K Tam, Assistant Commissioner (Intelligence and Investigation) of Hong Kong Customs.

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About the MPA: *The Motion Picture Association (MPA) represents the interests of major motion picture companies in the global marketplace. On behalf of its member companies, the MPA conducts investigations around the world, assists with the criminal and civil litigation generated by such cases, and conducts education outreach programs to teach movie fans around the world about the harmful effects of piracy. The MPA directs its worldwide anti-piracy operations from its headquarters based in Los Angeles, California and has regional offices located in Brussels (Europe, Middle East and Africa), São Paulo (Latin America), Montreal (Canada) and Singapore (Asia-Pacific). The MPA’s anti-piracy activities have helped to transform entire markets from pirate to legitimate, benefiting video distributors, retailers, and foreign and local filmmakers alike. The MPA member companies include: Buena Vista International, Inc.; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Releasing International Corporation; Twentieth Century Fox International Corporation; Universal International Films, Inc.; and Warner Bros. Pictures International, a division of Warner Bros. Pictures Inc.*

About the IFA©T-GC: *The International Federation Against Copyright Theft was established in 2006 by the Motion Picture Association to protect the film industry in the Greater China region from the adverse impact of copyright theft. IFA©T-GC works closely with its supporters, government and enforcement authorities to protect the Greater China film and television industry, retailers and movie fans.*

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