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POLICE SEIZE 147 DVD-R, CD-R BURNERS IN RAIDS ON STREET VENDOR SUPPLIERS IN TAIWAN

Labs Were Operated By A Single Organized Criminal Gang

Hong Kong, Encino – On January 17, Taiwan’s National Highway Patrol Police, in collaboration with IPR Police and with support from the Foundation for the Protection of Film and Video Works (FVWP), representing the Motion Picture Association (MPA), raided five pirate optical disc manufacturing and distribution facilities in Taoyuan County, seizing a total of 147 DVD-R and CD-R burners and arresting five people on suspicion of infringing Taiwan’s Copyright Law.

The facilities, where police also seized 118,961 pirated optical discs, were suspected of distributing significant numbers of pirated discs to a network of street vendors. The seized burners were capable of producing as many as 7,416,000 CD-Rs and 950,400 DVD-Rs in one year, yielding revenues of US\$9,557,664, assuming the burners were in operation ten-hours-a-day, seven-days-per-week.

“In just two weeks, police in Taiwan have seized nearly 250 DVD-R and CD-R burners, a tremendous effort by Taiwan’s law enforcement agencies that sends an unmistakable signal to organized criminal gangs that copyright theft will be vigorously prosecuted,” said Mike Ellis, Senior Vice President and Regional Director, Asia-Pacific for the Motion Picture Association. “However, the problem of piracy remains enormous, and it’s clear that law enforcement and industry must maintain the pressure on criminals who so badly damage Taiwan’s creative industries.”

In Taiwan, it is frequently the case that pirated movies are individually burned onto optical discs with CD-R or DVD-R burners. Burner labs can contain dozens of burners, capable of producing millions of pirate CD-Rs or DVD-Rs per year. In 2004 and 2005, more than 2,500 optical disc burners were seized in FVWP/MPA operations in Taiwan.

Only two weeks ago, police seized 101 DVD-R and CD-R burners in a raid on a pirate optical disc manufacturing and distribution facility in Hsinchu City that was

suspected of selling significant numbers of pirated discs via the Internet to customers throughout Taiwan.

The raids came during aggressive MPA anti-piracy enforcement operations, code named *Operation Big Broom*, currently running in 14 countries and territories across the Asia-Pacific region.

Operation Big Broom, begun in mid-December, focused on notorious piracy “black spots” in major cities in Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand.

By cracking down on the availability of illegally pirated movies in retail shops and markets and from street vendors during the important New Year holiday season, when many new movies are released, the operation is designed to protect sales of cinema tickets and legitimate home video products such as DVDs, VCDs and VHS videotapes. Previous operations have yielded seizures of millions of pirated optical discs, and hundreds of arrests.

Piracy in Asia

The MPA estimates that its member companies lose an excess of US\$896 million in potential revenue annually in the Asia-Pacific region alone. In 2004, the MPA operations in the Asia-Pacific region investigated more than 25,500 cases of piracy and assisted law enforcement officials in conducting nearly 12,000 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of approximately 49,000,000 illegal optical discs, and the initiation of more than 8,000 legal actions.

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 Encino, 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.; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios 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.*

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