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MOTION PICTURE INDUSTRY TAKES ACTION AGAINST EBAY PIRATES IN CALIFORNIA, MARYLAND, MINNESOTA, MISSOURI, UTAH AND VIRGINIA

MPAA Aims to Protect Consumers Against Counterfeit Movie Products

Los Angeles – The Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. (MPAA) filed six lawsuits yesterday against online auctioneers in California, Maryland, Minnesota, Missouri, Utah, and Virginia who were selling counterfeit DVDs on eBay. The cases involve movie titles from the major film studios including: *Sleeping Beauty*, *Walk the Line*, *Hustle and Flow*, *40 Year Old Virgin*, *The Legend of Zoro*, and *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. The lawsuits are part of the MPAA's ongoing efforts to combat piracy on the Internet and protect consumers from being tricked into purchasing counterfeit copies of movies online.

“People who abuse online auction sites like eBay to sell counterfeit DVDs are not only cheating their buyers, they are committing a serious crime,” said John G. Malcolm, Executive Vice President and Director of Worldwide Anti-Piracy Operations for the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. **“Our goal is to hold people accountable for these crimes and to protect unsuspecting consumers from counterfeit goods in the online marketplace.”**

The lawsuits were filed in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles against individuals in St. Cloud, MN; St. Louis, MO; Los Angeles, CA; Radford, VA; Genola, UT; and Hagerstown, MD. Statutory damages can be as much as \$150,000 per motion picture if such infringement is proven to be willful.

Tips to Protect Consumers from Purchasing Pirated Movies:

The MPAA encourages people to use these simple safety tips while shopping online:

- 1. Watch for Titles that are “Too ‘New’ to be ‘True’”:** Movies that have yet to be released in theatres, or which are still out in theatres, should/will not be available in DVD or videocassette formats. If very recent titles are being sold on an auction or other online retail sites, they are most likely pirated.

2. **Remember the Adage “You Get What You Pay For”:** Even if you are hoping to get your favorite movie titles at a discount, whether new or used, the extremely low prices offered on some websites might indicate pirated product.
3. **Read the Label:** Once your purchase arrives, carefully look over the packaging and beware of products that do not look genuine. The inferior quality of print work on the disc surface, and slip sleeve cover (DVD or CD), as well as the lack of original artwork and/or missing studio, publisher, and distributor logos on discs and packaging, are usually clear indicators that the product is pirated.
4. **Keep Receipts:** Print out a copy of your order number and sales confirmation and keep them at least until your purchase arrives in satisfactory condition.

According to a recent study done for the MPAA, the worldwide motion picture industry including foreign and domestic producers, distributors, theaters, video stores and pay-per-view operators lost \$18.2 billion in 2005 as a result of piracy. The major motion picture studios lost \$6.1 billion to piracy in 2005. Of the \$6.1 billion in lost revenue to the studios, \$4.8 billion (80%) resulted from piracy in other countries, and \$1.3 billion (20%) resulted from losses in the United States. About \$3.8 billion was lost to hard-goods piracy including bootlegging and illegal copying and \$2.3 billion to Internet piracy.

The MPAA and its member companies have a multi-pronged approach to fighting piracy, which includes educating people about the consequences of piracy, taking action against Internet thieves, working with law enforcement authorities around the world to root out pirate operations and working to ensure movies are available legally using advanced technology.

About the MPAA

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) serves as the voice and advocate of the American motion picture, home video and television industries from its offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. Its members include: Buena Vista Pictures Distribution; Paramount Pictures; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLLP; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

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