



PRESS RELEASE

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TWO JAILED AFTER POLICE RAID ONE OF UK'S BIGGEST PIRATE DVD 'FACTORIES'

ESTIMATED STREET VALUE OF £1.2M PER MONTH WAS BEING MADE FROM THE 'FACTORY'

Two men have been jailed for a total of three years after admitting their part in the running of one of the biggest ever pirate DVD factories in the UK, capable of producing thousands of counterfeited films each day.

John Tak Ke Lau, a chef, aged 45, of Upper Clapton Road, London E5 and Chee Chong Liew, an unemployed 35-year-old man of the same address, had previously pleaded guilty to conspiracy to defraud Walt Disney, 20th Century Fox, Warner Brothers, Sony and Columbia when they appeared at Harrow Crown Court.

Today Lau was sent to prison for 16 months and Liew was jailed for 21 months. The judge recommended that Liew should be deported at the end of his sentence.

The two Chinese men were both arrested when officers from Kent Police's serious crime squad discovered the factory at an industrial unit in London earlier this year.

It followed months of intelligence gathering and arrests made during the force's Operation Excalibur raids in Medway at the end of January.

In a joint initiative with FACT, the Federation Against Copyright Theft, police raided premises in Burnt Oak, Edgware on 1 February where they found the factory and arrested Lau and Liew.

More than 20,000 illegally copied DVDs were seized, along with computers, over 200 DVD burners and printers used to produce labels and covers, plus thousands of blank DVDs and plastic cases. This was one of the largest ever pirate DVD factories in the UK.

The factory had the capacity to produce anything from 16,000 to 36,000 counterfeit DVDs each day – although it is thought around 8,000 discs were actually being produced daily with an estimated street value of around £1.2 million each month. The average cost of a fake DVD is about £5.

'The discovery of this factory helped break up a criminal network supplying counterfeit films in Kent and across the south east and London,' said Detective Inspector John Biggadike, who led the inquiry.

‘After months of work and evidence gathering Kent Police worked closely with FACT and the Metropolitan Police to make these arrests and close the factory.

‘People can always help play their part in tackling piracy by refusing to purchase fake goods. Those who buy counterfeit films and other fakes are only helping to fund organised crime.’

Raymond Leinster, FACT Director General, added: ‘We are delighted that the court has recognized the serious criminality behind the manufacture of pirate DVDs and that custodial sentences have been given to these two individuals. This should be a warning that those involved in this kind of activity can and will be dealt with through prison sentences. I would like to thank Kent Police and the Metropolitan Police for their actions in this joint operation.’

Ends

Notes to editors:

DI John Biggadike is available for broadcast interviews on request to Kent Police Media Services on 01622 652150

Photos illustrating the interior of the factory are available from Kent Police Media Services.

Please note that Media Services has endeavoured to locate photographs of Lau and Liew but these cannot be found.

FACT, the Federation Against Copyright Theft, can be contacted on 020 8568 6646 (press office).

For further information:

About FACT

The Federation Against Copyright Theft is the UK’s leading trade organisation established to protect and represent the interests of the film and broadcasting industry against copyright and trademark infringements. Established in 1983, FACT works closely with statutory law enforcement agencies to combat the growth of pirate DVDs, film and other forms of broadcast material including the increasing threat from online/internet-based piracy. FACT has been accepted as a prosecution authority and engages in criminal prosecutions in its own right.

www.fact-uk.org.uk

www.piracyisacrime.com