



PRESS RELEASE

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Trading Standards, FACT and Police Swoop on Illegal DVD Sellers

Brent & Harrow Trading Standards Service working in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) swooped again on the illegal DVD street traders who plague the public along St Anns Road, Harrow on Monday 2nd October 2006.

Up to twenty traders were observed selling illegal counterfeit and pornographic DVDs on Monday afternoon by Harrow Council's CCTV operators and undercover Trading Standards and Police Officers.

Once the relevant surveillance was complete and some of the necessary evidence had been gathered, Trading Standards and a mix of plain clothed and uniformed Police Officers, received the 'GO Go Go' command over their radios to move in so the Police could arrest those involved with this illegal activity.

The street traders attempted to run off out of the town centre or into nearby shops, trying to blend into the crowds to avoid being caught. Several were caught hiding in shops or in Harrow on the Hill Station. In total nine traders were stopped, six males and three females. Over 1000 illegal DVDs were seized, many of which featured the latest blockbuster cinema titles.

The operation was organised in response to the continual number of complaints received by Trading Standards, FACT and the Police from the public and local businesses who are fed up with the on going problem of street traders selling counterfeit DVDs in the town centre.

The traders are now being investigated by Trading Standards after some were arrested and taken to Harrow Police Station for questioning aided by Chinese speaking interpreters. Three of these traders will be today appearing before Harrow Magistrates Court.

Last week (28th September 2006), Mei He (31) of an unknown address in Colindale, was remanded in custody awaiting sentencing in mid October 2006. Mei He had been spotted on a bus by Harrow CCTV operators after she was seen selling DVDs in St Anns Road earlier in the day. The Police were able to stop the bus and arrested her.

Her case was investigated by the Trading Standards Service. She had been caught by Trading Standards selling counterfeit DVDs in Harrow Town Centre on at least four occasions since she last appeared in Court for identical offences in February 2006 when she received a Conditional Discharge.

Speaking after the operation, John Taylor, Director of the Trading Standards Service said "My Officers are continually taking enforcement action against these traders who seem to persist in breaking the law with regular patrols and umpteen seizures of DVDs. We are hoping Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) can be used to stop these traders from continually returning to sell DVDS."

Sergeant Ian Walker of Greenhill Safer Neighbourhood Team which covers Harrow Town Centre said "This sort of partnership working is great because it pulls together the best resources available to tackle this problem. However, I urge members of the public not to buy the illegal DVDs from these street

traders. Not only are they bad quality and poor value for money, if the traders do not sell any DVDs, they won't keep returning".

Raymond Leinster, FACT Director General added, "The plague of illegal street sellers is one which affects Harrow and numerous other town centres across the UK. We welcome the involvement of Brent & Harrow Trading Standards in order to prevent such organised criminal activity which causes a public nuisance as well as helping to generate substantial criminal profits."

ENDS

Ends

For further information:

Further information available from Simon Legg at Brent and Harrow Trading Standards, 020 8937 5528 or William Goddard at Harrow Police Station

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Notes to editors:

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.

The maximum penalty for offences of film piracy is 10 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Proceeds of Crime Act legislation now also enables confiscation of assets and goods obtained through criminal activity.

www.fact-uk.org.uk
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