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MOVIE THIEVES TANGLED IN SPIDER-MAN'S WEB *Theater employees, moviegoers prevent 31 real-life villains from stealing Spider-Man 3 from theaters worldwide*

Los Angeles – Heightened security, vigilant theater employees and loyal film fans have prevented 31 would-be movie thieves from illegally recording Sony Pictures Entertainment's *Spider-Man 3* in theaters around the world, said the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. (MPAA) and the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO). Additional security and other preventive measures at worldwide premieres and screenings kept the film out of the hands of movie pirates prior to its release, which helped it shatter national and international box office records during its opening weekend.

“Sometimes even superheroes need a little help fighting the bad guys,” said Dan Glickman, Chairman and CEO of the MPAA. “We are taking all necessary steps to catch film thieves in the act and we are grateful to the theater managers, security guards, projectionists and even movie patrons themselves, who alerted law enforcement. Their willingness to speak up helped give *Spider-Man 3* a fair shot at its record-setting opening. These cases demonstrate the determination of film thieves to get their hands on major films, and serve as a reminder as audiences gear up for some of the most anticipated movies of the year, that every screen is a point of vulnerability. We will continue to work closely with the studios, theater owners and distributors on appropriate security measures, and appreciate the continued vigilance of moviegoers in helping to protect these films.”

“With strategic leadership and assistance from the MPAA and Sony, movie theatre employees and patrons around the world fought back successfully against illegal camcording of *Spider-Man 3*,” said John Fithian, President and CEO of NATO. “Future thieves beware: we will find you; we will stop you; and we will have you arrested.”

Specifically, since the world premiere of *Spider-Man 3* on April 16 in Tokyo, movie thieves were prevented from stealing the film from 22 theaters in Argentina, Germany, Malaysia, Russia, South Africa, Taiwan and the United Kingdom. Since the U.S. premiere on May 4, camcorders were caught ~~in the~~ act in nine U.S. movie theaters in California, Florida, Indiana, New York and Texas.

Camcorders are at the top of the piracy pyramid, supplying more than 90% of newly released movies that illegally end up on the Internet and in street markets around the world. These recordings often appear online within days of a film's theatrical release, triggering an avalanche of illegal downloads that can significantly impact a film's performance at the box office.

In anticipation of the release of *Spider-Man 3*, Sony conducted extensive outreach to exhibitors and augmented their internal security by also contracting additional security personnel for more than 160 pre-release screenings, as well as for the film's eight premieres around the world.

The MPAA and NATO work closely with theater employees to ensure that movies are protected from camcorders. In May 2004, the MPAA and NATO introduced the Take Action Reward Program, which rewards theatre employees up to \$500 when they identify, intercept, and report camcorder theft to law enforcement officers. Since the launch of the program \$38,500 has been awarded to 84 recipients. In 2006, the MPAA, NATO, the Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association (CMPDA), and the Motion Picture Theatre Association of Canada (MPTAC) launched FightFilmTheft.org, an online theatre employee training program in the U.S. and Canada that has since expanded to include Latin America. Theatre employees who participate in the online tutorial are eligible to receive \$300 (awarded every three months) for completing the training and taking a brief quiz at the end.

In 2005, President Bush signed the Family Entertainment and Copyright Act, which makes camcording in a theater a federal felony and establishes stiff penalties for illegally obtaining, distributing and/or selling copies of films that have not yet been released commercially. First-time violators can be sentenced to three and five years, respectively, for these crimes and fined up to \$250,000. The Motion Picture Association is campaigning for similarly strict laws and enforcement in countries around the world.

Anti-camcord legislation has been adopted by some countries such as Italy and is under consideration in other countries such as Japan and Mexico, and is a component of the free-trade agreement that was recently negotiated with Korea. Given the extent of this problem, it is important that more countries enact effective anti-camcord legislation as studios release films day and date (almost simultaneously) around the world.

The worldwide motion picture industry, including foreign and domestic producers, distributors, theaters, video stores and pay-per-view operators lose more than \$18 billion annually as a result of movie theft. More than \$7 billion in losses are attributed to illegal Internet distributions, while \$11 billion is the result of illegal copying and bootlegging.

About the MPAA

The Motion Picture Association of America, Inc. (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, LLP; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.

About NATO

The National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) is the largest exhibition trade organization in the world, representing more than 29,000 movie screens in all 50 states, and additional cinemas in more than 40 countries worldwide.

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For more information, contact:

MPAA Los Angeles
Elizabeth Kaltman
(818) 995-6600

NATO Los Angeles
Patrick Corcoran
(818) 506-1778