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COUNTERFEIT DVD/CD OFFENDERS SENTENCED

AUGUSTA, GA: Edmund A. Booth, Jr., United States Attorney for the Southern District of Georgia, announced that Luther A. Belcher, II, and Wesley Allan Thompson, both of whom were convicted on February 5, 2008, of Copyright Infringement, were each sentenced today by U.S. District Judge Lisa Godbey Wood, to eight months imprisonment and three years of supervised release. Belcher was also ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$29,294.24, to the Motion Picture Association of America, and to the Recording Industry Association of America; while Thompson was ordered to pay \$54,484.74, in restitution to the same victims.

Booth stated that the evidence presented at the guilty plea and sentencing hearings for each defendant showed that, at least since the beginning of 2007, Belcher and Thompson, working together and on their own, were manufacturing and selling counterfeit DVD movies and music CDs in violation of federal copyright laws. Many of those pirated items included movies illegally downloaded from the Internet and not yet released to the public on DVD. They also included music that had been copied from purchased CDs or created from songs downloaded from the Internet. The counterfeit items were then duplicated using CD and DVD burners located at the defendants' homes and either sold to re-sellers, or sold directly to the public out of a shop the defendants co-owned called Tees-N-Things, located on Tobacco Road, in Hephzibah, Georgia.

Booth said that the federal charges were brought as part of a cooperative investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Motion Picture Association of America, and the Recording Industry Association of America.

The government was represented in this case by Assistant United States Attorney Nancy C. Greenwood.

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