



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Chuck Rosenberg

Eastern District of Virginia

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: JIM RYBICKI

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008 PHONE: (703) 842-4050

WWW.USDOJ.GOV/USAO/VAE/

MEMBER OF MUSIC PIRACY GROUP CONVICTED OF CONSPIRACY

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – Barry Gitarts, 25, of Brooklyn, N.Y., was convicted today by a jury in the Eastern District of Virginia of conspiracy to commit criminal copyright infringement, announced U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia Chuck Rosenberg and Assistant Attorney General Alice S. Fisher of the Criminal Division. U.S. District Court Judge Liam O’Grady will sentence Gitarts on Aug. 8, 2008. Gitarts faces up to five years in prison, a fine of \$250,000 and three years of supervised release as well as being required to make full restitution.

According to the testimony and evidence presented at trial, Gitarts was a significant member of the Internet music piracy group Apocalypse Production Crew (APC) from at least June 2003 through April 2004. Records and testimony introduced at trial showed that Gitarts, using the alias “Dextro,” paid for and administered a computer server located in Texas that APC group members used to upload and download hundreds of thousands of copies of pirated music, movies, software and video games. Evidence also showed that Gitarts received payment from the leader of APC.

Testimony showed that APC acted as a “first-provider” or “release group” of pirated content on to the Internet. Release groups are the original sources for a majority of the pirated works distributed and downloaded via the Internet. Once a group prepares a stolen work for distribution, the material is distributed in minutes to secure computer servers throughout the world.

U.S. Attorney Rosenberg stated, “Music piracy is stealing and, unless you want to end up in a federal prison, don’t do it.”

The case is part of an ongoing federal crackdown against the organized piracy groups responsible for most of the illegal distribution of copyrighted movies, software, games and music on the Internet. To date, there have been 15 criminal convictions of APC members and 56 convictions in Operation FastLink, a massive international enforcement action against organizations involved in the illegal online distribution of copyrighted material.

To date, Operation FastLink has resulted in more than 200 search warrants executed in 15 countries; the confiscation of hundreds of computers and illegal online distribution hubs; and the removal of more than 100 million dollars worth of illegally-copied copyrighted software, games, movies and music from illicit distribution channels. Operation FastLink is the culmination of multiple FBI investigations, including an investigation into pre-release music groups led by FBI agents from the Washington Field Office.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Jay V. Prabhu of the Eastern District of Virginia and Trial Attorneys Josh Goldfoot and Tyler G. Newby of the Department of Justice Criminal Division’s Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section.

###