



# UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

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**UNITED STATES ATTORNEY CHUCK ROSENBERG**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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Jim Rybicki  
Public Information Officer  
Phone: (703)842-4050 Fax: (703)549-5202  
E-Mail: [usavae.press@usdoj.gov](mailto:usavae.press@usdoj.gov)  
Website: [www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae](http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/vae)

Further Information Contact:  
Laura Taylor (804) 819-5400

## **Three Men Sentenced For Copyright Infringement at “The Big EZ”**

**(Richmond, VA)** – Eric Harmon, age 40, of Richmond, Virginia, and Cherubin Pierre, age 32, of Highland Springs, Virginia, were sentenced today to federal prison for conspiring to violate federal copyright laws in connection with sales of pirated music CDs and movie DVDs. Harmon was sentenced to 27 months' imprisonment and Pierre to 24 months' imprisonment. Harmon and Pierre also forfeited certain property, including copyright-infringing CDs and DVDs. One week earlier, on September 7, 2007, Judge Payne sentenced a third defendant in the case, Ismail Haqq, age 33, of Meherrin, Virginia, to 8 months' imprisonment. United District Judge Robert E. Payne imposed the sentences, which were announced by Chuck Rosenberg, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia; and Special Agent-in-Charge Charles Cunningham, Richmond Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The case arose out of Harmon's operation of a retail store, The Big EZ, at 2536 Lombardy Street, Richmond. At The Big EZ, Harmon and others illegally reproduced (using a DVD/CD “burner”) and sold copyrighted music and movies. The movies involved were primarily films that were currently being shown in movie theatres, and were not commercially available to the public in DVD form. Harmon's store was not directly open to the public, but was locked with a security latch that required a Big EZ employee to “buzz” patrons in to the business. Harmon was the owner/operator of The Big EZ, and Haqq was an employee at the store in early 2006. Pierre supplied Harmon with copyright-infringing materials from an inventory in his home.

FBI agents made several undercover “buys” of illegal DVDs from Harmon and Haqq at The Big EZ in 2006, and observed Harmon meeting with Pierre. In March 2007, agents arrested the three defendants and searched the store, where they seized more than 2000 CDs and DVDs, as well as blank recordable media and computer equipment capable of reproducing CDs and DVDs. The agents also searched Pierre's residence in Highland Springs, where they seized approximately 3000 DVDs and CDs, along with blank discs and computer equipment, including

a “burner.” All three defendants were indicted for conspiracy to commit copyright infringement under Title 18, United States Code, Sections 371 and 2319, and later entered guilty pleas.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney John S. Davis, Special Assistant United States Attorney and Assistant Virginia Attorney General Matthew C. Ackley, and Department of Justice Senior Counsel Scott L. Garland, of the Computer Crimes & Intellectual Property Section.

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