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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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# MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY SEIZES 10 WEBSITES FOR CRIMINAL COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT IN CONNECTION WITH THE LIVE STREAMING OF SPORTING EVENTS OVER THE INTERNET

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and JOHN T. MORTON, the Director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement ("ICE"), announced today that seizure warrants have been executed against 10 websites engaged in the illegal streaming over the Internet of live sporting event telecasts and Pay-Per-View events. The ten websites – seized yesterday pursuant to a federal court order that was unsealed today – were among the most popular on the Internet for illegally distributing copyrighted sporting events. They are: ATDHE.NET, CHANNELSURFING.NET, HQ-STREAMS.COM, HQ-STREAMS.NET, FIRSTROW.NET, ILEMI.COM, IILEMI.COM, IILEMII.COM, ROJADIRECTA.ORG and ROJADIRECTA.COM.

Manhattan U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA said: "The illegal streaming of professional sporting events over the Internet deals a financial body blow to the leagues and broadcasters who are forced to pass their losses off to fans by raising prices for tickets and pay-per-view events. With the Super Bowl just days away, the seizures of these infringing websites reaffirm our commitment to working with our law enforcement partners to protect copyrighted material and put the people who steal it out of business."

ICE Director JOHN T. MORTON said: "This swift action by our Homeland Security Investigations New York special agents and analysts sends a clear message to website operators who mistakenly believe it’s worth the risk to take copyrighted

programming and portray it as their own. Protecting legitimate business interests is a priority for HSI and the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center and we will continue to aggressively investigate this type of crime with our law enforcement partners."

According to the seizure warrant application unsealed today in Manhattan federal court:

It is estimated that each year sports leagues and broadcasters lose millions of dollars from the illegal distribution of copyrighted, live sporting events over the Internet. Such piracy threatens the investment that broadcasters and digital media companies are willing to make to distribute live content, the leagues' ability to sell game tickets and secure local television and radio carriage, and the value of advertising revenue generated by broadcast, radio, and new media partners. Sports fans are also victims, as the costs expended by sports leagues in an effort to address on-line piracy are passed on to fans when they purchase tickets or subscribe to sports networks.

The ten websites seized yesterday provided access to illegal, pirated telecasts of sporting events of the National Football League ("NFL"), the National Basketball Association ("NBA"), the National Hockey League ("NHL"), World Wrestling Entertainment ("WWE"), and the Ultimate Fighting Championship ("UFC") – all of which hold the copyrights to the televised broadcasts of their respective sporting events.

The websites seized yesterday were popular "linking" sites – a type of website that provides access, or "links," to other websites where pirated sporting and Pay-Per-View events are hosted. Users simply click on a link to begin the process of downloading or streaming to their own computer an illegal broadcast of a sporting event from the third party website that is hosting the stream. Linking websites are popular because they allow users to quickly browse content and locate illegal streams that would otherwise be more difficult to find.

The U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York will ask that the domain names for these websites be forfeited. As authorized by the warrants, all visitors to these websites are being redirected to a banner that advises them that the domain name has been seized by Order of the Court, in connection with criminal copyright violations.

Mr. BHARARA praised the work of ICE HSI. He added that the investigation is continuing.

This case is being handled by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant U.S. Attorneys THOMAS G.A. BROWN and CHRISTOPHER D. FREY are in charge of the investigation.

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