

Bootlegger's Arrested

Written by Westside ID234

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A Homewood Pa. man described as a mid-level dealer of counterfeit DVDs and CDs was hauled away by Pittsburgh police in a citywide crackdown on suppliers of pirated music and films.

Detectives on Tuesday arrested Norman Johnson, 37, inside his store The Zone, 622 Homewood Ave., on one count of counterfeit and trademark fraud.

Police said they seized \$25,800 worth of pirated major motion picture discs including copies of "Shark Tale," "Ladder 49," and "Bourne Supremacy," films still showing in theaters and months away from being released by studios on DVD and videocassette.

They also seized hundreds of pirated CDs -many rap and hip hop artist - including a yet-to-be-released disc from the late rap pioneer Tupac Shakur.

If convicted, Johnson faces up to 10 years in prison and would have to reimburse the Motion Picture Association of America and the Recording Industry Association of America, two powerful Hollywood groups that have come down hard on counterfeiters, said police Detective Jimmy Conn.

Johnson, being led away from his shop in handcuffs for a trip to the Allegheny County Jail, yelled to a crowd of onlookers.

"It ain't like I killed four people or nothing," he said. "I'm only selling movies."

Johnson is accused of hawking pirated CDs for \$1 and DVDs for \$3, said police Detective Aaron Beatty. The quality of the merchandise ranged from poor to excellent, he said.

The sheer volume of bogus goods is overwhelming the ability of local authorities to eradicate the black market bazaar that Pittsburgh is becoming, said Dan Cuneen, a Pittsburgh-based representative for the Recording Industry Association of America.

"You can get the stuff anywhere, through street vendors Downtown, in stores in Penn Hills, the North Side or in Homewood," Cuneen said.

Most of the counterfeit luxury goods flooding Pittsburgh -- including bogus Louis Vuitton and Coach handbags and fake professional sports team paraphernalia -- is coming from New York City, officials said.

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While the discs are produced with huge duplicating machines capable of churning out 500 copies a minute in New York warehouses, the Louis Vuittons and Coaches are being made by sweatshops in China and other third-world locales, they said.

"People need to think twice about buying this stuff," Conn said.

[Source](#)