

Couple Charged in \$1Bln Pirated Movie Case

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The  Moscow Times

A Moscow couple has been charged with distributing pirated movies worth more than \$1 billion over the Internet.

The charges, following a lengthy investigation, mark Russia's first major Internet anti-piracy case focused on films.

Deputy Prosecutor General Viktor Grin said Monday that the Moscow couple, working under the pseudonyms Ripper, Shturman, Nadezhda and Piratka, distributed the movies over the Internet with the help of an accomplice in Germany, known as "Apple," through the Interfilm.ru file-sharing site.

Access to Interfilm.ru was blocked in Holland in 2009 at the request of Russia's Interior Ministry, Interfax reported.

The Moscow couple, Andrei and Natalya Lopukhov, are accused of distributing more than 30 films, including "Shrek 3" and "28 Weeks Later," between April 2007 and September 2008.

Their actions cost film owners more than 38 billion rubles (\$1.25 billion) in damages, Interfax said.

The case has been sent to the Timiryazevsky District Court. No trial date has been set.

Russia is frequently accused of not doing enough to enforce intellectual property rights, even as it negotiates to join the World Trade Organization.

(AP, MT)

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