



## Family made £7m in fake DVD scam

**A father and his sons who made £7m from a pirate DVD scam have been jailed by a judge at Southwark Crown Court.**

Sami Sheikh, 28, and brother Rafi, 26, of North Chingford, east London, were each jailed for six years.

They were earlier found guilty of conspiring to break copyright laws, trademark laws and acquire criminal property between 2003 and 2006.

Khalid Sheikh, 53, who lived with his sons, was convicted of the copyright plot and jailed for four years.

A fourth man, Xin Li, 34, of Victoria Road, Walthamstow, east London, was sentenced to two years and three months imprisonment, after being found guilty of concealing criminal property.

**" What I find really distasteful is you corrupted and exploited your children for your own financial interests "**

Judge Martin Beddoe, to Khalid Sheikh

As he passed sentence, Judge Martin Beddoe said: "The evidence suggested tens of thousands of burnt counterfeit material was being produced each week in so-called factories where vulnerable immigrants from China were patently being exploited for substantial financial reward."

Addressing Khalid Sheikh, the judge said: "You were not only the head of the family as father of your sons but in reality the head of a significant organisation... which had become part legitimate and part criminal.

"What I find really distasteful is you corrupted and exploited your children for your own financial interests."

Police caught the gang following a raid on residential and business premises in North Chingford, Harlow in Essex and Walthamstow on 13 June 2006.

During the trial the court heard the gang ran a "sophisticated" operation and imported equipment from the Far East to copy new films like Ice Age 2, the Da Vinci Code and Iron Man to the "best industry standards possible".

The gang, which employed "largely illegal Chinese immigrants", produced hundreds of thousands of DVDs in "factories" housed in several semi-detached houses across London.

The DVDs were then sold on the street for as little as £3 before they were released.

The father and sons, who claimed benefits, also produced pornographic and bestiality films to such an extent some sex film shops were driven out of business, the court heard.

Jurors heard that while the "employees" were made to work "round-the-clock in conditions of virtual slavery", the gang took first-class flights on luxury holidays and spent money in lap-dancing clubs.

Two years after opening a small shop in Walthamstow, the scam was so successful the gang bought a £658,000 warehouse in Essex and made it the headquarters of their operation.

Police believe most of the "vast" ill-gotten gains of the scam have been smuggled out of the country.

Following the sentencing Det Ch Supt Nigel Mawer, from Film Piracy Unit of the Met, said: "This sentencing is the result of three years' hard work and investigation into the activity of an extensive criminal network."

A confiscation hearing will take place at a later date.

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