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PRESS CONTACT: MIKE SEILING
mseiling08@gmail.com
(310) 751-4863

FLORIDA JUDGE ACCUSED OF DIRTY DEAL WITH FORMER LAW PARTNERS

Girls Gone Wild founder: "Panama City declared war on the Constitution"

August 19, 2008 (LOS ANGELES, CA) - Joe Francis, founder and CEO of Mantra Films, Inc., filed suit today in Los Angeles Superior Court, alleging that a federal judge worked in cahoots with opposing attorneys to extort a ransom for Francis' release from a Panama City, Florida jail cell.

Today's filing grows out of a 2003 First Amendment battle Francis and his company fought with Panama City officials. Mantra Films is best known for the Girls Gone Wild lifestyle brand, an American pop culture phenomenon. In town to produce a show about the wild antics of college coeds at Panama City's traditional spring break debauch, Francis and his team were falsely accused of illegal activity.

Court documents filed today allege a Bay County courthouse cabal imprisoned Francis illegally through shady backroom deals stemming from a civil lawsuit filed by several coeds who were filmed. Illegally imprisoned for almost a year without bail, Francis was forced to pay presiding Judge Richard Smoak's former law partners millions in ransom for his freedom.

Francis brings this legal action to set aside the settlement agreement coerced by duress and the improper conduct of the women, their parents, and their attorneys. Francis has also filed separate actions demanding over \$300,000,000 million in damages for the illegal conduct of Bay County officials.

"Panama City officials began their persecution of Joe Francis with open deception, continued with perjury, and concluded with illegal imprisonment," said Robert E. Barnes, attorney for Francis. "That may be what counts for justice in Panama City, but it's not American justice."

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Francis sent an email to millions of supporters today to enlist them in this important First Amendment battle. On a video message posted to his personal Web site, www.MeetJoeFrancis.com he thanked his supporters and said: "We're fighting back against judicial and government corruption. If this can happen to me, it can happen to you."

About Mantra Films, Inc.

Mantra Films, Inc. develops and distributes lifestyle entertainment to audiences worldwide through home video, television, live events, wireless, Internet, SVOD, and Pay Per View distribution channels. The company is a leader in the direct response marketing and membership segments and owns and operates its own production facilities, call center and fulfillment operation. The company was founded in 1997 and has four facilities in Los Angeles, headquartered in Santa Monica.

About Bernhoft Law

Bernhoft Law is one of the nation's leading boutique law firms specializing in complex litigation in federal criminal and civil courts, and international asset fraud recovery. Robert Bernhoft and Robert Barnes of the firm obtained felony acquittals for the actor Wesley Snipes. Mr. Bernhoft also previously obtained acquittals on all felony counts for former IRS investigator Joe Banister (a trial memorialized in Pulitzer Prize winning author David Cay Johnston's "Perfectly Legal"). They are also known for their precedent-setting representation of consumer advocate and presidential candidate Ralph Nader. Bernhoft Law has offices in Milwaukee, Wisconsin and Los Angeles, California. (www.bernhoflaw.com)

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