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CONSUMER ALERT

Virtual Store Front suspected Virtual Scam Front

Fort Worth, TX - Emma DeAnda of Bellmead wanted to add *The Wonder Years* to her DVD collection. With mouse in hand, she located the coveted DVDs at e-tailer dvdavenue.com. The site reflected secure shopping, privacy policies and a 100% satisfaction guarantee. It was only after she had been charge and no product arrived that she discovered the company may be less than they claimed to be.

She is not alone. Edd Jacobs of Denton made the same discovery when he ordered. He received an electronic invoice promising an e-mail within 48 hours confirming his order had been processed and a tracking number provided. Dozens of others from across the country have similar stories to tell.

Even those that did get They may not have gained the satisfaction they were expecting even if they received the ordered product. Many that did receive their DVDs found that they were recorded from Canadian television - not the promised "highest quality" product.

All purchasers faced a similar challenge when attempting to successfully exercise the "30-day 100% unconditional money-back guarantee." They used e-mail, voice-mail and live chat in hopes of receiving a credit or product. E-mails and voice mails went unanswered. Live chat provided lip service, but not results. The address of the company, uncovered by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Commercial Crimes Division, proved to be a provincial government office building in Regina, Saskatchewan.

To make even more difficult for consumers to weed out the trustworthy from the questionable, DVD Avenue's umbrella operates under multiple site names: dvdavenue.tv, dvdavenue.com, dvddonkey.com, allmyfavoritetvshows.com, and tvaddicts.tv. Unlike a traditional retail outlet, site names can be opened and shut down within minutes.

Scams are particularly easy when one can remain anonymous. The online shopping age has made this an "easy to assemble" proposition. As consumers are more educated on what to watch for, scammers are running two-steps ahead to build an appropriate façade to take in innocent shoppers who only want to conveniently and cost effectively get the product they are seeking.

Consumers need to be as conscientious about purchases with online merchants as they are with their local retailers. We encourage consumers to check a company's BBB Reliability Report **prior** to making a purchase at www.fwbbb.org with companies that they are not familiar. Other research points include, check if their address and telephone number are legitimate and contacting others who have done business with this company to share their experience.

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About the BBB System

The Better Business Bureau is dedicated to advancing trust between businesses and consumers. BBBs across the U.S. and Canada serve millions of consumers and nearly 400,000 Accredited Businesses. The BBB has grown to become the most recognized name and advocate for promoting trust in the marketplace, maintaining a database on almost 3 million businesses and approximately 7,000 charities. For more information, please visit www.bbb.org.