



**Crisis Deepens: Canadian Broadcasters Spend over 12 times more  
buying Foreign Drama than they do on Canadian Drama**

**For Immediate Release**

**March 4, 2008 – Toronto** – The CRTC released today the financial results for conventional broadcasters. After 2006's 25% plummet in spending on Canadian drama, figures released today reveal that Canadian drama is not on the road to recovery. Spending in 2007 increased by only 1.4%, extending the dismal track record of meager spending on high quality, original scripted drama in Canada.

The figures in the CRTC report reveal that broadcasters outside of Quebec spent 12.6 times on foreign drama what they spent on Canadian drama. "Welcome to the new normal," says Maureen Parker, Executive Director, Writers Guild of Canada. "Business as usual for broadcasters in Canada means trying to top each other in bidding wars for US programming. Quality Canadian drama is paying the price for their cross-border shopping sprees."

Spending on non-Canadian drama by broadcasters outside of Quebec is the highest it has been in eight years, at almost half a billion dollars (\$461,770,968). At the same time, spending on Canadian drama was just over \$36.5 million.

The industry is experiencing this crisis at the same time as the broadcasters enjoy stable profits. Despite their claims that the sky is falling with fragmented audience shares and digital alternatives, the major broadcasters continue to make money, reporting 5.2% profit before income tax (PBIT), a 1.3% increase over last year. And this figure does not include substantial revenues earned by the broadcasters from unregulated platforms (such as advertising on digital media).

This grim year for spending on Canadian drama follows a decline in production that began in 1999 with the lifting of expenditure requirements on conventional broadcasters. Spending on Canadian drama by conventional broadcasters has dropped from 5.1% of advertising revenues in 1998 to just 2.3% of advertising revenues in 2007. The Writers Guild of Canada expects to present to the CRTC during broadcaster licence renewal hearings in early 2009, and will continue to call for a minimum expenditure requirement for Canadian drama of 7% of advertising revenue.

For more information, please contact David Kinahan, Director of Communications, Writers Guild of Canada, at 416-979-7907 or 1-800-567-9974, or by email at [d.kinahan@wgc.ca](mailto:d.kinahan@wgc.ca)

The Writers Guild of Canada (WGC) represents more than 1,800 English-language professional screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers.