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BUDWEISER CANADA IS NOT THE KING

Toronto, February 10, 2012: Labatt Canada has side-stepped the National Commercial Agreement (NCA) to produce a non-union Budweiser commercial for the Super Bowl. A so-called "flash mob" involving over 600 background performers was hired without the wage protection and safety of the National Commercial Agreement.

The National Commercial Agreement (NCA) is the industry standard agreement for performers appearing in commercials produced in Canada. The NCA is negotiated between The Institute of Communications Agencies (ICA) and The Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and governs wages and working conditions for professional performers in Canada. Labatt Canada is an ACA member and, according to the ACA web site, Jorn Socquet, VP of Marketing for Labatt Breweries of Canada, also sits on the ACA board.

"It's an embarrassing day for Labatt when they're caught exploiting every day folks in their multi-million dollar television ads," says Heather Allin, President of ACTRA Toronto. "We are shocked that Labatt, with whom we have a long-standing business relationship, would undermine their agreement and hire workers for much less than industry-standard pay."

Anomaly, the U.S. advertising agency which produced this non-union commercial in Ontario, also used unsuspecting hockey players to promote their international brand. Under the NCA, the hockey players would have been fairly compensated for their speaking and stunt roles and would have had the protection of a qualified professional stunt co-ordinator.

Anomaly has produced several union commercials in Ontario for Budweiser over the past year prompting great frustration at ACTRA Toronto, that, in this case, they flouted the agreement. ACTRA Toronto is confident that Anomaly and ACTRA Toronto could have come to an agreement around hiring such a large cast for their spot. "We didn't even get a chance to talk to them before production. They didn't afford us that courtesy," says Ms. Allin. Anomaly is owned by MDC Partners in Canada. MDC owns several agencies which are signatory to the NCA and regularly produce commercials using ACTRA members.

ACTRA Toronto is the largest organization within ACTRA, representing over 15,000 of Canada's 21,000 professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. As an advocate for Canadian culture since 1943, ACTRA is a member-driven organization that continues to secure rights and respect for the work of professional performers.

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