

## **THE HIRE – THE ACCLAIMED FILM SERIES BY BMW – WILL END A FOUR AND A HALF YEAR INTERNET RUN OCTOBER 21ST**

**Woodcliff Lake, NJ, October 11, 2005...**BMW announced today that its award-winning internet short-film series, The Hire, will end its internet run on October 21, 2005. The debut of the first two films in The Hire series was online in 2001. The third film entitled, "The Follow," by Wong Kar Wai, made its debut at the Cannes Film Festival in May 2001 to international acclaim. The Hire was one of the leading examples of convergence in the media industry – an unprecedented, groundbreaking effort. In total, eight films were created in the series. And, since its debut, The Hire has received more than 100 million film views.

BMW took its place alongside the major movie studios with the production of The Hire short-film series on the internet, bringing together high-level talent from a number of diverse fields – a synergistic effort that crossed and pushed boundaries. Key producers included David Fincher, Ridley and Tony Scott. Other prominent directors that made up the dream team included John Frankenheimer, Ang Lee, Wong Kar-Wai, Guy Ritchie, Alejandro González Iñárritu, John Woo, Joe Carnahan.

The Hire has been showered with praise. The New York Times said, "The BMW films tingle with zest," while Time Magazine added, "It surely deserves the attention of discerning movie watchers." In 2002, the Cannes International Advertising Festival awarded The Hire with the Cyber Lion Grand Prix prize. Additional accolades include the "Best Excuse for Broadband" award at WIRED Magazine's third annual Rave Awards in 2001 and the 2002 Los Angeles International Short Film Festival's "Best Action Short" award, which was given to director John Woo for Hostage, the sixth film in The Hire. In 2003, The Hire series was inducted into the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA).

BMW took its non-traditional approach one step further by creating DVDs of the films, and distributing them in a targeted fashion at no cost to key audiences. One of BMW's first forays into this arena was the distribution of The Hire Season One DVD with issues of Vanity Fair magazine. This distribution helped create additional buzz for the film within a key audience. The full DVD collection (with all eight films) was unveiled at The Palais des Festival during the 2003 Cannes Film Festival.

DVD distribution was just one of the non-traditional ways in which BMW reached out to its essential alpha groups. BMW was also one of the first companies to partner with TIVO on a project such as The Hire. In another innovative move, BMW also created its own The Hire cable TV channel.

"What began as a "big idea" grew into a cutting edge, first-of-its-kind entertainment event that was unprecedented in our industry," said Jack Pitney, Vice President Marketing for BMW of North America. "We are proud that The Hire had more than 100 million film views." Jack adds, "BMW prides itself in creating innovative, high-impact marketing initiatives. We continually evaluate the effectiveness and value of each element while we simultaneously strive to search for new and fresh avenues to open communication channels with consumers. While today we may be talking about the end of The Hire, you can be sure that BMW is working on new approaches to bring the brand to life in innovative ways."