

# BUSINESS

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PHIL CARPENTER THE GAZETTE

Security guard Pascal Thellen keeps watch outside yesterday's news conference at Krypton Imagination, which has acquired comprehensive licensing rights from the Chaplin family-run company that is the sole rights holder of the Charlie Chaplin brand.

## Local upstart bags Little Tramp

### GLOBAL LICENSING RIGHTS SECURED

Krypton to debut Charlie Chaplin games for latest generation of mobile phones

LYNN MOORE  
THE GAZETTE

Charlie Chaplin – the silent screen's beloved Little Tramp – is being ushered into the digital age by a new Montreal company that has acquired global licensing rights from Chaplin's children.

The first venue for "the refreshed Charlie Chaplin persona" is a line of interactive games for the latest generation of wireless mobile phones that is

to make its debut in October, **Krypton Imagination Inc.** president Jean David announced yesterday.

**Dhruva Interactive**, a games publisher and developer based in Bangalore, India, will make the games available to a network of phone companies and distributors, David said.

That specialty market is hot in Asia, making inroads into Europe and should hit North America soon, he said.

Also vying for a licensing

agreement with Krypton are Hollywood producers who want to produce a "Shrek-style animated Charlie Chaplin movie," he said.

When – not if – the movie is made, Chaplin, who described himself as "a citizen of the world" during the 1940s, will become a top icon of the new millennium, Krypton founder Pierre Verreault said.

Chaplin, as artist, rebel and humanist, is already revered by millions, he noted.

"He even has a following in China because of his silent films. There was no language barrier," Verreault said.

Krypton, which is supported by private investors, is in line for

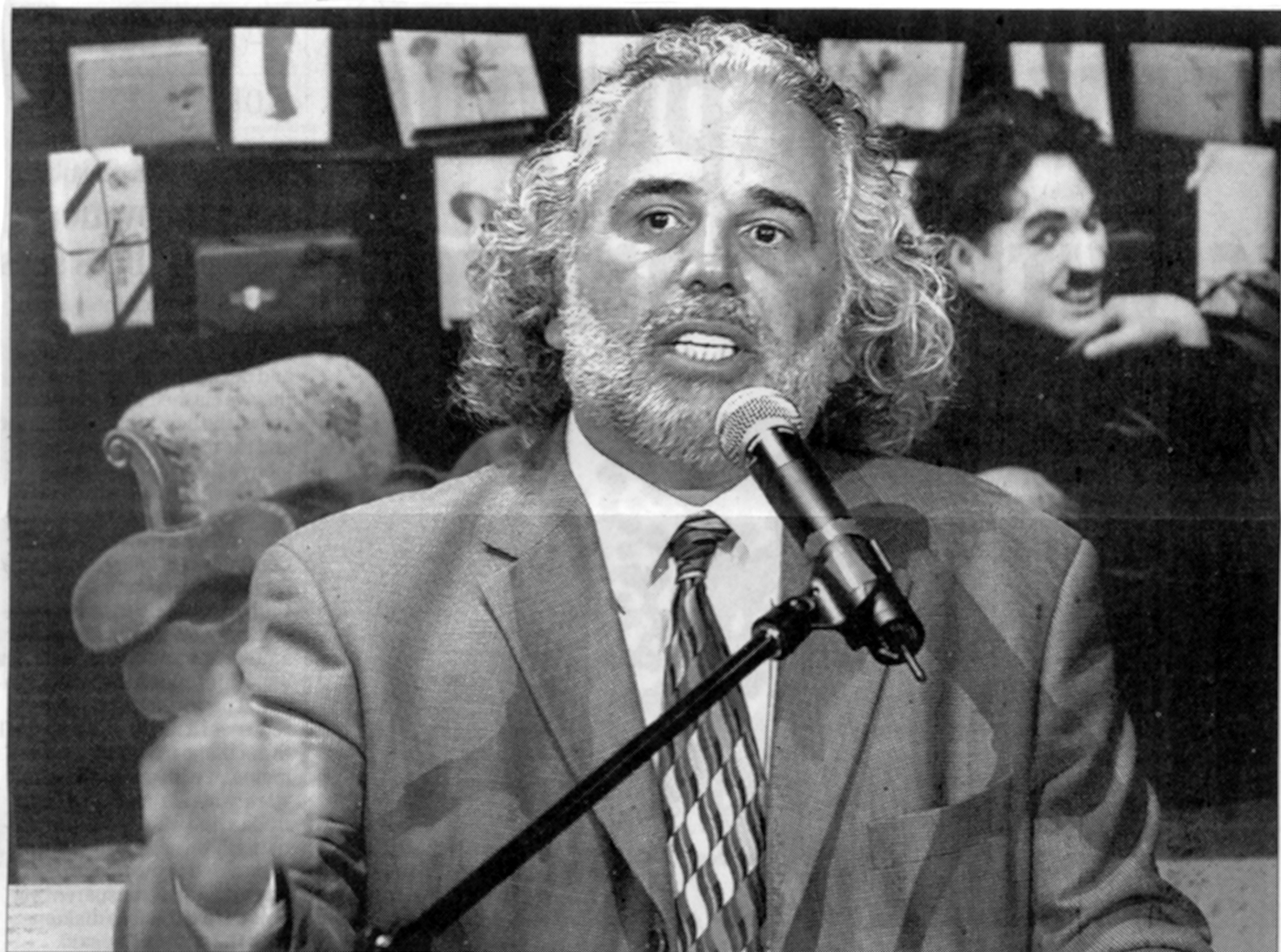
"a really big payback," said Verreault, noting that the branding/licensing industry is worth an estimated \$170 billion.

How Montrealers managed to get comprehensive licensing rights from **Bubbles Inc. SA**, the Chaplin family-run company that is the sole rights holder of the Charlie Chaplin brand, is a story in itself.

Through a friend and fellow Quebecer, Verreault, a chemical engineer who has morphed into an international development expert, worked on a project linked to the Chaplin museum in Switzerland. He consequently met the Chaplin family.

Please see CHAPLIN, Page B5

## CANADA



PHIL CARPENTER THE GAZETTE

**Little Tramp going digital:** Jean David, president of Krypton Imagination, announces his company's plan to market the Charlie Chaplin brand worldwide. First up: a line of interactive games for the latest generation of wireless mobile phones debuting in October.

## Chaplin | 'Movie themes universal'

CONTINUED FROM B1

Verreault and friend David, the former marketing guru at Cirque du Soleil, spent 18 months negotiating with the family, trying to prove that they had the integrity plus the technical know-how and marketing skills to undertake the venture.

"They didn't want it to be a Disney-like commercial thing," Verreault said.

Documents issued yesterday included a quote from Josephine Chaplin. "My father, Charlie Chaplin, has always been incredibly modern and before his time. His films have not aged because their themes are universal."

One item that helped Krypton prove its case was a "style guide" created by Thérèse Mondor, former graphics director for Cirque du Soleil. The 48-page document details images and quotations of Chaplin along with "Chaplin-inspired" backgrounds and a colour palette for various periods of his life that can be used by licence holders.

Yesterday, Mondor described the project as thrilling.

"I remember walking down the street in Paris, holding in my arms all of these original photographs of Charlie Chaplin that I was going to have scanned and thinking what would happen if I lost or damaged one of these

priceless works," said Mondor, who had access to about 15,000 original photographs.

On March 4, Krypton presented its marketing strategy to the Chaplin family, and on April 2 signed the deal, David said.

From that point, Krypton staff and consultants worked overtime to launch the company at Licensing 2004 International on June 8 in New York City. They unveiled an online shop (discoverchaplin.com) and connected with potential clients.

Best known by film audiences for his duck-foot walk, brush mustache and bowler hat, Chaplin was also admired for his social commentary.

In his film *The Great Dictator*, he exposed the megalomania of dictators, and in *Modern Times*, he explored the impotence of the individual in the machine age.

Born in the slums of London in 1889, the multi-talented artist became a millionaire. After being unsuccessfully investigated for communist leanings during the McCarthyism era in the U.S., Chaplin moved to Switzerland.

He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth in 1975, and died in 1977.

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