



AFACT

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION AGAINST COPYRIGHT THEFT

MEDIA RELEASE

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POLICE CATCH ALLEGED DRIVE-IN MOVIE THIEF DURING SCREENING OF MI4

Man faces multiple charges under Copyright Act

Sydney: On the evening of 16 December, Blacktown Police supported by investigators from the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT), apprehended a 35-year-old man from the NSW Central Coast as he attempted to illegally capture the audio soundtrack of the newly released film *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* at the Blacktown Drive-in cinema in Sydney's west. The blockbuster movie was being screened in Australia two days prior to its theatrical release in the USA and Europe.

The operation followed an extensive investigation by AFACT into the illegal recording of soundtracks of major film releases.

The suspect's vehicle was approached by the police and AFACT investigators before the end of the screening of *Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol* and a search of the vehicle was conducted. An iRiver audio recording device, which was in the process of recording the film, was located on the front passenger seat, hardwired to the in-car stereo system.

The 35-year-old man is assisting police with their enquiries and is expected to face multiple charges under the Copyright Act.

More than 90% of newly released movies that illegally end up on the Internet and in street markets around the world originate from illegal recordings being made in cinemas. These recordings often appear online within hours or days of a movie premiere, triggering an avalanche of illegal downloads that can significantly impact a film's performance at the box office and throughout its distribution cycle. Embedded watermarks on a film print allow investigators to identify the specific date and location where the illegal recording takes place.

Neil Gane, Executive Director of AFACT said: "Australian cinemas and their staff play a vital role in the prevention of illegal recordings of new release movies. All it takes is one illegal recording of a movie to put at risk its ability to recoup the substantial investment made in its production, marketing and distribution. Similarly, just one illegal recording can jeopardise the flow through of revenues to a long chain of businesses such as retail outlets, television networks and online enterprises, putting at risk the jobs of thousands of Australians who rely on a successful legitimate film and television industry for their livelihoods. I commend the NSW Police on this operation which is likely to have a direct positive impact on the wellbeing of the community."

Michael Hawkins, Executive Director of the National Association of Cinema Operators (NACO) said: "Cinema owners and staff throughout Australia are committed to providing a quality movie entertainment experience for movie lovers. However, our job is made significantly more difficult when movie thieves attempt to steal the content that allows us to effectively conduct our business for the enjoyment of our patrons. We thank the efforts of the NSW Police and AFACT for preventing what could have been an extremely damaging theft of an audio file so soon into the theatrical run of this movie."

Australian courts have previously handed down two convictions for making illegal recordings of movies in cinemas. In November 2007, Jose Duarte was convicted of making and distributing

an illegal camcord copy of the theatrical release of *The Simpsons Movie* on his mobile phone and uploading it to the internet. The unauthorized recording was tracked to streaming sites and P2P systems within 72 hours of Duarte making and uploading it. The illegal recording was illegally downloaded over 100,000 times and copies and sold as an illegal DVD around the world.

In April 2009, Craig Ferrugia was convicted of making and uploading to the internet illegal recordings of a number of new-release movies including *He's Just Not That Into You*, *Marley and Me*, *Yes Man*, *Bedtime Stories* and *Beverley Hills Chihuahua*.

About AFACT

AFACT works closely with industry, government and enforcement agencies to address copyright theft and protect the interests of the film and television community as well as the interests of Australian movie fans.

In February 2011, IPSOS and Oxford Economics released a study on behalf of AFACT entitled "Economic Consequences of Movie Piracy in Australia". The key findings, outlined below, indicated the scale of harm caused by movie piracy to the Australian economy in the 12 months up to July 2010.

- \$1.37 billion in revenue was lost across the entire Australian economy.
- 6,100 jobs were forgone across the entire economy.
- Tax losses to movie piracy amounted to \$193 million.
- Direct consumer spending losses to the movie industry, ie. cinema owners, local distributors, producers and retailers amounted to \$575 million.

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