
MEDIA RELEASE – JUNE 23 2005

GUILTY PLEA YIELDS \$15,000 PIRACY FINE FOR 18-YEAR-OLD

Liverpool, Sydney, June 23 – On June 22, 18-year-old Salahuddin Dannoun of Liverpool pleaded guilty to three copyright-related offences and was fined \$5,000 per charge, plus court costs, by Magistrate Kevin Flack of Liverpool Magistrate’s Court. Dannoun was charged following a raid on Preston Markets by Greenvalley Police on 2nd February, with assistance from the Australian Federation Against Copyright Theft (AFACT). Dannoun was found in possession of 123 pirated DVDs consisting of over a hundred different film titles, many of which had yet to be released in DVD format anywhere in the world, and one of which, “Million Dollar Baby”, had not even been released in Australian cinemas.

Pirated DVDs that are available in the market prior to the official release of home video or theatrical release negatively impact theatre ticket sales and legitimate DVD sales because a certain number of people have already seen the movie via illegal copies. The trade in unauthorized DVDs has an inevitable impact on the bottom line of Australian film industry businesses that abide by the law, and undermines their livelihood.

“DVD piracy impacts legitimate video rental and sales businesses, as well as cinemas, and cost honest Australians income and jobs,” said Neil Gane, the Director of Operations for AFACT. “AFACT applauds Greenvalley Police for their continued efforts to help stop movie piracy at local markets, and it is encouraging that NSW courts are handing down strong deterrent sentences for movie piracy offences.”

Piracy in Australia

AFACT estimates that movie piracy costs the film industry in Australia in excess of \$150 million in potential revenue annually. The illegal distribution of unauthorized copies of movies rose from 4% in 2000 to around 10% of the legitimate market in 2004. Police across Australia have more than doubled the number of illegal discs seized in 2004 compared to 2003. Discs comprise mostly DVD-R copies as DVD-R technology has increased its share of the pirate optical disc market. In addition Australian Customs seized over 40,000 pirate DVDs imported into Australia in 2004, a 185% increase compared to the 14,000 seized by Customs in 2003.

Police jurisdictions now recognize organized crime involvement in film piracy. Organized crime links to movie piracy in Australia were first uncovered following a raid on Malaysia-linked movie pirates in 2002.

Piracy in Asia

The MPA estimates that its member companies lose an excess of US\$896 million in potential revenue annually in the Asia-Pacific region alone. In 2004, the MPA operations in the Asia-Pacific region investigated more than 25,500 cases of piracy and assisted law enforcement officials in conducting nearly 12,000 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of approximately 49,000,000 illegal optical discs, and the initiation of more than 8,000 legal actions.

About AFACT

AFACT works closely with industry, government, police and educational institutions to address copyright theft and protect the commercial interests of the film and television industry as well as the interests of Australian movie fans. AFACT members include: Village Roadshow; Buena Vista International Inc; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Releasing International Corporation; Twentieth Century Fox International Corporation; Universal International Films Inc; Warner Bros. Pictures International [A Division of Warner Bros. Pictures Inc]

For more information, please contact:

Adrienne Pecotic

AFACT

0414 66 45 66

adrienne.pecotic@afact.com.au