



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release: 15th December 2006

£60,000 CONFISCATION ORDER AGAINST FILM PIRATE

Assets Recovery Agency (ARA) Financial Investigators, working in partnership with Essex County Council Trading Standards, Cambridge County Council Trading Standards, Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) and British Phonographic Industry (BPI) and have secured a Confiscation Order worth £60,681 against Peter William Axford of Kilmartin Road, Ilford, Essex, who is a convicted counterfeiter.

Investigations into Mr. Axford's activities began in November 2002 when Essex Trading Standards received complaints from members of the public in relation to the sale of counterfeit DVDs at car boot sales in the county. A joint investigation was launched with the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) and the British Phonographic Industry (BPI). Inquiries identified Mr. Axford as being involved in the illegal copying, distribution and sale of counterfeit DVDs in the Essex area.

In November 2002, searches of both Mr. Axford's home address in Ilford and business premises he rented in Romford uncovered in excess of 2,500 counterfeit DVDs, together with jewel cases, blank DVDs and wrappings, computers, printers, a scanner, CD rewriters and other equipment. Subsequent examination of the hard drives from the computers seized showed that they contained software and images relevant to the copying of DVDs.

On the 6th March 2004, a joint operation between Cambridge County Council Trading Standards, FACT and BPI was carried out at Oakington Market, Oakington, Cambridgeshire. Mr. Axford was stopped in a van which was found to contain 367 counterfeit DVDs and 235 counterfeit CDs, together with jewel cases, a TV/VCR and a CD/radio.

A further search of Mr. Axford's private and business premises in June 2004 by Essex Trading Standards, FACT and BPI uncovered 15,000 counterfeit DVDs, together with jewel cases, title inlays, blank DVDs and wrappings. In addition, 90 DVD burners, capable of producing between 250 and 300 counterfeit DVDs per hour, were seized together with a computer, flash drive memory stick and DVD labellers to produce title inlays. The computer and memory stick were subsequently examined and found to contain software allowing the copying of films, as well as details of recent releases and the latest titles.

On 10th July 2006 at Blackfriars Crown Court, Mr. Axford pleaded guilty to making for sale infringing copyright works, producing infringing copyright works, copying infringing copyright works, offering for sale infringing copyright works, and offering for sale counterfeit goods which bore a registered trademark. He was sentenced to 30 months' imprisonment.

At Blackfriars Crown Court yesterday, HHJ Marron certified that the benefit derived from Mr. Axford's activity amounted to £122,066.20, and ruled that the recoverable amount is £60,681. Mr. Axford has 18 months to pay this amount back to the Agency, or face 18 months' imprisonment in default

Jane Earl, Director of the Assets Recovery Agency, said: *"By using a joined-up approach, we can take the cash out of counterfeiting. The Assets Recovery Agency works with a range of agencies and*

organisations to make sure crime doesn't pay- this case is no exception. I look forward to even more success through cooperation in the future."

Kieron Sharp, FACT Director General, added: *"I am pleased that this multi-agency operation has resulted in a conviction and a confiscation order. The primary motivation for those involved in film piracy is the criminal profits and, by hitting them with prison and a financial penalty, we can send the message that this kind of activity carries a higher risk than previously. I would like to thank the ARA, Essex County Council Trading Standards, Cambridge County Council Trading Standards and the BPI for their assistance in this case."*

- Ends

For further information:

Eddy Leviten, FACT Head of Communications +44 (0) 20 8568 6646/ +44 (0)7768 057464
eddy.leviten@fact-uk.org.uk

Notes to editors:

About FACT

The Federation Against Copyright Theft is the UK's leading trade organisation established to protect and represent the interests of the film and broadcasting industry against copyright and trademark infringements. Established in 1983, FACT works closely with statutory law enforcement agencies to combat the growth of pirate DVDs, film and other forms of broadcast material including the increasing threat from online/internet-based piracy. FACT has been accepted as a prosecution authority and engages in criminal prosecutions in its own right.

The maximum penalty for offences of film piracy is 10 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine. Proceeds of Crime Act legislation now also enables confiscation of assets and goods obtained through criminal activity.

www.fact-uk.org.uk