



PRESS RELEASE

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EBAY FILM PIRATE HAS RECORD £55,000 ASSETS SEIZURE - LORD OF THE RINGS WAS TOP SELLING ITEM -

A prolific seller of pirate DVDs on eBay has been ordered to pay £55,000 under Proceeds Of Crime legislation following a judgement on Friday (1st December) at Bradford Crown Court.

Peter Spencer, who has already served a jail sentence for his piracy activities, had also been the subject of an investigation by the Assets Recovery Agency. This sum is the highest asset seizure to date for a FACT prosecuted film piracy case. The £55,000 was adjudged to be the criminal profit made by Spencer from his pirate DVD sales.

He must now pay the £55,000 to the Exchequer within 12 months or face a two year custodial sentence - with the money still owing and payable to the Exchequer.

FACT brought its own prosecution against Spencer, age 39, from Oakhall Park, Bradford after monitoring his trade in counterfeit DVDs on eBay since 2002. Spencer was sentenced to a six month jail term in May 2006 at Bradford Crown Court.

In just one day in January 2004 Spencer had over 950 pirate DVDs listed for sale on eBay and FACT's Internet Investigations Team was able to show that just one title alone, Lord Of The Rings: Return Of The King, made him over £14,000.

Kieron Sharp, FACT Director General said:

"This is another important milestone and it demonstrates the effectiveness of the Proceeds Of Crime Act. The use of this legislation to target the criminal profits gained from film piracy in addition to the custodial sentences handed down by the Courts is a powerful weapon as this hits criminals hardest – taking away their liberty and their money.

I would like to thank the Assets Recovery Agency and West Yorkshire Police for their diligence and assistance in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.

I hope this result also sends a strong message to those using auction sites such as eBay that they are not immune from prosecution and further action should they trade in counterfeit goods."

- Ends

Notes to editors:

1/ In May 2006, Spencer pleaded Guilty to the importation and distribution of counterfeit DVDs. The discs had been produced in pirate DVD plants in the Far East and had their region coding removed so that they would play in any DVD player worldwide. Pirate copies offered for sale included major titles such as Lord Of The Rings, Kill Bill, School Of Rock, Peter Pan and Matrix Revolutions.

2/ FACT's investigation started in 2002 when its Internet Investigations Team detected the pirate DVDs on sale on eBay. A large number of items were removed from eBay but Spencer then relisted them using

other usernames. He is believed to have used over 500 identities to trade on eBay over a two year period.

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