

GrayZone Digest

July - August 1996

[Legal Highlights](#)

"End of an era?"

This was the question posed by Ice in their August newsletter when they reported on bootleg raids conducted by the RIAA and local officials in the New York metropolitan region this past July. The aftershocks from these raids were felt all the way from Greenwich Village in New York City to locations in Europe, Asia and Australia...and on into the digital sub-ether of the Information Highway.

Simply put: everyone is talking about this one!!

This special double issue includes details of these raids. Additional information is contained in the [press release](#) issued from the offices of the New York State Attorney General, Dennis C. Vacco, who assisted the RIAA with two of the three raids. The final tallies were provided to us by the RIAA.

Using contraband databases we designed and continue to maintain for our clients, **GrayZone** provided the RIAA with detailed information concerning bootlegs available at these high profile New York locations.

We have also provided [color photos](#) of this event which is discussed in this section.

As you'll surely note in this digest, our anti-piracy colleagues have been busy throughout the world. We are especially delighted to report that efforts are being stepped up in Latin American countries. According to IFPI, the music industry lost approximately \$300 million to Latin American pirates in 1995.

Legal Highlights

RIAA Tackles New York

New York

More than 87,000 alleged bootleg CDs were seized by authorities on July 2 from three New York locations. They were the first seizures under New York State's bootleg amendment to the penal code. Andy Grabowicz and associate Gladys Caporali were arrested at Caporali's residence, located at 92-18 32nd Avenue, Jackson Heights in Queens, New York, and charged with manufacturing, selling and distributing alleged bootleg CDs, audiocassettes and videocassettes.

The seizures were conducted in raids by the New York State Attorney General's office and the New York State police with assistance by the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA). New York State Attorney General Dennis C. Vacco held a press conference at Second Coming Records, 235 Sullivan Street in Manhattan's Greenwich Village, an area Vacco characterized as "the single largest distribution point in the East, and perhaps the country..."

Approximately 10,000 of the alleged bootlegs were confiscated from Second Coming Records, Grabowicz's retail store, and an estimated 70,000 more were seized from his Queens warehouse, where the contraband was being stocked and

where Grabowicz and Caporali operated two mail order businesses: Motoring Music (for compact discs) and Video Jello (video mail order). Another 7,000 were confiscated from Revolver Records, located at 45 West 8th Street, which is independent from Second Coming Records, and is being treated as a separate case.

Frank Creighton, RIAA Vice President, Associate Director of Anti-Piracy, praised the law-enforcement efforts predicated by the new amendment, which took effect in November 1995. The amendment added distribution and sale of bootleg product to the penal law, which had been previously limited to manufacturing of bootleg product. Present at the press conference was Rusty Harmon, manager of Hootie & the Blowfish, a band whose music is frequently pirated. Hootie attorney Richard Gusler attended, also.

Bootlegged merchandise at the store included unauthorized recordings of The Beatles, Jimi Hendrix, Madonna, Michael Jackson, Janet Jackson, Neil Young, Prince, Eric Clapton, Counting Crows, Hootie and the Blowfish, The Grateful Dead, Bruce Springsteen, Billy Joel, Aerosmith, Bon Jovi, Guns & Roses, Bob Dylan, Creedence Clearwater Revival, John Fogerty, David Bowie, Pink Floyd, The Dave Matthews Band, Phish, Nine Inch Nails and The Allman Brothers. (Newsday July 7, 1996; Reuters/Variety July 5, 1996; Ice Aug 1996; Goldmine #419, August 16, 1996; RIAA Press Release July 7, 9 1996)

Busts and Raids

New York

A counterfeit video tape ring, headed by the Brooklyn based Halali-Sudry family, was busted by undercover detectives in Operation Copycat June 20. The ring manufactured more than \$100,000 worth of pirated video tapes a week, selling them from New York to California. Arrested were Israeli citizens Yeheskel Halali, 58; his son, Joshua, 36; his son-in-law, Asher Sudry, 29; Sudry's brother, Nissim Sudry, 19; another Halali family member not identified, and a Pakistani national, Noor Siddiqi, 48. The six are charged with conspiracy and manufacture or sale of unauthorized recordings, possession of false instruments and the unauthorized sale or advertisement of unauthorized recordings. Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau said he will seek to indict the gang on racketeering charges under the state's Organized Crime Act, the first time the statute will be used to fight piracy. (Daily News June 25, 1996 - Barbara Ross / Corky Siemasko)

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