

Ex-DVD company employee gets 4 years for leaking Spider-Man Blu-ray

Hale, a 38-year-old with prior felony convictions for armed robbery, risked a potential sentence of 15 years for these crimes, but he reduced his sentence to a maximum of five years through his plea deal. At the time, the DOJ credited him for taking “responsibility,” arguing that he deserved a maximum reduction partly because the total “infringement amount” was likely no more than \$40,000, not the “tens of millions” the DOJ claimed in today’s release.

Ultimately, Hale pleaded guilty to criminal copyright infringement, while agreeing to pay restitution (the exact amount is not clarified in the release) and return “approximately 1,160 stolen DVDs and Blu-rays” that the cops seized to his former employer. Hale also pleaded guilty to “being a convicted felon in possession of a firearm,” the DOJ noted, after cops uncovered that he “unlawfully possessed a pistol that was loaded with one live round in the chamber and 13 rounds in the magazine.”

Combining the DVD theft and firearm charges, the US District Court in Tennessee sentenced Hale to 57 months, just short of the five-year maximum sentence he could have faced.

In the DOJ’s press release, acting Assistant Attorney General Matthew R. Galeotti claimed the win, while warning that “today’s sentencing signals our commitment to protecting American innovation from pirates that would exploit others’ work for a quick profit, which, in this case, cost one copyright owner tens of millions of dollars.”

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