

Treasure haul as N.Z. police raid Megaupload guru

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A pink cadillac pictured at a 2008 automobile auction in Arizona. New Zealand police on Friday seized a pink Cadillac and a sawn-off shotgun, and froze millions of dollars in cash, after a raid on the fortified mansion of Internet guru Kim Dotcom, accused of online piracy.

New Zealand police on Friday seized a pink Cadillac and a sawn-off shotgun, and froze millions of dollars in cash, after a raid on the fortified mansion of an Internet guru accused of online piracy.

Armed officers swooped on an Auckland property occupied by "Kim Dotcom", whose website Megaupload.com is alleged by US authorities to be involved in one of the largest cases of copyright theft ever.

Dotcom, also known as Kim Schmitz, a 37-year-old German citizen with New Zealand and Hong Kong residency, was denied bail with three other

men on Friday when they appeared in an Auckland district court, police said.

According to New Zealand reports, Dotcom's lawyer initially objected to media requests to take photographs and video inside the courtroom. But the accused said he did not mind "because we have nothing to hide".

In a statement, police said they raided 10 Auckland premises, including the Megaupload founder's property known as Dotcom Mansion, after liaising with US authorities.

At the mansion they seized luxury cars worth NZ\$6.0 million (\$4.8 million), including a 1959 pink Cadillac and a Rolls Royce Phantom, as well as "a firearm which had the appearance of a shortened shotgun".

In addition, police said NZ\$11 million in cash held in New Zealand financial accounts was frozen pending the outcome of legal proceedings.

Detective Inspector Grant Wormald said the Megaupload founder tried to retreat to a fortified safe room when police arrived.

"Mr Dotcom retreated into the house and activated a number of electronic locking mechanisms," he said.

"While police neutralised these locks he then further barricaded himself into a safe room within the house which officers had to cut their way into.

"Once they gained entry into this room they found Mr Dotcom near a firearm which had the appearance of a shortened shotgun -- it was definitely not as simple as knocking at the front door."

Dotcom and the three other arrested men -- Dutchman Bram van der

Kolk and Germans Finn Batato and Mathias Ortmann -- were denied bail and are scheduled to reappear in court on Monday.

US authorities are seeking their extradition to the United States.

They accuse the Megaupload website, which allows downloading of large files, of generating more than \$175 million in criminal proceeds and causing "more than half a billion dollars in harm to copyright owners".

Its closure sparked retaliatory cyber-attacks from the "Anonymous" hacktivist group on the FBI and Justice Department websites, as well as music and recording industry websites seen as supporting the clampdown.

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