

Video images put shoplifters on the back foot as

Public helps trap brazen shop bandits



In focus: Video of an armed robber at St Leonards Tavern, Artarmon



Caught on camera: Footage of a ram-raid at Bambini in Balmain

By MARNIE O'NEILL

FRUSTRATED by brazen shoplifters, Sydney shopkeepers are showing customers video footage and photographs of thieves to track them down.

The tactic proved successful for one small business on Friday when a shamed shoplifter turned herself in after a "wanted poster" was placed in the shop's front window.

In another coup, a man and a woman were arrested last week after an upmarket Surry Hills wine shop erected large colour stills of the thieving pair in action.

Police are supporting the initiative, saying any opportunity to

gather evidence against shoplifters should be encouraged.

When Red Rocket Toy Store owner Peppa Landis printed out high-resolution images of the well-dressed thief — who turned out to be a local Rose Bay identity — she was amazed when 10 customers identified her.

Ms Landis and her son Dan, who co-manages the shop, then provided Rose Bay police with a copy of the footage and the tip-off about the woman's possible identity.

But before police could act, the woman turned herself in.

"She came in and said, 'I see you have those pictures of me there', and basically confessed everything," Dan Landis said.

Peppa Landis said she hoped that other small businesses would follow suit.

"What this shows is that we have taken matters into our own hands successfully and caught a thief," she said.

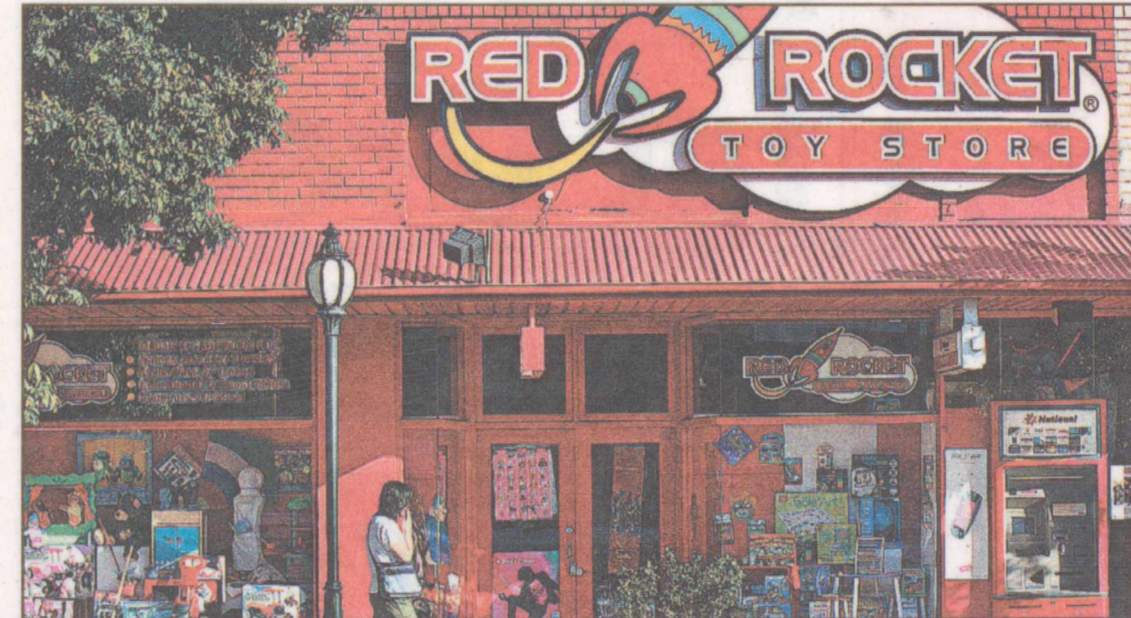
"I hope it will show other small businesses that they can do the same thing, that they shouldn't be frightened to be proactive.

"The police are far too busy with armed robbers to chase shoplifters, so why not do something yourself?"

The movie-like quality of digital surveillance footage is a far cry from the grainy images most people are used to.

Two weeks ago, *The Sunday Telegraph* posted amazing video

businesses leave thieves with nowhere to hide



Plan: The owner of the Red Rocket Toy Store in Rose Bay used technology to shame a shoplifter into confessing

of ram-raiders hitting Sydney designer clothes stores.

On Friday, *The Daily Telegraph* published terrifying images of a hooded, armed gang robbing an Artarmon pub.

Austral Surveillance proprietor Jacob Nalbandian said these days it was rare to enter business premises and not have your photo taken.

"A lot of businesses are using face identification technology such as door-greet cameras which take your mugshot as soon as you walk in," Mr Nalbandian said.

"Pubs, for example, are creating 'hall-of fame' style exclusion

galleries for their staff so that they will be able to recognise anyone who has come in before and stolen or made trouble.

"Unlike analogue, which is virtually obsolete and subject to a lot of wear and tear, digital footage can last up to 100 years."

In another success story, two people were arrested after an upmarket Surry Hills liquor shop posted digital images of shoplifters at their front counter. The pair cannot be identified because they are currently before the courts.

Wine shop assistant manager Patrick Clarke said that the pair had been stealing expensive al-

cohol from the shop for about five years.

"We got sick of it in the end, and decided we'd put stills from the footage on the wall in the hope someone could tell us who they were. It worked, and other businesses should consider doing the same thing."

Police, often too busy with violent crime to chase petty thieves, welcome the initiative and want small businesses to invest in high-quality closed-circuit TV cameras.

"Any opportunity to gather evidence using that technique is a plus," Rose Bay detective inspector Peter Fenwick said.



Watchful eye: Surveillance expert Jacob Nalbandian

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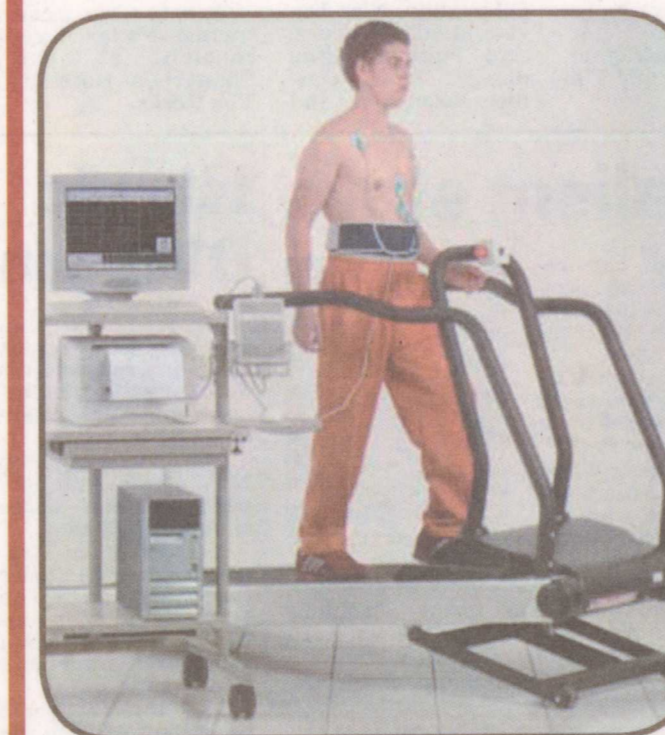
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