

Paper ignores Russ' pleas to take it all off

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Illawarra Mercury

RUSSELL Crowe has lost both his physical and legal bid to prevent a German newspaper publishing photos of him at a strip club in Hamburg at the weekend.

Police were called to the Dollhouse lap-dancing club in Hamburg's St Pauli red light district on Saturday night after the Hollywood star set his bouncers on to Bild Zeitung photographer Thomas Knoop who snapped him at the venue.

When Mr Knoop refused to hand over the disk in his digital camera, Crowe's lawyers tried to stop the pictures being published, but failed to earn an injunction.

Bild splashed the shots on its pages on Tuesday.

The paper's journalist Bea Swietczak who was in the club with Knoop said Bild had been flooded with requests from around the world to republish the raunchy photo of the Oscar winner sitting only feet away from a bent-over stripper.

"Crowe was on his own and not with his wife, she was in a London hotel room. He seemed to be enjoying himself, though," Ms Swietczak said.

In Hamburg last Saturday for the launch of his new movie Master and Commander, Crowe and some friends were sitting at the front of the strip club near the stage when he was photographed.

Four bodyguards were on their feet and surrounding the snapper in seconds.

Crowe, 39, then wandered over and demanded the disk but Mr Knoop refused.

"The row became so heated police were called," it was reported.

Bild reported that Crowe offered a substantial sum of money but the photographer refused to accept. Hamburg police reported no arrests.

The strip club drama comes after another incident following last week's Master and Commander premiere in London in which Crowe was accused of abusing a waitress.

Waitress Vanessa Boni, 20, claimed Crowe swore when she offered him a tray of seafood hors d'oeuvres while he was chatting with singer Sting and his wife Trudie Styler.

"I was in a special VIP room and offered him a snack," Boni said.

"But he said to me, 'F... off, with your f.....g salmon!'"