

Court winds back the clock to get speedo man

A former importer of used Japanese vehicles has been convicted for rewinding odometers in the mid-1990s eight years after legal proceedings were first filed.

Judge Roderick Joyce, QC, yesterday found Andrew John Gummer guilty on 24 fraud charges and not guilty on one.

Gummer was the target of self-styled whistle-blower and justice campaigner Dermot Nottingham the former car salesman who went public with allegations of widespread odometer tampering in 1997.

Mr Nottingham took an unsuccessful private prosecution against Gummer after accusing the Serious Fraud Office of failing to act.

But Gummer was acquitted: in 2000 Auckland District Court judge Phil Gittos found that though Gummer imported vehicles with odometers wound back, Mr Nottingham failed to prove he had conspired with anyone to do so.

After that, when the SFO pursued its prosecution, the courts had to decide whether Gummer was a victim of "double jeopardy" he said he had been cleared and should not stand trial again.

Last week the SFO finally got its case to trial, saying Gummer's company, Hillcrest Marketing Ltd, imported used vehicles that were sold through a North Shore car yard. It argued that odometers were either wound back on his instructions or with his knowledge.

Judge Joyce gave his verdict yesterday afternoon. Gummer will be sentenced in November.

Mr Nottingham welcomed the result. He said he had first filed court papers in 1997 and spent "hundreds of thousands" of dollars building a case against Gummer. "Fantastic. Justice at last."

Source: <http://www.japaneseusedcars.co.nz/automotive-news/>