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## Crown Confidential: FOUR CORNERS

Monday 6<sup>TH</sup> March 2017

### ***Crown Confidential: Packer's Losing Hand***

James Packer and his Crown gambling and entertainment empire have bet big, for more than a decade on China, and its VIP gamblers. These high rollers have fuelled Crown's booming businesses in Asia and Australia.

*"Ladies and Gentlemen, I have made many, many mistakes in my life, but investing in China is not one of them."* James Packer, March 14, 2013

But one night in October last year, all that was turned on its head.

*"They said it felt like they were suspects of a murder investigation or a drug bust. That was just how sudden and forceful the raids were."* Reporter

Fifteen Crown employees and a number of associates were swept into custody in a carefully coordinated series of raids across four cities in China.

*"If you are referring to the Australian nationals who were detained by Chinese authorities a few days ago on suspicion of gambling activities ... gambling is illegal in China."* China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson

Crown's operations had run headlong into China's biggest ever corruption crackdown, leaving its business model in disarray.

*"This was a shot across the bows by the Chinese Government ... of Crown, but it was a general warning to everybody else who was thinking about sending people to China to recruit Chinese high rollers to gamble in their casinos."* Former Hong Kong prosecutor

On Monday night *Four Corners* investigates what went wrong for Crown in China.

Reporter Marian Wilkinson pieces together the key characters and events in the lead up to the arrests.

*"There was a certain arrogance ...they wouldn't touch us because we are, frankly speaking, we are white guys."* Casino consultant

And explores what this means for Crown's casino business here in Australia, especially the multi-billion dollar Barangaroo project in Sydney, as the bottom falls out of their Chinese high roller market.

*"If you've been going to Crown and you are phoned up by the local police and questioned on your movements and your past history of travel to Australia, you would be close to borderline suicidal if you were to make another trip to Australia. It's like putting big 'X' across your forehead."* Casino consultant

**Crown Confidential, reported by Marian Wilkinson and presented by Sarah Ferguson, goes to air on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> March at 8.30pm EDT. It is replayed on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March at 10.00am and Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> at 11pm. It can also be seen on ABC News 24 on Saturday at 8.00pm AEST, [ABC iview](#) and at [abc.net.au/4corners](#).**

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