

Crowe pays \$130,000 in phone-throwing case

OSCAR-WINNING actor Russell Crowe has reached a settlement with an employee at a New York hotel who claimed the actor threw a phone at him. Gladiator star Crowe, 41, allegedly hit concierge Nestor Estrada in June while in New York to promote his movie Cinderella Man, in which he plays a boxer.

“Both sides expressed satisfaction at the resolution,” a statement by the actor’s publicist said yesterday.

Terms of the settlement were not disclosed but Crowe is said to have paid about \$132,000 (€107,000) to settle the civil lawsuit. He still faces criminal charges of assault. Yesterday, Robin Baum, Crowe’s publicist, said the actor has settled out of court with Mr Estrada for an undisclosed sum but it is far from the multi-million dollar figure originally quoted.

Mr Baum confirmed that the figure was in the “low six figures” and that “both sides expressed satisfaction with the resolution.”

The settlement means Crowe will not have the conviction held against him and will be able to continue to work in the US.

The movie star publicly apologised on the Late Show With David Letterman shortly after the incident and said it was “possibly the most shameful situation that I’ve ever gotten myself in in my life, and I’ve done some pretty dumb things in my life.”

Crowe, angered by a malfunctioning phone at the Mercer Hotel at 4am on June 6, threw it. The phone hit Mr Estrada in the face.

He was reported to have been trying to get his wife, Australian actress Danielle Spencer, on the phone at the time. He and Ms Spencer have a young son.

Prosecutors charged Crowe with second-degree assault and fourth-degree criminal possession of a weapon - the telephone.

Crowe is due to return to court on September 14 on the criminal charges, and faces up to seven years in jail if convicted.

Speaking in a newspaper report shortly after the incident in a trendy SoHo hotel, the actor admitted it was entirely his fault.

He blamed his state of mind on “the combination of jet lag, loneliness and adrenalin,” having just returned to the US, without Spencer, after a flying visit to London for the Kostya Tsyzu fight.