The United States Attorney's Office

District of Massachusetts

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WOMAN PLEADS GUILTY TO HACKING INTO PRIVATE BOXES ON PERSONAL AD COMPANY COMPUTERS AND THREATENING A CUSTOMER

BOSTON, Mass. - A Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, woman pleaded guilty today to hacking into computers that control the voicemail system for a Massachusetts-based personal ad company as well as to making death threats against a Massachusetts woman whom she met through the company's personal ad service.

U.S. Attorney Carmen M. Ortiz and Richard DesLauriers, Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Field Division, announced today that BARBARA DENENBURG, 53, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Court Judge Joseph L. Tauro to Mailing Threatening Communications, Access Device Fraud, and violating the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act.

At today's hearing, the prosecutor told the court that had the case proceeded to trial, the evidence would have proved that in June 2007 DENENBURG began accessing computer systems for a Boston based company that provides voice personal ad services for hundreds of newspapers throughout the country. The personal ads appear in the newspapers, but to respond to the ad, a reader calls a phone number at the company and leaves a voicemail message for the person who placed the ad. Using a telephone, DENENBURG accessed voicemail boxes of more than 200 people who had placed ads, and changed passwords for more than 40 of these voicemail boxes as well as greetings for at least 25.

DENENBURG also harassed a series of women who had placed ads through the personal ad company. One of these is a Massachusetts woman whom DENENBURG began harassing in August 2007. In October 2007, DENENBURG mailed a series of letters to the victim, one of which stated that the victim would be executed by lethal injection. DENENBURG also sent the victim a package containing a cardboard tombstone on which was written, "RIP," the victim's name, date of birth "to Oct 20, 2007," and "Hated by . . . all women everywhere."

Under the terms of the parties' binding plea agreement, DENENBURG faces a sentence of time served (23 months already served) to be followed by three years supervised release and $67,000 in restitution.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Adam J. Bookbinder of Ortiz's Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Unit.

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