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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**
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# MANHATTAN U.S. ATTORNEY CHARGES CALIFORNIA MAN WITH CYBER-EXTORTION OF NEW YORK-BASED INSURANCE COMPANY

PREET BHARARA, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, and GEORGE VENIZELOS, the Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's New York Field Division ("FBI"), announced that ANTHONY DIGATI was arrested on March 6, 2010, on charges of attempting to extort approximately $200,000 from a New York-based life insurance company by threatening to make false public statements and transmit computer spam in an effort to damage the reputation of the company and cost it millions of dollars in revenue.

According to a criminal Complaint unsealed on March 8, 2010, in Manhattan federal court:

On February 22, 2010, more than a dozen employees, executives, and one board member of the life insurance company (the "Company") received an email signed "Anthony Digati." The email reads, in part, "I HIGHLY suggest you visit this website and contact me afterwards." The email provides a website address that leads a viewer to a website created by DIGATI (the "Website").

The Website includes, among other things, the following text:

a. These things, unless you honor the below claim, WILL HAPPEN on March 8, 2010.

b. As you have denied my claim I can only respond in this way. You no longer have a choice in the matter, unless of course you want me to continue with this outlined plan. I have nothing to lose, you have everything to lose.

c. My demand is now for $198,303.88. This amount is NOT negotiable, you had your chance to make me an offer, now I call the shots.

d. I have 6 MILLION emails going out to couples with children age 25-40, this email campaign is ordered and paid for. 2 million go out on the 8th and every two days 2 million more for three weeks rotating the list. Of course it is spam, I hired a spam service, I could care less, The damge [sic] will be done.

e. I am a huge social networker, and I am highly experienced. 200,000 people will be directly contacted by me through social networks, slamming your integrity and directing them to this website within days.

f. I think you get the idea, I am going to drag your company name and reputation, through the muddiest waters imaginable. This will cost you millions in lost revenues, trust and credibility not to mention the advertising you will be buying to counter mine. Sad thing is it's almost free for me!

g. The process is in motion and will be released on March 8th, 2010. If you delay and the site goes live, The price will then be $3,000,000.00.

DIGATI, 52, was arrested at his home in Chino, California. He is charged with one count of extortion through interstate communications. If convicted on this charge, DIGATI faces a maximum sentence of two years in prison and a maximum fine of $250,000 or twice the gross pecuniary loss or gain derived from the offense.

DIGATI is expected to be presented today before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Riverside, California.

U.S. Attorney PREET BHARARA stated: "In this computer age, cyber-extortion has become an emerging tool for criminals to hold businesses at virtual gunpoint, threatening them with widespread spamming and other Internet-based attacks. With the assistance of the FBI, our Office will work to safeguard the Internet and prosecute computer-savvy criminals who seek to harm the well-being of businesses and our economy."

FBI Acting Assistant Director-in-Charge VENIZELOS stated: "The digital age revolutionized business, among other ways, by drastically reducing the cost of direct marketing. But it has also facilitated the kind of cyber extortion allegedly effected by Digati. One blackmailer can, with mere keystrokes, spread damaging lies to millions. The threat is magnified by the sheer numbers of potential recipients. The most effective deterrent to cyber extortion is vigorous enforcement by the FBI."

Mr. BHARARA praised the New York FBI Office and the Riverside Resident Agency of the Los Angeles FBI Office.

This case is being prosecuted by the Office's Complex Frauds Unit. Assistant United States Attorney AMANDA KRAMER is in charge of this prosecution.

The charge in the criminal Complaint is merely an accusation, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

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