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FBI Arrests Man Behind A Host Of Website Attacks- Including RollingStone.com

Newark, NJ – Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun announced the surrender of Bruce Raisley, age 47, a software developer from Monaca, Pennsylvania. Raisley quietly surrendered to the FBI this morning, charged with one count of Computer Fraud and Abuse.

Raisley is charged with the unauthorized access of protected computers with the intention of causing denial of service and/or losses to the websites. In addition to RollingStone.com and for way of background, some of the other websites included: Rick A. Ross Institute of New Jersey (Rick Ross Institute), based in Hudson County, NJ. This service is an internet archive "for the study of destructive cults, controversial groups and movement". Perverted Justice, a Portland, Oregon based organization operated by X. E., was also affected. This organization seeks to identify and expose pedophiles and sexual predators targeting minors. In or about 2004, Raisley volunteered for Perverted Justice. Also included in the host of attacks was Corrupted Justice, an organization whose stated purpose was to educate the public on the actions of various purported cyber-vigilante groups, including Perverted Justice. In or about 2006, after becoming disenchanted with Perverted Justice, Raisley became a member of Corrupted Justice.

The criminal complaint details that in September 2006 and July 2007, Radar Magazine and the Rolling Stone, published two separate articles (Strange Bedfellows and To Catch a Predator: The New American Witch Hunt for Dangerous Pedophiles), both of which presented positive and negative views on the activities conducted by Perverted Justice and its volunteers. The articles described what was termed as "questionable tactics" by Perverted Justice to silence critics. One of these tactics was an episode between X.E. and Raisley. In or about 2007, Strange Bedfellows was reprinted on numerous websites.

On or about September 25, 2007 the Rick Ross Institute experienced a Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attack. One of the attacking computers was found to be that of the Academic and Research Network of Slovenia (ARNES). Upon examination, they found a malicious program on their network. On or about November 20, 2007, the Slovenian Computer Emergency Response Team (SI-CERT) further determined that the DDOS program downloaded instructions from two locations, dosdragon.com and n9zle.com. These locations instructed the program to repeatedly target the victim websites.

Rolling Stone was a subject of multiple DDOS attacks directed specifically at the webpage which hosted "The New American Witch Hunt". During the height of the DDOS attacks, the page requests for the article escalated from a few requests per day to millions of page requests per day, causing the website to experience significant slowdown.

On or about March 07, 2008, the United States Computer Emergency Response Team (US-CERT) confirmed SI-CERT's findings. On or about January 16, 2008 and February 08, 2008, Internet Service Provide records showed that Raisley controlled both command and control systems.

Corrupted Justice was the victim of a similar attack on July 25, 2007. This particular attack shut down their website for four days. They were attacked again on or about November 02, 2007 and on or about March 10, 2008, causing an additional seven days without service. The complaint alleged that Raisley contacted Corrupted Justice to "gloat that he had again taken down their servers. The complaint also states that Raisley told Corrupted Justice that he "unleashed a virus that could never be stopped," that [Corrupted Justice] could "kiss [his] website goodbye because nothing could protect [his] servers against this attack".

During a search of Raisley's home on March 27, 2008, Raisley admitted to contacting both Rick Ross Institute and Corrupted Justice, asking them to take the articles from their websites. Additionally, Raisley stated he wrote the programs on a memory stick the FBI had taken as part of the search. Raisley said he used these programs to attack the Perverted Justice, Corrupted Justice and Rick Ross Institute websites.

A forensic review of the seized electronic media confirmed it contain copies of programs used in conjunction with the DDOS attack described above.

Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun stated, "In this situation, this type of cyber-bullying was used as a way to try to silence our media and deny them of their constitutional rights to the freedom of press. It simply will not be tolerated. Technology works both ways and you will get caught". My thanks to our Agents in Trenton, the New Jersey Computer Forensic Laboratory and the United States Attorney's Office for a job well done.

Raisley is scheduled for an initial appearance today before the Honorable Patty Schwartz, United States Magistrate. If convicted, Raisley could face a maximum of up to ten years imprisonment, $250,000.00 fine, or both. A criminal complaint is merely an accusation. Despite this accusation, every defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Erez Lieberman in the District of New Jersey.

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