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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 22, 2010
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HACKER CONVICTED OF UNLEASHING A VIRUS AND ATTACKING MEDIA OUTLETS

CAMDEN, N.J. – A computer programmer was convicted today of launching a virus that infected approximately 100,000 computers around the world and directed them to attack media outlets that republished stories that mentioned him, United States Attorney Paul J. Fishman announced.

The jury returned a guilty verdict against Bruce Raisley, 49, of Kansas City, Mo. – formerly of Monaca, Pa. – following a six-day trial before United States District Judge Robert B. Kugler in Camden. Raisley was convicted of the count charged in the Indictment on which he was tried: launching a malicious computer program designed to attack computers and Internet websites, causing damages.

According to documents filed in this case and the evidence at trial:

Raisley formerly volunteered for Perverted Justice, an organization that worked with the Dateline NBC television show "To Catch a Predator" to identify and apprehend pedophiles. After a falling out with the group and its founder, Xavier Von Erck, Raisley became an outspoken critic of Perverted Justice and Von Erck.

Von Erck retaliated by posing online as an adult woman named "Holly" and initiating an Internet relationship with Raisley. Eventually, Raisley agreed to leave his wife for "Holly" and was photographed by a Perverted Justice volunteer waiting for "Holly" at the airport.

In September 2006, Radar Magazine published an article entitled "*Strange Bedfellows*," and in July 2007, Rolling Stone Magazine published an article entitled, *"To Catch a Predator: The New American Witch Hunt for Dangerous Pedophiles."* Both articles discussed the television show "To Catch a Predator" and, more specifically, the techniques employed by Perverted Justice and the show to ensnare pedophiles. Both articles discussed the episode between Raisley and Von Erck posing as "Holly."

The two articles proved popular, and were later posted on a number of websites beyond Radar and Rolling Stone, including a website operated by the Rick Ross Institute of New Jersey. As a result, Raisley devised a plan to remove the articles from the websites.

Specifically, Raisley developed a virus that would spread over the Internet and infect computers. When he deployed the virus, it infected approximately 100,000 computers across the

world, creating what is known as a "botnet." Expert witnesses explained that a botnet is a collection of victim computers that are remotely controlled to accomplish tasks such as sending out e-mail spam or, as in this case, attacking websites.

Raisley used the botnet to launch distributed denial of service attacks. Such attacks caused the 100,000 computers to repeatedly attempt to access any websites that posted the two articles in an effort to overwhelm the computers that hosted the websites and shut down the websites. The effect of denial of service attacks is akin to an "all circuits are busy" message – making it impossible for Internet users to access the content of the victim websites, including, of course, the two articles.

Evidence admitted at trial demonstrated that Raisley targeted and attacked a number of websites, including those of Rolling Stone, Radar, Nettica, Corrupted Justice, and the Rick Ross Institute of New Jersey. In total, those websites suffered damages in excess of $100,000 in lost revenues and mitigation.

U.S. Attorney Fishman stated: "Regardless of Raisley's motivations, his attacks on computer systems were misdirected vengeance. It is unacceptable when a personal vendetta turns into criminal behavior, and we will track down cybercriminals who launch such malicious attacks."

The count on which Raisley was convicted carries a statutory maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a $250,000 fine, as well as restitution to the victims of his offense. Sentencing is currently scheduled for January 7, 2010.

U.S. Attorney Fishman credited special agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, under the direction of Special Agent in Charge Michael Ward, for the investigation leading to the Indictment.

The government is represented by Assistant U.S. Attorneys Erez Liebermann and Lee Vartan of the U.S. Attorney's Office Economic Crimes Unit, Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property Section in Newark.

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Defense counsel: John Yauch, Esq., Newark, New Jersey