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U.S. Department of
Justice
United States Attorney
Debra W. Yang
Central District of California
Thom Mrozek
Public Affairs Officer
Phone: (213) 894-6947
email: thom.mrozek@usdoj.gov
Contact: Elena J. Duarte
Assistant U.S. Attorney
Phone: (213) 894-8611

Ex-employee of Airport Transportation Company Arrested for Allegedly Hacking Into Computer, Destroying Data

A man previously employed at the administrative and operations center of the Airline Coach Service and the Sky Limousine Company in Inglewood was arrested this morning on federal charges of hacking into the companies' computer system and wiping out critical data. The hack wiped out the companies' customer database and other records, and effectively shut down the companies' computer server, Internet-based credit card processing system and website. Alan Giang Tran, 28, of Fountain Valley, was arrested pursuant to a criminal complaint filed Tuesday in United States District Court in Los Angeles. The complaint accuses Tran of intentionally causing damage to a protected computer and recklessly causing damage by intentionally accessing a protected computer. These violations are alleged to have occurred between December 22, 2002, and January 6, 2003. According to court documents, Airline Coach Service and Sky Limousine are jointly owned companies with a combined gross annual revenue of approximately $8.5 million. Tran was the network administrator at the companies' facility in Inglewood, where he had administrator-level passwords and privileges for all of the companies' computer operations. Tran was recently terminated by the companies. On January 5, 2003, the companies' computer system was attacked; passwords on the system were changed and specialized software applications were deleted. Because employees could not use the computer system, the companies were unable to dispatch drivers to pick up clients, and the companies suffered thousands of dollars in losses. Federal investigators last week executed a search warrant at Tran's home, where they found several computers, a file folder marked "retaliation" and information regarding the companies' computer systems. An criminal complaint contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Tran made his initial appearance this morning in United States District Court in Los Angeles, where a Magistrate Judge ordered him released on a $10,000 bond that has various conditions, including restricted access to computers. Tran was ordered to appear on March 17 for an arraignment. The two counts alleged in the criminal complaint carry a maximum possible sentence of 15 years in federal prison. The case against Tran was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Cybercrimes Squad.

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