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Ex-employee of Airport Transportation Company Guilty of Hacking into Company's Computer

A man previously employed at the administrative and operations center of the Airline Coach Service and Sky Limousine Company in Inglewood pleaded guilty today to a federal charge 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, pleaded guilty today in connection with the attack, before the Honorable Dean D. Pregerson, U.S. District Court Judge, to an information filed pursuant to a plea agreement, charging him with intentionally causing damage to a protected computer by knowingly causing the transmission of a program, information, code, or command, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1030(a)(5)(A)(i) and (B)(i), a felony. 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 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. Tran was ordered to appear on July 28, 2003, for sentencing. The count to which Tran pled guilty carries a maximum possible sentence of 10 years in federal prison. The case against Tran was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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