



United States Attorney's Office

Northern District of Florida

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INTERNATIONAL COMPUTER "HACKER" CONVICTED IN FEDERAL COURT

Pensacola, Florida - Gregory R. Miller, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Florida, announced today the guilty pleas of Robert Matthew Bentley, 21, Panama City, Florida, to conspiracy to commit computer fraud and computer fraud.

Bentley was indicted by a federal grand jury in Pensacola, Florida in November 2007. The case originated in December 2006 when the London Metropolitan Police ("The Met") Computer Crime Unit requested assistance from the United States Secret Service after European representatives of the United States-based "Newell Rubbermaid" Corporation and at least one other European-based company contacted The Met to report a computer intrusion against the companies' European networks. The indictment resulted from a multi-year criminal investigation by the United States Secret Service, primarily involving the London (England) Resident Office, the Paris (France) Field Office, the Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Field Office, the Seattle (Washington) Field Office, the Jacksonville (Florida) Field Office, the Tallahassee (Florida) Resident Office, the Panama City (Florida) Field Office, the Santa Ana (California) Resident Office, the Los Angeles (California) Field Office, the Wilmington (Delaware) Field Office, and the CERT Coordination Center at Carnegie Mellon (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). Secret Service worked the investigation together with the Finland National Bureau of Investigation, the London Metropolitan Police, the Westminster (California) Police Department, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation Philadelphia (Pennsylvania) Field Office.

Bentley agreed to a detailed factual summary filed at the time of his guilty plea outlining his role in the computer intrusions. Bentley and other unnamed co-conspirators infected hundreds of computers in Europe with "adware" that cost tens of thousands of dollars to

detect and neutralize. Bentley and others received payment through a Western European-based operation called “Dollar Revenue” for unauthorized intrusions and placement of the adware. Bentley used computers in the Northern District of Florida to accomplish the intrusions and to receive payment.

United States Attorney Miller observed, “The identification, indictment, and conviction of Bentley constitutes a significant success in a complex international investigation, and resulted from the outstanding cooperation of the many participating law enforcement agencies. The use of “botnets” - a series of computers covertly controlled by Bentley and his co-conspirators to accomplish the intrusion of victim computer systems - is a major focus of computer-related criminal investigations worldwide. Botnets are responsible for much of the malicious activity conducted on the internet. “Botherders” or “Botmasters” operate within a group of computer hackers on a global scale, making this computer crime one of the most pervasive forms of organized criminal activity plaguing law enforcers in this country and abroad.”

Bentley is scheduled to be sentenced by United States District Judge Richard Smoak on May 28, 2008. He faces a maximum penalty of 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and 3 years of supervised release for each charge. He must pay a special monetary assessment of \$100 for each charge.

The case is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Thomas P. (Tom) Swaim of the Pensacola Division.