

Dallas Man Associated With Anonymous Hacking Group Faces Additional Federal Charges

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DALLAS — A federal grand jury in Dallas returned a 12-count indictment this week that charges Barrett Lancaster Brown in Count One with trafficking in stolen authentication features; in Count Two with access device fraud; and in Counts Three through Twelve with aggravated identity theft. Today's announcement was made by U.S. Attorney Sarah R. Saldaña of the Northern District of Texas.

Brown, 31, a resident of Dallas, is in federal custody on charges outlined in another indictment, returned in the Northern District of Texas on October 3, 2012, that charges him with making an internet threat, conspiring to make restricted personal information of an employee of the U.S. publically available and retaliation against a federal law enforcement officer.

Count One of the most recent indictment alleges that on approximately December 25, 2011, Barrett, aided and abetted by others, knowingly trafficked in more than five authentication features, knowing that such features were stolen and produced without lawful authority. According to the indictment, Brown transferred a hyperlink from an Internet Relay Chat (IRC) channel to an IRC channel under his control. That hyperlink provided access to data stolen from the company Stratfor Global Intelligence (Stratfor), which included more than 5,000 credit card account numbers, the card holders' identification information and the authentication features for the credit cards, known as the Card Verification Values (CVV). By transferring and posting the hyperlink, Brown caused the data to be made available to other persons online, without the knowledge and authorization of Stratfor and the card holders.

Count Two of the indictment alleges that from approximately December 25, 2011, through at least March 6, 2012, Brown, aided and abetted by others, possessed at least fifteen or more unauthorized access devices, in that he possessed stolen credit card account numbers and CVVs without the knowledge and authorization of the card holders.

In Counts Three through Twelve, the indictment alleges that during the above-mentioned time period, Brown unlawfully transferred and possessed the means of identification, consisting of the CVVs; the card holders' names and usernames for online account access; and the card holders' physical address, phone numbers and email addresses.

An indictment is an accusation by a federal grand jury, and a defendant is entitled to the presumption of innocence unless proven guilty. Upon conviction, however, the trafficking count carries a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison and the access device fraud count carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison. Each of the aggravated identity theft counts, upon conviction, carries a mandatory two-year sentence in addition to any sentence imposed on the trafficking count. In addition, a fine of up to \$250,000 may be imposed on each count of conviction. Restitution could also be ordered.

The case is being investigated by the Dallas office of the FBI and prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Office in the Northern District of Texas.