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CHARGES IN DISTRIBUTED DENIAL OF SERVICE ATTACK AGAINST SANTA CRUZ COUNTY WEBSITE

*Defendants Alleged to Be Part of "People's Liberation Front,"
Hacking Group Associated with "Anonymous"*

SAN JOSE, Calif. – A federal grand jury in San Jose indicted Christopher Doyon and Joshua John Covelli for Conspiracy to Cause Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer, and Causing Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer and Aiding and Abetting, announced the United States Attorney's office.

The indictment alleges that Doyon, 47, of Mountain View, Calif., and Covelli, 26, of Fairborn, Ohio, participated in a Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attack against Santa Cruz County's computer servers on Dec. 16, 2010, that caused Santa Cruz County's website to go offline. A DDoS attack is an attempt to render computers unavailable to users by saturating the target computers or networks with external communication requests, thereby denying service to legitimate users. The indictment further alleges that the People's Liberation Front (PLF), coordinated and executed the attack. The PLF is associated with other hacking groups such as the Anonymous group.

According to the indictment, the County of Santa Cruz, Calif., maintained its website on the internet through computer servers located within the Northern District of California. This website allowed access to Santa Cruz County's government entities and programs, including Emergency Services, Law Enforcement, the Courts, Social Services,

Agricultural Extension, Employment, Surplus Sales, Vendor Registration and Construction Projects and Proposals. Santa Cruz County's website and computer servers were used in and affecting interstate and foreign commerce and communication.

The City of Santa Cruz enacted Section 6.36.010 of its Municipal Code, entitled "Camping Prohibited," which contained restrictions and definitions on camping within Santa Cruz City. In response to the enforcement of Section 6.36.010, protesters occupied the Santa Cruz County Courthouse premises from approximately July 4, 2011 to Oct. 2, 2011. Law enforcement officers from Santa Cruz County disbanded the protest and several protesters were charged with misdemeanors crimes in Santa Cruz County.

In retribution for Santa Cruz City's enforcement of Section 6.36.010 of the Municipal Code, and Santa Cruz County's disbandment of the protest, the PLF co-ordinated and executed a DDoS attack against Santa Cruz County's computer servers. The PLF referred to these co-ordinated attacks as "Operation Peace Camp 2010." According to the indictment, as part of Operation Peace Camp 2010, Doyon, Covelli and others allegedly conspired to intentionally damage the protected computers hosting the website for the County of Santa Cruz.

Defendant Covelli is presently under indictment in United States District Court for the Northern District of California (CR-11-00471-DLJ) for his alleged participation in a DDoS attack on PayPal in December 2010. Covelli's next District Court appearance in that matter is scheduled for Nov. 1, 2011, at 9 a.m. before U.S. District Judge Lowell D. Jensen in San Jose.

The maximum statutory penalty for Conspiracy to Cause Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer in violation 18 U.S.C. § 1030(b) is five years imprisonment, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution if appropriate. The maximum statutory penalty for Causing Intentional Damage to a Protected Computer and Aiding and Abetting in violation 18 U.S.C. §§ 1030(a)(5)(A), (c)(4)(A)(i)(I), (c)(4)(B)(i) & 2 is 10 years imprisonment, three years of supervised release and a fine of \$250,000, plus restitution if appropriate. However, any sentence following conviction would be imposed by the court after consideration of the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and the federal statute governing the imposition of a sentence, 18 U.S.C. § 3553.

Doyon appeared before Magistrate Judge Howard Lloyd in San Jose today. Magistrate Lloyd ordered that a bail study be done, remanded Mr. Doyon, and set his next court appearance in the same courtroom for Thursday, Sept. 29, 2011 at 1:30 p.m. A criminal summons has been issued to Covelli requiring him to appear before Magistrate Paul Grewal in San Jose on Nov. 1, 2011.

The Computer Hacking/Intellectual Property (CHIP) Unit of the United States Attorney's Office for the Northern District of California is prosecuting the case. The charges are the result of an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Please note: An indictment contains only allegations against an individual and, as with all defendants, Mr. Doyon and Mr. Covelli must be presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

Further Information:

Case #: CR 11-0683 DLJ

A copy of this press release may be found on the U.S. Attorney's Office's website at www.usdoj.gov/usao/can.

Electronic court filings and further procedural and docket information are available at <https://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/cgi-bin/login.plhttps://ecf.cand.uscourts.gov/>.

Judges' calendars with schedules for upcoming court hearings can be viewed on the court's website at www.cand.uscourts.gov.

All press inquiries to the U.S. Attorney's Office should be directed to Jack Gillund at (415) 436-6599 or by e-mail at Jack.Gillund@usdoj.gov.

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