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U.S. ARRESTS QUEENS MAN ON FEDERAL CHARGE OF UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS TO FORMER EMPLOYER'S COMPUTERS

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that JUSTIN EHRLICH, 30, of Flushing, New York, was arrested yesterday on federal charges related to his unauthorized access of his former employer's computer system and his deletion of e-mail messages stored on that system.

According to a criminal Complaint filed Monday, EHRLICH was employed as a salesman at StaffIT, Inc. ("StaffIT"), a Manhattan-based firm which recruits technology-related staffers, such as computer programmers, for client companies. According to the Complaint, EHRLICH's employment was terminated on the evening of October 31, 2004. The Complaint charges that from about that time until the following morning, when EHRLICH's former employer changed passwords protecting its electronic mail system, a computer using a cable modem subscribed to by EHRLICH (the "Computer") was used approximately 500 times to access without authorization – and to delete – a StaffIT employee's e-mail messages using that employee's username and password.

According to the Complaint, records maintained by StaffIT reveal that the Computer had also been used to access without authorization the same employee's electronic mail files on StaffIT's computers more than 180 times between October 3 and October 13, 2004. According to the Complaint, the Computer was used unsuccessfully to attempt to access the employee's e-mail records another approximately 250 times between November 1 and November 9, 2004, after the employee's password had been changed.

The Complaint charges EHRLICH with one count of unauthorized access to a computer and intentionally causing more than $5,000 in damage.

If convicted of the charge, EHRLICH faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of $250,000 or twice the gross gain or gross loss from the offense.

EHRLICH, 30, of Flushing, New York, was arrested yesterday by FBI agents and was presented before United States Magistrate Judge DEBRA C. FREEMAN. EHRLICH was released on $50,000 personal recognizance bond.

Mr. KELLEY praised the outstanding efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Computer Hacking and Intellectual Property crimes squad.

Mr. KELLEY said the investigation is continuing.

Assistant United States Attorney THOMAS G. A. BROWN is in charge of the prosecution.

The charges contained in the Complaint are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and

until proven guilty.

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