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FBI Arrests Glendale Man in ‘Sextortion’ Case

Defendant Allegedly Coerced Young Women to Expose Themselves on Internet

LOS ANGELES – A Glendale man accused of hacking into hundreds of Facebook, Skype and email accounts and extorting women into showing him their naked bodies was arrested today on federal computer hacking charges.

Karen “Gary” Kazaryan, 27, was arrested this morning without incident by special agents with the FBI. Kazaryan, who was named in a 30-count indictment returned last Friday by a federal grand jury, is being arraigned this afternoon in United States District Court.

According to the indictment, Kazaryan gained unauthorized access to – in other words, hacked into – the victims’ accounts, and changed the passwords, which locked victims out of their own online accounts. Once he controlled the accounts, Kazaryan searched emails or other files for naked or semi-naked pictures of the victims, as well as other information, such as passwords and the names of their friends. Using that information, Kazaryan posed online as women, sent instant messages to their friends, and persuaded the friends to remove their clothing so that he could view and take pictures of them.

When the victims discovered that they were not speaking with their friends, Kazaryan often extorted them again, using the photos he had fraudulently obtained to again coerce the victims to remove their clothing on camera.

The indictment charges Kazaryan with 15 counts of computer intrusion and 15

counts of aggravated identity theft.

According to a search warrant executed in 2011 and unsealed today, Kazaryan repeatedly contacted victims to demand that they expose their breasts to him on Skype, and used their email and Facebook accounts to make contact with other victims. Kazaryan allegedly posted nude photos of some victims on their Facebook pages when they failed to comply with his demands.

Investigators estimate that Kazaryan victimized more than 350 women, but they have not identified all of the victims whose accounts were hacked. Authorities found approximately 3,000 pictures of nude or semi-nude women – some of which were taken from their online accounts, and some of which were taken by Kazaryan on Skype – on Kazaryan's computer. Anyone who believes they may have been a victim in this case should contact the FBI's Los Angeles Field Office at (310) 477-6565.

An indictment contains allegations that a defendant has committed a crime. Every defendant is presumed to be innocent until and unless proven guilty in court.

If convicted on all counts, Kazaryan faces a statutory maximum penalty of 105 years in federal prison.

The investigation was conducted by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

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