



**U.S. Department of Justice**

*United States Attorney*

*Eastern District of Virginia*  
2100 Jamieson Avenue (703)299-3700  
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Paul J. McNulty  
United States Attorney

**NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
Alexandria, Virginia  
October 22, 2004

For further information contact  
Sam Dibbley 703-842-4050

Paul J. McNulty, United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, announced that Myron Tereshchuk, 42, of Hyattsville, Maryland, was sentenced today to one count of attempting to extort \$17 million over the Internet. United States District Judge James C. Cacheris sentenced Tereshchuk to 63 months imprisonment.

For more than a year, the defendant harassed MicroPatent, an intellectual property firm that produces and distributes patent and trademark information. The defendant sent MicroPatent's clients hundreds of emails, many of which were "spoofed" to resemble authentic MicroPatent correspondence. The emails contained statements derogatory to MicroPatent, attached sexually explicit patent applications, and disclosed MicroPatent documents that were believed to have been confidential. The defendant obtained the confidential information by gaining unauthorized access to MicroPatent's computer network and by searching through the trash set out to be collected by a shredding company at MicroPatent's location in Alexandria, Virginia. The defendant sent emails anonymously by using equipment from his automobile to gain unauthorized access to unsecured wireless computer networks in residences and businesses in Maryland and Virginia. Once the defendant had access to the networks, he often sent the emails using accounts of AOL customers without their knowledge or authorization.

On February 3, 2004, the defendant began sending a series of extortionate emails to the president of MicroPatent using the alias "Bryan Ryan" and a free Yahoo email account. To further hide his identity, the defendant accessed the Yahoo account through unsecured wireless access points and the unauthorized use of the University of Maryland computer network and students' accounts. In the emails, the defendant demanded \$17 million or he would disclose additional MicroPatent proprietary information and launch distributed denial-of-service attacks against intellectual property attorneys' computer systems worldwide.

The FBI searched the defendant's residence on March 10, 2004, and found not only computers and other items related to the attempted extortion, but also the components for hand grenades, the formula and items necessary for making Ricin, and literature about poisons. The defendant was indicted by a grand jury in the United States District Court in Greenbelt, Maryland, for producing and possessing ricin and nicotine sulfate for use as weapons and possessing unregistered destructive devices in the form of grenades. Those charges are still pending.

(more)

United States Attorney Paul J. McNulty stated, "Once again, a serious criminal thought

the anonymity of cyberspace would protect him, and once again, law enforcement has proven him wrong."

The case was investigated by the FBI and was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Jack Hanly and Michael Stawasz, Trial Attorney, Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, United States Department of Justice.

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