

What the Hack?

By Reg P. Wydeven
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I'm so excited for Christmas vacation this year. We spend a lot of time together as a family going sledding, eating delicious meals and going to movies. Lots of people love going to movies during Christmas vacation, which is why so many good flicks are released.

One movie getting a lot of attention is 'The Interview.' The flick, recently pulled from theaters, stars James Franco as a tabloid talk show host and Seth Rogen as his producer. After the duo learns Kim Jong Un, the leader of North Korea is a fan, they agree to visit the country and have the dictator on the show as a guest. The CIA, however, enlists them to assassinate Kim Jong Un and hilarity ensues. Unless you're Kim Jong Un.

While critics have given the movie lukewarm reviews, North Korea hasn't been so generous. The head of the Center for Korean-American Peace has publicly decried the film, while North Korea's U.N. ambassador equated it to "an act of war."

Other experts speculate that North Korea is also behind the huge cyber hack of Sony Pictures, the studio behind the movie. The hackers have released tons of information garnered from Sony's website, including the budget of the film, the salaries of its cast and crew, and even a \$5,000 fee paid to Britney Spears' ex-husband, Kevin Federline, for his cameo appearance.

In addition to nuggets about the film, the hackers also leaked tons of personal information about Sony employees. As a result, two lawsuits were filed last week in California against Sony by disgruntled employees.

The first was filed by Michael Corona and Christina Mathis, who both used to work for Sony. The lawsuit alleges that current and former employees of Sony have had "their most sensitive data, including over 47,000 Social Security numbers, employment files including salaries, medical information, and anything else that their employer Sony touched...leaked to the public, and may even be in the hands of criminals."

The suit, which is seeking class action status, demands actual and statutory damages, restitution and disgorgement for several causes of action, including negligence, health privacy and failure to provide notice of a data breach. While the actual damages have yet to be calculated, the suit also demands equitable relief, such as forcing Sony to provide credit monitoring for at least five years, identity theft insurance, credit restoration service and requiring Sony receive periodic compliance audits by a third party regarding the security of its computer systems.

The second suit, also seeking class action status, was filed by Susan Dukow and Yvonne Yaconelli, two of Sony's production managers. This suit cites the same leaks by Sony of employee information and seeks similar remedies. However, the second case goes further by asserting Sony invited the retaliation by changing the original, generic villain in the file to Kim Jong Un specifically.

The suit claims that, "Sony knew it was reasonably foreseeable that producing a script about North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un would cause a backlash," and "created an unreasonable risk that Plaintiffs' and Class Members' personally identifiable information would be exposed."

President Obama recently criticized Sony for being "intimidated by these kind of criminal attacks." I'm more upset that they put Kevin Federline in the movie.

Have a blessed and happy 2015.

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