

EVERY MEDIA COMPANY, CAMPAIGN FINANCIER AND POLITICIAN HAS ALREADY BEEN HACKED AND THERE IS NO WAY TO STOP NEW HACKERS!

By Tim Johnson

tjohnson@mcclatchydc.com

o

WASHINGTON

After stealing and releasing 10 episodes of the fifth season of the Netflix series “[Orange is the New Black](#)” a month before its official premiere, a shadowy hacking group now is threatening to release shows by four other networks unless the networks’ pay a ransom.

It’s a sign of things to come. The future is being hacked, and there’s no certainty where it might end. In today’s digital world, hackers can steal an ever-growing number of secrets.

If they can steal unreleased television shows, could they also spoil the Oscar ceremony by stealing and threatening to reveal the winners ahead of time? How about announcements of Nobel prizes? Or product launches from Apple and Tesla?

In a fast-paced world, people don’t want to wait for staged announcements designed for collective suspense. Criminal hackers seek to profit from that

desire. For better or worse, they steal – and reveal – the future.

A previously unknown person or group calling itself “thedarkoverlord” announced on Twitter Saturday that it had released the “Orange is the New Black” shows on the popular file-sharing site The Pirate Bay because Netflix refused to pay a ransom.

Let's try to be a bit more direct, Netflix: <https://t.co/xhS07xugGK>

— thedarkoverlord (@tdohack3r) [April 28, 2017](#)

Netflix said the matter was in the hands of “the appropriate law enforcement authorities.” The hacking group hinted that its work was only beginning.

“Oh, what fun we’re all going to have. We’re not playing any games anymore,” it said in one weekend tweet.

The hackers said they now hold unreleased shows from ABC, Fox, National Geographic and IFC and would release them if ransoms weren’t forthcoming.

Who is next on the list? FOX, IFC, NAT GEO, and ABC. Oh, what fun we're all going to have. We're not playing any games anymore.

— thedarkoverlord (@tdohack3r) [April 29, 2017](#)

The Netflix brouhaha began Friday afternoon with a brief tweet from the “thedarkoverlord” saying, “Let’s try to be a bit more direct, Netflix.”

The tweet carried a link to a site on Pirate Bay with the first episode of season five of “Orange is the New Black.” At 11:36 a.m. Saturday, nine more episodes were posted. Season five contains 13 episodes but the

hackers said they obtained the shows before the final episodes were available.

“It didn’t have to be this way, Netflix. You’re going to lose a lot more money in all of this than what our modest offer was. We’re quite ashamed to breathe the same air as you,” the hackers said in [a statement posted on, then removed from, pastebin.com](#), a popular site for sharing text.

A website that follows developments related to piracy and file-sharing, [Torrent Freak](#), said it had been in touch with the hackers and learned the stolen episodes were filched from [Larson Studios](#), an audio post-production facility in Hollywood. Larson Studios couldn’t be reached for comment Sunday.

Torrent Freak published excerpts of a “contract” that the hackers sought to have Larson Studios sign in exchange setting the ransom payment terms. The document called for [a payment of 50 bitcoin](#), which at current value is about \$66,100.

The spelling in the contract and in statements on pastebin.com indicate the hackers are from Britain or areas of the world that follow British, rather than U.S., spelling practices.

[RELATED: [Spooked by spike in cyber extortion, businesses are stockpiling bitcoin for payoffs](#)]

Netflix was scheduled to release season five of “Orange is the New Black” on June 9.

The hackers did not say which programs from other networks it has obtained.

“We’re not quite done yet, though. We’re calling you out: ABC, National Geographic, Fox, IFC, and of course Netflix, still. There’s more Netflix on the feasting menu soon (in addition to the other studios, of course), but we’ll get to that later. Enjoy the fruits of our labour,” the statement says.

Larson Studios also does post-production work on shows like “Queen of the South,” “New Girl,” and “Chance” for Fox 21 Television Studios, “Glow” from Netflix, “Designated Survivor” from ABC, and “Portlandia” from IFC.

Global cybercrime syndicates increasingly demand ransom from hacking targets who fall victim to their digital traps and intrusions.

In a [report released Thursday](#), the giant software security company Symantec estimated that worldwide ransomware attacks surged from 340,665 in 2015 to 463,841 in 2016. In these attacks, hackers commonly encrypt a hard drive and offer a decryption key only on payment of ransom. In addition to individuals, hospitals, schools and universities have been hit.

Twitter users offered suggestions to “thedarkoverlord” of other places it might hack.

[@tdohack3r](#) I suggest Trump's tax returns.

— JO (@JulieOMarshall) [April 29, 2017](#)

“I suggest Trump’s tax returns,” tweeted an account from someone identified as Julie O. Marshall, an events manager.

Another suggested the hackers better fear for their freedom

[@tdohack3r](#) Spoiler alert: you will be in jail soon!

— laurent jedeloo (@LJedeloo) [April 30, 2017](#)

“Spoiler alert: you will be in jail soon!” tweeted Laurent Jedeloo (@ljedeloo).

“Your going to get in a lot of trouble for this...” echoed @grey_alien33

[@tdohack3r](#) hack something worthwhile like our credit rating. Wipe us all clean. Or petty crimes. Or job history

— Mr Karen Walker (@i_drunktweet) [April 30, 2017](#)

Still others made requests for unreleased television shows they can't wait to see, or hacks to fix their own blemished pasts.

"Hack something worthwhile like our credit rating. Wipe us all clean. Or petty crimes. Or job history," tweeted an account identified as Mr. Karen Walker (@i_drunktweet)

Tim Johnson: [202-383-6028](tel:202-383-6028), [@timjohnson](#)