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Former Leader of Razor 1911, the Oldest Game Software Piracy Ring on the Internet, Sentenced

United States Attorney Paul J. McNulty, and Michael Chertoff, Assistant Attorney General for the Criminal Division, announced today that Shane E. Pitman, age 31, of Conover, North Carolina, was sentenced to 18 months in federal prison by the Honorable James C. Cacheris, United States District Judge, for conspiring to violate criminal copyright laws as the former leader of the oldest game software piracy ring on the Internet.

Shane Pitman, known by his screen nickname "Pitbull," was a leader of the online software piracy group known as Razor 1911. Since the early 1990's, Razor 1911 sought to achieve a reputation in the underground Internet piracy community – the so-called "warez scene" – as the leading distributor of illegal computer and console game software. The group prided itself on cracking and illegally distributing the most popular software games, usually before their public release date, including such games as Quake, Red Alert, Terminal Velocity, and Warcraft II and III. Group members known as "suppliers" often obtained pre-release versions of the game software from company insiders or by posing as game reviewers for bogus online magazines. Other group members known as "crackers" would defeat the copyright protections embedded in the game software before the group distributed it to Internet sites worldwide.

"Shane Pitman's conviction and sentence should send a strong message to organized Internet gangs like Razor1911 that stealing and illegally distributing game software online is not a game. It is a federal crime, and it has severe consequences. If other software pirates still entertain the false belief that the Internet offers anonymity for this type of copyright infringement, they do so at their own peril," said U.S. Attorney Paul McNulty.

"The sentencing of this cyber-pirate is another victory for intellectual property rights worldwide and the latest in a string of successes resulting from Operation Buccaneer, the largest Internet piracy investigation in history," said Michael J. Garcia, acting Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). "Working with our law enforcement partners, ICE agents will continue to identify, disrupt, and dismantle large-scale Internet piracy gangs."

Pitman was among more than 40 individuals targeted worldwide by Operation Buccaneer, a 14-month undercover investigation by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security, which represents the largest international copyright piracy investigation ever undertaken by law enforcement. In addition to Razor1911, Operation

Buccaneer netted members from a broad cross-section of other leading Internet piracy groups, including DrinkOrDie, RiSC, RiSCISO, Request To Send (RTS), ShadowRealm (SRM), We Love Warez (WLW), and POPZ.

Pitman is one of 22 defendants who have been convicted to date on charges of felony copyright infringement as a result of Operation Buccaneer. Seventeen of those defendants were prosecuted by the Eastern District of Virginia's Cybercrime Unit, in partnership with the Department of Justice's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section. Additionally, last March, a federal grand jury in the Eastern District of Virginia indicted Hew Raymond Griffiths of Bateau Bay, Australia, the self-proclaimed leader of various Internet software piracy groups, including Drink Or Die, ViCE, and RiSC. If Griffiths is extradited and convicted on all charges, he would face up to 10 years imprisonment and a \$500,000 fine.

Prosecuting these cases for the United States are Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Wiechering, Senior Counsel Michael DuBose and Deputy Chief Michael O'Leary, Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, Department of Justice. The investigation was conducted by the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security. Assistance was provided by the Interactive Digital Software Alliance (IDSA).

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- | [More information on: Protecting Intellectual Property Rights](#)
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