

Suspect pleads not guilty to celebrity hacking

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Actress Scarlett Johansson at the 68th annual Golden Globe awards in California on January 16. Hacked pictures of Johansson appeared in mid-September and showed her in a state of undress in a home setting.

A Florida man pleaded not guilty to hacking into the emails of Scarlett Johansson, Christina Aguilera, Mila Kunis and other celebrities, following his arrest last month.

Christopher Chaney, 35, appeared in court in Los Angeles three weeks after he was detained following an 11-month investigation by agencies including the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) (FBI).

He was allowed to remain free but his bail was increased from \$10,000 -- set when he initially appeared in court in Florida -- to \$110,000, and a tentative trial date of December 27 was set.

Chaney, who pleaded not guilty to charges including identity theft,

unauthorized [computer access](#) and wiretapping, faces up to 121 years in jail if found guilty on 26-count list of indictments.t

Judge Patrick Walsh ordered him to wear an [electronic tag](#), stick to a nightly curfew, avoid all use of computers of Internet-connected devices, and have no contact with anyone under 18 without his parents being present.

"You have to stay away from the celebrities," the judge told him.

His arrest by FBI agents grew out of an 11-month investigation dubbed "Operation Hackerazzi" into the hacking of over 50 celebrities, of whom Johansson, Aguilera and Kunis were the highest-profile named.

Aguilera's computer was hacked last December, when racy photos of her also hit the Internet. Kunis's cell phone was hacked in September with photos of her, including one in a bathtub, spread online.

Hacked pictures of Johansson, star of "The Horse Whisperer" and "Girl with a Pearl Earring," appeared in mid-September and showed her in a state of undress in a home setting.

The FBI alleges that Chaney used open-source, public information to try to guess a celebrity's email password, and then would breach the account.

He then allegedly communicated directly with contacts found in the hacked email account's address list and searched the account for photos, information and other data.

In a media interview shortly after his arrest, Chaney apologized to his celebrity victims.

"I deeply apologize. I know what I did was probably the worst invasion

of privacy someone could experience. I'm not trying to escape what I did," he told Action News television in Jacksonville, Florida, where he lives.

"It was wrong. And I have to just face that and go forward," he added in the interview, during which he vowed to plead guilty to the charges against him, according to the broadcaster.

Explaining how the hacking began, he said: "It started as curiosity and it turned to just being addictive ... Seeing the behind-the-scenes of what's going on with the people you see on the big screen."

And he denied criminal intent. "I wasn't saving the emails to blackmail someone," he said, adding that the hacking "was almost like a completely uncensored blog."

"I don't know how my email got a hold of, someone contacted me wanting the pictures," said Chaney. "I don't even know who it was. No, I didn't give that person any pictures. I never wanted to sell or release any images."

"I was almost relieved when they came in and took the computers," he said, about the moment when police swooped.

One of Chaney's lawyers, Christopher Chestnut, said Tuesday that his client would return to Florida and respect all conditions of release. "He's not running from this," he said.

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