

# US journalist suspended after charged in hacking plot

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A US journalist with the Reuters news agency has been suspended after being charged with conspiring with the hacktivist group Anonymous to break into and alter an online Los Angeles Times article.

Matthew Keys, 26, "has been suspended with pay effective Thursday," said a spokesman for Reuters parent firm, Thomson Reuters.

The Justice Department said Thursday that Keys was indicted in California on three counts of felonies related to hacking before his current Reuters post. He faces up to 10 years in prison and a \$250,000 fine.

According to the [federal grand jury](#) indictment in Sacramento, Keys provided Anonymous members with login credentials to a [computer server](#) belonging to Tribune Co., which owns the Times, in December 2010.

He had been fired from his post as a Web producer at a Tribune-owned television station in Sacramento—KTXL FOX 40—two months before.

A hacker then used the credentials provided by Keys to log into the Tribune server, and ultimately made changes to the online version of a Los Angeles Times news story.

The conspiracy aimed to "make unauthorized changes to websites" of the Tribune Company, the Justice Department said.

Court documents showed, meanwhile, that Keys communicated with a member of the [hacker group](#) known by his handle "Sabu," who ended up becoming a government informant against Anonymous.

Hector Xavier Monsegur, known as Sabu, last year was identified as a key informant. Officials said he pleaded guilty to a series of computer hacking crimes which could land him in prison for 124 years.

"The Keys case alleges that Keys gave login credentials to members of Anonymous and encouraged them to vandalize the web site of his former employer, a [news organization](#)," a court document said.

"Defendant Monsegur, who used the nickname 'Sabu,' appeared in the Internet chat log at the core of the Keys case, and, in that chat log, offered advice on how to conduct the network intrusion. Monsegur later became a cooperating defendant in the Southern District of New York."

A statement posted by Anonymous on Friday denounced the indictment, calling it the latest in a targeted campaign against the group.

"Matthew Keys has just been indicted for supposedly sharing admin login details of the Tribune Company with, you guessed it, none other than Hector Xavier Monsegur," the statement said, referring to the informant as a "miserable snitch" among other epithets.

"See a theme developing here yet? The law will target those around and within Anonymous in any way that they can, and bottom feeders like sabu will help prop up any flimsy case they happen to want to bring."

Keys joined Reuters in 2012, more than a year after the alleged crimes. He turned to Twitter to react to the indictment hours after it was handed down in court—and said he learned of the news via the social network.

"I am fine. I found out the same way most of you did: From Twitter. Tonight I'm going to take a break. Tomorrow, business as usual," he said via his new Twitter handle @TheMatthewKeys.

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