US charges Iranian over 'Game of Thrones' HBO hack

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The Night King from the Game of Thrones visited the 2017 Comic-Con event in San Diego, California

The United States on Tuesday charged an Iranian computer whiz with hacking into HBO, stealing scripts and plot summaries for "Games of Thrones," and trying to extort $6 million in Bitcoin out of the network.

US prosecutors in New York unveiled a seven-count indictment against

Behzad Mesri, whom they identified as an Iran-based hacker who also goes by the name Skote Vahshat. Mesri is still at large, a spokesman for the US Attorney's office in Manhattan told AFP.

Mesri is accused of orchestrating a hack of HBO from May to August, then threatening to release stolen data unless the premium cable network paid a $6 million ransom in the digital currency Bitcoin.

US prosecutors say he stole scripts and plot summaries for then unaired episodes of the global smash hit "Game of Thrones" series, and unaired episodes for multiple other shows, including the "Curb Your Enthusiasm" comedy series.

He is accused of compromising multiple user accounts, and in July of sending an anonymous email to HBO personnel saying: "Hi to All losers! Yes it's true! HBO is hacked!... Beware of heart Attack!!!"

Mesri leaked some of the stolen data over the Internet onto websites he controlled, US [federal prosecutors](link) allege.

The Iranian suspect faces seven counts in the United States, including wire fraud, aggravated identity theft and four counts of computer fraud.

US prosecutors accuse Mesri of previously conducting computer attacks on behalf of the Iranian military that targeted nuclear software systems and Israeli infrastructure.

They also said he was a member of the Iranian-based Turk Black Hat Security hacking group, targeting hundreds of websites in the United States and around the world.