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Whither the Old Anonymous? 'Hackers' Rustle League Want to Be the Andy Kaufman of Trolling

They aren't the aggressively-perspiring, jailbait-loving pervs who destroy teenage girls' lives then mock their deaths on Facebook memorial pages.

By Fruzsina Eordogh

Feb 22 2013, 3:25pm  



Jaime Cochran, AKA [@asshurtmacfags](#), co-chair of Rustle League.

Via Vice UK: According to reports on the BBC and other news sites, hacktivist collective Anonymous had one of their main Twitter feeds hacked yesterday. As you might imagine, this is a big deal in the hacking world because at this stage, Anonymous are to hacking what David Beckham is to football and Will Smith is to rapping: if you asked your nan to name you a hacking collective, she'd go for Anonymous.

So who's responsible for the hack? It's been attributed to a group of hackers going by the name Rustle League.* They've been pestering Anonymous since last summer, and though they've also made it their business to troll lazy journalists and Justin Bieber fans, their main sport is trolling Anonymous. Yesterday's takeover of @Anon_Central isn't even the first time Rustle League are reported to have taken over an Anonymous Twitter feed; last time, the group were credited for taking over @YourAnonNews and tweeting images of a man splaying his anus wide open (yeah, it was goatse, I'm not linking to it). They didn't just do this once, they did it 30 times.

If you think about it, it makes sense: Why shouldn't Anonymous, who have exploded as an online movement the world over, have their own group of dedicated trolls? Online phenomenon begets online phenomenon.

What makes Rustle League interesting is that they aren't pricks. The word "troll" has become a catch-all misnomer for lazy mainstream media outlets looking to pigeonhole basically anyone who's being a dick on the internet. Originally, though, it used to refer to a less heinous, more playful breed of internet antagonist, and it's to this group that Rustle League seem to belong.

They aren't the aggressively-perspiring, jailbait-loving.pervs who destroy teenage girls' lives then mock their deaths on Facebook memorial pages. They retain a sense of mischief rather than menace, and they're not trying to change the world either, like Anonymous appear to be doing right now.

I got in touch with them before their latest hack on Anonymous to discuss modern-day trolling. I guess if you want an accurate definition of the word "troll", it's best to ask a troll themselves. (Unless they give you a wrong answer on purpose because they're trying to troll you.)

"Trolling is a form of social commentary or satirical performance art for people who take themselves too seriously on the internet," said Jaime Cochran, co-chair of Rustle League. Cochran (she goes by the handle @asshurtmacfags on Twitter) is a 20-something online security professional and "aspiring porn actress" who, when we met for coffee in her home city of Chicago, described her style as "cerebral trolling" or even "an interactive comedy routine", before comparing herself to Andy Kaufman.

Cochran is one of Rustle League's five core members, around which drifts a more nebulous network of 30 or so more. All of them are hackers and online security professionals. None of them are fat, middle-aged men still living with their parents. Although, said Cochran, "The most malicious cyber-bullies are privileged, middle-aged, middle class men. I call it, 'The middle-aged, upper-middle-class white guy on the internet syndrome.'"



A Rustle League fan or member – it's hard to tell.

Rustle League didn't begin as a bunch of malicious jerks bombarding Facebook RIP pages or teenage girls with abuse, but as a joke between a group of friends that morphed into a wider, unified network with their own website (nazifag.com) and Google Voice hotline. Cochran explained that the

group formed last summer and began to release "pastebins (online text-storing apps) of nonsense" to "lampoon the way Anonymous" conducts itself.

"We see ourselves as the old Anonymous, which is more about having fun and fucking with people rather than revolution and saving the world. Although, what we do does serve a purpose in society," said Cochran.

According to Cochran and IRC chat logs she showed me, Anonymous now think that Rustle League are comprised entirely of FBI agents "because we annoy the shit out of them". Convoluted conspiracy theories about how Rustle League are "a PsyOps" – a government-run operation meant to affect the already paranoid mental state of Anonymous – abound. Cochran assures me she is not FBI.

Rustle League Site (nazifag.com) Admin Login Page HACKED!!!!!!



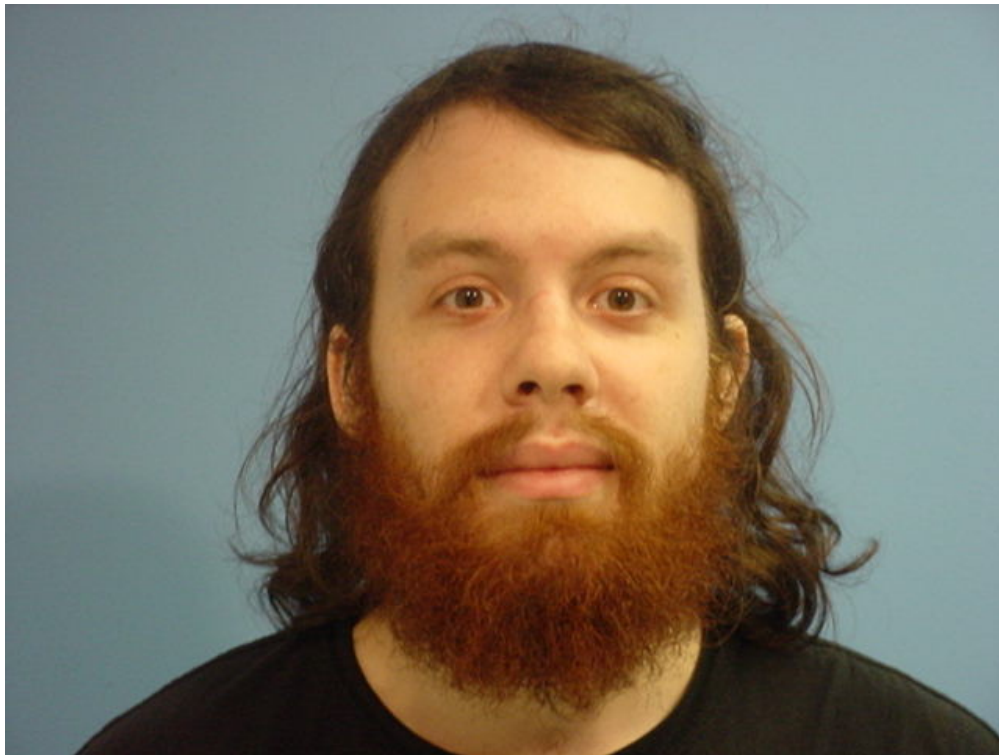
The "hacked" Rustle League website.

Besides Anonymous, Rustle League poke fun at the entire hacker ethos. Try "hacking" into the user section of the Rustle League website – designed like a shitty Geocities fan-page whose user ID and password are both "admin" – and you'll find a screen of flying penises, swastikas and the American and Israeli flags. As if it wasn't already obvious enough, they're using symbols like the swastika and words like "nigger" or "fag" because they're charged

phrases sure to offend anyone who's not a part of the community. React with outrage and you become the victim.

"I facetiously call someone a 'fag', but that's internet nomenclature, internet lexicon," said Cochran, who happens to be transgender and a friend of Andrew "weev" Auernheimer, the "iPad hacker" currently facing a totally unjustified ten years in prison for exposing AT&T's loose security.

Weev was president of another trolling group known as GNAA (Gay Nigger Association of America), a revolving collective that made headlines last autumn for their tweets about African-Americans stealing televisions and pet cats during Hurricane Sandy. None of the thefts they tweeted about actually happened, obviously, but some outlets ran with the story, which is exactly what the GNAA wanted: to point out inefficiencies in today's media by very successfully making them look like idiots.



Andrew "weev" Auernheimer.

Rustle League member Jihad, who was also part of the Occupy Movement and Antisec before one of its most prominent guys, Sabu, was outed as an FBI informant, is convinced "the media purposely confuses trolling for bullying". In a private web chat about their fake Super Bowl power-outage "hack", Jihad wrote:

“Often we [trolls] rely on the ignorance of the media itself to propagate our messages. When the lights went out at the Super Bowl, the Rustle League tweeted, taking responsibility and linking an obviously fake picture of the “control panel” used to ‘LYKE OMG HAXOR THE NFL GIBSON.’ It wasn’t long before that information was up on various news websites and blogs,” he added, before calling this type of un-fact-checked journalism “lazy” and a form of “selling ignorance.”

Rustle League don’t really focus on trolling the media or pointing out issues with the 24-hour news cycle as much as other groups, though. Their “operations” are varied, something that comes with 30 or so unofficial members doing their own thing. One floating member, Dutchminati, for example, created the #cutforbieber hashtag that temporarily had the media believing Justin Bieber fans were cutting themselves in protest at their idol smoking weed. It was supposed to be a form of “social commentary on idol worship and how we treat and look up to celebrities”, explained Cochran. She reiterated, however, that this kind of trolling isn’t her style.

Besides mocking hacker culture and Anonymous, Rustle League have made prank calling internet radio station Vince in the Bay another one of their trademarks, but Cochran admits, “We’ve started to wear out the Vince in the Bay thing.” She then mused aloud about joining the Westboro Baptist Church, “just because they’re trolling the shit out of Anonymous”.

She explained, “They use free speech so brazenly and it’s amazing to see people like Anonymous trying and failing to squash what they do. I don’t agree with their message as a trans-woman, but they push the limits of free speech and it’s something that needs to be done more often.”

tl;dr: Rustle League = a group of digital Voltaires.

**Update, 6:56PM, 22/02/13: We just got an email telling us that Rustle League didn’t hack Anonymous at all, that the two groups are great pals and basically colluded to “rustle the jimmies” of the world’s media – “world’s media” including us in this instance, I guess. If what the email says is true, then good work, Rustle League. But we haven’t yet verified this. See this recent Twitter exchange:*

@youranonnews we didn't rustle Vice. We fucking jacked one of your accounts. Sore losers and poor sports is all you are @viceuk

— Rustle League (@RustleLeague) [February 22, 2013](#)

Follow Fruzsina on Twitter: [@FruzsE](#)

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For a Moment, One 40 oz Drinking Contest United the Hacker, Activist, and Troll Communities

The online stunt raised funds for w0rmer, an incarcerated hacker — and for his newborn baby.

By [Fruzsina Eordogh](#)Jun 21 2013, 1:25pm  

#OCCUPY @5hm00p

1m

"I LIKE TO TICKLE MY POOPY HOLE AND MAKE POOPIE PIES IT'S FUN!"

[Expand](#)

Shm00p @5hm00p

3m

I WANT TO APOLOGIZE TO ALL OF THE JEWS, PEOPLE OF COLOR, AND LBGT PEOPLE I HAVE OFFENDED

[Expand](#)

Shm00p @5hm00p

4m

I AM NO LONGER THE LEDER OF THE #RUSTLELEAGE - I WAS OWNED BY A GILR TODAY, @PLUSSONE

[Expand](#)

Shm00p @5hm00p

7m

5HM00P - OWNED BY @PLUSSONE - NIGGA CAN'T EVEN CHUG 40z

[Expand](#)**Image: Twitter**

The hacktivist community looked on while activist Rachael Perrotta chugged a 40 oz faster than Shm00p, the current leader of the [Anonymous trolling group Rustle League](#). It was part of a fundraising stunt—a drinking contest held before an exclusive audience of hackers on Tynychat—for imprisoned 31-year-old hacker Higinio Ochoa, aka "w0rmer," his wife, and their newborn baby. Just twenty people were invited to watch, but the event's impact was felt across the hacker-space.

The winner got to control the other's twitter account for 30 minutes, so Perrotta took the opportunity to tweet apologies to all those offended by Shm00p's online buffoonery, along with other messages sure to enrage the notorious troll.

Many onlookers described it as a merry time for a community prone to infighting and “drama,” even though Perrotta admitted to losing 800 twitter followers by the next morning. In an email, she told me “it's all worth it for w0rmer and family. Twitter is not serious business - supporting political prisoners is.”

w0rmer was caught by police last April when his wife (then girlfriend) sent him risque photos of her breasts and derriere. He was sentenced to 27 months in prison in August for hacking into computers belonging to the Texas Department of Public Safety, the Alabama Department of Public Safety, Houston County, Alabama and the West Virginia Chiefs of Police Association while acting as part of the Occupy Wall Street social media support team and the hacktivist group known as cabincr3w. His wife Kylie Gardner gave birth to their son Brody last month.

According to his federally appointed public defender, Jose I. Gonzalez-falla, w0rmer has been transferred to multiple facilities in 5 different states to date—Alabama, Pennsylvania, Georgia, West Virginia and now Ohio—because “they don’t know what to do with him, they don’t know what they are dealing with, they’re afraid of him, and they see him as a security risk.”

In a phone interview, he shared a story of how the base commander at Maxwell Air Force Base in Alabama refused to let w0rmer in the facility, perhaps because he “was concerned he would hack into his computer.” Gonzalez-falla also confirmed w0rmer was not given his medication for epilepsy while he was in a local Alabamian facility.

Gardner has had limited opportunities to travel to visit her husband given the impending pregnancy—she went for their April 7th wedding anniversary and was denied a visit except through a prison monitor—so she’s been relying on the prison’s email system known as corrlinks to send her husband pictures of their son. Corrlinks costs money, however, and to say she is stressed and exhausted is an understatement. This was why then, that Perrotta, upon reading Gardner’s frazzled tweets about caring for her newborn alone, decided to do something to help.

“I noticed that #freewormer wasn't getting the same type of attention as other fundraising attempts [in the activist community]” said Perrotta. She’d been egging Shm00p online for a while and seeing interest in the hacking community over their drinking contest, decided to use the contest as a

fundraising stunt for Gardner. “She’s a young basically single, mother trying to make it and I am glad to be able to support her like this,” said Perrotta.

“When you are in prison there are a lot of costs which are much more expensive than on the outside, like using corrlinks to contact his wife and child, buying simple things like toothpaste, stamps and paper or a long underwear shirt,” said Perrotta, who watched her friends deal with the prison system while serving as a press liaison for Occupy Chicago and a member of the defense committee to free the NATO 5. “I know what a huge difference commissary money makes” she added.

The community raised \$1,700 yesterday (their original target was \$500), and the money will go towards w0rmer’s \$14,000 restitution bill as well as commissary expenses, diapers for Brody, and whatever else the w0rmer family needs.

It wasn’t quite 40 oz to freedom, but it was the best they could do for now.

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Missing Money Threatens to Implode Anonymous' Largest Twitter Account

Your Anon News wanted to be a major news outlet, but the dream appears to be dead.

By Fruzsina Eordogh



May 10 2014, 4:26pm  



Image: Garry Knight

The largest Anonymous Twitter account, the 1.24 million followers-strong Your Anon News, is on the verge of imploding over an ownership dispute that stems from missing funds equaling \$35,000.

Last March, members of the collective held an Indiegogo fundraising campaign in order to start an Anonymous-related news site that according to their Indiegogo page, would “disseminate information” the collective “viewed as vital, separating it from the political and celebrity gossip than inundates the mainstream.” Besides aggregating news, this new site promised to deliver original, independent reporting through heavy reliance on “Livestreamers,” folks that would broadcast live from major events and protests.

Anonymous raised a total of \$54,668 for this purpose, and everyone patted themselves on the back for a successful fundraising campaign. Then months rolled by without the site actually materializing. Worse, the bulk of the money disappeared, with that \$35,000 still unaccounted for today.

The Anonymous-affiliated activist responsible for collecting the funds into his own personal bank account, Christopher Banks, who goes by @JackalAnon on Twitter, has failed to answer questions regarding what happened to the missing funds. @JackalAnon was also the main admin for the @YourAnonNews Twitter stream.

By late November, Banks relinquished control of @YourAnonNews to a dozen activists, including prominent figures in the Anonymous community like Nicole Powers, who does social media and a radio show for Suicide Girls, journalists Dell Cameron and Daniel Stuckey, and the lawyer known for freeing weev, Tor Ekeland, all of whom came to sit on YAN's board. (A regular contributor to Motherboard, Stuckey's only involvement with this article was providing the author with a phone interview last week.) Cameron and co. then organized a separate private fundraiser totaling \$9,000 for the sole purpose of sending the people who donated to the original Indiegogo campaign their YourAnonNews t-shirts and other donation perks.

Getting a straight answer out of Banks as to where the YourAnonNews site money went continued to be a challenge. Interview requests with the new YourAnonNews team over what happened to the funds, issued by me, were repeatedly denied, until I spoke with Cameron in person at SXSW in March, and all he was able to tell me was “we don't know.”

Which brings us to the present day drama, where the various board members of YourAnonNews Twitter account board ousted Banks from the account completely, after first meeting with a lawyer. This ousting then prompted some members to resign, including Ekland (out of protest) and Cameron (who was tired of being harassed, including at his place of work).

According to a leaked email about the proceedings written by Cameron, a few members of the YourAnonNews Twitter board attempted to meet with Banks and have him sign a nondisclosure agreement over what happened to the funds. This did not fly well with others, Stuckey explained in a phone interview, because it came across as a “cover-up” to benefit Banks as well as destroy any effort at transparency and what little credibility remained with YourAnonNews. In a Twitter DM, Ekland countered that it was not a nondisclosure agreement, but “a settlement.”

Rather than lay low or go quietly into the night (or answer questions about the missing funds), Banks is now petitioning Twitter to regain sole access over @YourAnonNews. A few members of YourAnonNews that are still active published an open letter on the YourAnonNews Tumblr last night addressed to Twitter, begging the microblogging service deny this request. An excerpt:

This person stole from your community. Not ours. Not Anonymous. But from Twitter. We are not prone to begging, you know that. It's not our style. But we are asking you, in the most serious way, to not fulfill this request. No one that has abused your service, and misled thousands of your users, for their own personal profit, should be allowed retain control of this account. We would rather see it burnt to the ground...

Do not turn this account over to someone that has used it to steal your users' money. We fought very hard to remove him. Do not permit this abuse of your service to be repeated.

Twitter was not available for comment at press time, so it is unclear what will happen to @YourAnonNews. Anonymous-friendly Twitter users have taken to advocating that the entire account be deleted or be given to trolling and media prankster groups like the GNAA and Rustle League.

Others are discussing the possibility of legal action, citing a recent development in the crowdfunding landscape that has Washington state

attorney general Bob Ferguson currently suing a playing card manufacturer for failing to deliver the goods after a successful Kickstarter campaign. As for whether a YourAnonNews site will ever materialize, that seems unlikely at this point. Rustle League leader @meepkittyfuck, in a fit of seriousness, thinks even if the news site was eventually created, “too much time has passed, too much damage has been done to the name that there can be no recovery—the name has been tainted, forever.”

*The following correction has been made to this article: *Nicole Powers is not a Suicide Girl, though she runs their social media and works on an affiliated radio show. The post has also been updated to add Ekeland's comment.*

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Anonymous Says It Hacked the US Government Personnel Database Before China

The Chinese weren't the only ones hacking into US government databases this year.

By [Fruzsina Eordogh](#)

Aug 5 2014, 11:30am



FRENCH ANONYMOUS PROTESTING IN 2012. IMAGE: [FLICKR/PIERRE RENNES](#)

Chinese hackers made headlines last month for hacking into United States government servers in March, but they weren't the only ones poking around on those servers: Anonymous claims it was too.

In fact, a high-level member of Anonymous says the group hacked the same government servers targeted by the Chinese, except months

beforehand, through a different, previously unreported exploit.

In early July, the New York Times reported that Chinese hackers had found their way into government servers containing the personal information of numerous federal employees, known as the databases of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

The Chinese hackers apparently did this in March, but we didn't hear about it until months later. Caitlin Hayden, a spokeswoman for the Obama administration, told the Times that the administration "had no reason to believe personally identifiable information for employees was compromised."

Well, that's not entirely true, says one Anonymous member with a senior-level status in the collective. In a private, encrypted chat, this Anon showed me the results of what appears to be a standard database dump, including passwords and login information, as well as the names, departments and addresses, of various government personnel.

For example, here's a listing showing publicly available contact info for the Department of Transportation, along with login info we've redacted (humorously enough, the ID and password were the same):

```
TS_AGENCY_HQ_NAME,TS_BUSINESS_ADDRESS,TS_BUSINESS_PHONE,TS_LOGIN_ID,TS_
"Department of Transportation","400 7th Street SW","202-366-8984",
[redacted]","[redacted]"
```

For a random sample of more specific entries, I was able to verify names, addresses, and phone numbers via a quick Google search, which all checked out, but was unable to verify login information and passwords of the listed federal employees.

OPM has not yet responded to a request for comment through its media contact. We'll update when and if the agency responds.

The Anon source insists all the data is real. The breach by which Anonymous hacked into the OPM servers has since been fixed, and this Anon claims they did not gain access through the e-QIP system, which the Chinese hackers were reported to have done.

The Anon wouldn't specify why he or she was coming forward with this information right now, except to say they had their "reasons" and "everything is political." When pressed, the Anon admitted to being angry about the late Aaron Swartz and the incarceration of journalist Barrett Brown, as well as the charges against hacktivists Lorax and Lauri Love.

Brown is facing 8.5 years in prison, reduced from 105 years, while British hacker Love is facing 10 years in a US prison for participating in last year's political hacking campaign known as Operation Last Resort. Operation Last Resort was motivated by the harsh prison sentencing given to hackers and activists.

Meanwhile, Adam "Lorax" Bennett, a popular internet radio DJ by night and surfing lifeguard and cancer fundraiser manager by day, has been charged with "aiding" the hacking of Australian and Indonesian websites in 2012.

The OPM data shown to Motherboard was held "in reserve to make a statement, think similar lines to #oplastresort," said the Anon, before continuing, "Nothing is secure, governments, businesses, nothing. The US government used this hack to posture at the Chinese, but how many times are they hacked and have no political reason to reveal it?"

This hacking of the OPM database is in line with Anonymous' activities all of last year, when they were reported as spying on more than 100,000 US government officials and engaging in the aforementioned political hacking spree Operation Last Resort.

Anonymous is also in the habit of stockpiling information to save for rainy days, or in this case, for various political purposes. Anonymous doesn't always announce on Twitter or via YouTube video when they have hacked something; not everyone is in the habit of tweeting "TANGO DOWN," the catchphrase appropriated from the hacker known as the Jester.

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