

Johnathan James AKA c0mrade

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What is he known for?

- Compromised a network belonging to a NASA unit.
- Gained access to computers to an external Pentagon unit.
- First juvenile to be sentenced for computer hacking.



(Jonathan James – the teenager , 2023)

Early Life

- Born on December 12, 1983 in Pinecrest, FL.
- Father was a computer programmer.
- Played games on father's computer, which led to learning programming.
- Spent most free-time on computer.
- Went by alias “c0mrade” online.



(Jonathan James – the teenager , 2023)

First Hacking Experiences

- Parents would take away his computer for spending too much time.
- Was able to bypass the restrictions placed on computer by parents.
- Was not getting high grades in school due to spending time programming.
- Parents took away computer due to low grades.
- Able to hack into the school's system and change his grades.



NASA Hack

- At 15 years old, he wanted to hack a bigger goal.
- Found a vulnerable server in Huntsville, Alabama from AT&T BellSouth.
- Installed malware, escalated privileges, and compromised computers on the network.
- The network belonged to a NASA unit, the Marshall Flight Center.
- Had important parts for life support of the ISS, which was worth millions of dollars.
- NASA disconnected servers for 3 weeks, and damaged them \$40 thousand.



(NASA, 2023)

Defense Threat Reduction Agency Hack

- In September 1999, he detected a backdoor on a server in Dulles, Virginia.
- With the access, he installed a sniffer to intercept the traffic.
- Was able to intercept the credentials of the employees of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency.
- Downloaded thousands of letters from user emails that work for the Pentagon.
- First successful intrusion in the internal networks of the Pentagon external units.



*The Defense Threat Reduction Center at the McNamara Headquarters Complex,
Fort Belvoir, Virginia*

(White, 2011)

Arrest

- An arrest order was placed for James.
- In January 2000, he was arrested during the raid of his home.
- Actively worked with the police and explained how he hacked the federal agency.
- Accused the government of not taking network security seriously.
- Due to no damage of systems and contents and being 16 years old, he received a lesser punishment.
- Pleaded guilty for hacking NASA and US Department of Defense.
- Received 6 months of house arrest and recreational computer ban.



Time in Prison

- Violated the terms of the house arrest.
- Replaced house arrest with 6 months of jail time.
- First US teenager to go to prison for a computer-related crime.
- Served all 6 months in the juvenile correctional center.
- Decided to lead an ordinary life at parents' house.



(Morgan Wallace, 2020)

2nd Raiding of House

- In 2007, a massive hack on TJX, Boston Market, Dave & Busters, etc. occurred.
- Stole credit card information and used illegally.
- Secret Service contacted associates related to hack, and mentioned Johnathan James.
- Secret Service raided James' parents house, but couldn't find anything.
- The hack was led by a cyber theft gang, led by Albert Gonzalez.



(The TJX, n.d.)

Death of Johnathan James

- On May 18, 2008, Johnathan James was found dead at the age of 24.
- Suicide from self-inflicted gunshot to the head.
- Suicide note was left.
- “I do not believe in our ‘justice’ system...”
- “I have nothing to do with this whole TJV story...”
- “I am far more seductive to public opinion than these two random idiots.”
- “I personally win or lose by being in prison... for a crime that I didn’t commit.”
- (*Jonathan James – the teenager* , 2023)



(Zetter, 2010)

Legacy

- Forever apart of the hacking community.
- Young age was able to accomplish great computer feats.
- Hacking for fun, as did not cause any damages directly.
- Unfortunate death left huge impact on hacking world.



(Poulsen, 2009)

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