

The Sony Hack of 2014

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The Event

On November 24, 2014, it was discovered that over 8,000 computers used by movie studio, Sony Pictures Entertainment, were hacked and bricked up by the North Korean group, "The Guardians of Peace". The incident occurred in response to the then upcoming Seth Rogen comedy, "The Interview", a film depicting the assassination of North Korean ruler, Kim Jong Un. This was achieved by a Server Message Block worm to access Sony's computers, rendering them unusable. After the hackers got ahold of private information that belonged to Sony, it was leaked to the public.

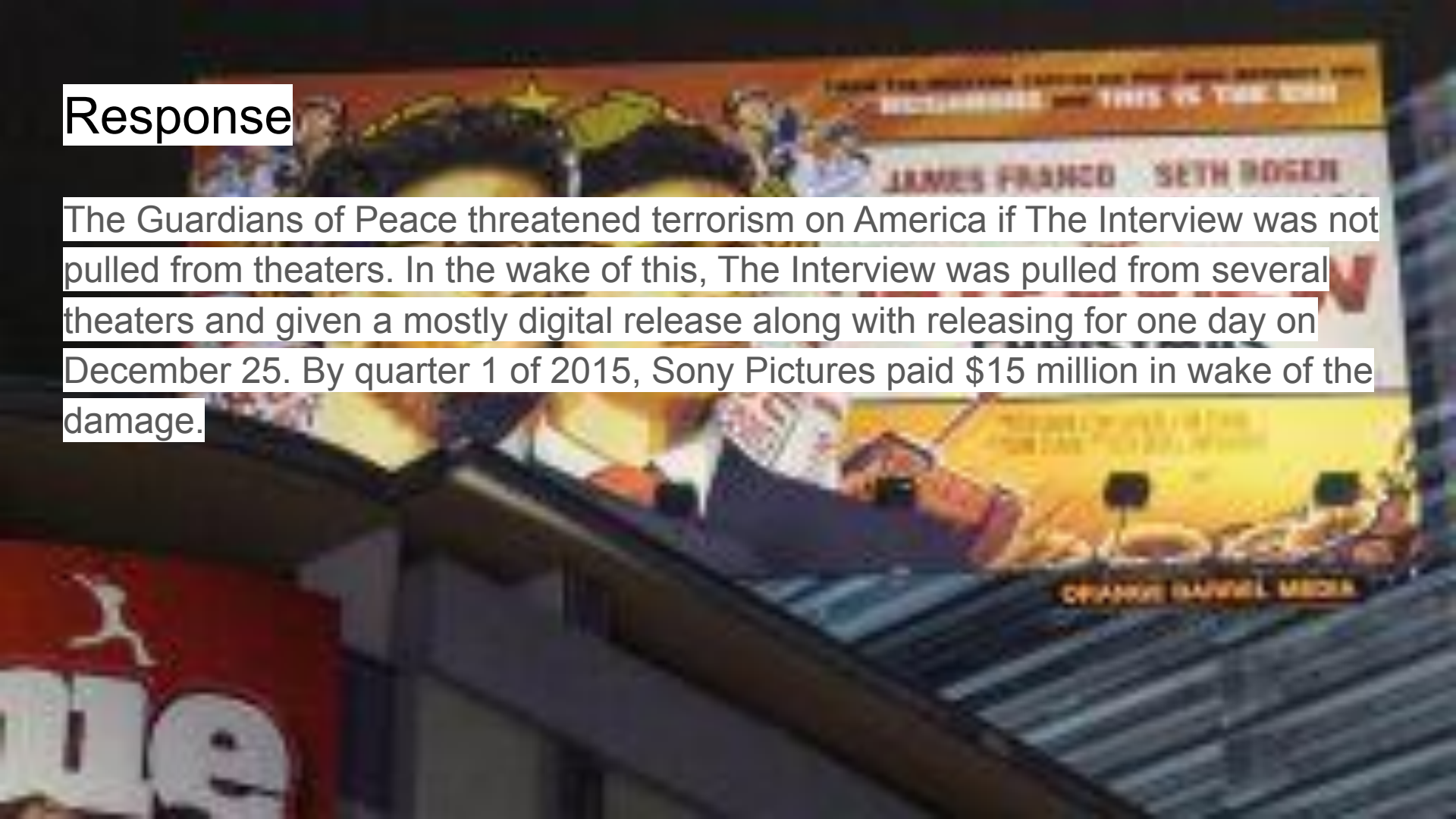
What was leaked?

Some of the most important documents dumped by The Guardians of Peace included information, scripts, and files related to then upcoming and even unannounced films that Sony was working on, along with some entire films being leaked and pirated online. On top of that, personal information was also leaked, such as emails from other employees and even information about their families. Controversial emails from Sony chairman, Amy Pascal were revealed, leading to her being fired. This was all topped off by a Shamoon wiper erasing data from Sony.

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Response

The Guardians of Peace threatened terrorism on America if The Interview was not pulled from theaters. In the wake of this, The Interview was pulled from several theaters and given a mostly digital release along with releasing for one day on December 25. By quarter 1 of 2015, Sony Pictures paid \$15 million in wake of the damage.



How could this have been prevented?

Despite the motivation of the hack being a Seth Rogen comedy of all things, there still may have been a way to prevent this. Since the hack was initiated via malware slowly being installed on the systems' computers over the course of a few months, one way it could have been prevented would be if users were to routinely check their machines and make sure nothing harmful had been installed. There also could have been better infrastructure and security systems installed on the machines to prevent the malware from entering. Above all, Sony should have been much more careful when unknowingly downloading the malware that initiated this.