

EBAY, TESLA, FACEBOOK and GOOGLE Executives Operate Cyber-stalking And Attack Campaigns Against Whistle-Blowers

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[Lorenz Duchamps](#)



David Harville (L) arrives at Moakley Federal Court in Boston on Sept. 29, 2022; James Baugh (R) in Boston on Sept. 29, 2022. (Lane Turner/The Boston Globe via AP)

Two former [eBay](#) Inc. executives were jailed on Thursday for their role in a cyberstalking campaign that targeted a Massachusetts couple whose online newsletter was perceived as critical of the e-commerce company and viewed as a threat to its business.

James Baugh, 47, of San Jose, California—who served as eBay's former senior director of safety and security—was sentenced to 57 months in prison, while David Harville, 50, of Las Vegas, Nevada—who served as a former director of global resiliency—was given two years in prison.

Additionally, U.S. District Judge Patti Saris, who imposed the sentences, ordered Baugh to also pay a fine of \$40,000 and Harville a \$20,000 fine.

The two executives are among seven former eBay employees who have pleaded guilty to charges in the case. [Philip Cooke](#), Brian Gilbert, Stephanie Popp, Veronica Zea, and Stephanie Stockwell previously pleaded guilty to their roles in the [harassment](#) campaign.

The California-based e-commerce company executives, former employees, and co-conspirators, became frustrated with the online newsletter—EcommerceBytes—written and published by Massachusetts couple, David and Ina Steiner.

In August 2019, the group hatched a scheme to terrorize the creators of the pamphlet.

Corporate Harassment Campaigns

Investigators said the defendants “executed a three-part harassment campaign intended to intimidate the victims and to influence their reporting about eBay.”

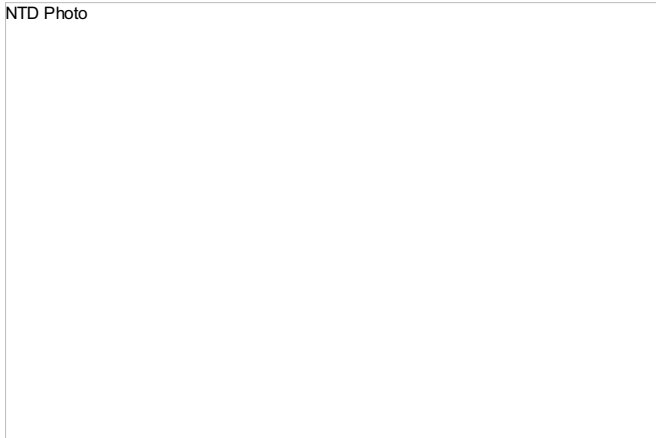
The campaign included sending disturbing deliveries to the couple’s home such as live spiders, cockroaches, a funeral wreath, and a fetal pig, among other things. It also involved posting harassing and sometimes threatening Twitter messages to criticize the newsletter’s content, as well as strange emails from groups like an irritable bowel syndrome patient support group and the Communist Party of the United States, authorities said.

“The defendants’ toxic brand of online and real-world harassment, threats, and stalking was outrageous, cruel and defies any explanation—all the more because these men were seasoned and highly paid security executives backed by the resources of a Fortune 500 corporation,” U.S. Attorney Rachael Rollins said in a [statement](#).

Authorities portrayed Baugh as the mastermind of the scheme and said he directed eBay employees to use prepaid debit cards, disguises, and overseas email accounts to hide the company’s involvement.

Prosecutors said in court documents that although Harville wasn’t at the initial meetings about the scheme, “he was aware enough of the harassment by the time he was in Boston to joke with Baugh about delivering a bag of human feces, a running chain saw, and a rat” to their porch.

Baugh’s lawyers said their client had faced “intense, relentless pressure” from executives—including former eBay CEO Devin Wenig—to do something about the Steiners. They described Baugh as a “tool” who was used by eBay and then discarded when “an army of outside lawyers descended to conduct an ‘internal investigation’ aimed at saving the company and its top executives from prosecution.”



Devin Wenig, CEO of eBay, attends the annual Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference in Sun Valley, Idaho, on July 10, 2019. (Drew Angerer/Getty Images)

Wenig, a former CEO of Thomson Reuters Corp., stepped down as the president of eBay in September 2019 and was not criminally charged in the case, but faces a civil lawsuit from the couple.

“At this point, an independent investigation has said that Mr. Wenig had no knowledge and the prosecutors in the case have made it clear that Baugh was responsible,” a spokesperson for Wenig said. “[He] never told anyone to do anything unethical or illegal and if he had known about it, he would have stopped it.”

The Steiners say the terror campaign stole their sense of safety and caused devastating consequences to their business and finances.

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