

US wants woman accused in Capital One hack to stay locked up

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In this July 16, 2019, file photo, a man walks across the street from a Capital One location in San Francisco. Federal prosecutors say Paige Thompson, the woman accused of hacking Capital One and at least 30 other organizations, is a threat to herself and society, a flight risk and should be kept locked up until her trial. Prosecutors are expected to make their argument for detaining Thompson at a hearing Friday, Aug. 23 in Seattle. Prosecutors say the former software engineer has a history of stalking and threatening to kill people and to get herself killed by police. Her lawyers denied that she is violent. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu, File)

A woman accused of hacking Capital One and at least 30 other organizations is a flight risk, a threat and should be kept locked up until her trial, U.S. prosecutors said in court documents filed ahead of a Friday detention hearing in Seattle.

Paige Thompson, a former Amazon software engineer who goes by the online alias "erratic," has a history of stalking and threatening to kill people and to get herself killed by [police](#), prosecutors said in the documents.

Police in Mountain View, California, said she also threatened to shoot up an undisclosed company in May, while she was living with a convicted felon who had a stockpile of pistols, rifles and ammunition.

Lawyers for Thompson, a 33-year-old transgender woman, denied that she is violent and said she should be released to a halfway house where she would have better access to mental health care. Citing a doctor, they say her safety is at risk in the male facility.

"The risk of being continuously misgendered and becoming a target for intimidation by other inmates is likely increased in a male facility," Dr. Matt Goldenberg wrote.

Authorities say Thompson previously has been the subject of an extreme risk protection order due to mental illness issues. State red flag laws permit police or family to petition a court to remove firearms from a person deemed to be a danger to themselves or others.

"In today's America, it is easy enough to obtain firearms, and there is every reason to be concerned that Thompson, who repeatedly has threatened to kill, would obtain the means to carry out ... her threats -

particularly when confronted with the alternative of near-certain conviction and imprisonment," prosecutors said in their motion.

Thompson was charged in July with accessing [personal information](#) on 106 million Capital One credit card holders earlier this year.

The financial corporation said among the information obtained by the hacker was 140,000 Social Security numbers and 80,000 bank account numbers. It said no credit card account numbers or log-in credentials were compromised.

The breach was among the largest on record involving a major U.S. financial institution. Thompson had talked about the hack online in chat groups, authorities say.

At least 40 lawsuits have been filed in the U.S. against Capital One following the breach, saying it failed to protect consumers. Eight other suits were filed in Canada.

Seattle police were granted the risk order against Thompson in May 2018. Four months later, two of Thompson's former friends secured a protection order against her, saying she had stalked and harassed them.

Sarah Stensberg told police that Thompson left [voice messages](#) and several text messages, including one that listed Stensberg's address and read, "rest in peace." Stensberg said Thompson also stalked her on [social media](#).

In May, Thompson focused on a California social media business and sent a series of Twitter messages to a former Amazon co-worker, according to police.

"I feel bad, when my cat dies, I'm going to California to shoot up

(REDACTED) office I hope you are not there," the message said.
"Sorry. But it has to be done."

The message continued: "I like you but I can't let you stand in the way of what has to be done."

The person responded, police said, and Thompson wrote back: "maybe spd could do something kind and come over and shoot me."

Mountain View police sought help from Seattle police and they informed Thompson's case manager and made a referral to a designated crisis responder.

Thompson's lawyers said the Seattle police officer wrote in a report, "I am familiar with Paige Thompson and my unit has a response plan for her," and found she had no means or money to travel to California.

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