



FBI PRESS RELEASE

Detroit Field Office

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Sextortion: A Growing Threat Targeting Minors

Offenders deceive and manipulate victims to create sexually explicit material for extortion purposes.

Detroit Field Office – The FBI wants to warn parents, educators, caregivers, and children about the dangers of online activity that may lead to the solicitation and enticement of a minor to engage in sexual acts.

Sextortion involves an offender coercing a minor to create and send sexually explicit images or video. An offender gets sexually explicit material from the child, then threatens to release that compromising material unless the victim produces more. These offenders are seeking sexual gratification.

Financially motivated sextortion is a criminal act that involves an offender coercing a minor to create and send sexually explicit material. Offenders threaten to release that compromising material unless they receive payment, which is often requested in gift cards, mobile payment services, wire transfers, or cryptocurrency. These offenders are motivated by financial gain, not necessarily just sexual gratification.

Victims are typically males between the ages of 14 to 17, but any child can become a victim. For financially motivated sextortion, offenders are usually located outside the United States and primarily in west African countries such as Nigeria and Ivory Coast, or Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines.

These crimes can lead victims to self-harm and has led to suicide. From October 2021 to March 2023, the FBI and Homeland Security Investigations received over 13,000 reports of online financial sextortion of minors. The sextortion involved at least 12,600 victims—primarily boys—and led to at least 20 suicides.

In the six-month period from October 2022 to March 2023, the FBI observed at least a 20% increase in reporting of financially motivated sextortion incidents involving minor victims compared to the same time period the previous year.

“The FBI encourages families and caregivers to have open and honest conversations about sextortion,” said **Special Agent in Charge Cheyvorvea Gibson of the FBI in Michigan**. “By discussing the prevalence of sextortion today, it is our hope we can reduce the shame and stigma associated with being targeted and provide the public with assurances about our work in this space. The FBI is committed to working in-conjunction with our domestic and international law enforcement partners to prevent youth from becoming victims of this tragic crime and to hold those who target our teens in this manner accountable – no matter where in the world they may be.”

The Detroit Field Office has provided [this awareness video](#) and suggested information to highlight when discussing sextortion:

- Be selective about what you share online.
- Block or ignore messages from strangers.
- Be wary of anyone you encounter for the first time online or of anyone that wants to move to a different platform to have a conversation.
- People can pretend to be anything or anyone online, and their videos or photos are not proof of who they say they may be.
- Any content you create can be made public and you have little control over where it is shared next.
- Do not send any money or additional content to the blackmailer.
- Don't be ashamed. Ask for help. If you are getting messages or requests online that don't seem right, block the sender, report them to the platform's safety administrators, tell a trusted adult, or the FBI.

If you or someone you know believes that they are a victim of sextortion or financially motivated sextortion, immediately report the activity to law enforcement. You can report it to the FBI by calling 1-800-CALL-FBI or visiting tips.fbi.gov.

For more information on sextortion and financial sextortion, visit the FBI's resources on the threats at: <https://www.fbi.gov/sextortion> and <https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/sextortion/financially-motivated-sextortion>.

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