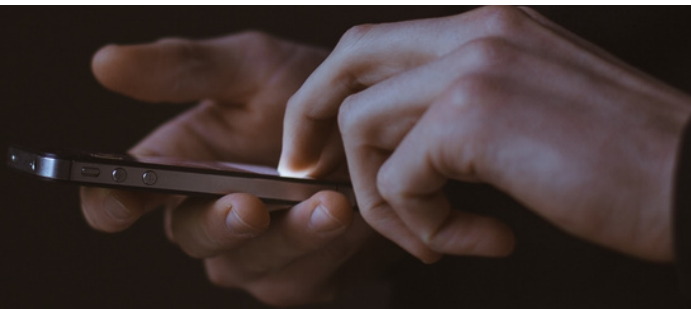


## **SEXTORTION IS IT HUMAN TRAFFICKING?**



**Sextortion is a form of exploitation because it is the forced exchange of sexual material between two parties. With the internet having revolutionized the way traffickers recruit victims, sextortion situations can be a gateway to human trafficking. Criminals can potentially use sextortion as a recruitment strategy for human trafficking. However, sextortion itself does not constitute human trafficking because there is no involvement of a third party that would profit from the sexual material produced in the form of money, drugs, or something else of value.**

### HOW IT HAPPENS

Sextortion happens when an adult contacts a minor over an online platform, such as a communication app, game, or social media account. Offenders often pose as a young person, often of the opposite gender. They use deception and manipulation to convince a young male or female, usually 14 to 17 years old, to engage in explicit video or activity, which the offender secretly records. The offender then informs the victim that they have made the recordings and attempts to extort the victim for money, more sexually explicit images, or in-person sexual favors to prevent this material from being published online. In a different scenario, the offender convinces the minor to send him nude photographs or videos of themselves. The offender threatens to post the minor's pictures or videos online if they do not produce more sexually explicit content. Offenders also use other threats, including threats to harm the child or family, to make them comply with their demand for sexually explicit material or in-person sexual favors.

Upon review of news sources and court records of sextortion cases, it appears sextortion does not fall under the federal definition of human trafficking. However, it can be a gateway to the trafficking of minors. For example, predators in sextortion schemes can use grooming tactics to build relationships with youth and gain their trust. They can potentially use sextortion as a recruitment strategy to lure and trap victims in a trafficking situation.

## SEXTORTION

### CASE EXAMPLE

In one sextortion court case reviewed, an offender contacted a child online pretending to be a peer and convinced the child to send him sexually explicit materials of herself. The offender also extracted her personal information, then blackmailed her to receive an in-person sexual favor.

Fearing for her safety, the victim agreed to meet with him. The offender met with the victim at a hotel where he recorded himself sexually assaulting the victim. The offender then kept contacting the victim and threatening to harm her and her family.

There was no information in unsealed court records about the victim receiving money or something else of value in exchange for the sexual encounter nor about the offender publishing the child sexual abuse material online for profit.

Since there was no commercial element present in this case, this situation falls outside of the purview of human trafficking.



[HTTPS://WWW.FBI.GOV/VIDEO-REPOSITORY/WHAT-IS-SEXTORTION/VIEW](https://www.fbi.gov/video-repository/what-is-sextortion/view)

[HTTPS://WWW.FBI.GOV/HOW-WE-CAN-HELP-YOU/SCAMS-AND-SAFETY/COMMON-SCAMS-AND-CRIMES/SEXTORTION/SEXTORTION\\_DEFAULT\\_PAGE](https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/scams-and-safety/common-scams-and-crimes/sextortion/sextortion_default_page)