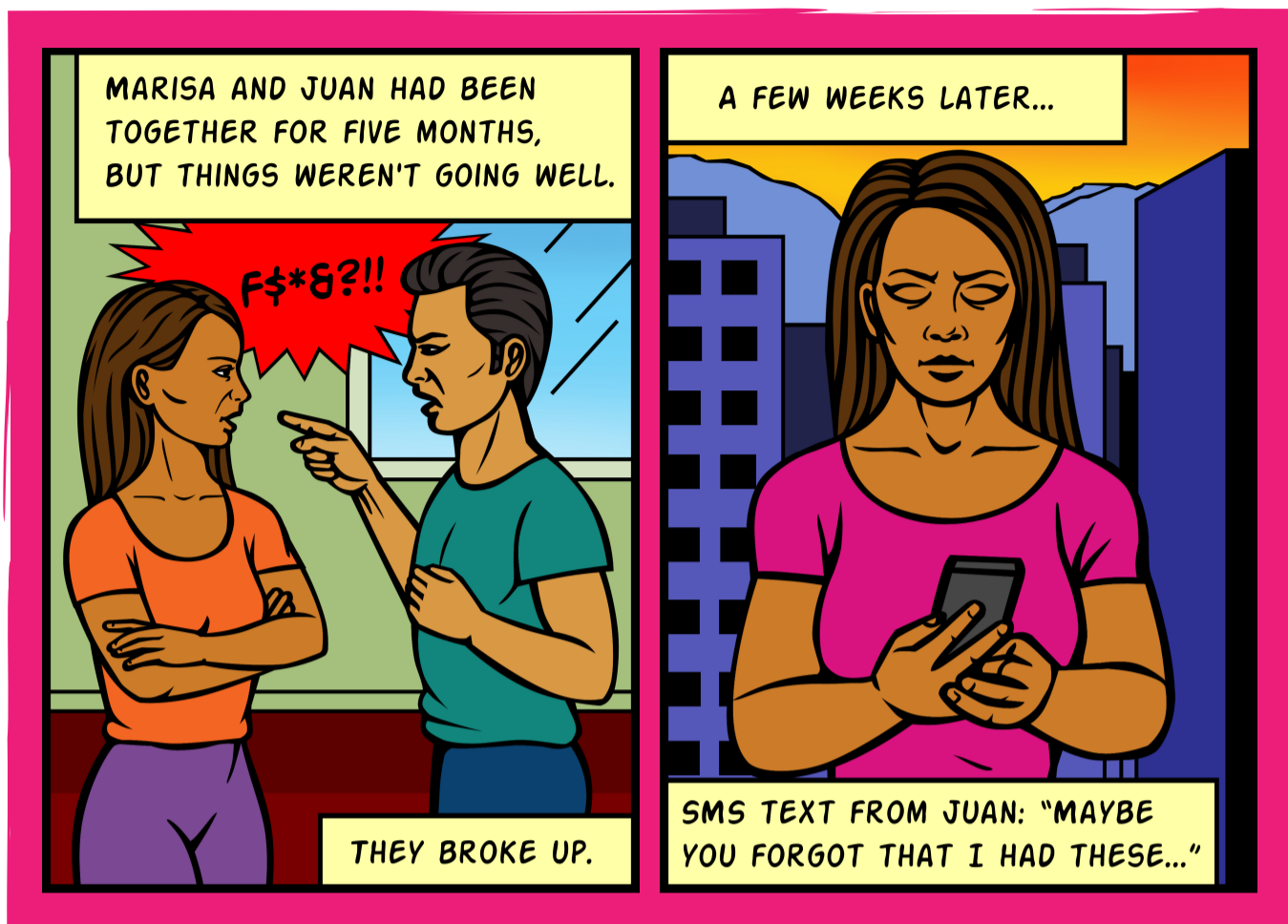


# BLACKMAIL



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**BLACKMAIL IS THE CRIME OF THREATENING TO REVEAL EMBARRASSING OR DAMAGING INFORMATION ABOUT A PERSON TO THE PUBLIC, FAMILY OR ASSOCIATES UNLESS THAT PERSON BUYS THE BLACKMAILER'S SILENCE.**



Because the information is usually true, it is not revealing the information that is criminal, but demanding money - or other favours - in return for not releasing the information.

A blackmailer's "price" can also include sexual favours or that the person stay in a relationship.

Both emotional and financial blackmail are forms of extortion.

Online blackmail can involve the posting of intimate photos on so-called 'revenge porn' websites (sites that maliciously, and without authorisation, publish intimate images) with demands for money to remove the photos.

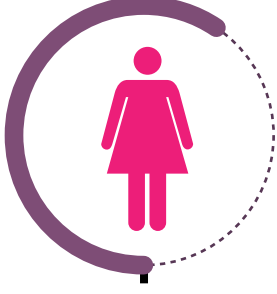
There is also a disturbing related form of blackmail - where neither money nor favours are demanded - but a price is exacted all the same. Intimate images of women are stolen (often through illegal hacking) and then posted online. The photos may be posted along with home and work contact information, encouraging viewers to harass the woman. The price these blackmailers seek is humiliation of the other.

In a world where a female judge in Canada was suspended "because her husband put onto the web images taken in intimacy of her", rather than the authorities going after the man who violated her privacy, blackmail and related violence are serious threats for women and girls.

'Revenge porn' is in fact a gross violation of a woman's privacy, where private and personal video and photographic images are published without consent onto various websites for the purposes of extortion, blackmail and/or humiliation. This is an act of violence and should not be conflated with pornographic content.

ONLINE BLACKMAIL IS A MIXED BAG WHERE BLACKMAILERS MAY STEAL INTIMATE IMAGES OR FAKE THEM. THE PRICE DEMANDED MAY BE MONEY OR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL CONTROL OF THE PERSON BEING BLACKMAILED. IN THE CASE OF 'REVENGE PORN' WITHOUT FINANCIAL MOTIVE, THE PRICE SEEMS TO BE PURE HUMILIATION OF WOMEN.

## HOW PEOPLE EXPERIENCE BLACKMAIL

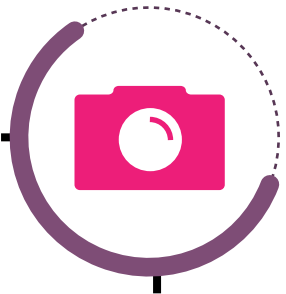


### PARTNER SURVEILLANCE TO OBTAIN SEX/CONTROL

"After two weeks of this, I told David we needed to stop talking. He then told me he'd recorded everything I'd done on camera and planned on releasing it if I didn't have sex with him."

"My parents said they weren't upset with me, but I could still grasp their feeling of disappointment. I lived in a constant state of shame. I felt like I didn't deserve to live."

"When my pictures were released, I decided a career as a musician or actress were completely out of the question. A job in the public eye could be ruined over a mistake I made at a young age."



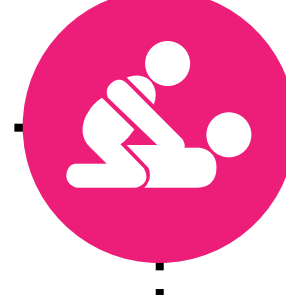
### PHOTOS HELD TO SILENCE

"The perpetrators of the Shakti Mills gang rape had gotten away with it before, and expected to get away with it again, assuming that the threat to reveal photographs of her nude and violated body would ensure the victim did not seek justice. She did, and the very photographs that empowered the men will now incriminate them."



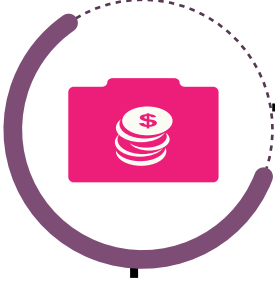
### VIDEOS TAKEN WITHOUT CONSENT FOR FINANCIAL GAIN

"According to Philippine National Police Chief Alan Purisima, the syndicates had created provocative, alluring and entirely fictitious social media accounts to entice unwitting victims into live cybersex activities. The criminal groups would then secretly record the footage, before threatening to expose the victims to their friends and families unless they handed over between US\$500 and US\$2,000."



### 'REVENGE PORN' FOR FINANCIAL GAIN

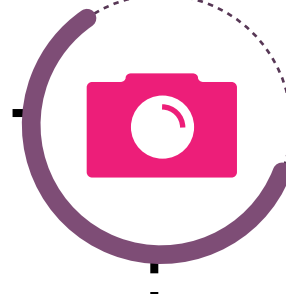
"Some websites have been set up in far-flung territories specifically to host revenge porn and will only remove photographs on payment of a fee."



### IMAGES STOLEN FOR FINANCIAL GAIN

"The FBI says its learned the real secret behind the success of the nasty revenge porn website isanyoneup.com: The site operator, 27-year-old Hunter Moore, was paying a hacker to steal nude photos of innocent people right from their email accounts."

Moore's site began as a revenge porn site, inviting embittered ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends to submit explicit photos of their former partners. But to keep populating the site with new images (needed to keep the reported monthly advertising fees of thousands of dollars), Moore allegedly instructed Evens to hack email accounts to steal private photos, for which he paid Evens \$200 a week."



### PHOTO MANIPULATION TO HUMILIATE

"One picture showed the person performing a sex act. She says someone set up an imposter site, leaving settings on 'public' for the world to see. Only two weeks ago did she tell her mother and father."

"Ali is Muslim. Her faith, she says, values integrity and reputation."

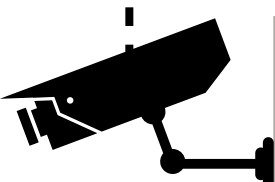
"She says she asked the social media giant repeatedly over the course of the next four and a half months to take down the photos. They only did she says after she got police involved. They sent Facebook a subpoena while investigating."

"She says she's been so humiliated that Facebook should pay her 10 cents for every user they have."

### GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE FOR POWER

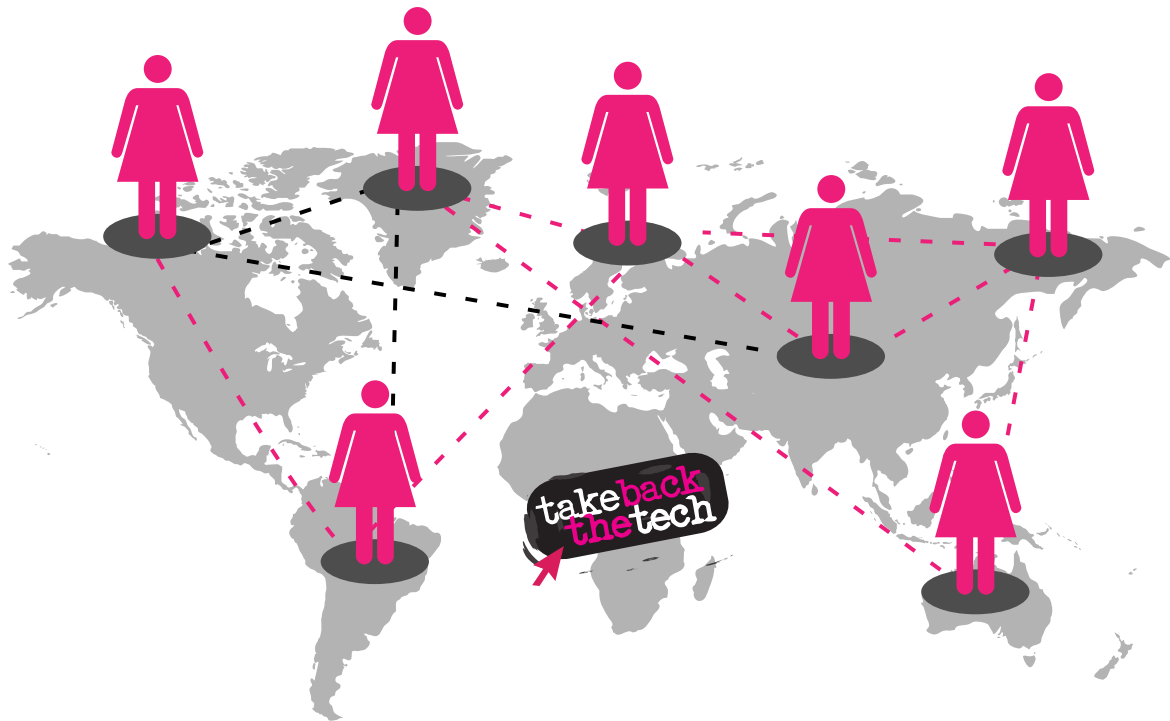
"Everyone has secrets - that is what people realise too late when a surveillance society falls softly into place."

"If you are a recovering alcoholic, make a pass at someone of the same gender, have a gambling problem, suffer from bipolar illness, or have had a conversation with your accountant about your taxes that skirted what was proper, are you ready to be 'outed'?"



"OFFICIAL SURVEILLANCE HAS BEEN MARKETED AS A NATIONAL-SECURITY IMPERATIVE. IN FACT, IT GIVES THE STATE THE POWER TO BLACKMAIL ANYONE IT WISHES."

NAOMI WOLF



## YOUR RIGHT TO PRIVACY

Article 12, Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.”

Blackmail often involves doxing, which is hacker slang for publishing someone’s personal contact information online to intimidate or punish them. Doxing is an obvious violation of your right to privacy and anyone who does this without your permission is breaking the law. Generally, in law, the right to privacy trumps freedom of expression.

People who post to ‘revenge porn’ sites use the anonymity the internet can give them to take advantage of the fact that authorities are only just beginning to understand this crime, but legislation is emerging. In the first half of 2014, nine US states passed legislation to specifically prohibit the unauthorised posting of images.

In Europe, there is also a Right to be Forgotten, which can be used to demand that search engines remove links with personal information because it is irrelevant. Interestingly, the burden of proof is now on the search engine to prove that the data cannot be deleted because it is still relevant. The law applies to all companies, including those outside the EU, which serve European citizens.

## YOUR RIGHT TO FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media regardless of frontiers.”

Like most online violence, blackmail is often used to silence women. This means that preventing tech-related violence against women is not in opposition to free speech, but rather in line with it.

If your freedom of expression is being challenged primarily because of a private demonstration of sexuality, the blackmailers are trying to punish or control you using the censure and/or shame our patriarchal societies put on women and their naked bodies. Women have a right to be sexual; when we stop shaming women’s sexuality, so-called ‘revenge porn’ will diminish in power.

## YOUR RIGHT TO FREEDOM FROM VIOLENCE

United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women: “States should condemn violence against women and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to its elimination. States should pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating violence against women... [This includes] any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”

Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence: “Parties shall take the necessary legislative and other measures to promote and protect the right for everyone, particularly women, to live free from violence in both the public and the private sphere.”

Intimate photos or videos that a couple may take consensually can become a blackmail tool if one of the partners threatens to share them without consent. This is violence in itself, but there are also cases where women are forced to endure further violence by remaining in unwanted relationships or engaging in undesired sexual activities because of blackmail.

## YOUR RIGHT TO PROTECT YOUR ARTISTIC WORK

Article 27, Universal Declaration of Human Rights: “Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.”

Copyright establishes two rights – economic and moral. The moral rights of copyright allow you to claim authorship of a photo or video and the right to prohibit or authorise its distribution.

Photographs and videos are considered artistic productions. Some women have used copyright laws to register intimate images they took of themselves and were later misused without their consent in order to build a legal case for reclaiming ownership and demanding withdrawal from the public domain.

The Berne Convention guarantees that copyright protection is obtained automatically; there is no need for registration or other formalities. Some national copyright offices and laws allow you to register works, which may facilitate legal cases.