



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION PROTECTING AMERICA'S CONSUMERS

Website Operator Banned from the 'Revenge Porn' Business After FTC Charges He Unfairly Posted Nude Photos

Craig Brittain Allegedly Deceived Women on Craigslist, Offered Fake 'Takedown' Service

FOR RELEASE

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The operator of an alleged “revenge porn” website is banned from publicly sharing any more nude videos or photographs of people without their affirmative express consent, under a settlement with the Federal Trade Commission. In addition, he will have to destroy the intimate images and personal contact information he collected while operating the site.

The FTC’s complaint against Craig Brittain alleges that he used deception to acquire and post intimate images of women, then referred them to another website he controlled, where they were told they could have the pictures removed if they paid hundreds of dollars.

“This behavior is not only illegal but reprehensible,” said Jessica Rich, director of the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. “I am pleased that as a result of this settlement, the illegally collected images and information will be deleted, and this individual can never return to the so-called ‘revenge porn’ business.”

According to the FTC’s complaint, Brittain acquired the images in a number of ways, such as by posing as a woman on the advertising site Craigslist, and offering nude photos purportedly of himself in exchange for photos provided by women. When women provided him with the photos, Brittain posted them on his site without their knowledge or permission.

In addition to collecting and posting the images himself, Brittain solicited viewers of his site to anonymously submit nude photos of people to his site, according to the complaint. He required submissions to include sensitive personal information about the people in the photos, including their full name, town and state, phone number and Facebook profile.

The complaint also alleged that Brittain offered a “bounty system” on his site, wherein users could offer a reward of at least \$100 in exchange for other users finding pictures and information about a specific person. Overall, Brittain’s site included photos of more than 1,000 individuals, according to the complaint.

Women whose photographs and information were posted on the site contacted Brittain to have the information removed, citing the potential harms to their careers and reputations. In addition, women cited unwelcome contact from strangers who had discovered their information on Brittain's site. The complaint notes that in many cases Brittain did not respond to the women's requests to remove the information.

In fact, the complaint alleges that Brittain's site advertised content removal services under the name "Takedown Hammer" and "Takedown Lawyer" that could delete consumers' images and content from the site in exchange for a payment of \$200 to \$500. Despite presenting these as third-party services, the complaint alleges that the sites for these services were owned and operated by Brittain.

Under the terms of the settlement, Brittain is required to permanently delete all of the images and other personal information he received during the time he operated the site. He will also be prohibited from publicly sharing intimate videos or photographs of people without their affirmative express consent, as well as being prohibited from misrepresenting how he will use any personal information he collects online.

The Commission vote to accept the the proposed consent order for public comment was 5-0. The FTC will publish a description of the consent agreement package in the Federal Register shortly. The agreement will be subject to public comment for 30 days, beginning today and continuing through March 2, 2015, after which the Commission will decide whether to make the proposed consent order final. Interested parties can [submit comments electronically](#) by following the instructions in the "Invitation To Comment" part of the "Supplementary Information" section.

NOTE: The Commission issues an administrative complaint when it has "reason to believe" that the law has been or is being violated, and it appears to the Commission that a proceeding is in the public interest. When the Commission issues a consent order on a final basis, it carries the force of law with respect to future actions. Each violation of such an order may result in a civil penalty of up to \$16,000.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 2,000 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's website provides [free information on a variety of consumer topics](#). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#), and [subscribe to press releases](#) for the latest FTC news and resources.

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