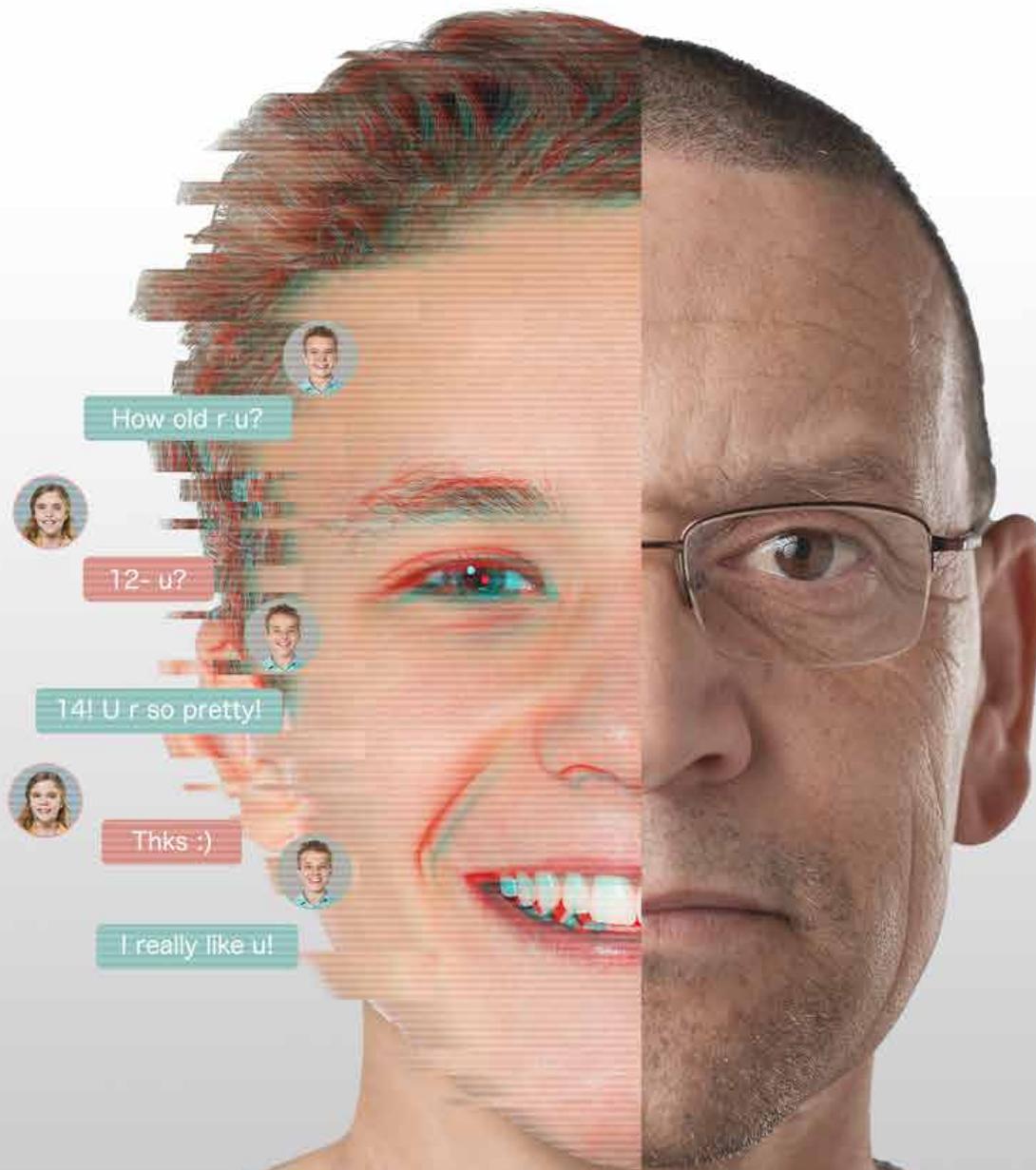


ANY KID ONLINE. ANY TIME. ANYWHERE.



SEXTORTION

the hidden pandemic

DIRECTED BY MARIA DEMESHKINA PEEK

www.SextortionFilm.com | [#stopsextortion](https://twitter.com/stopsextortion) | [@sextortionfilm](https://twitter.com/sextortionfilm)
For press inquires: Annie Jeeves (310) 995-3834 Annie@CinematicRedPR.com

"*Sextortion: the Hidden Pandemic* powerfully brings to life the human impact of this truly global crime. It is required viewing for anyone who wants to ensure children are able to explore and enjoy the digital world safely. Through providing a space for both those working to bring abusers to justice and survivors of abuse to share their incredible stories, it offers a compelling argument for increased action and investment in this crucial area."

Iain Drennan
Executive Director, We Protect Global Alliance

SEXTORTION

the hidden pandemic

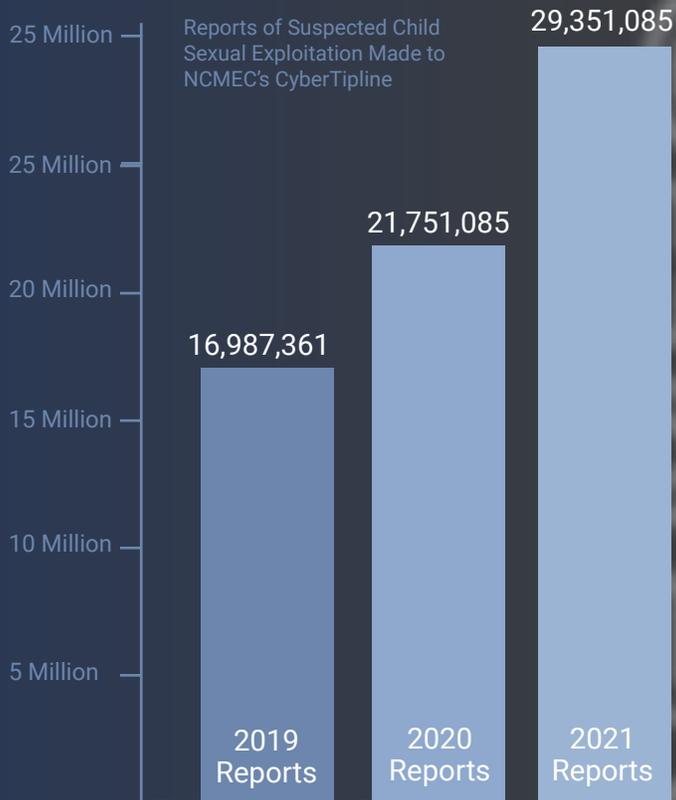
"*Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic* is a must-see documentary for everyone. Sexual predators have found a way to extort children in the privacy of their homes. They don't need a key to get in; just a device connected to the Internet. They secretly coerce their underage victims to produce sexual images, to have sex with them or give them money. At the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children we see the devastating impact of these crimes every day."

John Shehan, Vice President, Exploited Children Division
The National Center for Missing & Exploited Children

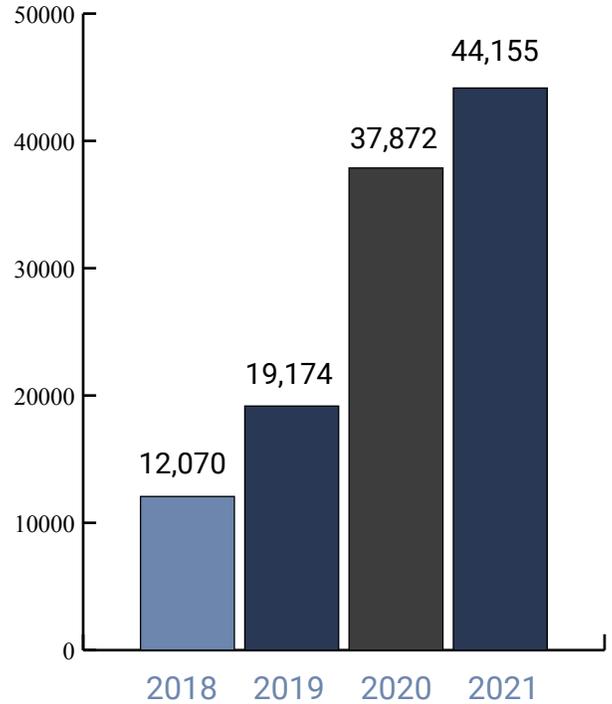
According to the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), there was a 98% increase of online enticement reports from 2019 to 2020, with the reports by the public more than doubling. Sextortion is a part of online enticement.



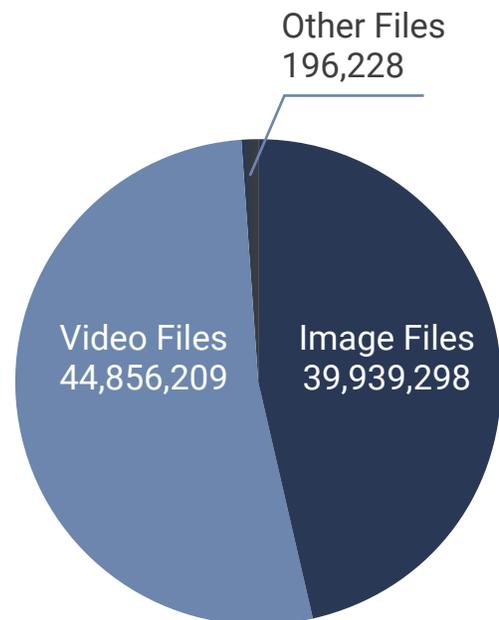
Overall Cyber Tipline Reports increased from 16.9 million in 2019 and 21.7 million in 2020 to 29.3 million in 2021, which included 44,856,209 video files and 39,939,298 image files.



Reports of Online Enticement Made to NCMEC's CyberTipline



Files Included in 2021 Reports Made to NCMEC's CyberTipline



Source: National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 2022.

LOGLINE

With unique, unrestricted access to government files, victim families, and investigators, *Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic* uncovers the hidden world of online enticement and exploitation of children—and what we can do to stop it.

SHORT SYNOPSIS:

Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic is an investigation into the world of online grooming and sextortion—a present-day reality for one in seven children online. By unsealing the federal case of a top-gun pilot with hundreds of victims, and interviewing survivors and their parents, this true-crime piece exposes an often-overlooked crime against children, the tactics of online predators, and the voices of parents and law enforcement poised to stop online child exploitation in its tracks.

LONG SYNOPSIS:

An insider look into one of the largest international child sextortion cases investigated by Homeland Security and the Department of Justice on American soil, *Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic* begins with an investigation of the sexual extortion—or "sextortion"—of a Virginia teen and a fourteen-year-old girl from Japan. As investigators pursue the case, surprising new details emerge—including the fact that the same suspect is behind both crimes. And further forensic research reveals hundreds of similar victims across the United States.

With unique, unrestricted access to government files, victim families, and investigators, *Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic* uncovers the hidden world of online enticement and exploitation of children. Tapping into the findings of child exploitation experts, the film spotlights the common tactics of online predators, the signs that a child is being groomed online, and a documented rise in global sextortion cases.

As the film tracks the ongoing international investigation, it also reveals the investigators' shocking discovery of the online predator behind hundreds of sextortion cases—and his attempts to escape prison and evade foreign agents. In the final act of the film, we witness the first-person account of S.M., a victim of the same international sextortion ring that victimized Canadian teen Amanda Todd, who took her own life as the result of online predation. Todd's mom and S.M. reveal the truth behind what happened to Amanda back in 2012—and why it's critically important for them to speak out now.

DIRECTOR STATEMENT

Sextortion: The Hidden Pandemic is definitely the hardest documentary I have ever made. The extremely disturbing yet timely subject matter, combined with the challenges of filming during the pandemic made making this film almost an impossible task. We had to adjust, improvise, and rely on court drawings and animation when filming just was not possible. Through our partnerships with the Department of Justice and Homeland Security, our team had unique unrestricted access to all government documents for an international sextortion case unsealed for this film for the very first time. The interviews with prosecutors, law enforcement officials, and survivors largely informed my filmmaking approach.

The written stories of survivors, obtained in person and from the court documents, have opened my eyes to the severity and cruelty of this crime, especially the psychological long-term effects on the children and their futures. It is my hope that in the same way, the eyes of the viewers will be opened – and awareness, education and civil action will become the result of this film. We simply cannot allow this to go on. Unfortunately, the rates of sextortion across the world are skyrocketing, and many children are getting hurt by simply being online. The thought of helping so many has kept us going, and I am extremely thankful for our small filmmaking team, and all our partners who made this film possible.

DIRECTOR BIO



Maria, a Siberian-born filmmaker, started her film career by acquiring a Master's of Arts in Producing/Directing from Regent University in 2002, and directing numerous TV spots and doc series through her production company, Auroris Media, which she co-founded in 2003. Maria's first short documentary, "Searching Generation", won Worldfest Houston in 2009.

After pivoting away from TV spots and limited series, Maria directed her first feature documentary, "I Dream of Dance"-, in 2017, which was well received by critics and the dance community alike. "I Dream of Dance"- was acquired as premium content for Netflix in 2018.

Maria is a member of the Producer's Guild of America, a film festival judge, and a public speaker. In addition to M.A. in Producing/Directing, she holds a M.T.S. degree from Samford University, and a B.S. degree in Applied Mathematics from Novosibirsk State University. She resides on the East Coast with her husband Stephen and their two children.

PRODUCER BIO

Stephen had his first professional photo shoot at 15 years old, and has been creating images ever since! He began his journey in film after graduating with a Masters Degree in Film/TV in 2003 from Regent University. He co-founded Auroris Media in 2003 with his partner in crime Maria.

Stephen has produced docu-series and feature documentaries that have aired on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu, and Discovery+ among others.

His first feature length documentary "Unacknowledged" became the top selling documentary of 2017, and was acquired by Netflix. Stephen is VP, Production for the award-winning production company Auroris Media, and oversees all aspects of global production. Stephen is an active member of the Producers Guild of America.



ON-CAMERA EXPERT BIOS



Erin Burke

UNIT CHIEF, CHILD EXPLOITATION INVESTIGATIONS UNIT AT CYBER CRIME CENTER (C3), HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS (HSI).

CEIU is comprised of three sections, the Victim Identification Lab, Intake and Operations, and Angel Watch. As a Special Agent, Erin has worked investigations related to child exploitation, human trafficking, national security, transnational narcotics, gangs, and financial crimes for over fifteen years. Erin has earned a master's degree in Forensic Science from The George Washington University.



Paul Wolpert

SPECIAL AGENT (S/A), HOMELAND SECURITY INVESTIGATIONS (HSI).

Paul Wolpert has been working in the Norfolk office for twenty years, with the past eighteen dedicated to investigations involving the exploitation of children. S/A Wolpert has been involved with investigations related to child pornography, sextortion, travel and enticement, and sex tourism. S/A Wolpert has also been a computer forensic analyst the past sixteen years. Prior to HSI, S/A Wolpert served for seven years in the United States Coast Guard. S/A Wolpert obtained a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from York College of Pennsylvania.



Lindsey Olson

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EXPLOITED CHILDREN DIVISION
THE NATIONAL CENTER FOR MISSING & EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Lindsey Olson currently focuses on NCMEC's CyberTipline and domestic law enforcement. She's been with NCMEC for more than 20 years and has held a variety of positions within the Exploited Children Division, including Analyst, Supervisor and CyberTipline Program Manager. Olson has represented NCMEC at numerous domestic and international conferences and trainings and has worked closely with Electronic Service Providers. She was an honors graduate from Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, North Carolina with a B.A. in Sociology and Communications.



Elizabeth Yusi

ASSISTANT UNITED STATES ATTORNEY IN THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA, NORFOLK.

Prior to being an AUSA, she was a Trial Attorney with the Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section (CEOS) of the U.S. Department of Justice's Criminal Division. Prior to joining CEOS, Ms. Yusi worked in private practice at "Big Law" in Houston, TX, and Washington, D.C., for approximately five years. Ms. Yusi also served as a case manager in the International Division of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children prior to attending law school. As a federal prosecutor, Ms. Yusi has prosecuted federal child exploitation offenses around the country involving child pornography, sextortion, travel and enticement, sex trafficking, child prostitution, and sex tourism. Ms. Yusi obtained her law degree from Washington and Lee University School of Law and her bachelor's degree from the University of Virginia.



Wes Nance

COMMONWEALTH ATTORNEY, BEDFORD, VIRGINIA.

Wes has held that elected position, as the county's chief prosecutor, since 2015. Prior to that he held various other positions within the Bedford Commonwealth Attorney's Office since 2001. In total he has over 25 years of prosecution experience ranging from traffic infractions to homicides. During his time in Bedford, he has specialized in violent crimes, sex crimes, and crimes against children. Those prosecutions included the Commonwealth v. Wesley Earnest, later documented in an episode of 48 Hours and the successful prosecution of Lloyd Welch in 2017. At the time of Welch's guilty plea it was believed to be the oldest successful cold case homicide involving a bodyless prosecution at over 40 years. In his time in Bedford, Mr. Nance has also prosecuted dozens of internet-based child exploitation cases.



Opal Singleton Hendershot

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF MILLION KIDS, A 501(C)3 ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO KEEPING KIDS SAFE FROM PREDATORS

Million Kids serves as the Training and Outreach Coordinator for the Riverside County Anti Human Trafficking Task Force (RCAHT) and works with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department through a Department of Justice Grant. Opal has completed tens of thousands of hours of research over the past ten years on those subjects and dealt with real cases making her an expert on human trafficking crimes and online social media exploitation of minors.

Tiffany McGee

CEO, FOUNDER "SURVIVOR VENTURES INC"

Tiffany founded Survivor Ventures in 2018 and has been involved in counter human trafficking initiatives for over a decade. As a Department of Defense Intelligence Analyst, Tiffany served on anti-trafficking task forces in Embassies throughout Africa and Europe. More recently, Tiffany helped stand up the Hampton Roads Human Trafficking Task Force, in which she was responsible for the design and supervision of human trafficking victim services.

Tiffany has a M.A. in Peace Negotiation and Conflict Resolution from the American Military University, a post-graduate degree in Gender and Transformation from the University of Cape Town's African Gender Institute and a B.A. from Ohio University in African Affairs.

Andrew Doan, MPH, MD, PhD and Julie Doan, RN

Julie Doan is a registered nurse who has an interest in child development, neuroscience, and digital media addictions. She is married to Dr. Andrew Doan. Dr. Doan received his M.D. and Ph.D. in neuroscience degrees from The Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine. Dr. Andrew and Julie Doan research digital media addictions and methods to help families thrive by overcoming digital media overuse, and have given talks around the world about the problems associated with digital media overuse. They are parents of two adult children and one teen girl.

Carol Todd

FOUNDER, AMANDA TODD LEGACY.

Carol Todd is the mom of late Amanda Todd, a 15 year old Canadian student who took her own life when she became a victim of sextortion, following the posting of a YouTube video that detailed the exploitation via an online predator. In memory of her daughter, Carol founded the Amanda Todd Legacy Society to create further awareness surrounding these important issues. Carol is an activist and an international speaker, sharing her daughter's struggles with bullying, cyber abuse, online victimization and mental health, to empower youth and adults to address these social issues.



FULL LIST OF CREDITS:

IN MEMORY OF:
Amanda Todd
Investigator Daniel Viar

THIS FILM IS DEDICATED TO:
All the victims of sextortion
Law enforcement who tirelessly fight this
horrendous crime

CINEMATOGRAPHY BY

Stephen Peek

CAMERA OPERATOR

Stephen Peek

VOICE OVER

Ben and Alaina Clay
Wes Nance as himself
Elizabeth Yusi as herself

PRODUCED BY

Stephen Peek, p.g.a.
Maria Demeshkina Peek, p.g.a.

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Colton Stark (Bedford)

LEGAL COUNCIL BY

Lisa Calif/Donaldson, Callif and Perez

DIRECTED and EDITED BY

Maria Demeshkina Peek

DRONE OPERATOR

Stephen Peek

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John Butler
The Clay family
Paul and Jennifer Warren
Alexander Demeshkin
Kat and Ana
The Khomyak family
Norm Mintle
Doug Miller
Andria McClellan
Wes Nance, Commonwealth Attorney
Relentless Entertainment/Michael
Beckman
Agent Paul Wolpert, HSI
April Russo, USADC
Elizabeth Yusi, USAVA

MUSIC BY

Jake Hull

KEY GRIP

Ben Clay

FEATURING

(In order of appearance):

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Nataliya Khomyak
Wes Nance
Kat as H.M.
Chauncey Wilder
Steve Anders
Paul Wolpert
Erin Burke
Andrew Doan
Opal Singleton
Dede Wallace
Tiffany McGee
Josh Taylor
Lindsey Olson
Elizabeth YusiCarol Todd
Gary Babb
S.M.
Julie Doan

GAFFER

Austin Cross (Norfolk)

GAFFER

Ian Miller (Bedford)

GRIP

Graham Miller (Bedford)
Lachlan McClellan (Norfolk)

PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Jordan Miller (Bedford)

GRAPHICS TEAM

Lachlan McClellan
Donovan Kidd
Tyler Yowell

COURTROOM SKETCH ARTIST

Oles Romanyuk