



Federal Bureau of Investigation *Boston Division*

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Our commitment to community safety starts with keeping you informed, especially when it comes to the safety and security of our children.

The FBI is extremely concerned about a sharp increase in the activity of “764” and other violent online networks targeting and exploiting children and other vulnerable individuals across the United States and here in New England. While these networks are often referred to as “764,” there are many other offshoot networks and names.

Members of these networks connect with children and other at-risk individuals online through mobile messaging apps, social media and gaming platforms, then manipulate or coerce them into producing and sharing graphic content, child sexual abuse material (CSAM), or engaging in acts of animal cruelty, self-harm, or violence. Some of these predators even watch live-streamed self-harm and other violent content and circulate it to continue to extort their victims and exert control. It’s a tactic known as Sadistic Online Exploitation. Here in FBI Boston’s area of responsibility, there have been instances where members of these networks have also utilized doxing and swatting as an intimidation tactic to coerce victims into performing increasingly degrading and violent acts.

The term Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE) refers to what is motivating most of these subjects to commit criminal acts. They want to sow chaos and facilitate the destruction of society. However, not all participants in these violent online networks are motivated by NVE. These subjects may be engaging in criminal activity for sexual gratification, social status, a sense of belonging, or for a mix of other reasons. Each case is evaluated individually to determine if Nihilistic Violent Extremism is involved. Regardless of motivation, the FBI takes each case seriously and works with its law enforcement partners, both domestic and foreign, to ensure offenders are held accountable.

The FBI is determined to identify and stop these criminal networks. Right now, we are investigating over 350 subjects nationwide who are tied to these violent online networks, and all 56 FBI field offices across the country are involved in these investigations.

While many of the victims are young females, any child can be at risk. The perpetrators themselves are often males under the age of 25 and come from all walks of life. They often groom victims by first establishing a trusting or romantic relationship before eventually manipulating and coercing them into engaging in escalating harmful behavior designed to shame and isolate them.

Awareness is the first step in prevention. It’s critical that parents and guardians understand who their children are communicating with online and what platforms they are using. In many investigations involving online threats, parents believe they are aware of their child’s activities

only to discover they didn't know what was truly happening. Have open, ongoing conversations with your child about the risks of sharing personal information, images, or videos online. You can find helpful guidance here: [FBI.gov-How we can help](https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help)

Potential signs of victimization include:

- Sudden behavior changes such as becoming withdrawn, moody, or irritable
- Changes in appearance, including neglect of appearance or hiding specific body parts
- Changes in eating or sleeping habits
- Signs of animal cruelty
- Unexplained harm to younger siblings
- Threatening to commit suicide and openly talking about death, "not being wanted or needed," or "not being around"
- Scars, often in patterns, including 764-related terms or names from online platforms
- Fresh cuts, scratches, bruises, bite marks, burns, or other wounds
- Reports of personally identifying information being posted online for victimization (commonly referred to as a "dox")
- Unexpected texts or phone calls about the child from unknown numbers to the home
- Sudden and unexplained gifts or packages arriving for the child to the home

If you or someone you know is a victim of a crime using these kinds of tactics, retain all information from the incident such as usernames, email addresses, websites, or names of platforms used, and immediately report it to:

- 1-800-CALL-FBI (1-800-225-5324) or tips.fbi.gov
- FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center at www.ic3.gov

If anyone feels they are in imminent danger, please reach out to local law enforcement immediately.

The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) provides a free service known as Take It Down, which helps minor victims, or adults who were victimized as minors, with removing or stopping the online sharing of nude or sexually explicit content taken while under 18 years old. For more information, visit <https://takeitdown.ncmec.org>.

The threats our children face online are real and growing. But with awareness, vigilance and cooperation, we can stop these predators before they cause harm. Your role is critical. By staying informed and engaged, you become the first line of defense in protecting our children. The FBI is steadfast in this mission, and we are proud to stand with you in the fight to keep our children safe.

Respectfully,



Ted E. Docks
Special Agent in Charge