



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## **STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS**

### **EVIDENCE**

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021**

#### **Witness 1 (As an Individual):**

When I was 24, I met someone I thought was a really nice guy. I married him, and as soon as he thought I was stuck, he stopped being nice pretty quickly. In April 2020, I moved away from our home to be safe, and obviously, we're not together anymore.

During our relationship, I had let him take some pictures. I was uncomfortable at first, because I had never been in any picture like that, but I trusted him and I wanted to keep him happy. It wasn't until August of 2020 that I discovered those private photos had been uploaded to porn sites, including Pornhub.

I was upset about the photos, but it was about to get worse. Finding the photos led me to a video. I did not know the video existed. I found out about it by watching it on Pornhub. In the title of the video, it says I'm sleeping. The tags include "sleeping" and "sleeping pills". Whether I was asleep or drugged is impossible to know after the fact, but what is clear in the video is that I am not conscious and there is nothing to suggest consent. The video is clearly homemade and was uploaded by an anonymous email address. This is the content that the Pornhub moderators supposedly viewed and decided belonged on their porn site. My video had been uploaded in August of 2017, so by the time I found it, it had been active on Pornhub for over three years, and I had no idea.

I didn't try to get the video down right away because I showed it to the police the next morning, and they told me to leave everything until they were done with it. However, sometime between August 16 and 19, the Pornhub video became no longer playable. It said "technical difficulties". About that same time, I noticed that Pornhub was pulling their tags that directly indicated non-consensual content. For example, if you searched "sleeping pills" in early September, it didn't return any results. This was, of course, not the case in mid-August, so my best theory is that the video disappeared as they tried to clean up those kinds of tags.

In all that time, the video did not get flagged or removed. The viewers, rather than being turned away by sexual assault videos, were actively searching out that content. The tags made this possible, and they knew what they were watching before they clicked. It is a profound betrayal to know that thousands of men saw your assault and not only did nothing to flag it but actively sought it out and enjoyed it.

On Pornhub, there is a comment section, so the night I found my video, I also got to read a man describe in graphic physical detail just how much he enjoyed himself watching it. On another site, thousands of men watched my video and instead of flagging it, they awarded it top-rated for a certain body part. This video is not a one-off that slipped through a filter. Sexual assault is not an anomaly on the porn sites; it is a genre. This leaves little incentive for these sites to moderate such content.

To give an idea of the scope of the spread, as of early January 2021—after the December purge, and after the RCMP had removed a bunch for me—googling the name of my Pornhub video still returned over 1,900 results. One cause of the spread is, of course, users downloading it and reuploading it. There are definitely some of these floating around, but the most significant way my video was spread was through links. MindGeek did this by putting links to my Pornhub video on their other sites as a cheap way of adding content to those sites. Many of the other third party sites also use this method, so they too linked to my video on Pornhub. Of the 1,900 search results, Pornhub is the source for all of them.

The upside with linking is that when the video is removed from Pornhub, it's not playable on these other sites either. The downside is that Pornhub creates a thumbnail image file for all the videos uploaded to its site, and this image can be downloaded even if the video is only a link. There are still quite a few of these thumbnails on porn sites and in search engine caches. The thumbnail is still a picture of me naked. I don't want it on the Internet. Also, when Pornhub deleted my video, they didn't delete any of the data surrounding it like the title and the username. That is also a problem.

I contacted Pornhub in January to get them to remove the data and the thumbnails associated with their site. At first they pretended not to know what I was talking about. I sent them all the information again. They sent me a link to Google and told me to go do it myself. After a month and a half and eight emails, Pornhub has removed some of the data and thumbnails that were associated with their site and they indexed a few things on one search engine that's still not all gone. I think they're just ignoring me now.

I also asked them for help in removing the thumbnails and the content that spread from Pornhub to these other sites. They told me that they can't remove their content from the other sites it spreads to. However, they have an entire program where they proactively do exactly that for their exclusive model content. They advertise it. They monitor the Internet for where these videos spread, they take them down for them and they even pay them a bonus. All I'm asking is that they pretend to care as much about their non-consensual content as they do about their paid, exclusive content.

Nothing will ever be able to undo what has been done. At this point, I just want to be off the Internet.

Thanks to Pornhub, today is day 1,292 that I have been naked on these porn sites.