



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

STANDING COMMITTEE ON ACCESS TO INFORMATION, PRIVACY AND ETHICS

EVIDENCE

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2021

Ms. Victoria Galy (As an Individual):

Thank you.

First, thank you for having me and for allowing me to participate. My statement is a little lengthy. I'll try to get through it as fast as I can and not take up too much of your time.

My name is Victoria Galy. I live in Hendersonville, Tennessee. I'm a victim of sex trafficking under the legal definition in Tennessee in the United States. I've had numerous non-consensual pornographic images and videos of me posted on Pornhub.com.

Beginning in 2018, I found the videos and reported them to Pornhub. Many of the videos were labelled "teen" and were clearly of a person who was drugged and/or intoxicated, as evidenced by the occurrences in the videos. Most of these videos were made by an ex of mine on a trip we took to Las Vegas, Nevada.

Upon finding these videos in 2018, the first thing I tried to do was to flag them. This led me nowhere. The videos were not removed. The next thing I tried to do was to report the videos. I found out that you had to create an account in order to do so. I had to provide my full name and my email address. I was hesitant, as I wasn't the type of person who watched porn or subscribed to anything like that. I didn't really want my name or my email address associated with it. However, I reluctantly set up the account and began to try to report the videos.

In 2018 I reported approximately 30 videos. Only three of those videos were removed at that time. For the remaining videos, I was told that I needed to submit a DMCA takedown notice to Pornhub before they would remove them. I wasn't familiar with what that meant or even what a DMCA takedown notice was.

As a result of the initial trauma in finding these videos, I suffered great emotional distress, resulting in what my doctor has now defined as a dissociative condition wherein I basically removed the memory of these videos and events from my present recollection, as it was too painful for me to process. It's called dissociative amnesia. People who suffer from this escape reality in ways that are involuntary and unhealthy, which causes problems with functioning in everyday life. This was obvious in my behaviour and my interactions with friends, family and co-workers from 2018 to 2020. I completely lost my self-worth and was engaging in risky behaviour that was very different from my typical self prior to 2018.

It wasn't until the summer of 2020, when these flashbacks and memories began to return, that I sought treatment with a psychiatrist and a sexual abuse trauma therapist. That is when I received my diagnosis and began taking medication for depression and PTSD. I have been undergoing cognitive processing therapy and making leaps and bounds in my recovery, but this is the hardest thing I've ever had to face in my life.

At times I was suicidal. After 16 years with one law firm as a paralegal, I had to take a leave of absence as I could no longer function on a daily basis nor make it through even one day at work. I left my house. I moved in with my mother for approximately four weeks so she could help me care for my children. I have a 16-year-old son and a seven-year-old daughter with Down syndrome. I also suffered from severe anxiety and fear. I didn't feel safe. I was having intense nightmares, irritability, anger, embarrassment and such physical symptoms as pounding heart, nausea, etc. I lost at least 20 to 30 pounds. I couldn't eat. I was very sick.

In August of 2020, when my memories began to return, I began contacting Pornhub again regarding these videos. Upon visiting their website, I found that there had been many more videos made over that two- to three-year period. I reported many videos, including the ones claimed by Vicky Lust. There were approximately 60 to 65 videos. These were made by my ex, Brandon. Some of the videos were removed, but the ones that were claimed by Vicky Lust were not. I was told that they were claimed by a verified model and that they would not remove them. I sent them numerous emails explaining that the videos were of me and my ex, Brandon, but they refused to listen. I sent them photos of my birthmark, pointed out that I said Brandon's name in at least one of the videos, and even submitted photos of my various body parts to prove that it was me. They still refused to remove them.

I contacted their legal department directly through the email legal@pornhub.com, providing a clear PowerPoint presentation detailing why it was me in the videos and not the couple claiming them—who I found out later was in Helsinki, Finland—named Laura and Lauri. I received no response to that email.

In addition to the clear PowerPoint presentation that was provided to them, the comments that were posted and deleted on the Vicky Lust videos evidenced their non-consensual nature. It was not until after December 2020, when I filed a civil lawsuit against them *pro se*, I emailed them a copy and the article came out in The New York Times titled "The Children of Pornhub", that they have now, at least temporarily, suspended these videos. They are of course all over the Internet now, having been downloaded by who knows how many users, and on a plethora of other websites. I will never be able to remove these videos. There were over eight million views just on

Pornhub alone. To think of the amount of money that Pornhub has made off my trauma, date rape and sexual exploitation makes me sick to my stomach.

On Tuesday of this week, Chantelle Pittarelli, the director of legal and business affairs, finally responded to my emails. He or she refused to admit that it was me in the videos, but noted that they had decided at this time, due to the seriousness of my allegations, to delete the Vicky Lust account and that they fingerprinted the content to prevent future uploads to their site.

This, however, does nothing to remove them from the other sites all over the Internet, nor take back any of the destruction that this has caused in my life. Had they done this back in 2018 when I first contacted them, my life would look much different now. They never cared about my well-being, and they've profited from these illegal activities. I've had Facebook friends send me messages with links stating things like "Vicky, this looks like you". I've been stopped at my home by an unknown man on at least two occasions and even propositioned by a stranger on Facebook asking if I had considered his offer to make videos. When I asked him, "What videos?", as I did not know this man nor to what offer he was referring, he never responded.

Not only does Pornhub make it difficult or impossible to get these non-consensual videos removed, they make it difficult to sue them, insisting that I serve them with my lawsuit in Cyprus. Having been a paralegal for over 16 years, I've familiarized myself somewhat with the Hague Convention and have initiated service of process by postal means, as allowed under the convention for Cyprus residents. However, the typical victim would not have such means or familiarity.

Pornhub has training blogs and articles for teaching models and/or perpetrators at being successful on their platform. They recommend virtual private networks and the best editing apps to use and so on, which makes it more difficult for victims to prove their cases and get justice. In my particular case, my ex used a fake foreskin to appear uncircumcised in the videos, which caused the police department to not believe me and the district attorney to decline prosecution, despite me later providing clear evidence of this. Pornhub, to this day, has active videos showing this "toy" being used, which only educates predators in the ways of avoiding detection by authorities.

As stated in The New York Times article that I mentioned, I too feel like Pornhub has become my human trafficker, and they have been relentless in doing so. The background profile photo for Vicky Lust prior to August 2020, when I reported it to the police, was a full-body photo of me, naked, with only a mask across my nose and part of my eyes, similar to a Mardi Gras mask. I have been recognized in public by many people who wouldn't say from where it was and tormented emotionally.

If it weren't for the help of my amazing therapist and her cognitive processing therapy, I would not be here before you today, but I refuse to be a victim any further. I will advocate for myself and for all of the other victims who may not be able to or may not want to stand up, or who may have committed suicide, as we will never know. For me personally, I came very close to suicide, and I have never been so broken as I have been throughout this process.

I have been forced to stand up alone and fight Pornhub, so when I heard about your inquiry into the ethics of this company, I gladly came forward, willing to testify openly about my situation. I appreciate being allowed to participate in this process and the possibility of effecting change and/or holding this company accountable.

Thank you for hearing from me.