Beat: News

St. Paul Man Charged for Sextortion Scheme Targeting More Than 500 Minors

Yue Vang used Kik, Snapchat, and Skype

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USPA NEWS - A St. Paul man has been charged in an extensive online sextortion scheme that victimized more than 500 minor girls across the country, announced U.S. Attorney Andrew M. Luger.

According to court documents, for approximately five years, Yue Vang, 31, created and used multiple Internet applications and social media services, including Kik, Snapchat, and Skype, to communicate with hundreds of minor girls throughout the United States and elsewhere. Vang created fake female personae to prey on vulnerable minor girls he met online in order to entice and coerce them to create sexually explicit images and videos to send to him. Vang also threatened to disseminate sexually explicit images of the minor victims to their family members, friends, and classmates, unless they created and sent him additional images and videos of themselves nude or engaging in sexually explicit conduct. For example, in June 2016, Vang contacted a 15-year-old girl and threatened to distribute sexually explicit pictures of her to her classmates and parents to “ruin her life” unless she complied with Vang’s demands to send additional sexually explicit images and videos.

To date, at least 500 minor females have been identified, although law enforcement is attempting to confirm the identity of many other victims. Anyone who believes they may have been a victim of Vang’s offenses or who has information about this matter is encouraged to visit www.fbi.gov/resources/victim-services/seeking-victim-information/seeking-victims-in-yue-vang-investigation or www.Justice.gov/usao-mn/child-sextortion-victim-information.

Vang is charged with two counts of production of child pornography, one count of possession of child pornography, and one count of interstate communications with intent to extort. If convicted, Vang faces a minimum statutory penalty of 15 years in prison. He will make his initial appearance in U.S. District Court before Judge Eric C. Tostrud at a later date.

This case is brought as part of Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative launched in May 2006 by the Department of Justice to combat the growing epidemic of child sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by U.S. Attorneys’ Offices and the Criminal Division’s Child Exploitation and Obscenity Section, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state, and local resources to better locate, apprehend, and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as to identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov. Click on the “resources” tab for information about Internet safety education.

This case is the result of an investigation conducted by the FBI Minneapolis Field Office and multiple FBI Field Offices, the St. Paul Police Department, the Minnesota ICAC Task Force, the Chandler (Arizona) Police Department, the Delhi Township (Ohio) Police Department, and the Iowa Department of Criminal Investigation.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Chelsea A. Walcker and Miranda E. Dugi are prosecuting the case.

The charges contained in the information are merely accusations, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

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Wendy writes for the United States Press Agency and is a former columnist with the Fulton County Expositor, Wauseon, Ohio.

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UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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