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NEWS RELEASE

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**FBI Field Offices Warn of Numerous Targeted Sextortion Schemes
in Southern Arkansas and Northern Louisiana**

Recently, FBI Little Rock and FBI New Orleans have noted an increase in sextortion schemes targeting children in southern Arkansas and northern Louisiana. The FBI has received numerous reports of predators posing as children on social media to coerce minors into sending sexual videos of themselves and then extorting money from these underage victims. FBI Little Rock has noted an alarming uptick in these schemes targeting children in areas around El Dorado, Magnolia, and Monticello, AR. FBI New Orleans has also seen similar schemes targeting children in the Monroe, Alexandria, and Shreveport, LA areas.

Here's how this disturbing scheme works:

1. A predator (posing as a child on social media) uses deception and manipulation to convince a minor victim, usually 13 to 17 years old, to engage in explicit sexual activity over video chat.
2. The videos or images are secretly recorded and saved by the predator.
3. The predator then reveals they have saved the recordings and attempts to extort money from the juvenile victim by threatening to post the videos on various social media pages.
4. To receive money, the predator may ask for bank account login information or request gift cards.

Sextortion is a crime. The coercion of a child by an adult to produce child sexual abuse material (CSAM) carries heavy penalties, including life sentences for offenders. To make the victimization stop, children typically notify someone—normally a parent, teacher, caregiver, or law enforcement. The embarrassment children feel from the activity they were coerced to engage in is what usually prevents them from coming forward. Sextortion offenders frequently have dozens of victims around the world, so coming forward to help law enforcement identify a predator may prevent countless future incidents of sexual exploitation.

Here are some tips to protect children online:

- Everyone should be wary of anyone they encounter online. Block or ignore messages from strangers.
- People can pretend to be anyone online. Videos and photos are not proof that a person is who they claim to be.
- Be highly suspicious if someone you meet on a game or app asks you to start communicating with them on a different platform.
- Encourage children to report suspicious behavior to a trusted adult.

If you know someone who may be a victim of sextortion in Arkansas or Louisiana:

1. Contact FBI Little Rock at 501-221-9100 or FBI New Orleans at 504-816-3000.
2. Do not delete anything before law enforcement is able to review it.
3. Tell police investigators everything about the online encounters. It may be embarrassing, but it is necessary to find and stop the predator.

*The mission of the FBI is to protect the American people and uphold the Constitution of the United States.
For more information, visit www.FBI.gov.*