

Beat: Vips

Cyber criminals post nude photos of Jennifer Lawrence, Kate Upton, others

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USPA News - American authorities were investigating Monday after cyber criminals released scores of nude photographs of several celebrities, including Oscar-winning actress Jennifer Lawrence, 'Sports Illustrated' model Kate Upton, and 'Glee' actress Becca Tobin. Hundreds of photos and several videos emerged on Sunday morning and later in the day when they were posted by an unidentified person to imageboard website 4chan.

The stolen images quickly spread on social networking websites such as Twitter and Facebook when several of the victims confirmed the photos were authentic. "So 2 to 3 days ago there was a thread where some dude was selling celebrity nudes for bitcoin, J[ennifer] Lawrence and Kate Upton, etc," a post on 4chan, believed to be the first, said. "[I] thought it was a scam, but i managed to get some samples, post ending 9 decides if I post `em." The person later posted intimate photos of Kate Upton, which her attorney confirmed are authentic. The person who published the photos also claimed that the person responsible for the theft was still attempting to sell nude photos of about 100 celebrities, including Hillary Duff, Kim Kardashian, Kirsten Dunst, Mary-Kate Olsen, McKayla Maroney, Rhianna, Selena Gomez, and Vanessa Hudgens. "The dude wanted 2btc for one set," the person said, referring to the digital cryptocurrency Bitcoin, which currently trades at about \$480 per bitcoin. The vast majority of stolen photos were not published by Monday afternoon, but photos and videos belonging to about a dozen celebrities were being circulated online, including some which were confirmed to be authentic. Representatives of both Upton and Lawrence said authorities had been notified. It is believed the images were stolen through a recent flaw in Apple's iCloud service, which automatically stores copies of photos taken by iPhones. The bug allowed a malicious user to repeatedly guess passwords on Apple's "Find my iPhone" service without alerting the user or locking out the attacker. An Apple spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment. A user of the social networking website Reddit, who followed clues left behind by a person attempting to sell more photographs, said he had identified the person responsible as a 26-year-old man from the Greater Atlanta area in the state of Georgia. Neither the Gwinnett County Sheriff's Office nor the FBI's Field Office in Atlanta would comment on whether the man, whose name is being withheld from this article, was being investigated. "This is obviously an outrageous violation of our client Kate Upton's privacy," attorney Lawrence Shire said in an e-mailed statement through Upton's publicist. "We intend to pursue anyone disseminating or duplicating these illegally obtained images to the fullest extent possible." A spokeswoman for Jennifer Lawrence also confirmed the photos were authentic and demanded they were not republished by media organizations. "This is a flagrant violation of privacy," she said. "The authorities have been contacted and will prosecute anyone who posts the stolen photos of Jennifer Lawrence." Fashion model Ali Michael appeared to have been the worst hit, with nearly 150 photos and seven videos of her being circulated. Although she did not immediately comment on whether the images were authentic, a brief update on her Twitter account appeared to refer to the images. "Cool," she wrote as word spread about the images, in which she appears mostly topless. Upton was also hit hard, with more than 100 photos and several videos having been published, including nude and intimate images that show her with her partner Justin Verlander. Eight photographs of actress Becca Tobin - some of which show her nude next to a Christmas tree - were also being circulated, to which the actress responded on Twitter: "Merry XXXmas!" Actress Mary Elizabeth Winstead, who is best known for her roles in 'Final Destination 3' and two of the 'Die Hard' movies, was furious at the release of at least six nude photos. "To those of you looking at photos I took with my husband years ago in the privacy of our home, [I] hope you feel great about yourselves," she wrote on Twitter. In a second tweet she added: "Knowing those photos were deleted long ago, I can only imagine the creepy effort that went into this. Feeling for everyone who got hacked." She later said she was "going on an internet break" after some users of the social networking website lashed out at her. Dozens of photographs said to show 'Nickelodeon' star Victoria Justice, including several in which her breasts are exposed, were also being circulated, though the actress claimed they were fake. "These so called nudes of me are FAKE people. Let me nip this in the bud right now. pun intended," she wrote on her Twitter account. Internet users who compared the nude photos to known photos of Justice noticed similarities in the surroundings and clothing, and were certain the photos were legitimate. Gossip website HollywoodLife, citing an unidentified source close to Justice, reported that the actress was "flipping out" over the situation and had expressed shock that other celebrities had confirmed the authenticity of the photos. English actress Jessica Brown Findlay, who is best known for her role in 'Downton Abbey,' was also a victim of the theft, with eleven photos and seven videos being circulated, some of which show her in extremely intimate situations with a partner. Australian actress Teresa Palmer and 'Spider-Man' actress Kirsten Dunst were also victims of the theft. The authenticity of other photographs, which allegedly show several other celebrities, could not be immediately confirmed. In a similar case in December 2012, Christopher Chaney of Jacksonville, Florida, was sentenced to 10 years in federal prison after he hacked into the personal e-mail accounts of more than 50 people, including actresses Scarlett Johansson, Mila Kunis and Renee Olstead. He later posted several nude photographs of Johansson.

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