

A Dish Best Served Cold

By Reg P. Wydeven
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A long time ago, we went up to a buddy's cottage to celebrate another friend's bachelor party. We went white water rafting on a frigid lake. When we got back to the cottage, we changed out of our freezing, wet clothes. While wrapped in a towel, I tried on a pair of snakeskin cowboy boots I found.

Not being the cowboy boots wearing type, my friends laughed and wanted to take my picture. Since I'm incredibly stupid and gullible, I was so busy mugging for the camera that I failed to notice one of my pals sneak behind me to rip off my towel as the shot was taken.

Thankfully this took place in the 1990s, before digital cameras. I've tried to confiscate all of the copies and I'm hoping that the negative has deteriorated by now. But I'm sure there are probably one or two copies still floating around out there, killing my chance of running for president. And if there is a copy still out there, just remember the river was only 41 degrees that day.

I'm lucky to have good friends. While they may use the picture to razz me, they would never use it against me. Not everyone is as fortunate as me.

In the digital age we live in, an ugly new dilemma has emerged: "revenge porn." Revenge porn is the practice of posting online naked or sexual photographs, usually of former wives or girlfriends, by a scorned ex.

One of the victims of this trend, Dr. Holly Jacobs, founded End Revenge Porn, an organization that provides support and advocacy for people whose intimate photographs and/or videos have been disseminated on the Internet without their permission. For three and a half years, Dr. Jacobs' ex-boyfriend posted photos of her online. However, the police and FBI refused to file criminal charges against him, claiming there were technically no laws he was violating.

Frustrated, Dr. Jacobs started EndRevengePorn.org as a website to host a petition collecting signatures in favor of criminalizing revenge porn in the U.S. As a result of her efforts, last week, California Governor Jerry Brown signed into law a bill banning revenge porn.

The legislation makes it a misdemeanor to post nude photos of another online without their consent, and the person posting the photos or videos must have done so with the intent of causing emotional distress or humiliation. If convicted, violators could face six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine.

While Dr. Jacobs supports the measure, she hoped the law would go further. While the bill outlaws pictures of people taken by others, it doesn't prohibit "selfies," or photos people take of themselves and share with others. This is significant, because according to Dr. Jacobs, almost four out of five photos that are posted online by vengeful exes are selfies.

People who have taken selfies can ask websites posting the photo to remove it under the federal Digital Millennium Copyright Act, which says the photographer owns the rights to the picture. However, prosecuting under the Act is difficult, and once the picture is posted, the damage is already done.

New Jersey has had a similar law on the books since 2003. Florida, Texas and Georgia are also considering outlawing revenge porn.

Thankfully, so is Wisconsin. So if my buddies are reading this, they better think twice about posting my incriminating photo.

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