



FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Consumer Information

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How to avoid a Bitcoin blackmail scam

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"I know about the secret you are keeping from your wife and everyone else. You can ignore this letter, or pay me a \$8600 confidentiality fee in Bitcoin"

It's enough to send shivers down anyone's spine, but these chilling words are part of a new scam targeting men.

Here's how it works. Scammers have been sending letters to men, demanding payments using [bitcoin](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2014/09/staying-current-bitcoin-and-other-cryptocurrencies) in exchange for keeping quiet about alleged affairs. The letter also explains how to use bitcoin to make the payment.

This is a criminal extortion attempt to separate people from their money.

If you — or someone you know — gets a letter like this, report it immediately to your local police, and the [FBI](https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us).

Threats, intimidation and high-pressure tactics

(<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/blog/2015/03/reluctant-be-rude>) are classic signs of a scam. Learn how to stay ahead of clever crooks with these [practical tips](#)

(<https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0060-10-things-you-can-do-avoid-fraud>), and check out the ways you can [keep your personal information secure](https://www.consumer.ftc.gov/articles/0272-how-keep-your-personal-information-secure).

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