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|  | [A fraud alert from Doug Shadel, Washington State Director](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=0364982148a0fd97fb15e3e4260033cbc9da643c038c2b72761484e135953a04b7e67ac70de6b185b5e40282f277bc22b72148aa5ec8e1a0) | [View email online](https://view.email.aarp.org/?qs=92606c047f321d6599520c892fad1a2c875110013c52454a4d3ce69214a06b8a122b9656e5e4f7faf755c0ad6f73ea44b060698a8e1d6c4b6e239296a3b5e484f23ca0f0dc5536f0ff669ca6372b94d3) |

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| AARP Fraud Watch Network |

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| **In a World of Sheltering in Place, Scammers Turn to Extortion Emails** | https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aarp.adagencyprojects.com/34405/WA_Seal_w_216x216.png |

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| Dear all, |
| While most of us are stuck at home, the scammers are still hard at work. In fact, they are customizing their approach to target us while we work from home or otherwise spend time online as a way to stay connected to the outside world. The Fraud Watch Network Helpline has seen a big spike in email extortion scams. The FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) documented over 51,000 cases of online extortion at last count, with victims suffering losses of $83 million. |

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| **https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aarp.adagencyprojects.com/34405/FWN_Gear_63X66.jpg** |

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| **How It Works** |
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| • | Scammers send emails containing a former or current password of yours. |
| • | They claim to be watching you over your computer’s camera or that they are recording websites you visit, and say they have evidence of you or your spouse visiting adult websites. |
| • | They threaten to share this information with your contacts or on social media platforms unless you pay them. Typically, the request is for hundreds of dollars in the online currency Bitcoin (complete with instructions on how to process the transaction). |

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| **https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aarp.adagencyprojects.com/34405/FWN_ThoughtImage_62X77.jpg** |

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| **What You Should Know** |
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| • | The password they have is most likely among information exposed in a data breach, which gets bought and sold among criminals. |
| • | The message likely has no mention of any specific websites you or your spouse have allegedly visited, because they don’t have this information. |
| • | It is highly unlikely your computer has been accessed. The scammers simply hope to stumble across a few people who don’t change their passwords regularly. |

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| **https://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aarp.adagencyprojects.com/34405/FWN_DirectionSign_60X73.jpg** |

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| **What You Should Do** |
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| • | Change passwords regularly, using a different password for each site you log into. Consider using a password manager to keep track of passwords. |
| • | Cover the lens on your computer’s camera with a piece of tape when you’re not using it to block a hacker who could use it to spy on you. |
| • | Avoid clicking any links in any email from an unknown source. |
| • | Report extortion emails to the [IC3](https://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx) or to an [FBI field office](https://www.fbi.gov/contact-us/field-offices) in your area. Include the sender’s email address and payment information, if provided (for example, the number of his or her Bitcoin “wallet”), which may help with the investigation. |

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| Sincerely, |
| *Doug Shadel* |
| AARP Washington State Director |

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| P.S. Are you active on social media? Do you enjoy sharing information that can help prevent friends and family from falling victim to scams? Become a volunteer AARP Fraud Watch Network (FWN) Digital Fraud Fighter! In exchange for simply sharing the same type of content with your friends and family that you already do, Digital Fraud Fighters will receive access to exclusive scam briefings, plus a Welcome Packet that includes a T-Shirt, a copy of the FWN Con Artist’s Playbook, the FWN Watchdog Alert Handbook and more. Interested? Send us a note at FWN@aarp.orgfor more information! |

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| This is a message from [AARP Washington](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=c5a6a9c0435c014c40a9659ddaf99a684e5ff20239af31cdd8d051fd362177bab4ccb6c901725c432afc8dfb35053680061baf552920f65f) and the [Washington State Attorney General's Office.](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=c5a6a9c0435c014c80ba87dd76bf60ba16b959d223ba62dd0acfb09b87622fda36487fe00aea8cc229f0d547cfabcd4d4b32b609bd15444a) If you or someone you know has been a victim of identity theft or fraud, you can contact the [AARP Fraud Watch Helpline](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=c5a6a9c0435c014c1baaffc53ca9f46ec3a9235fb618f5a340648957001f4a4f7b6afd1f83721939999dc89785c5476d6edcfcad68410d1e) at 1‑877‑908‑3360. You can also file a [consumer complaint](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=c5a6a9c0435c014cf00db2135f1da7c01d8c7df96c56ebe80d41e14984e8b1be61954564ae9e1f37e43a470f20d84b27fab5585394d6d3d0) with the Washington State Attorney General’s Office. |

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| **Get Help** |

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| **Get Help** |
| To report a scam or for help if you or a loved one has fallen victim, contact the AARP Fraud Watch Network Helpline. |
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| **CALL 877-908-3360** |

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| **Phone Icon** |

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| **Receive AARP Watchdog Mobile Alerts\*** |
| Text "FWN" to 50757 to sign up. |

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| \*By entering your mobile number, you are opting in to receive text messages from AARP to the number you provide. Your consent is not required as a condition to purchase goods/services. Message frequency varies by account. Message and data rates may apply. SMS Terms and Conditions: [https://aarp.info/tcofr](https://click.email.aarp.org/?qs=1e19787d2742fbadd4b0513f44b0a558d54bb0c5baddd19f05e65925bf989228c34901e93d7a940fcdbed82cfc8a5c96cf868814845bbba2) |
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