

## PARENTS TALK BACK Caught your child sexting: Now what?

More than 100 teens in Canon City, Colorado, were saved from a sexting scarlet letter last month.

Prosecutors decided not to press child pornography or other charges, which would have forced the middle and high school students to register as sex offenders for swapping and collecting hundreds of nude pictures. Some teens had evaded parental oversight by using the private Photo Vault app, which allows naked pictures to be hidden on smartphones.

The early data on the rate of adolescents exchanging sexually explicit pictures or messages, known as sexting, has been all over the map, ranging from the low single digits to upwards of a third of teens. According to recent research by Jeff Temple, associate professor and psychologist at University of Texas Medical Branch, anywhere from 20 to 30 percent of teens will send or receive an explicit text. By college, that number is around 50 percent. And 70 percent of teen girls have been asked to send a naked picture of themselves, he said.

Teens engaged in sexting minimize or dismiss the legal and emotional risks involved. But in 30 states, sexting could carry felony charges under child pornography laws and put participants on a sex offender registry. There are 20 states with laws that specifically address sexting; of those, 11 treat it as a misdemeanor, allowing informal sanctions such as counseling, according to the Cyberbullying Research Center.

When Temple has the opportunity to discuss these risks with students, he begins by asking them if they wear a seat belt in the car. Every hand in the crowd goes up. Then he asks, "Why?"

The students say they want to be protected in case there is an accident.

"But the chances are slim," he says.

"But just in case," a student typically responds.

Ah, just in case. This is where he wants them.

He tells them to think about how slim the chances of getting caught sexting seem.

It's unlikely. But what if?

Then, the consequences can be enormous — life-altering. It's a crash in which reputations and futures get burned.

Yet anytime there is a big bust of a school sexting ring, which happens regularly in big cities and small towns all across the country, parents express shock.

Temple says parents do their children a real disservice if they don't pay attention to their online lives. They have to know how popular apps like Instagram, Snapchat and Tumblr work so they can help their children become responsible digital citizens.

Sexting creates a perfect storm of parental avoidance: unfamiliar technology combined with the uncomfortable topic of their child's emerging sexuality. But staying in a state of denial does nothing to protect your kids.

Temple says his research finds that sexting typically precedes real-life sex. And teen girls who sexted were more likely to be associated with other risky behavior, he said.

"Risky behaviors tend to cluster together," he said, not that one necessarily causes another.

His advice to parents who catch their teens with compromising or inappropriate texts on their phones is not to panic or freak out. It's a chance to talk about consequences and boundaries. It signals a need for closer monitoring, but it is also an opportunity to talk about healthy relationships, digital citizenship and safe sex, he said.

"What does it mean to be online, and how does it reflect their offline behavior?" he asked.

Until our laws catch up to the ways in which technology has impacted teen interactions, parents have to continue to use stories like Canon City's to talk to their children about sexting.

Otherwise, kids risk being branded for life by a teenage mistake.

Aisha Sultan is a St. Louis-based journalist who studies parenting in the digital age while trying to keep up with her tech-savvy children. Find her on Twitter: @AishaS.



AISHA SULTAN  
Parents talk back

By SUE MANNING  
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Rafael Mantesso turned 30 in an empty New York apartment after divorce left every wall, floor, closet and shelf bare. The only things he had left were his cellphone and a pit bull named Jimmy Choo that his neighbors went out of their way to avoid.

When he turned 33 on Jan. 14, Mantesso still owned that apartment and it's still vacant. But it's for sale now. And people can't get enough of his 6-year-old bull terrier — from the Instagram sketches-plus-photos of Jimmy that went viral, the book "A Dog Named Jimmy" and a collection of Jimmy-inspired bags and purses for the high-end fashion brand Jimmy Choo. (Mantesso's ex-wife had named the dog for her favorite shoes.)

There are future plans too: a calendar, endorsements and launching the charitable Jimmy Foundation. Meanwhile, Mantesso is working at an advertising agency in Sao Paulo in his native Brazil, and doing the occasional photo shoot.

The first night they were alone in the "naked" apartment three years ago, Jimmy did a happy dance through all the rooms. Mantesso picked up his phone and started shooting photos of Jimmy's contagious dance of joy.

"When I sat in my empty living room, Jimmy was happy, running from one side to the other side, in circles, crazy. The apartment was a playground to him. He was loving that empty place. That energy was amazing. I looked at him and said to myself, 'Oh my God, I was thinking everything was lost and I had the most important thing in the house — Jimmy,'" Mantesso said in his Portuguese accented-English.

Jimmy is a white dog but his ginger and red ears contrasted with



This 2013 photo provided by artist Rafael Mantesso shows his bull terrier, Jimmy Choo, with a piano keyboard that Mantesso has drawn in on the floor around him, at his studio in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

the white walls, floors and ceilings. At some point, Mantesso picked up a piece of white cardboard, drew a skeleton with a red heart on it, put it in front of Jimmy and took a photo.

He liked it, put it on Instagram (#jimmythebull) and they were in business.

The ideas came fast. Mantesso would put Jimmy in a pose and the dog would freeze while he took photos. "Everyone ask, 'How do you make a crazy dog freeze in position you want?' I think Jimmy knows that I want him in that position and he just stay," Mantesso said.

Mantesso credits a tweet by actor Ashton Kutcher for putting focus on his early Jimmy art. Kutcher retweeted a drawing depicting the spaghetti scene from "Lady and the Tramp," where

the dogs are slurping strands of spaghetti. Views went from 10,000 to 100,000 that night, Mantesso said.

Jimmy also kept Mantesso going at a time when he was feeling down. Because of Jimmy, Mantesso had to take a walk twice a day. Because he had to buy Jimmy food, he bought food for himself. And because of Jimmy, he was motivated to keep taking pictures. He liked what he was doing so much that they worked side by side for 90 uninterrupted days, he said.

Eventually "A Dog Named Jimmy" was ready for the publisher, and there is also a Jimmy deck of cards. Some of Mantesso's images show the dog's paws or his pink-and-black spotted mouth. Others show him posed with a human hand, while others

feature Jimmy with black-and-white sketches of simple objects or scenes — a piano keyboard, antlers, cartoon characters.

They've come a long way since people demanded that Mantesso muzzle the pit bull. "People still cross the street when they see Jimmy, but now it's to ask if they can take pictures with him," he said, adding that Jimmy's received fan mail from over 100 countries.

His planned Jimmy Foundation will fund pet food drives, spay and neuter clinics and adoption campaigns at shelters throughout Brazil.

He doesn't accept every endorsement offer, but he did say yes to Netflix, the Jimmy Choo fashion house and Porsche.

"They want my dog to drive a Porsche convertible. I said, 'Come on, I want to drive it too.'"

## OUT OF THE VAULT

# Folk song inspiration dies at Pendleton mental hospital

An African-American woman who died January 8, 1952, at the age of 75 at the Eastern Oregon State Hospital in Pendleton claimed to be the inspiration for "Frankie and Johnny," a popular folk song in the early 20th century whose notoriety continued long after her death.

According to an Internet article by Paul Slade, Frankie Baker was a 24-year-old prostitute working the St. Louis, Missouri, vice district the late 1890s, and Allen (Albert) Britt, 17, a talented ragtime piano player, acted as her pimp in addition to being her lover. The couple shared an apartment on Targee Street and Baker took care of Britt financially.

In Baker's version of events she and Britt had a "misunderstanding" in their



RENEE STRUTHERS  
Out of the vault

apartment about 2 a.m. on Oct. 15, 1899, after she caught him with another prostitute, Alice Pryor. At the murder trial Baker claimed she shot Britt in self-defense, saying he came after her with a

knife during a heated argument, and had also beaten her up a few days before the shooting. She was acquitted, and the judge returned her gun.

The song "Frankie Killed Allen" was written by St. Louis balladeer Bill Dooley shortly after the shooting and was making the rounds of the neighborhood even before Britt

died on Oct. 19. A variant of Dooley's song was published by Frank and Bert Leighton in 1912 as "Frankie and Johnny" with the words that appear in modern folk song books. At least 256 recordings of the song have been made including folk, country and jazz versions.

The story of Frankie and Johnny also inspired several films starring the likes of Mae West, Cary Grant, Elvis Presley, Al Pacino and Michelle Pfeiffer, and actor John Huston wrote and produced a puppet play in 1930 titled "Frankie and Johnnie" after interviewing Baker and Britt's former neighbor in Missouri.

Baker left St. Louis in 1900 and eventually ended up in Portland, Ore., where she worked as a prostitute for a few years

before opening a shoeshine shop in 1925. She always deplored the fact that money was being made from the song, and that she never received a dime. Baker also claimed that the song and subsequent movies were defamatory, and sued twice for damages; she lost both times.

Frankie Baker was committed to the state mental hospital in 1950, and hospital officials in Pendleton described the tiny Baker as a gentle, docile patient. She died after suffering a paralytic stroke and was buried in Los Angeles by her brother.

Renee Struthers is the Community Records Editor for the East Oregonian. See the complete collection of Out of the Vault columns at [eovault.blogspot.com](http://eovault.blogspot.com)

## ODDS & ENDS

### Lizard found in kindergartner's salad becomes new class pet

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP) — A New Jersey elementary school science class has a new pet after a lizard was discovered in a student's salad after being refrigerated for days.

Riverside Elementary School science teacher Mark Eastburn told NJ.com the 3-inch green anole lizard was found in a bundle of tatsoi greens last week by a kindergartner.

The lizard had been cold and lifeless after being confined in a refrigerator for days, but has since been warmed and lives in a cage in Eastburn's class.

"It's a really fitting mascot for our science lab," he said.

The lizard, dubbed "Green Fruit Loop," came from Florida. Eastburn said green anole lizards live in the southeastern states, from Texas to North Carolina.

"It probably has some moderate adaptation to the cold which is why it made it through," Eastburn said.

The tatsoi had been bought from Whole Earth Center, a natural foods store in Princeton. Mike Atkinson, the store's produce manager, said the greens are cleaned as they're stocked and that the lizard must've been tucked away in a leaf.

"I've been in produce for 17 years and I've never heard of a lizard making it to the customer," Atkinson said.

He said he doesn't think the lizard would have made it in conventional, non-organic box.

"It might normally surprise or freak out conventional shoppers, but the majority of organic shoppers realize that produce is grown on a farm and there's lots of bugs and animals that live on a farm too," Atkinson said.



Mark Eastburn via AP

This photo taken Jan. 22 shows a 3-inch green anole lizard that was found in a bundle of tatsoi greens last week by a kindergartner at Riverside Elementary School in Princeton, N.J.

### Iowa U. fight song plays 7 hours a day at vacant building

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (AP) — An instrumental rendition of the University of Iowa fight song has been playing for several hours every day since last summer over speakers mounted on a vacant building in the city of Niagara Falls.

And it's driving the neighbors crazy.

The music starts in the mid-afternoon and repeats in about 50-second loops for the next seven hours before turning off.

The owners of a restaurant directly across the street from the building say they have been told by police that the music's volume and the time it's being played don't violate any city noise ordinances.

Kevin Robertson, the restaurant's chef, lives above the eatery. He says being subjected to hours-long daily doses of the Iowa fight song is torture.

### Decades later, Michigan library gets book back

HOLLAND, Mich. (AP) — A book has been returned to a library in western Michigan — 49 years later.

The borrower told the library that he was a college student in 1967 when he checked out a book about World War II from the Herrick library in Holland. He wrote in a letter that the book was stored in a trunk that hadn't been opened until recently. He also provided a donation with his letter.

Library director Diane Kooiker declined to identify the title of the book or the man's name, citing privacy. She said he sent \$100.

In his letter, the man described it as a "modest donation" on what could be a "tremendous fine."

Kooiker tells *The Grand Rapids Press* that honest people sometimes can misplace a book.

### Garbage truck fueled by natural gas explodes in N.J.

HAMILTON, N.J. (AP) — Authorities say no one was injured when a garbage truck fueled by natural gas exploded "like a missile" in New Jersey. Tuesday's blast in Hamilton damaged four homes.

One of the truck's four natural gas tanks blasted a hole in a nearby home and debris tore a hole in the roof of a neighboring home. Windows were broken and the siding melted on two other houses.

Police say the truck's operators evacuated the vehicle when they saw smoke coming into the cab. Officials are trying to determine what caused the fire and explosion.