

Sex Trafficking via Facebook Sets Off a Lawyer's Novel Crusade | The New York Times

By Jack Nicas

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HOUSTON — Tech has led to a lot of trouble lately: [hate speech](#), [financial scams](#), [undermined elections](#). Yet tech companies have largely avoided legal consequences, thanks to [a landmark 1996 law](#) that protects them from lawsuits.

Now that federal law, [Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act](#), has a new threat: Annie McAdams, a personal-injury lawyer in Houston.

Ms. McAdams is waging a legal assault against Facebook and other tech companies, accusing them of facilitating the sex trafficking of minors. In a series of lawsuits in California, Georgia, Missouri and Texas, she is using a novel argument to challenge the 1996 law, and finding some early success. This year, a Texas judge has repeatedly denied Facebook's motions to dismiss her lawsuits.

Section 230 states that internet companies are not liable for what their users post. Ms. McAdams argues that, in the case of pimps using Facebook and Instagram to lure children into prostitution, separate laws require Facebook to warn users of that risk and do more to prevent it.

[...]

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