



Written by [Lenore Skenazy](#) on July 7, 2023

## Fearmongering Moms, Take Note!

Maybe this will convince other moms not to make outrageous claims on social media.

A Petaluma, California, “momfluencer” who claimed her kids were the victims of an attempted abduction in a Michael’s parking lot has been sentenced to 90 days for falsely reporting a crime. Thirty of those days must actually be spent behind bars.

On Dec. 7 of 2020 — yes, a day that will live in infamy — Katie Sorensen called the cops. She reported that she’d been shopping at the craft shop with her kids, 1 and 4, when a couple seemed to focus on them, and followed her out to her car. She was certain the couple was going to snatch her kids.



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The cops checked out the story and found it baseless.

Whereupon Sorensen took her story to social media with a video that garnered millions of views. “Monday of this week, my children were the attempted targets of attempted kidnap, which is such a weird thing to even vocalize. But it happened. And I want to share that story with you, in an effort to raise awareness of what signs to look for.”

And that is exactly what she has done — raised awareness in a way I could only dream of!

Here are the signs to look for... when someone on social media is saying their kids were almost kidnapped but there’s no truth to the claims.

The signs?

No. 1: The kids were not kidnapped.

That’s it.

Oh. You want more? OK — consider these:

- The main “evidence” is usually the mom’s Spidey sense that something was wrong.
- Ancillary evidence includes the fact someone else was shopping at the store at the same time as the mom.
- Said person or persons looked at the mom and her kids.
- Often, the person(s) ended up in the same aisle as the mom and kids a second time.
- They proceeded to check out at about the same time.
- They had a car.

BONUS POINTS:

- They were of another ethnicity.



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That was true in Sorensen's case. She claimed the would-be snatchers "didn't look necessarily clean cut." She also said they'd actually tried to grab her stroller.

After her video went viral, she went on TV and told her tale again. At which point the cops reopened the investigation, because she'd added so many details. This time they reviewed surveillance camera footage with her, and she identified a husband and wife — Sadie Vega-Martinez and Eddie Martinez — as the perps.

Police posted their photo and one of the Martinez's five children saw it and said: Wait — is this you?

The couple cooperated with the police, explaining they'd been at the store to shop for a nativity scene. Once again, the kidnapping case was closed. But a case against Sorensen was opened.

She was tried on three counts of falsely reporting a crime and convicted of one.

What we cannot know is whether Sorensen actually believed her kids were in peril or if she did this for publicity. The fact is that so many moms are making these "Almost kidnapped/sex-trafficked" videos that it can start to feel as if you really DO have to be on guard all the time. Which leads to more "My kid was almost kidnapped/sex-trafficked!" videos, and on and on.

Sorensen's sentence may give some moms pause before they press "record."

If anyone needs another reality check, here are the words of David Finkelhor, head of the Crimes Against Children Research Center, regarding stranger danger on shopping expeditions: "Nobody is abducting 1- and 4-year-old kids into sex trafficking."

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