# Deepfake videos of UK news reporters used to promote illegal gambling apps spark investigations



A recent discovery of a deepfake AI technology-altered video involving two prominent UK news reporters has prompted investigations by both Apple and the UK Gambling Commission. The video, which deceptively promotes an illegal gambling site, was flagged after it emerged that users were being tricked into downloading the app from the Apple App Store, raising concerns about security lapses on the supposedly secure platform.

Sky News reported on Monday that it had uncovered a sophisticated scam ring exploiting trusted UK brands and well-known news personalities to lure users into illegal gambling. The investigation uncovered that approximately 36 Facebook accounts were employed to promote these deepfake advertisements, primarily directing victims to the Apple App Store to download illicit gambling apps.

One of the reporters affected is Sky Science and Technology correspondent Mickey Carroll, who detailed how she herself was deepfaked in the scam. Carroll shared a video revealing that a deepfake version of her, using a false name, claimed to have won a dream car and £500,000 by playing the illegal mobile game being promoted. She noted, “The video ad was watched by at least a quarter of a million people on Facebook.”

Another central figure in the deepfake ad was a manipulated representation of Matt Barbet, a well-known Sky News presenter. In the doctored video, the AI-altered Barbet impersonated a news bulletin, stating: “Important news for all iPhone owners. Apple CEO Tim Cook has unveiled an app that will earn money for anyone who has an iPhone.” Even Apple CEO Tim Cook himself was deepfaked in the video, all designed to entice viewers to download a mobile game named Heavenly Sphere.

The video script also featured the counterfeit Barbet questioning the falsified Carroll about her notable winnings, to which the doctored Carroll responded, “It’s very simple, I downloaded the app and started playing.” Carroll explained that the footage used in the fake video had been extracted from a previous discussion between her and Barbet on Sky News, relating to a legal matter involving Apple a few months prior.

Experts have validated the authenticity of the manipulated content. Sky News quoted University of Buffalo Professor Dr Siwei Lyu, a specialist in deepfake technology, who confirmed the video’s faces were lip-synced using AI models. Additionally, Dr Jessica Barker, Co-Founder of the security firm Cygenta, highlighted that gambling scammers are increasingly targeting Facebook users with country-specific campaigns featuring recognizable journalists from national news organisations like Sky. She noted this as an “increasing trend” in the deployment of such scams.

The exposure of this deepfake scam has led to Apple’s law enforcement team and the UK Gambling Commission launching a joint probe aimed at curbing the distribution of illegal gambling apps and mitigating the misuse of AI technology in deceptive advertising. The discovery raises significant questions regarding app vetting processes on the Apple App Store as well as the wider implications of AI-driven disinformation in digital environments.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://news.sky.com/video/scammers-use-ai-deepfakes-of-sky-news-journalists-to-promote-illegal-casinos-13353003> - This article by Sky News corroborates the claim that scammers used AI deepfakes of Sky News journalists to promote illegal online casinos and highlights the sophisticated nature of the scam targeting users through fake ads.
* <https://news.sky.com/video/skys-tech-reporter-was-deepfaked-for-an-ai-powered-scam-so-she-investigated-13352599> - Sky News details how their tech reporter Mickey Carroll was deepfaked in the scam, describing the contents of the fake video and her investigation into the AI-powered illegal gambling promotion.
* <https://www.vegasslotsonline.com/news/2025/04/21/deepfake-video-of-apple-ceo-uk-reporters-promoting-gambling-app-prompts-probe/> - This source reports that Apple and the UK Gambling Commission have launched a joint probe into the deepfake video scam featuring Apple CEO Tim Cook and UK reporters promoting an illegal gambling app.
* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHIC6TliK9o> - A video published by Sky News visually demonstrates the deepfake adverts using Sky News journalists to promote illegal casinos, supporting descriptions of the scam's reach and methodology.
* <https://news.sky.com/story/matt-barbet-deepfake-video-apple-gambling-app-13353015> - This article discusses how Matt Barbet was deepfaked to impersonate a news bulletin in the scam video and how footage from earlier Sky News segments was reused in the manipulated video.