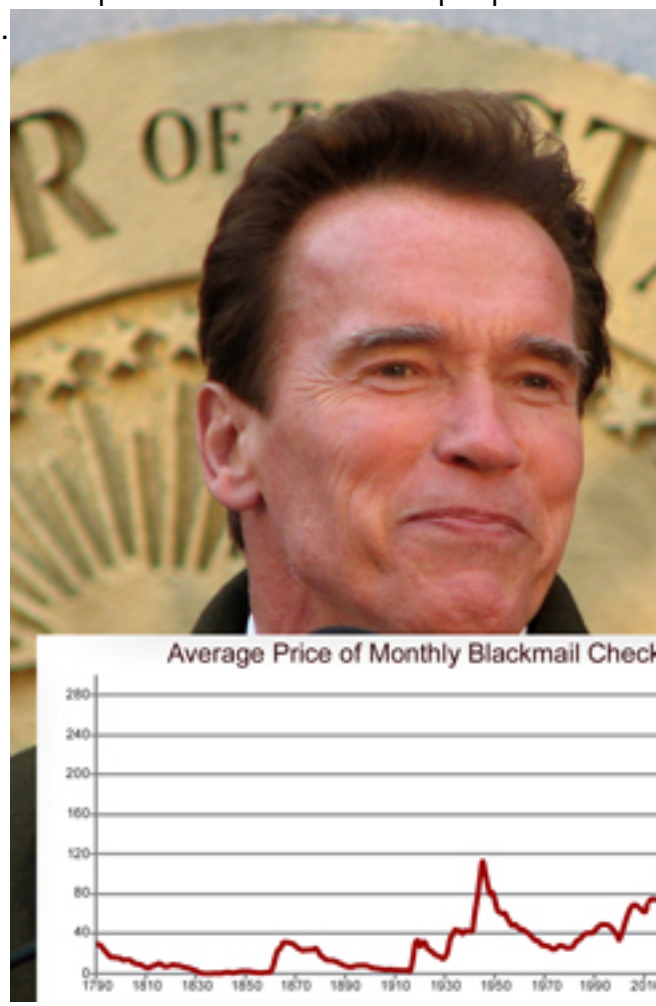
Written by Conan A. Predator
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Citing its effectiveness in the career of former Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, who spent 10 years shelling out money to keep his affair and love child a secret, blackmailers across the United States have seen their payoffs spike by an average of 30 percent. The amount of people entering the blackmail industry has seen similar increases.



"Blackmail works," said Sheila Payola, president of the National Association of Blackmailers (NAB). "Without blackmail payments, Arnold never would've been governor of the most populous state in the country. No fancy dinners with world leaders. No cutesy commercials on skis. And I can't provide specifics, but it may or may not be true that even his acting career wouldn't have gotten past Terminator without effective blackmail payments. Plus he avoided 10 years' worth of alimony and child-support payments--well, the public kind."

According to the NAB leader, men and women with all sorts of incriminating evidence are stepping up their efforts and demands to elicit steeper fees for their unwelcome knowledge or illegitimate children.

"My phone is simply blowing up," added Payola. "Everyone wants to know what the new going rate is for concealing an affair or not telling where a body is buried. Blackmailing had a bad run there for a while, what with Princess Fergie's disaster and David Letterman sending his blackmailer to jail, but Arnold's success was a 'game changer' for us.

"Blackmail is an incredible growth industry right now," she added. "Like Arnold himself, it's one of the great American success stories. Arnold owes his governorship to blackmail, and now blackmail owes its resurgence to Arnold."

Payola also indicated that Schwarzenegger and NAB are in negotiations for the now divorced and unemployed actor to be the spokesperson for the entire blackmail industry. NAB is test-marketing the catchphrase "I'll be back ... with a briefcase of small, unmarked bills."

"But he's a tough negotiator, so I don't know if we can close the deal," noted Payola. "I guess 10 years of haggling over payments to keep your secret love child under wraps so you could stay married and become governor of California will do that to you. But I think we'll get him signed. After all, he may or may not have other secrets that NAB knows about."