

# Police chief: "Paying the Bitcoin ransom was the last resort"

Suburban Boston police paid \$500 ransom in wake of CryptoLocker infestation.

by **Cyrus Farivar** - Apr 8, 2015 6:18am PDT

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A small town police department just outside of Boston finally agreed to pay a \$500 ransom to regain access to a police server that it had been locked out of after being infected with CryptoLocker ransomware. As the name suggests, [once the malware infects a computer](#), it encrypts the drive and can only be unlocked once the private key is entered—for which the criminals demand a ransom payment.

The Tewksbury Police Department chief told its local newspaper, the *Tewksbury Town Crier* that those who infected the computers in early December 2014 were "terrorists."

"Nobody wants to negotiate with terrorists. Nobody wants to pay terrorists," said Chief Timothy Sheehan. "We did everything we possibly could.

"It was an eye-opening experience, I can tell you right now. It made you feel that you lost control of

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—IF YOU WANT TO  
SEE YOUR DATA  
AGAIN, PAY US \$300  
IN BITCOINS**

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everything," he added. "Paying the bitcoin ransom was the last resort."

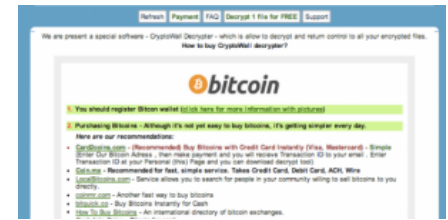
Tewksbury will now be added to the ever-increasing list of local law enforcement agencies that have been hit with with the malware. A suburban Chicago police department also [agreed](#) to pay a \$500 ransom in February 2015, as did a Tennessee sheriff's office. By contrast, the City of Detroit, Michigan and the [Town of Durham, New Hampshire](#) have refused.

According to the *Town Crier*, the infected computer contained a significant amount of police data, including its "Computer Aided Dispatch, records management, arrest logs, calls for service, [and] motor vehicle matters."

It turned to the FBI, Homeland Security, and the Massachusetts State Police, "as well as private firms in an effort to restore their data without paying the ransom."

In 2013, Swansea Police Department, which sits south of Boston, [paid a similar \\$750 ransom](#), just a month after Ars first [reported](#) on the phenomenon.

## FURTHER READING



## WE "WILL BE PAYING NO RANSOM," VOWS TOWN HIT BY CRYPTOWALL RANSOM MALWARE

Police computers in New Hampshire hamlet crippled by crypto-based ransomware.