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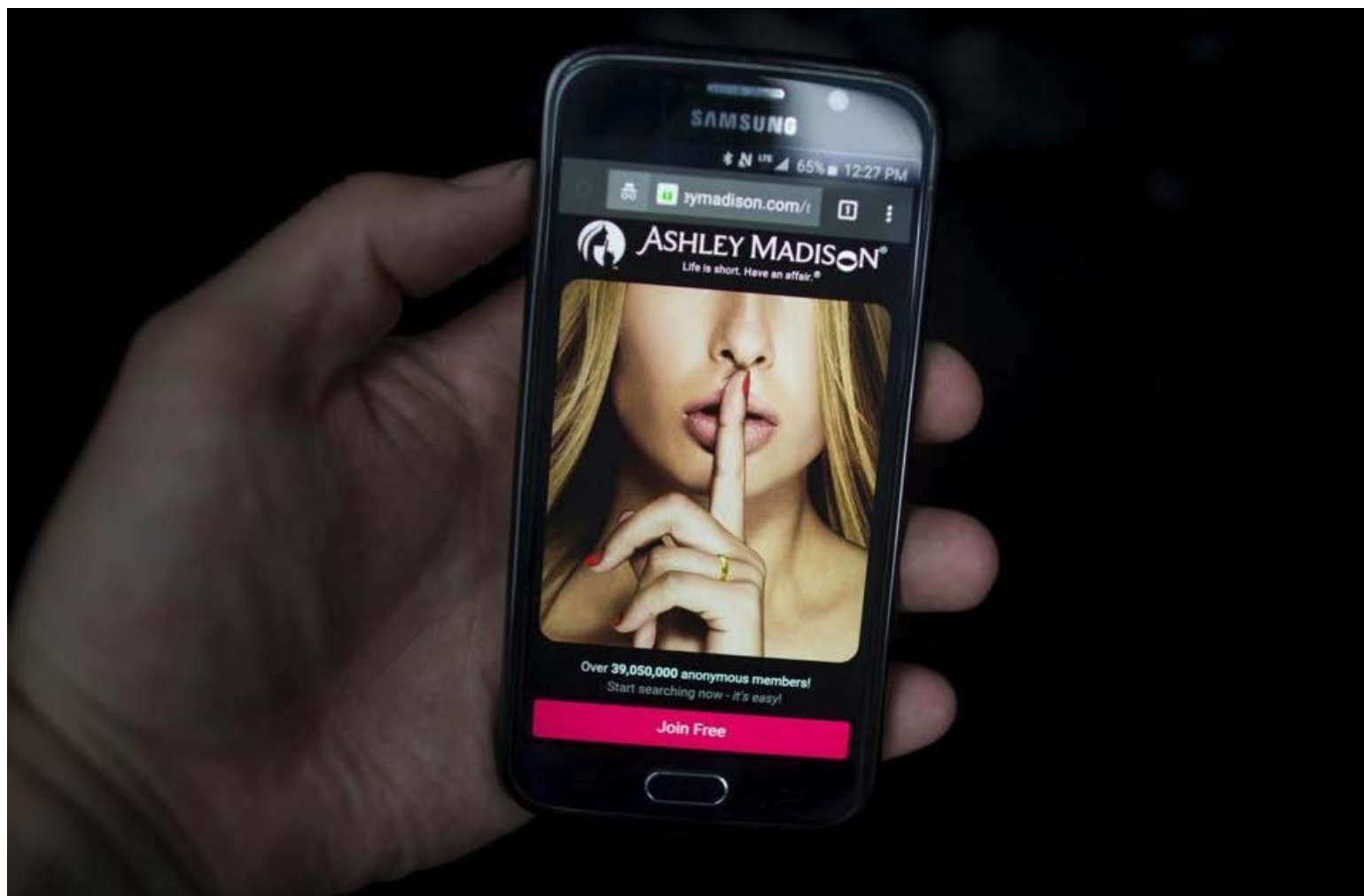
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MARK BLINCH/REUTERS

By **Matt Rocheleau**

GLOBE STAFF AUGUST 21, 2015

The leak of user data from cheating website Ashley Madison may not only expose millions of people as unfaithful partners, but also, legally speaking, as criminals, depending on where they live.

Adultery is illegal in 20 states in the United States, typically a misdemeanor. But in several states, including Massachusetts, adultery is a felony.

In Massachusetts, a married individual who has sex with someone other their spouse, or an unmarried person who has sex with someone who is married, can be sentenced to up to three years in prison, up to two years in jail, or pay up to a \$500 fine, according to the state's laws governing "crimes against chastity, morality, decency and good order."

However, in most states adultery is rarely prosecuted, and in recent years several states, including New Hampshire and Colorado, have moved to repeal laws that ban marital cheating.

The states where adultery remains a crime are:

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Illinois
- Kansas
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota

- Mississippi
- New York
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Oklahoma
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Utah
- Virginia
- Wisconsin

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