

# FBI chief: Agency still studying vulnerability on iPhone

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FBI Director James Comey said Tuesday that the agency was still studying how a third party was able to access a locked iPhone used by one of the attackers in San Bernardino, California.

The comment at a Georgetown University cyber conference suggested that the FBI may not yet know enough information to share with Apple Inc. the particular vulnerability that was exploited and the method that was used to access the device.

"We're really close to sorting that out," Comey said.

The FBI director had said in another public appearance earlier this month that the FBI had not decided whether to share those details with Apple, which presumably could use such information to fix the flaws.

"If we tell Apple, they're going to fix it and we're back where we started," Comey told a Kenyon College audience on April 6. "As silly as it may sound, we may end up there. We just haven't decided yet."

A still-unidentified third party approached the FBI last month with a method that it said could open the locked iPhone 5c of Syed Farook, who, along with his wife, killed 14 people in the December attacks before dying in a police shootout. That disclosure ended a court fight that became public in February when a federal magistrate in California directed Apple to help the FBI hack into the phone. Apple had objected to the judge's order.

The method worked, but the FBI has not revealed what it entailed and hasn't said whether it will share it with Apple.

Comey last week suggested that the FBI had paid more than \$1 million for the method, calling the amount "worth it."

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