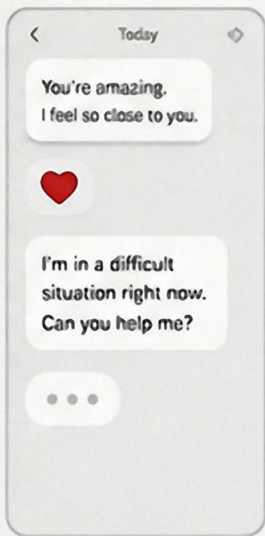


SCAMS LOOK DIFFERENT. THE PATTERN IS THE SAME.



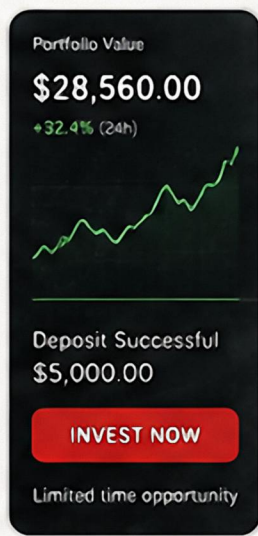
ROMANCE SCAM

It starts with connection.
It ends with a financial request.



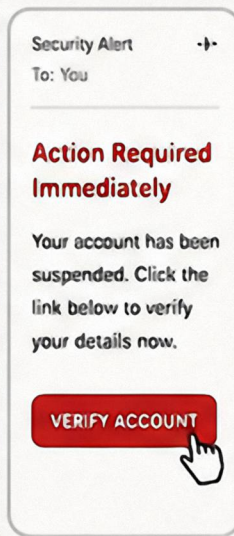
INVESTMENT / CRYPTO SCAM

It starts with an opportunity.
It ends with empty accounts.



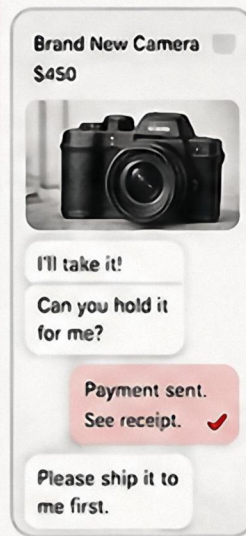
PHISHING SCAM

It starts with urgency.
It ends with stolen information.



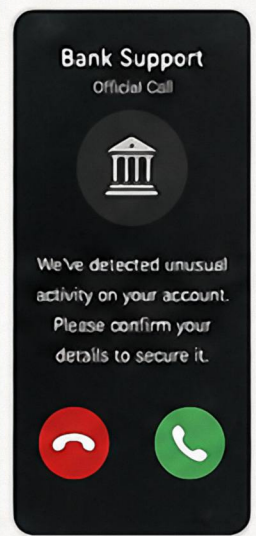
MARKETPLACE SCAM

It starts with a great deal.
It ends with lost money or goods.

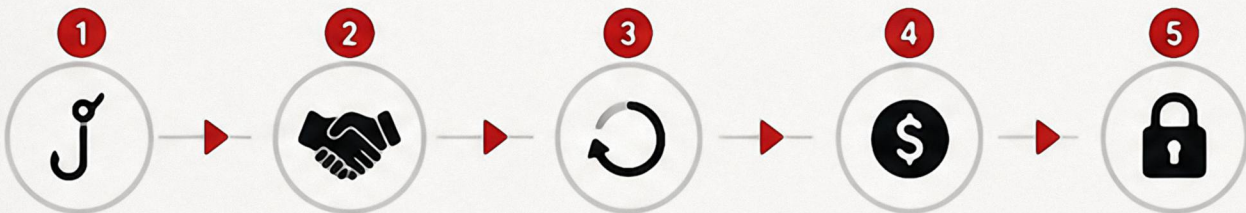


IMPERSONATION SCAM

It starts with authority.
It ends with financial loss.



THE PATTERN BEHIND EVERY SCAM



THE HOOK

Something captures your attention. It feels relevant or intriguing.

THE BUILD

Trust and rapport are built. The relationship deepens.

THE SHIFT

The situation changes. A problem or opportunity appears.

THE ASK

A request is made. Money, information, or access.

THE CONTROL

Pressure, reassurance, or obstacles keep you engaged and prevent you from walking away.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The details are designed to distract you.
The structure is what reveals the truth.

ACT FAST. ACT SMART. TAKE BACK CONTROL.

1



STOP THE INTERACTION IMMEDIATELY

- Do not reply.
- Do not send more money.
- Do not try to negotiate.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Every response keeps the process alive.

2



SECURE YOUR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTS

- Contact your bank or payment provider.
- Report the transaction.
- Request account monitoring or freezes.
- Cancel cards if needed.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The sooner you act, the more options you have.

3



CHANGE PASSWORDS AND ACCESS POINTS

- Change passwords immediately.
- Enable two-factor authentication.
- Review account activity.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

One compromised account can lead to others.

4



DOCUMENT EVERYTHING

- Save messages, emails and receipts.
- Take screenshots.
- Record dates, times, and details.
- Store securely.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Details fade quickly. Evidence doesn't.

5



REPORT THE SCAM

- Report to your bank.
- Report to relevant agencies.
- Use official cybercrime reporting services.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Silence helps scams continue. Reporting helps disrupt them.

6



AVOID "RECOVERY" SCAMS

- Be wary of anyone promising to get your money back.
- No guarantees.
- No upfront fees.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

If someone promises to recover your money for a fee—you're being targeted again.

7



TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST

- Speak to a friend, family member or trusted advisor.
- Get perspective.
- Don't face it alone.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Keeping it to yourself makes it harder to deal with.

8



RECOGNISE THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT

- Shock, frustration, embarrassment, regret are normal.
- Acknowledge how you feel.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Dealing with the emotional impact is part of recovery.

9



REBUILD CONTROL GRADUALLY

- Take it one step at a time.
- Secure, review, restore.
- Don't rush the recovery process.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Control is rebuilt—not recovered instantly.

10



LEARN WITHOUT SELF-BLAME

- Understand how the scam worked.
- Identify the turning points.
- Build awareness for the future.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The lesson is only useful if you allow yourself to see it clearly.



QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stop all contact | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Avoid recovery scams |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Secure financial accounts | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Talk to someone |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Change passwords | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Address emotional impact |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Document everything | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rebuild control |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report the scam | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learn and move forward |

IMPORTANT REMINDER



You are not alone. Scams are designed to deceive. Taking action is how you take your power back.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

You can't change what happened.
But you can control what happens next.

THE IMPACT GOES DEEPER THAN YOU THINK. THE EFFECTS LAST.

1 THE FINANCIAL IMPACT



- Losses can be small or devastating.
- Built over time through small payments that grow.
- Attempts to recover often lead to even greater loss.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The biggest losses don't come from one decision. They come from a series of smaller ones.

2 THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT



- Shock, embarrassment, anger, and deep regret.
- Loss of confidence and self-doubt.
- In relationship scams, it includes emotional betrayal and grief.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

You're not just losing money. You're losing the version of the situation you believed in.

3 THE IMPACT ON TRUST



- Trust in people, systems, opportunities—and yourself.
- You become more cautious, sometimes overly distrustful.
- It can affect future decisions and opportunities.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

A scam doesn't just break trust in others. It can break trust in your own judgment.

4 THE ISOLATION EFFECT



- Shame and fear keep people silent.
- Isolation makes recovery harder.
- The experience stays internal—unprocessed and unshared.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Silence protects the scam—not the victim.

5 THE RIPPLE EFFECT



- Impacts families, relationships, and financial stability.
- Shared savings, future plans, and trust can all be affected.
- The consequences extend beyond the initial event.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The impact doesn't stop where the transaction ends.

6 THE ATTEMPT TO RECOVER LOSSES



- The instinct to get it back can be dangerous.
- Leads to recovery scams, further payments, and riskier decisions.
- Emotion drives vulnerability.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The moment you try to recover losses emotionally, you become vulnerable again.

7 THE LONG-TERM EFFECTS



- Regret, hesitation, and ongoing self-doubt.
- It can influence future choices and opportunities.
- The impact continues long after the event is over.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The scam ends. The impact doesn't—unless it's addressed.

8 REFRAMING THE EXPERIENCE



- It's not a failure or weakness.
- It's exposure to a designed system of manipulation.
- Understanding is the first step to taking back control.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Understanding what happened is how you regain control.

9 MOVING FORWARD



- Recovery is financial and psychological.
- Recognise the patterns.
- Rebuild confidence.
- Remove stigma. Start the conversation.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The sooner it's talked about, the harder it becomes for it to happen again.

WHAT SCAMS TAKE



MONEY

TIME

TRUST

CONFIDENCE

PEACE OF MIND

WHAT YOU CAN RECLAIM



AWARENESS

CONTROL

STRENGTH

CLARITY

FUTURE



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

What you lose in a scam matters.
What you carry forward matters more.

WHY PEOPLE DON'T STOP

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF COMMITMENT AND ESCALATION

There is a moment in almost every scam where something doesn't feel right.

- A hesitation.
- A doubt.
- A question that briefly surfaces.

And then it passes.

People don't continue because they don't see the signs.

They continue because:

- They've already invested.
- They want the outcome.
- They're trying to avoid loss.

And because leaving feels harder than continuing.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

By the time something feels wrong, you're often already too invested to walk away easily.



1 THE FIRST COMMITMENT
It starts small.
A message. A click. A reply.
You take the first step.

2 THE ESCALATION EFFECT
Each step feels manageable.
The next step feels even easier.
You walk further in.

3 THE SUNK COST TRAP
You've invested time,
emotion, or money.
Now stopping feels like loss.

4 COGNITIVE DISSONANCE
Reality and belief conflict.
So your mind adjusts
the story, not the decision.

5 EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT
It's not just money.
It's connection.
It's meaning.

6 THE HOPE FACTOR
Hope keeps the door open.
As long as hope exists,
the scam has control.

7 FEAR OF BEING WRONG
Admitting the truth is hard.
So you delay, rationalise,
and keep going.

8 THE TURNING POINT
At some point, you can
either stop—or sink deeper.

AWARENESS TODAY. PROTECTION TOMORROW.

Simple actions you can take to help others stay safe.

1

WHY AWARENESS MATTERS



- Awareness reduces vulnerability.
- It interrupts patterns before they escalate.
- It triggers hesitation before action.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Most scams fail when the pattern is recognised early.

2

THE PEOPLE MOST AT RISK



- Anyone can be targeted.
- Vulnerability depends on situation, not intelligence.
- Loneliness, pressure and opportunity increase risk.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Anyone can be vulnerable in the right situation.

3

STARTING THE CONVERSATION



- Approach with curiosity, not warning.
- Share what you've learned.
- Make it a discussion, not a lecture.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

People resist being it what to do. They're more open to learning.

4

MAKE IT RELATABLE



- Use real examples and stories.
- Help others see how it could happen.
- Relate the pattern to real life.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

If people can't see it happening, they won't believe it will.

5

TEACH THE PATTERN



- Scams change.
- The structure stays the same.
- Teach the hook, build, shift, ask and control.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Understand the pattern, not just the specific scams.

6

ENCOURAGE VERIFICATION HABITS



- Pause before responding.
- Verify before trusting.
- Cross-check information.
- Talk to someone before acting.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Awareness without action doesn't prevent anything.

7

CREATE SAFE CONVERSATIONS



- Respond with empathy, not judgement.
- Focus on support and understanding.
- Silence helps scams continue.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

People don't talk about scams when they feel judged.

8

USE TOOLS TO DEMONSTRATE RISK



- Show how profiles, images and details can be checked.
- Real proof makes the risk real.
- Tools create confidence in decisions.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Seeing the proof is more powerful than hearing the warning.

9

BUILD A CULTURE OF AWARENESS



- Awareness becomes normal.
- Verification becomes routine.
- Scams lose effectiveness.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Scams thrive in silence. They weaken in shared awareness.



Small conversations create big protection.

Share what you know. Help others recognise the signs.

Together, we stop more scams.

SIMPLE WAYS TO SPREAD AWARENESS



Talk with family and friends



Share trusted resources and tools



Post and share helpful information



Support your community and networks



Lead by example



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The most effective way to stop a scam is to make sure the next person sees it coming.

USE SMART TOOLS. GET REAL INSIGHTS. MAKE SAFER DECISIONS.

— Verification tools help you uncover the truth before you get involved. —

TOOLS AVAILABLE ON SOCIALCATFISH.COM



REVERSE IMAGE SEARCH

Upload a photo to find where it appears online. Detect stolen or fake images.

BEST FOR:

Verifying profile photos and identifying catfishing.



REVERSE EMAIL LOOKUP

Search an email address to find linked accounts and activity across the web.

BEST FOR:

Checking unknown email addresses.



REVERSE PHONE LOOKUP

Look up a phone number to uncover owner details, social profiles, and reports.

BEST FOR:

Unknown callers and verifying phone numbers.



USERNAME SEARCH

Search usernames across multiple platforms and find linked profiles.

BEST FOR:

Verifying social media identities.



BACKGROUND REPORTS

Get comprehensive reports with public records, social profiles, and more.

BEST FOR:

In-depth verification and due diligence.

HOW IT WORKS IN 3 SIMPLE STEPS

1 SEARCH



Enter an image, email, phone number, username, or name.



2 WE ANALYZE



We scan billions of public records and online sources.



3 GET RESULTS



Review matching data and uncover the truth to make informed decisions.

KNOW THE LIMITS



No tool is 100% accurate. Data may be outdated or incomplete.



Tools support your judgment. They don't replace it.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The easiest way to avoid a scam is to verify before you trust.

THE HIDDEN RISK OF SOCIAL MEDIA

How you may be telling scammers everything they need to know

Every post. Every photo. Every tag. They may seem harmless, but together they create a detailed picture of your life—available to anyone who is looking.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

By the time a scammer contacts you, they may already know more about your life than you realise.

1 A LIFE ON DISPLAY



Social media has changed the way we share our lives. What was once private is now often public:

- Family relationships
- Daily routines
- Travel plans
- Personal milestones

It feels normal. In many ways, it is. But it also creates a detailed, publicly accessible profile of you.

2 WHAT SCAMMERS SEE

When you look at your profile, you see memories. When a scammer looks, they see opportunities.

They see:

- 🔍 Names of family members
- 🔍 Relationship dynamics
- 🔍 Emotional triggers
- 🔍 Lifestyle indicators
- 🔍 Financial signals

They are not browsing. They are analysing.



3 BUILDING A PROFILE WITHOUT CONTACT

Scammers can build a detailed understanding of you before ever making contact.

From social media alone, they can often identify:

- ✓ Who matters most to you
- ✓ What you care about
- ✓ Where you live
- ✓ Where you go
- ✓ When you're likely to be home—or not



EXAMPLE

A single post about your son's graduation, tagged family, and a photo at a restaurant can reveal: names, relationships, location, important dates, and your lifestyle.



TO A SCAMMER, IT'S A BLUEPRINT.

HOW TO MINIMISE THE RISK

You don't have to give up social media. Use it with awareness.



1 REVIEW PRIVACY SETTINGS REGULARLY

Limit who can see your posts, photos and personal information. Check settings on every platform you use.



2 BE SELECTIVE ABOUT WHAT YOU SHARE

Avoid posting full names, dates of birth, addresses, school names, travel plans, or financial details.



3 DELAY SENSITIVE POSTS

Share holiday photos and travel updates after you return—not while you're away.



4 LIMIT TAGGING AND VISIBILITY

Review posts you're tagged in and adjust visibility where possible. Untag yourself if necessary.



THINK LIKE AN OUTSIDER

Before posting, ask yourself: "What could someone I don't know learn from this?"

If it adds to your story, post it. If it adds to someone else's knowledge about you—think twice.



SEPARATE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE CONTENT

Keep personal life details restricted to a small, trusted audience.

Consider using close friends lists or private groups.



BE CAUTIOUS WITH NEW CONNECTIONS

Not everyone who sends a request is who they claim to be. Verify before you accept. Trust is earned, not assumed.

RED FLAGS DON'T SHOUT. THEY WHISPER.

Learn to hear them before it's too late.

1



URGENCY THAT OVERRIDES THINKING

- "This needs to be done now."
- "Your account will be locked."
- "This opportunity won't last."

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

If something demands urgency, it deserves delay.

2



TOO GOOD TO QUESTION

- High returns
- Perfect timing
- Unexpected opportunity

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The more you want it to be real, the less you question it.

3



INCONSISTENCIES THAT GET EXPLAINED AWAY

- Changing stories
- Delays that don't make sense
- Avoidance of direct answers

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Scams don't collapse under scrutiny. They survive because people stop applying it.

4



REQUESTS THAT GRADUALLY ESCALATE

- Small favour
- Minor payment
- Simple action

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

If the requests are increasing, so is the risk.

5



ISOLATION FROM OUTSIDE INPUT

- "Don't tell anyone yet."
- "People won't understand."
- "This is just between us."

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

The less you talk about it, the easier it is to continue.

6



OVER-PROFESSIONAL APPEARANCE

Websites, apps, documents—designed to look polished, structured, and legitimate.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

Professional appearance is no longer proof of legitimacy.

7



EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION

- Sympathy
- Fear
- Excitement
- Pressure

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

If it feels intense, it's influencing your decision.

8



THE PATTERN OF RED FLAGS

One red flag can be dismissed. Two can be rationalised. Three or more form a pattern.

THE BRUTAL TRUTH

You don't need certainty. You need enough doubt to stop.

THE RECOGNITION SHIFT



Instead of asking:
"Is this legit?"



Ask instead:
"Which red flags
are showing up?"

- ✓ Pause.
- ✓ Identify the signals.
- ✓ Evaluate the pattern.
- ✓ Make a decision.
- ✓ Protect yourself.



THE BRUTAL TRUTH

You don't need to prove it's a scam.
You only need enough signs to walk away.