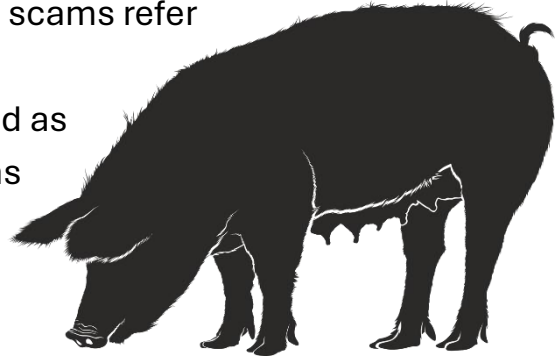


## Pig Butchering Scams

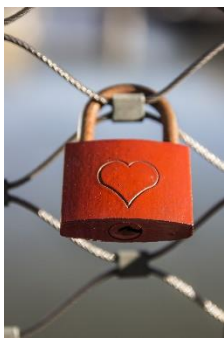
Pig butchering scams are a type of investment fraud with a romance fraud element. They are extremely sophisticated operations being perpetrated by organised crime groups overseas. They use specific scripts using social engineering to entice victims into the scam. They often use human trafficking to drive these operations, forcing people to work these scams using violence. The criminals behind these scams refer to their victims as 'pigs', the social media platforms as 'pig pens', and the scripts used as 'pig feed'. The scammers see themselves as the 'butchers', hence the term pig butchering. But how do pig butchering scams work?



### **Initial contact**

They typically start in the same way as romance frauds, over social media or dating platforms, with fake profiles using stolen photos. Another technique is where the fraudster will message numerous numbers saying something like, "Hi Sarah, it was lovely to see you last week. We should do it again sometime". If the receiver of the message responds telling them they have the wrong number, the fraudster will attempt to strike up a conversation and make them think they are hitting it off. Criminals call this 'pig hunting'.

### **Building trust**



However the contact is made, the fraudster will spend time getting to know the victim and building trust with them, introducing elements of romance in the conversation. This may continue for several weeks, or even months. The fraudster will be dropping into the conversation that they are a business minded individual making a lot of money through cryptocurrency. They will usually say that they have a family member who is an expert in cryptocurrency investment who guides them. This can also provide the victim with reassurance that this is someone who isn't after their money, easing any concerns that this could be a romance fraud. They will make promises of the successful life they will have together. This is a process they call 'pig raising'.

## The Investment Proposal

The fraudster will then offer to help guide the victim through cryptocurrency investing, insisting they can help them make a lot of money, just like they do. Once the victim agrees, the fraudster sets them up on a fraudulent app or web platform, which may even be a clone of a genuine platform. Behind the scenes, this platform is completely controlled by the scamming team.

## High Returns

The victim will put funds into their account and see what they believe is real-time market data. They will be able to watch their investment making them money and may even be able to withdraw a small amount of money from the platform. The reassurance of the withdrawal will encourage them to invest much larger amounts, as they are under the illusion that they will easily be able to withdraw funds at any time.



## The Fraudster Disappears

The fraudster realises they have gotten all the money from the victim they are going to get and may have even coerced them into taking out loans to make further investments, insisting that a good trade is coming up that they just can't miss. At this point, the fraudster cuts contact with the victim, and they realise they have been scammed. This final stage is gruesomely known as 'pig killing'.

## Advice

- **Just say no.** Don't invest in anything based merely on advice from someone you just met online.
- **Be skeptical.** Avoid anything with guaranteed rates of return or promises you'll double your money. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is.

**Do your research.** Any time you invest in anything, you need to do thorough research and seek advice from a financial advisor. It is difficult to tell a genuine investment opportunity apart from a fraudulent one, and even experienced investors get caught out.