

# Relationship-led investment fraud

A patient, warm relationship built over weeks that ends at a trading platform which does not exist.

Also called: pig butchering, romance investment scam, sha zhu pan.

## How it works

Contact begins somewhere ordinary — a dating app, a professional network, or a text that appears to be a wrong number and is answered politely. There is no pitch for days or weeks. The relationship is the product being manufactured, and the people doing it are often trafficked workers reading from a script with quality control above them.

Investing is mentioned in passing, as something they do, not something you should do. Reluctance to involve you comes next, which is the move that makes you ask. Eventually you are helped onto a platform, sometimes an app installed outside the official stores.

A small deposit performs well. A small withdrawal succeeds — this is the pivotal moment, and it is paid out of your own money. Deposits increase. The balance rises impressively. When you try to withdraw meaningfully, a fee appears, then a tax, then a compliance hold, each urgent and each final.

## What you would actually see

- Someone attentive, consistent, and unusually easy to talk to, who is never quite able to meet or take an unscheduled video call.
- A platform with a professional interface, live-looking charts, and an account manager.
- A balance that grows steadily, and one early withdrawal that worked.
- Eventually: a withdrawal blocked behind a payment you must fund from outside.

## Warning signs

- The relationship moved to WhatsApp, Telegram or Line early on.
- They introduced investing themselves, then seemed hesitant to help.
- The platform is not on any regulator's register and the app came from a link.
- A withdrawal requires new money in rather than being deducted from the balance.
- Any pressure involving a deadline, a forfeiture, or a limited window.

## What to do now

1. Send nothing further. Whatever has gone is fixed; the fee is a separate, still-avoidable loss.
2. Do not confront them. It changes nothing and sometimes accelerates the account being closed and evidence disappearing.
3. Screenshot everything before it vanishes — the whole conversation, the profile, the platform, the balance page.
4. List every payment: date, amount, asset, and the address or account it went to.
5. Run the free check [here](#), then file with IC3 and your local police the same day.

Honest odds: Recovery is unlikely, but acting fast still matters

Most payments go to self-custody addresses and move onward within hours. If any leg was USDT, or any payment went through a bank wire, act within hours — those are the two genuinely time-sensitive levers.

## Disclaimer

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This document is general information about how cryptocurrency systems and common frauds work. It is not legal advice, not financial advice, and not a substitute for either. Nothing in it guarantees or predicts the recovery of any funds.

BlockchainFraud.org charges a flat fee stated in advance and never a percentage of any recovery. We will never contact you unsolicited offering to recover funds, and anyone who does should be treated as a likely recovery scam.