



# THE LONG CON: PIG BUTCHERING & AI-ENABLED FRAUD

*The relationship is manufactured. The profits are fake. The losses are real.*

## TOP DEVELOPMENTS

### › Crypto investment fraud climbed to \$7.2 billion

The FBI recorded 61,559 complaints in 2025 - a 48% increase - with losses rising 25% to \$7.228 billion.

[Read the 2025 IC3 Annual Report](#)

### › Adults 60+ carried the heaviest loss burden

People age 60 and older reported 13,685 crypto-investment complaints and nearly \$2.764 billion in losses.

[View the age-group breakdown](#)

### › AI is now a measurable fraud tool

For the first time, the IC3 report includes an AI section: 22,364 complaints and nearly \$893 million in losses. Reported tactics include fake profiles, voice clones, documents, and believable video.

[Read the FBI's April 2026 release](#)

### › Federal disruption is targeting the scam ecosystem

On June 3, the Scam Center Strike Force announced a government-and-industry disruption effort aimed at accounts, domains, wallets, and infrastructure supporting Southeast Asian scam centers.

[Review the DOJ disruption update](#)

### › Recovery fraud creates a second wave of harm

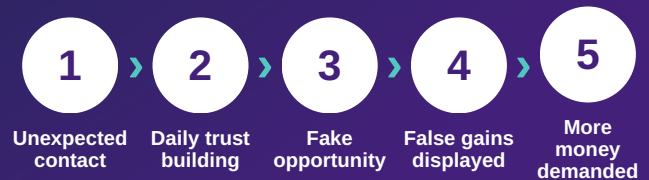
After the first loss, victims may be contacted by fake law firms, recovery companies, or officials promising to retrieve funds for an advance fee. Adults 60+ reported more than \$540 million in recovery-scam losses.

[See the FBI recovery-scam data](#)

## THE FRAUD IS A PROCESS

# CONTACT → TRUST → CONTROL

Pig butchering is a relationship scam before it becomes an investment scam. The criminal builds familiarity, manufactures proof, and gradually isolates the victim from trusted advice.



## AI MAKES THE SCRIPT MORE BELIEVABLE

- ID Synthetic identity**  
Generated photos, profiles, documents, and social histories can make a fictional person appear established and real.
- VO Cloned voice or video**  
A familiar voice, adviser, celebrity, or family member can be imitated to create trust or urgency.
- 24 Personalized, persistent contact**  
AI-assisted messages can mirror a victim's interests, remain polished, and maintain contact around the clock.
- ! Manufactured proof**  
Fake dashboards, testimonials, screenshots, and news-style content reinforce the illusion that the investment is legitimate.

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## HOW TO INTERRUPT THE LONG CON

*Ask better questions. Create a pause. Preserve the evidence.*

### THE FIVE STAGES TO RECOGNIZE

- 1 Opening contact** A wrong-number text, social-media message, dating contact, or professional-networking approach.
- 2 Credibility** Daily check-ins, shared interests, attractive photos, personal stories, and apparent emotional support.
- 3 Migration** The conversation moves to a private messaging app where reporting and oversight are more difficult.
- 4 Investment** A fake platform is introduced. The victim is coached through a deposit and may receive a small early withdrawal.
- 5 Extraction** More deposits, loans, taxes, fees, or "verification" payments are demanded. Withdrawals become blocked.

### QUESTIONS THAT BREAK THE SCRIPT

- ? How did the relationship begin, and who initiated the first contact?
- ? Have you met the person in real life or completed a verified live video call?
- ? Who selected the investment platform, wallet, app, or financial adviser?
- ? Can you withdraw your original money to your own bank account without paying anything else?
- ? Has anyone asked you to keep the relationship, investment, or transaction secret?
- ? Are you being coached on what to tell your bank, family, law enforcement, or financial adviser?

### TEJC FIELD NOTE: TREAT IT LIKE COERCIVE CONTROL

Pig-butchering victims are often not persuaded by a single investment pitch. They are groomed through affection, attention, fear, secrecy, and repeated reinforcement. A blunt warning may deepen the victim's loyalty to the scammer.

**"Lead with validation, then create a pause: You are not in trouble. You are not alone. Before any more money moves, let's independently verify the person, the platform, and the withdrawal process."**

**Frontline objective:** Preserve the relationship with the victim long enough to slow the transaction, gather evidence, and connect the victim to law enforcement and support.

#### RECOGNIZE

Look for secrecy, coaching, unusual urgency, and a new online relationship.

#### PAUSE

Slow large or unusual transfers and create space for independent review.

#### VERIFY

Check the person, domain, app, platform, and withdrawal process separately.

#### PRESERVE

Save chats, phone numbers, emails, receipts, wallet addresses, and screenshots.

#### REPORT

Contact IC3 and law enforcement quickly; rapid reporting may improve recovery options.

### REPORTING & RESOURCE LINKS

**FBI Internet Crime Complaint Center - Report internet-enabled fraud and preserve transaction details**

**National Elder Fraud Hotline - 1-833-FRAUD-11 | Victim support and reporting assistance**

**FTC ReportFraud - Report scams and share details**

**FBI AI & Crypto Scam Alert - Share current AI-enabled fraud warning signs**

**DOJ Scam Center Strike Force - Review the June 2026 disruption update**

### QUICK PARTNER ASK

#### Banks / CUs

Add relationship-grooming questions to large-transfer and new-payee reviews.

#### Law Enforcement

Ask for chat histories, app names, domains, wallet addresses, and all attempted transfers.

#### Aging Network

Frame the scheme as manipulation and coercion - not greed, carelessness, or poor judgment.

#### Community

Share: "A small withdrawal does not prove an investment is real. It may be part of the hook."

**Sources reviewed:** FBI 2025 Internet Crime Report; FBI April 6, 2026 release on cryptocurrency and AI scams; U.S. Department of Justice Scam Center Strike Force June 3, 2026 disruption update; U.S. Attorney/FBI/HSI February 12, 2026 warning on romance and online investment scams; Federal Trade Commission consumer guidance on AI-enabled voice cloning.

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