



Pig Butchering Scam Report

by RealCall



November 30, 2022

Background

This is a report RealCall has been trying to dig into since a long time ago because no such reports on such a topic have been released by any organization.

As an increasing number of users start using RealCall to block robocalls and spam calls and they're usually suggested to provide the reason why RealCall is used as they create their first accounts on it, the option is more selected that "Avoid huge economic loss" and the tragedies always start from just a text or phone call from the anonymous. That's why we're determined to do research about pig butchering scams that aren't even introduced on the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) website. We aim to provide a detailed introduction about such scams so that people can really avoid being trapped.



Key Takeaways



96.08% of respondents have already or almost been trapped by pig butchering scams that are quite common day.



40.4% of victims claim their first contact with scammers was via anonymous calls and texts and 25.7% of them via dating websites.



The common scam awareness used to avoid ordinary types of scams may not be useful when it comes to pig butchering scams because they conform to a different scheme from ordinary ones.



Blocking anonymous calls and texts efficiently and effectively boosts immunity against pig butchering scams.

Methodology

Due to the particularity of pig butchering scams, multiple methods are applied to contribute to the insights of this report so as to get an integrated conclusion and summary.

Survey

Since the term of pig butchering scams fails to be defined under a uniform understanding and even some victims don't know the scams they've gone through belong to the group of pig butchering scams, a survey is drastically necessary to clarify their scam types. For this report, we released 1000 questionnaires and received 996 and specific conclusions are all made based on the data.

Interview

We also carried out interviews with dozens of scam victims, former scam sweatshop workers, advocates, rescue workers, law enforcement and investigators, along with extensive documentary evidence including training manuals for scammers, chat transcripts between scammers and their targets and complaints filed with the FTC.

Research

Apart from survey and interview, some research is also implemented via complicated channels like Internet, books, magazines, etc. Hundreds of professional and official reports have been referred to in the process of research and any clue concerning pig butchering scams has been found out and used.

Terminology

Unlike other scams, the term “pig butchering” doesn’t refer to the scams when a real pig is being slaughtered. However, pig butchering is a metaphor term originally from Chinese to refer to the scams that finally cause huge economic loss after series of activities to “train” or “feed” victims to be the “best” victims, which is similar to the process of fattening a pig before slaughtering it. That’s where the term comes from.

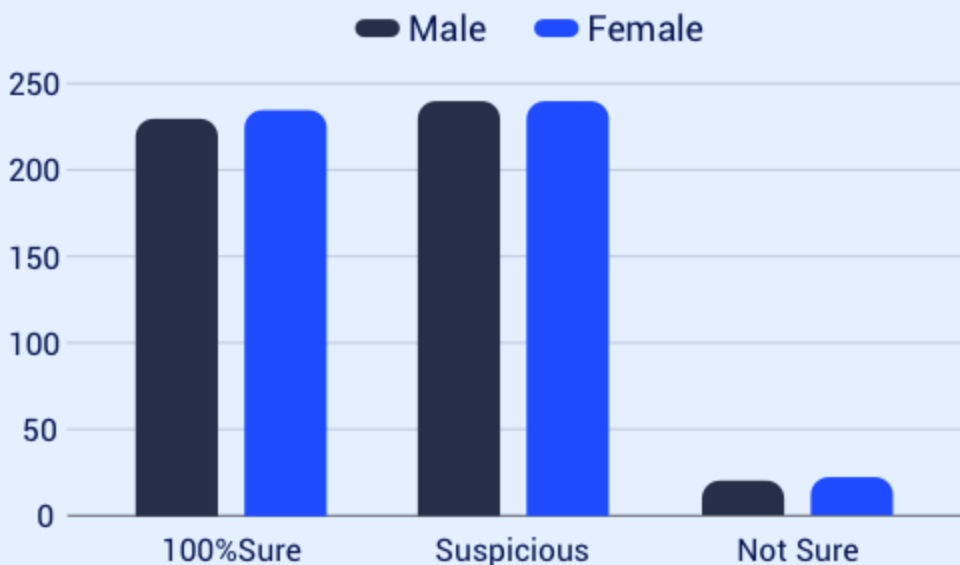
Pig butchering scams are the only type of scams whose name contains some attitude or emotion towards victims. Perhaps it came as a jargon of fraudsters when scams are designed and done but it undoubtedly vividly describes the features of such scams.

In summary, the features of a pig butchering scam include:



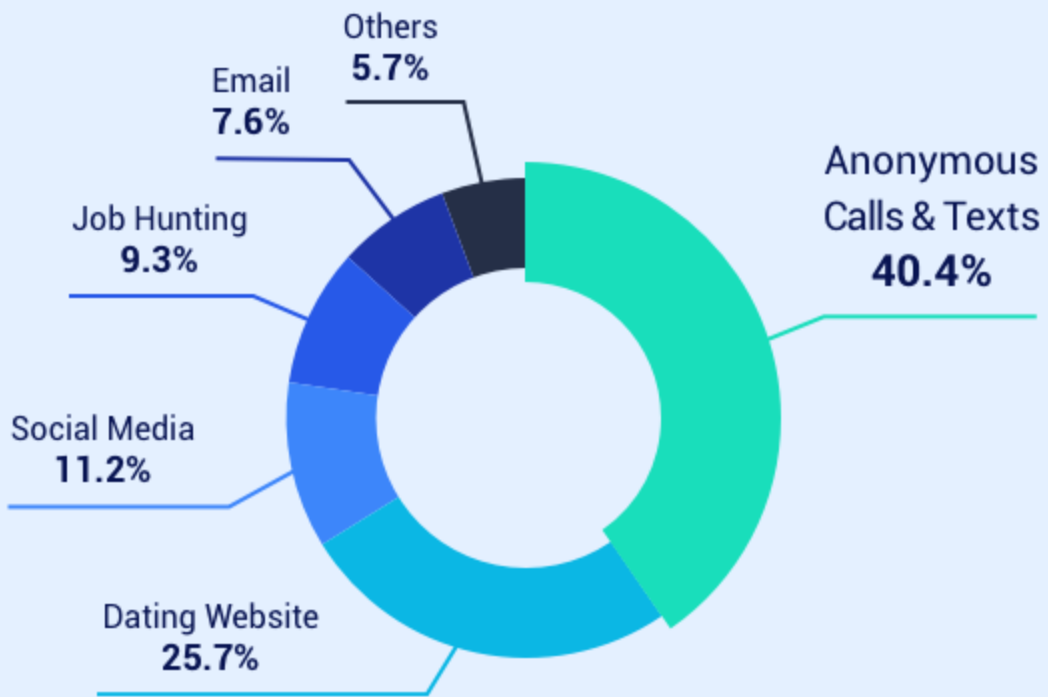
Therefore, all the pig butchering scams mentioned in this report only refer to those carrying the above features.

47.59% of respondents claim to go through pig butchering scams and 48.49% of those claim to be almost be trapped by pig butchering scammers.



Among all the 996 respondents returning their questionnaires, 474 respondents (235 male and 239 female) claim they have truly gone through pig butchering scams and economic losses while 483 respondents (242 male and 241 female) almost fell in the traps of pig butchering scams. Some of them didn't identify a scam until they were advised to invest cryptocurrency and some of them refused to meet in person all the time. It's worth noting that a couple of victims even kept being scammed for as long as four months.

40.4% of victims claim their first contact with scammers was via anonymous calls and texts and 25.7% of them via dating websites.



Contact Channel	Count	Contact Channel	Count
Anonymous Calls & Texts	402	Dating Website	256
Social Media	112	Job Hunting	93
Email	76	Others	57

40.4% of victims claim their first contact with scammers was via anonymous calls and texts and 25.7% of them via dating websites.

Among all the victims including real victims and almost-to-be victims, 40.4% of them claim their first contact was established via anonymous calls or texts. Most of them make a call or text pretending to be arriving at a wrong number by accident. Once a reply is received, scammers will actively push forward their dialogues. A previous scammer Daniel that was cheated to work in Indonesia and finally escaped said millions of scripts are prepared by pig butchering scammer groups and they have been trained to start a conversation with anyone based on their individual interests.

The second highest “chances”, 25.7%, leading to pig butchering scams goes to dating websites. It’s worth noting that job hunting also contributes relatively largely to a pig butchering scam. “On one hand, it’s becoming increasingly difficult to find a job since the pandemic around the world,” said Curry, the product lead at RealCall. “On the other hand, the lack of money easily leads them to believe some so-called quick and easy investment. That’s just what pig butchering scammers are good at.”



Why do pig butchering scams always work?

FTC has been working to educate the public about all kinds of possible scams and avoiding tips. Unfortunately, there's not a page on their website to educate or alert the public how to spot and avoid pig butchering scams.

Unlike most scams, pig butchering scams go in a totally different direction," claimed Curry,

“Ordinary scammers aim to proactively cheat people but pig butchering scammers never. They may send anonymous text messages pretending to go to a wrong number and that totally looks like an accident. Such a start makes it natural and easy for victims to believe at the very beginning. In other words, you may identify an ordinary scammer based on his or her first word, but a pig butchering scammer will never go into your ‘bad people’ zone.”

“Pig butchering scammers are patient enough to expect their ‘pig targets’ to grow big enough. So, they spend most of their time training or persuading victims to really trust them. Once an opportunity arrives, they’ll be 100% ready and an investment suggestion seems quite natural and acceptable.”



Moreover, their patience also totally eliminates the slightest doubt victims may have at the very beginning the moment they were linked together. Generally speaking, **ordinary scammers always persuade victims to act immediately but pig butchering scammers never.**”

“The perfectly-hiding risk behind pig butchering scams is the investment motivation and method.” said Curry. Ordinary scammers always lead victims to pay for something, which means their money will be out of their pockets to another one. That’s a scam alert. However, pig butchering scammers always persuade victims to invest on themselves.

Lisa, one victim of a pig butchering scam with a loss of \$30,000, told RealCall that she invested money on a so-called Bitcoin app just she confirmed that all her money didn’t go anywhere else but her own account on the app. As a result, the Bitcoin app proved to be totally fake and disappeared just after Lisa realized she had been trapped in a scam.

Is there a solution to avoid pig butchering scams?

Whenever there's a scam, there will be a solution.

To avoid pig butchering scams, it's foremost to cut the possible contacts with the scammers. Now that the highest percent of victims start to be linked with scammers via **anonymous calls and texts**, such calls and texts should be **instantly blocked**. In this case, anonymous calls and texts blocking plays a role as immunity that should be boosted by everyone.

Next, whenever **cryptocurrency investment** is concerned, **stay alert!** Scammers always establish fake websites or apps to convince victims that they are investing in an "eligible" way. Moreover, small earnings have been the common tool to attract victims to invest more.

Don't be ashamed to share your experience or report to corresponding organizations. Keep in mind, stay ALERT all the time!

By the way, when there's something that is too good to be true, it must be a scam.



RealCall

RealCall is an app that provides spam call blocking and caller ID for global users. Empowered by the vast and ever-evolving database and AI-based modeling, RealCall features top-notch accuracy of blocking.

For more information, please visit

 <https://www.realcall.ai>

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