

Internet dating is bad for your wealth

A serial fraudster who cheated single women he wooed on internet dating websites out of at least £500,000 was jailed on 14 September for almost seven years.

Described in court as 'a man with a golden tongue', charming and apparently successful professional, David Checkley seemed ideal to the women he courted on dating websites.

In reality, however, the 52-year-old was a serial fraudster who cheated some 30+ victims out of more than £500,000. He was tried on 13 specimen charges of fraud totalling £163,000.

One of his single victims lent him £10,000 after he claimed to need money for a vital operation to cure his fictional Parkinson's disease.

Others gave him cash for fictitious businesses as he posed amongst many as an architect, property developer, fighter pilot and Vietnam War veteran – even though he was 14 when the war ended. He told victims of his friendship with Michael J Fox and President Barack Obama.

He spent the money on Mercedes and Ferrari cars, Harley Davidson motorbikes and Rolex watches.

One woman ended up losing her house. Another lost her business.

Whilst this example of internet dating fraud is against women, such frauds are just as likely to be targeted against men, who are generally more at risk.

Dating Agency and Singles Events service RSVP offers a safe way to go dating; it protects its clients from fraud by interviewing and ID-checking all potential members up front. So they know who their clients are and where they live. In the unlikely event that anything did go wrong (and it hasn't yet), it would be a relatively simple matter to trace anyone involved or suspected.

RSVP have also assembled their own advice on avoiding internet dating scams and published this on the website: www.dating-tips-and-advice.co.uk.

The simplest and easiest to remember advice about avoiding fraud on the internet is:

if something/someone seems too good to be true, it/he/she almost certainly is.

For more details about RSVP membership and safe dating, visit www.rsvp-int.co.uk or call **0800 542 7262**.

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Notes to Editors

RSVP was established in 1992 and is today one of the UK's largest and most-respected off-line dating agencies. Owned today by husband and wife team Anne and Roland Stringer, RSVP is distinguished by being one of the very few agencies to offer two ways for single people to meet:

- one-to-one introductions
- 60 singles events every month.

RSVP is a member of the Association of British Introduction Agencies, established in 1981 at the instigation of the OFT to provide clients with a way of accessing agencies that subscribe to a Code of Conduct.

To learn more about RSVP, visit www.rsvp-int.co.uk/about.htm.

Or view a brief history of RSVP at www.rsvp-int.co.uk/documents/RSVPHistory.pdf.

RSVP operates in London, Birmingham, Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Luton, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Peterborough, Rutland, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, West Midlands, Worcestershire.

Anne Stringer, RSVP Managing Director and Chief Matchmaker, is available for interview to discuss the content of this press release further. Anne is an articulate, media-savvy professional who is the point of reference on dating and relationships for BBC Radio Leicester, BBC Three Counties Radio, BBC Radio Northampton and many more. She has also appeared on ITV Anglia, LBC and in many newspapers and magazines. You can read/hear/watch examples of Anne's appearances on our media page here: www.rsvp-int.co.uk/media.htm.



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