# Sophisticated conman jailed for £600,000 sports betting fraud targeting family and friends



A sophisticated conman has been sentenced to four-and-a-half years in prison after orchestrating a sports betting scheme that defrauded 14 family and friends out of £600,000. Richard Evans, 41, marketed his fraudulent operation as a legitimate investment opportunity, citing impressive returns through a complex spread betting strategy. However, this scheme soon unravelled, leaving a trail of financial devastation that included individuals who had known him for years and one victim, a teacher, who lost an inheritance she had received at the age of eleven.

The court heard that Evans misled his victims into believing they were participating in a highly lucrative venture supposedly backed by a wealthy business partner. They signed contracts promising a guaranteed return of 15%, which was based on fabricated statistics and annual statements that Evans created to entice further investment. Instead of generating income, the operation lacked any real foundation, resulting in catastrophic losses. Prosecutors revealed that funds funnelled into Evans's bank account were promptly squandered on personal luxuries, dining at restaurants, and even covering his mortgage.

The fallout was extensive, with victims struggling to comprehend how someone they had known personally could betray their trust to such an extent. One victim, Alison Wem, expressed her feelings of failure and guilt for having encouraged her family to invest, highlighting the emotional scars that had formed as a result of the fraud.

Judge Jaron Crooknorth, who presided over the case at Portsmouth Crown Court, remarked on the stark dishonesty of Evans's actions, emphasising that he should feel "ashamed." While Evans’s defence lawyer, James Williams, argued that the scheme was initially a "genuine" attempt to enrich both himself and his investors, the reality was that the setup was inherently deceptive from the start. Evans concealed the true nature of the venture and made excuses for why repayments were not forthcoming until the victims finally reported him to the police in 2021, seven years after the scheme began.

The case of Richard Evans is a sobering reminder of how close relationships can be weaponised in fraudulent schemes. It reflects a broader trend observed globally where individuals exploit personal connections for financial gain. In a separate but notable instance, Richard Dexter was sentenced to four-and-a-half years for similar fraudulent activity, where he deceived a woman he met on Tinder into investing over £140,000 by falsely claiming to have connections with major corporations. Dexter's case exemplifies a different but equally manipulative tactic, where charm and deception coalesce to exploit trust.

The legal repercussions of such deception are severe. Many fraudsters not only face lengthy prison sentences but also create unquantifiable emotional damage to their victims. The fallout from Evans's scheme has fractured relationships; some victims are still grappling with the betrayal, while others find it hard to accept the reality of their financial losses. This incident, alongside growing concerns over increasing scams targeting friends and family networks, underscores the need for vigilance and trustworthiness in financial dealings.

As for Evans, despite the heavy sentence, the victims have yet to see any of their money returned, raising questions about reparations and the systemic enforcement of financial regulations to protect individuals from such fraudulent schemes in the future. With cases like these proliferating, the legal system faces the challenge of addressing both the perpetrators and the broader societal vulnerabilities that enable such fraud to occur.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-60332908)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.suffolknewsherald.com/2023/10/25/portsmouth-man-sentenced-in-mail-fraud-case/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/portsmouth-tinder-conman-faces-jail-for-swindling-ps140000-out-of-millionairess-3473072)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.suffolknewsherald.com/2023/10/25/portsmouth-man-sentenced-in-mail-fraud-case/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-60332908)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.5sah.co.uk/knowledge-hub/news/2025-02-12/andrew-evans-and-sophia-kerridge-secure-ponzi-scheme-conviction)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14750313/Sophisticated-conman-dupes-14-close-family-friends-shell-600-000-fraudulent-sports-betting-scheme-lavishes-money-himself.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-60332908> - Richard Dexter, 38, was sentenced to four and a half years in prison at Portsmouth Crown Court after admitting seven counts of fraud and perverting the course of justice. He deceived Amrita Sebastian, a woman he met on Tinder, into investing over £140,000 by falsely claiming to have acquired a patent catalogue of biopharmaceutical products and being on the verge of a £12 million licensing deal with 3M. The multinational company later confirmed it had no contact with Dexter. The court heard that Dexter continued to approach Ms. Sebastian for money throughout 2016, despite her being in ill health. Police later found an investment report on his computer in which he falsely claimed to have assets of £4 million. A fake licensing agreement, created from a US legal documents website, was also discovered on a USB stick. The court heard Dexter had boasted about his 'immense wealth and having a private jet'. A former business colleague described him as 'constantly boasting and tried to portray himself as a success', most of which was 'outright lies', prosecutors said. Speaking in court, Dexter said: 'I'm very, very sorry to the point that I think about it every day and have done for seven years. I can't justify what I did.' When questioned he said the money went on 'general day-to-day living' and clearing a debt of £35,000. He admitted seven charges of fraud and was found guilty of perverting the course of justice and possession of articles for use in fraud, following a trial in November. Passing sentence His Honour Justice Mousley QC said Dexter 'never spared a thought' for Ms. Sebastian. 'There is no doubt dishonesty is a feature of your character - it is profound,' he added. 'You are someone who shows no hesitation in resorting to lies with an ease that is almost breath taking.' He was ordered to spend at least half of his sentence in custody. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-60332908?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.suffolknewsherald.com/2023/10/25/portsmouth-man-sentenced-in-mail-fraud-case/> - Richard Edward Hardy, 55, was sentenced to two years in prison for defrauding nearly 20 victims across the United States of almost $90,000 in several mail fraud schemes. Between 2020 and 2022, Hardy conspired with others to use the U.S. postal service and other mail carriers to defraud victims in romance, real estate, and other fraud schemes. In the real estate scheme, victims responded to a property that was listed for rent online. The victims were instructed to send Hardy a security deposit and first month’s rent at his Portsmouth home. Unbeknownst to the victims, the properties were not actually for rent, and Hardy cashed the money orders and shared the proceeds with his co-conspirators. Hardy defrauded nearly all the victims after being convicted in Portsmouth General District Court of similar conduct in December 2020. Further, after federal law enforcement executed a search warrant at his home in September 2022, Hardy continued to defraud additional victims in a change-of-address scheme. ([suffolknewsherald.com](https://www.suffolknewsherald.com/2023/10/25/portsmouth-man-sentenced-in-mail-fraud-case/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.5sah.co.uk/knowledge-hub/news/2025-02-12/andrew-evans-and-sophia-kerridge-secure-ponzi-scheme-conviction> - Andrew Evans and Sophia Kerridge prosecuted Richard Lester for running a Ponzi scheme that targeted hundreds of people worldwide who thought they were investing in discounted cruise holidays. Following a two-month trial at Chelmsford Crown Court, the jury unanimously convicted Richard Lester of fraudulent trading and concealing criminal property. The fraud affected over 180 victims from across the world. Witnesses gave evidence during the trial in person and via video link from the United States, Canada, Australia, as well as from various parts of the UK about how they had spent their savings on Cruise Vouchers or Cruise Miles which they later redeemed for cruises, only to have their bookings cancelled without warning, as the Ponzi scheme started to collapse. The Prosecution also relied upon expert forensic accounting evidence to identify how customers’ monies had been laundered and applied by Lester to finance his lavish lifestyle, gambling, and other business interests. He was sentenced to 5 years in prison and was disqualified from being a company director for 9 years. ([5sah.co.uk](https://www.5sah.co.uk/knowledge-hub/news/2025-02-12/andrew-evans-and-sophia-kerridge-secure-ponzi-scheme-conviction?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/portsmouth-tinder-conman-faces-jail-for-swindling-ps140000-out-of-millionairess-3473072> - Richard Dexter, 38, was warned he faces jail after conning a millionairess he met on Tinder into handing him almost £150,000. He promised victim Amrita Sebastian that he was on the verge of a ‘big windfall’ and ‘significant sums’ after telling her he had acquired the patents to valuable biopharmaceutical technology. As part of his ‘house of cards’ of deceit, Dexter told her major multi-nationals - including US medical firm 3M - were interested in signing a multi-million pound deal with him. On the back of his lies, Ms. Sebastian - a Middle East-based executive - handed over a series of payments totalling £141,000 believing they were investments, prosecutors say. However, Dexter pocketed the cash for himself and came up with a series of increasingly bizarre excuses for why he couldn't pay her back. ([portsmouth.co.uk](https://www.portsmouth.co.uk/news/crime/portsmouth-tinder-conman-faces-jail-for-swindling-ps140000-out-of-millionairess-3473072?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-4th-circuit/1114153.html> - In the case UNITED STATES v. EVANS, the defendant, Evans, was involved in a scheme where he impersonated individuals to negotiate checks on their accounts, leading to a loss of $13,634.89 to businesses in North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. Evans purchased personal information about victims from a childhood friend employed by Wachovia Bank and used false identification to negotiate the checks. He also bought approximately ten to twenty false identification cards to perpetrate additional identity theft crimes. Evans pleaded guilty to identity theft, and the court noted the severe repercussions for his victims, including damage to their reputations and financial losses. ([caselaw.findlaw.com](https://caselaw.findlaw.com/court/us-4th-circuit/1114153.html?utm_source=openai))