

Armed gang posed as single women on Tinder to lure men, proving again that Tinder is a scam

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- [Lovesick singletons are the biggest target for scam artists in America](#)

Swipe right with caution.

Police in San Jose, California, arrested five people for allegedly staging a series of armed robberies, assaults and carjackings by asking unsuspecting men to meet “Victoria” or “Becky,” two fictional profiles they set up on the location-based dating app Tinder. The suspects, three males and two females, range in age from 15 to 19.

“The times and locations were usually in the late evening hours on secluded streets near a park,” the San Jose Police Department [said in a statement](#). “When the victim arrived at the location, they were beaten, robbed and carjacked at gunpoint by several masked suspects.”

Tinder did not respond to request for comment.

Dating sites also are working to weed out such “cat phishing,” which is usually carried out remotely by asking the victim to wire money rather than in-person shakedowns. Location-based dating apps like The Grade and Tinder are encouraging their members to connect through Facebook to create more transparency about age and real first names.

The dating industry is worth up to \$3 billion and is growing [between 5 percent and 7 percent](#) a year. All the big dating sites offer similar advice to members: Never wire money, don’t give out your home address and always meet in a crowded, well-lit public place. Online robots posing as potential matches may also lure singletons to click on malware links, security consultants warn.

Dating sites say they’re taking action to prevent assaults. After a 2011 date arranged on Match.com — also owned by IAC Interactive, the same company that owns Tinder and OKCupid — resulted in a sexual assault, the site agreed to begin screening members against public sex offender registries, a Match.com spokeswoman said at the time.

Match says 200-plus customer service agents “read through every single profile and approve every picture” looking for inappropriate content like sexually explicit language or pictures,

or any signs of criminal behavior such as illegal drug use. Mark Webb, the lawyer who represented the prosecution in the assault case, said it helped pave the way for safer dating.

If you believe you've been the victim of a dating scam, you can [report it to the Federal Trade Commission](#) online using its complaint form. The FTC suggests users include in a complaint the website where they met the scammer. Security consultants say you should always tell people where you are going and give them the location.

The number of so-called cat phishing or romance scams reported to the FTC increased to over 21,000 in 2018, up from 8,500 in 2015. People targeted by these scams reported a median loss of \$2,600, according to the FTC. Losses are even higher for older age groups, with people 70 and over reporting the biggest median loss at \$10,000