

# Tinder Swindler's Web: A Test Case Study and Security Analysis of Online Dating App.

<sup>1</sup>Subhra Prosun Paul, <sup>2</sup>Dipayan Ghosh

<sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of CSE, Chandigarh University, Chandigarh, India

<sup>2</sup>Research Engineer, C3i Hub, Department of CSE, Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur, Kanpur, India  
Email - <sup>1</sup>subhra.phd.cu2021@gmail.com, <sup>2</sup>dipayanghoshk@gmail.com

**Abstract:** "Tinder Swindler" is a thrilling Netflix film that explores the dark and unpredictable side of online dating. When a charismatic entrepreneur creates a revolutionary dating app, it quickly gains popularity, connecting people in ways never imagined. However, as the app's success soars, it becomes a breeding ground for deception, betrayal, and unexpected consequences. The film delves into the lives of individuals entangled in a web of swipes and matches, revealing the blurred lines between love and deceit. With a mix of suspense, romance, and unexpected twists, "Tinder Swindler" exposes the vulnerabilities that come with the quest for connection in the digital age. Get ready for a rollercoaster ride of emotions as the characters navigate the complexities of modern relationships in this gripping Netflix original.

**Key Words:** Online dating, love and deceit, digital age, financial fraud, cybercrime, red flags, digital dating awareness, technological determinism, catfish.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

In the realm of online dating, where connections are forged through digital interfaces, the "Tinder Swindler" stands as a cautionary tale, highlighting the vulnerability of individuals seeking love in the virtual landscape [1]. This essay explores the infamous case of the Tinder Swindler, shedding light on the tactics employed, the consequences for victims, and the broader implications for online dating security.

### 1.1 THE TALE OF THE TINDER SWINDLER:

This gripping Netflix documentary about a jet-setter internet-dating scammer is staggering yet compassionate towards the female victim [2]. Had I met someone in a hill town or on a beach and it had been love at first sight, or had our conversation started with a little quarrel and ended in romance, what a pleasure it would have been. But the sad thing is that in real life, such experiences are rare. So for many of us, the only way to find a romantic partner is through a dating app like Tinder. Swipe right means to 'like or accept' someone, and swipe left means to 'reject'. These two finger gestures form the core of Tinder's usage mechanics. If two people swipe right on each other's profiles, Tinder declares them a match. One's right swipe can change the shape of one's life. One characteristic of social media is that one can pretend to be a completely different person than one's real self [3]. In the virtual world, people can don any mask and convince others that it is their true face.

In the documentary, Cicilie is looking for her perfect match on Tinder. Cicilie swipes right on Simon Leviev's profile and Tinder finds them as a match [4]. Simon tries to pass himself off as a billionaire. Simon snapped his picture next to diamond king Lev Levies. That picture is enough to convince Cicilie that Lev Levies is Simon's father. He also poses as the prince of the LLD diamonds. Cicilie feels very happy to have such a rich, handsome man in her life. Simon already knows that. He requests to meet her at a five-star hotel. Simon knows how to win a woman's heart. Simon tells Cicilie about his ex-wife and daughter. Cecilie is impressed by Simon's honesty. Simon makes the final move when he asks Cicilie to accompany him on his private jet. In a short time, Simon glamourizes himself as rich and honest to Cecilie. Celicie is led to believe that Simon wants her as a life partner. Simon flies to Oslo on a private jet to meet Cicilie. They have a good time. Cecilie is pleased to be Simon's girlfriend. She starts planning to rent a new house and

start a life with Simon. At this point, the story takes a turn. Simon asks Cecilie for financial help by sending her a video of his bloodied face, claiming that he is in danger. Cicilie's victimisation starts. She continues to help Simon financially, losing everything she owns. When Cicilie cannot afford Simon's expenses anymore, she asks for her money back. Obviously, she does not get any money back. She realises that Simon has committed financial fraud on her with the false promise of love and romance. But as usual, it's too late for Cicilie. For Simon, it's time to move on to another victim.

Simon finds another Swedish woman, Pernilla, who seems a little worldlier than Cicilie. Pernilla thought it would be interesting to date Simon when they were matched on Tinder. To pretend to be a rich man, Simon sends Pernilla a flight ticket to Amsterdam. Pernilla finds the LLD Diamond's official email address as the contact email for the ticket. Upon searching for LLD Diamonds on the Internet, she gets cautious. Pernilla doesn't fall for Simon's charms, at least not romantically, but they become friends. She enjoys a wild summer with Simon, attends many luxurious parties, and even introduces Pernilla to his Russian girlfriend. Everything goes fine until Simon pretends to be in danger by sending that bloodied face video again.

Cecilia and Pernilla both confirm Simon's identity from Google and Instagram-verified accounts. But all that glitters is not real gold. Tinder Swindler has taught us that googling names before going on a date with someone we meet online isn't enough. We need to do more to be sure the person we have been talking to isn't a scammer or catfish. Flashy gifts might be covering red flags. Moving in together too quickly is a bad sign. If someone gets really interested in us too soon and tries to get close too fast, we have to wave the red flag. Cicilie tries to know what Simon is up to with the money she was defrauded of. Cicilie asks for help from the VG newspaper. Journalists begin gathering evidence. Cicilie and Pernilla are both victims of Simon. They both decide to unmask Simon in front of the public. When the story is finally published, the women face ignominy and insults on social media from strangers who call them 'gold-diggers' and other epithets. Simon's current girlfriend, Ayleen, learns the story. The same thing happened to her, but Simon is still present in her life. In the end, Ayleen instruments Simon's apprehension at the airport for a fake passport. The documentary closes off with Cicilie, Pernilla, and Ayleen expressing joy at Simon's arrest, but a montage at the end reveals that he only served one-third of his sentence and is currently a free man.

Most true-life movies tend to exaggerate. There is only a mixture of thrills and sadness that continues to unfold. Tinder swindler seems to be an exception to us. The three women are interviewed in separate locations, and the documentary starts with Cicilie's interview. Cicilie's interview scene looks like she's sharing all her stories with a friend [5]. Sometimes she has a smile on her lips, and sometimes she has teary eyes. The three women in the story show signs of compassionate behaviour towards each other. The efforts of VG newspaper journalists to find the truth must be applauded. It takes a lot of guts to make a documentary film like 'The Tinder Swindler', and Felicity Morris shows that guts. This type of victimisation separates people from their main lives; they cannot return to the mainstream of life. This documentary is the story of three women coming back to the mainstream, which will inspire others and give ideas to prevent cybercrime [6].

## **2. PERPETRATION OF ONLINE ROMANCE FRAUD:**

It's important to clarify that engaging in online romance fraud or any form of fraudulent activity is illegal and unethical. The term "Tinder Swindler" is associated with a documentary that tells the story of a man who allegedly defrauded women he met on the dating app Tinder [7]. While the documentary gained attention, it's crucial to remember that such behaviour is not representative of ethical and legal relationships. Romance fraud involves building a romantic relationship with someone with the intent to deceive and exploit them financially [8]. This can include creating fake identities, manipulating emotions, and ultimately scamming victims out of money. Victims of romance fraud may experience significant emotional and financial harm.

It's essential for individuals to be cautious when forming online relationships, and platforms like Tinder often provide safety guidelines to help users protect themselves from scams. If we or someone we know has fallen victim to romance fraud, it's important to report the incident to law enforcement and the relevant online platform. Always prioritise our safety, and be sceptical of individuals who ask for money or make unusual financial requests in the context of a romantic relationship. If you have concerns about someone's intentions, consider seeking advice from friends, family, or even law enforcement [9].

## 2.1 TACTICS OF DECEPTION:

The swindler's success lies in his ability to craft compelling personas and manipulate emotions. Using a combination of charm, fabricated stories, and manipulated images; he presented an idealised version of himself to his targets [10]. The swindler meticulously exploited the desire for love and connection, leaving victims emotionally invested before revealing his true intentions—financial gain.

## 2.2 CONSEQUENCES FOR VICTIMS:

The aftermath of falling victim to the Tinder Swindler goes beyond monetary losses. Victims grapple with the emotional trauma of betrayal and the realization that their quest for love was manipulated for ulterior motives. The psychological toll extends to a loss of trust, self-doubt, and the challenge of rebuilding one's life after such a profound breach of intimacy [11].

## 3. BROADER IMPLICATIONS FOR ONLINE DATING SECURITY:

Adherence The case of the Tinder Swindler underscores the urgent need for enhanced security measures within online dating platforms [12]. While the responsibility primarily lies with the platforms to implement stricter verification processes, users must also exercise caution and be vigilant for potential red flags. Increased awareness of scams and deceptive practices can empower individuals to navigate the online dating landscape more safely. The theoretical framework for "Tinder Swindler" draws upon concepts from sociology, psychology, and technology studies [13].

- **Social Exchange Theory:** The film explores the dynamics of social exchange within the context of online dating. Characters engage in the give-and-take of emotions, trust, and personal information, reflecting the principles of social exchange theory.
- **Symbolic Interactionism:** Symbolic interactionism is evident as characters interpret and give meaning to the symbols (such as profile pictures, messages, and digital interactions) within the online dating environment, shaping their perceptions and interactions.
- **Self-Presentation Theory:** The film delves into the concept of self-presentation in the digital realm, where individuals carefully curate their online personas. It explores how this deliberate construction of identity influences the development of relationships and the consequences of authenticity or deception.
- **Technological Determinism:** Examining the impact of the dating app on the characters' lives, the film considers technological determinism. It explores how the design and features of the app shape the behavior and relationships of its users, highlighting the profound influence of technology on modern romance.
- **Trust and Risk in Online Environments:** Theoretical perspectives on trust and risk are applied as characters navigate the uncertainties of online dating. The film explores how trust is established, maintained, or shattered in a digital space where face-to-face interactions are limited.
- **Hyper personal Model:** Drawing from communication studies, the hyperpersonal model is evident as characters experience heightened levels of intimacy and connection in the online realm. The film examines the paradox of online communication, where individuals may feel more connected despite physical distance.

By integrating these theoretical frameworks, "Tinder Swindler" aims to provide a nuanced exploration of the complexities that arise when traditional social dynamics intersect with the digital landscape of contemporary dating apps.

## 4. RECOMMENDED GUIDELINES:

Movies, Movies, analysing a person's sentiment, and determining if they are fraudulent on a dating app can be challenging, and it's important to approach this with caution [14]. While we can look for certain signs, keep in mind that these are not fool proof methods, and false positives are possible.

- **Inconsistencies in Profile Information:** Check for inconsistencies in the details provided in their profile, such as age, location, job, and relationship status. Fraudsters may provide conflicting information.
- **Grammar and Language Use:** We have to pay attention to the way they communicate. Fraudsters may have poor grammar or use language that seems unnatural. However, this is not always a definitive sign, as language skills can vary widely.
- **Too Good to Be True:** We have to be cautious if the person seems too perfect or if their story seems too good to be true. Fraudsters may create idealized profiles to attract attention.

- **Quick Professions of Love:** We have to be wary if the person professes love or deep feelings very quickly. Fraudsters may try to establish an emotional connection rapidly to manipulate their targets.
- **Requests for Money:** If the person starts asking for money or financial assistance, it's a significant red flag. We never send money to someone we haven't met online, especially if we haven't met them in person.
- **Avoiding Face-to-Face Meetings:** Fraudsters may avoid meeting in person or make excuses for not being able to meet. We have to be cautious if the person seems reluctant to take the relationship offline.
- **Image Reverse Search:** We have to use image reverse search tools to check if the profile pictures are associated with other online profiles. Fraudsters often use stolen photos.
- **Google Search:** We have to do a simple Google search with their name, location, and any other information they've provided. This can sometimes reveal if the person is using a fake identity.
- **Video Calls:** We need to suggest a video call to verify the person's identity. We have to be cautious if they consistently refuse or make excuses not to video chat.
- **Trust our instincts:** If something feels off or too good to be true, we need to trust our instincts. It's better to be cautious and verify information before getting emotionally invested.
- **Conversations with friends and family:** Sharing details about the person we're dating from the app with someone we trust can provide a valuable space to reflect on our own experiences. Discussing the highs and lows of the relationship can help us gain clarity on our feelings and priorities [15]. Every individual approaches relationships with their own set of values and experiences. Consulting with different people allows us to tap into a variety of perspectives. External observers can often detect red flags that may be less apparent when one is emotionally involved. Discussing our dating situation with others can bring objectivity, helping us to evaluate the relationship from a more balanced standpoint [16].

We have to remember that, while these signs can be indicative of potential fraud, they are not foolproof. Always prioritize our safety, and if we have concerns, we need to consider seeking advice from friends or reporting suspicious behaviour to the dating app platform. Additionally, we need to be aware of the potential for false positives and avoid making accusations without concrete evidence. Recent advancements in generative AI have increased this risk manifold. Identifying such deep-fake videos can be a critical factor in the times to come. Here are a few suggestions that might come in handy.

- To look for unnatural facial expressions, blinking, or lip sync issues. We need to pay attention to inconsistent lighting and shadows on the face.
- To look for unrealistic renderings of hair and clothing, any inconsistency can be a red flag.
- Pay attention to any discrepancies between lip movements and spoken words.
- Deepfake algorithms may have difficulty generating realistic backgrounds. We need to look for distorted or blurred areas and check for consistency in the environment.
- To use online tools and software specifically designed to detect fake videos. We need to keep in mind that the effectiveness of these tools may vary.
- Perform a reverse image or video search using tools like Google Images or InVID to check if the person's image or video has been used elsewhere on the internet.
- To ensure that the video call is initiated from a legitimate and secure platform. We have to be cautious about answering video calls from unknown sources.
- If we have serious concerns about the authenticity of a video, consider consulting with experts in forensics or cybersecurity who specialize in deepfake detection.
- To keep ourselves updated on the latest developments in deepfake detection technology, as new tools and techniques are continuously being developed.
- It's important to note that while these methods may help to identify potential deepfakes, they are not foolproof, and the technology used to create deep fakes is continually evolving. Always, we have to approach online interactions with caution and verify information through multiple sources when possible [17].

## 5. CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, the online dating app. Security analysis from the perspective of the Netflix documentary "Tinder Swindler" basically highlights the impact of deceptive online personas and the emotional toll on the victims, which is a very sensitive topic in today's online dating. It serves as a cautionary tale about the dangers of online relationships and the need for increased awareness and vigilance in the digital dating world. The documentary underscores the importance

of verifying identities and exercising caution before placing trust in virtual connections. It is expected that people should be more careful while making online relationships through various dating apps.

## REFERENCES:

1. Lokanan, Mark E. "The tinder swindler: Analyzing public sentiments of romance fraud using machine learning and artificial intelligence." *Journal of Economic Criminology* 2 (2023): 100023.
2. Mo, Yuen Ting Natalie. "Victorian Tinder: Examining New Media Technologies in the Nineteenth-Century Marriage Plot." (2023).
3. Cefai, Sarah. "Consent-deception: a feminist cultural media theory of commonsense consent." *Feminist Theory* (2023): 14647001231206026.
4. Duguay, Stefanie. "You can't use this app for that: Exploring off-label use through an investigation of Tinder." *The information society* 36.1 (2020): 30-42.
5. Bland, Richard Sinclair I. Matthew, and I. Bradley Savage. "Dating hot spot to fraud hot spot: Targeting the social characteristics of romance fraud victims in England and Wales." (2023).
6. Aderibigbe, Yakub. "Digital deception in the online dating space: A study of tinder." (2023).
7. Basra, Sri Meiweni. "Speech Acts Analysis of the Main Characters in Tinder Swindler Documentary Film." *JALL (Journal of Applied Linguistics and Literacy)* 7.1 (2023): 154-163.
8. Hammond, Christiana, and Langmia Kehbuma. "Online Dating and Females in the Academia: Is it an Issue for Commendation, Condemnation or Ambivalence?." *Research Journal of Mass Communication and Information Technology* 6.2 (2020): 22-39.
9. Rosewarne, Lauren. *Intimacy on the Internet: Media representations of online connections*. Routledge, 2016.
10. Greene, Bronwyn. "A qualitative investigation into the psychological impacts of using mobile dating apps and online dating sites." (2016).
11. Ong, Grace. *Young Adults And Online Dating In Malaysia: An Exploratory Study*. Diss. UTAR, 2019.
12. Obada-Obieh, Borke, Sonia Chiasson, and Anil Somayaji. "'Don't break my heart!': user security strategies for online dating." *Workshop on Usable Security (USEC)*. 2017.
13. Cobb, Camille, and Tadayoshi Kohno. "How public is my private life? Privacy in online dating." *Proceedings of the 26th International Conference on World Wide Web*. 2017.
14. Ostheimer, Julia, and Sarfraz Iqbal. "Privacy in online dating: does it matter?." *Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Cryptography, Security and Privacy*. 2019.
15. Patsakis, Constantinos, Athanasios Zigomitros, and Agusti Solanas. "Analysis of privacy and security exposure in mobile dating applications." *Mobile, Secure, and Programmable Networking: First International Conference, MSPN 2015, Paris, France, June 15-17, 2015, Selected Papers 1*. Springer International Publishing, 2015.
16. Stoicescu, Maria, and Cosima Rughiniş. "Perils of digital intimacy. A classification framework for privacy, security, and safety risks on dating apps." *2021 23rd International Conference on Control Systems and Computer Science (CSCS)*. IEEE, 2021.
17. Nandwani, Mona, and Rishabh Kaushal. "Evaluating user vulnerability to privacy disclosures over online dating platforms." *Innovative Mobile and Internet Services in Ubiquitous Computing: Proceedings of the 11th International Conference on Innovative Mobile and Internet Services in Ubiquitous Computing (IMIS-2017)*. Springer International Publishing, 2018.