## The Dangers of Selling a Motorhome on Facebook Marketplace

### Initial Enquiries and Screening

I placed an advertisement for my motorhome on Facebook Marketplace. For security reasons, I intentionally omitted my telephone number.

The ad received approximately 15 replies. Red flags appeared immediately when several buyers offered the full asking price without even viewing the vehicle. To stay organised and avoid confusion, I kept a written log of the enquiries and marked an "X" next to these suspicious buyers.

Eventually, I narrowed the list down to one prospective buyer who appeared to have a genuine Facebook profile. Many of the other accounts lacked basic profile information or were only a couple of years old.

### Arranging the Viewing

I shared my phone number with the chosen buyer, and an Irish gentleman called me shortly after. He asked several questions, and I was completely transparent with him. I explained that the motorhome had previously suffered from damp issues, which had since been sealed but not fully rectified.

We initially agreed that he would visit in two days to inspect the vehicle. However, the following day, he texted back to ask if he could view it a day early. I agreed to the change but explicitly instructed him not to bring a crowd of people.

### The Inspection and High-Pressure Tactics

Two men arrived for the viewing. They immediately began inspecting the interior using a damp meter. The device registered a reading of 99% which I knew to be false. They continually focused on the negative aspects of the vehicle to devalue it. I informed them that I already had another offer on the table and refused to negotiate below a certain threshold. When they made an insultingly low offer, I told them we were completely misaligned.

At that point, one of the men asked me to pour water onto the roof. I did as requested. When I stepped inside the vehicle afterward, he pointed out a wet patch on the upper right side. I knew instantly that he has sprayed water there himself to stage a leak.

As soon as I stepped back outside, they immediately pressure me with another very low offer. This triggered a fight or flight response, sending adrenaline surging through my bloodstream. In that high stress state, I went into fierce negotiations, desperately trying to push the price up as if my life depended on it. I ultimately agreed to a price well below a genuine offer I had previously received from a professional vehicle repairer.

### The Transaction and Financial Discrepancies

The buyer, who identified himself as Steven, entered my house under the guise of making a bank transfer. Instead, he pulled out the entire sum in cash. I reminded him that we had explicitly agreed on a bank transfer.

To resolve this, I travelled with Steven and his associate, Patrick in their car to my local Barclays branch on Princes Street. We deposited the cash into my account and the bank staff informed me that they would call once the funds had fully cleared.

During the drive back to my flat in Martlesham Heath, the bank called to inform me that the cash deposit was £100 short. I decided I would collect the missing £100 from Steven once we returned to my house. However, as soon we stepped inside to complete the V5C vehicle transfer, Steven handed me just £60, claiming he was keeping £40 to cover his fuel costs. Although I hesitated, I did not challenge him.

When we initiated the ownership transfer online, I began filling out the buyer's details. Steven instructed me to leave the section blank. While I found this highly suspicious, I complied, handed over both sets of keys and they drove away.

**Reflection**

Reflecting on the incident, I now fully understand the psychological tactic they used. By manufacturing defects and rushing the process, they forced me into a state of panic, severely clouding my judgement.

Furthermore, Steven repeatedly claimed he was in a rush to catch a ferry from Liverpool. In hindsight, his story made no sense; I even asked him at the time how he could have pre-booked a ferry slot when he did not know if he would be purchasing.

### Dangers of selling motorhome on Facebook Marketplace: AI Response

It sounds like you went through an incredibly stressful experience. You should trust your instincts here – your gut was 100% right. You were targeted by a notorious, highly coordinated **distraction scam** frequently used by unscrupulous buyers (often travelling in groups) on Facebook Marketplace, eBay and Autotrader.

They use intimidation, manufactured faults and deliberate sabotage to pressure honest sellers into slashing their prices.

Here is a breakdown of the specific tactics they used against you, why they do it, and how you can protect yourself moving forward.

**The Anatomy of the Scam Used Against You**

- **Buying Sight-Unseen:** Offering full asking price immediately is a tactic to lock you in and stop you from talking to genuine buyers. They never intend to pay that price.
- **Changing the Date:** Arriving a day early is a deliberate tactic to catch you off guard, rushing you so you have less time to think clearly or arrange for a friend to be there with you.
- **The "Crowd" and Distraction:** Even though you asked him not to bring a crowd, bringing a second person is essential to their scam. One person distracts you (asking you to pour water on the roof), while the other sabotages the vehicle (spraying water inside or using a fake/rigged damp meter).
- **The Phoney Damp Meter:** They often use cheap, uncalibrated, or rigged tools. They often press them against a damp cloth in their pocket right before touching your wall, or simply use a device that beeps aggressively on any surface to create instant panic.
- **Chemical/Oil Sabotage:** A common variant of the distraction scam involves one buyer asking you to look at the exhaust while the other pours old into your engine coolant reservoir or snaps a wire. They then point out the "blown head gasket" or smoke and offer you a fraction of the value.
- **Fake Banking App Scams:** The buyer will show you their phone screen showing a "successful" bank transfer to your account. They use a dummy app that looks identical to a real banking app. The money never arrives, and they drive away with your motorhome.
- **Drafting Fraud/Logbook Theft:** Buyers asking to take photos of your V5C (logbook) or VIN number. They use these details to clone your vehicle or create fake listings to scam others.

**How to Protect Yourself Moving Forward**

If you decided to keep listing the motorhome yourself, strictly enforce these rules:

- **Never Be Alone:** Always have at least one or two friends or family members with you. Scammers rely on isolating vulnerable or solo sellers.
- **Never Leave Them Unattended:** If a buyer asks you to fetch water, get keys or look away, refuse. Tell them they are welcome to test things themselves, or have your friend fetch the items while you keep your eyes firmly on the buyer.
- **Clear the Vehicle Immediately:** If someone makes you feel uncomfortable, lies or demands a ridiculous price drop, you have the right to end the meeting. *Say: "The vehicle is no longer for sale to you. Please leave my property immediately."* If they refuse, call the police.
- **Verify the Cash or Bank Transfer:** Never let the vehicle or the V5C logbook leave your sight until you have checked **your own** banking app on **your own** phone and confirmed the funds are cleared. Do not rely on their phone.

## Here is an Explicit Breakdown of the Mechanical Sequence and Psychological Tricks they Used to Exploit You

The "adrenaline scam" – often referred to by UK and Irish police forces as a "damp meter" or "pressure purchase" scam – is designed entirely to hijack your nervous system. By triggering a massive "fight or flight" response, they impair your logical thinking so you agree to a massive price drop just to get them away from your property.

### The Trap: Building Unearned Trust

- **The Approach:** They often cold call at your door or respond immediately to private online adverts. They present themselves as friendly, eager buyers with cash or a mobile banking app ready.
- **The False Security:** They frequently transfer a large sum of money into your account or hand you cash immediately. By giving you the money *before* inspecting the vehicle, your brain registers the deal as "done", lowering your natural defence mechanisms.
- **The Family Disguise:** They often bring an older man whom they respectfully call "Dad" or "Grandad" or talk about buying it for a family holiday to appear wholesome and completely harmless.

### The Adrenaline Spike: The High-Pressure Extortion

- **Space Invasion:** They will crowd your physical space, talk loudly, and cross boundaries. This environment is deliberately designed to trigger an automatic adrenaline jump in your body, including anxiety, confusion and fear.
- **The Refund Demand:** Because they already "paid" you, they demand a heavy partial refund or a total refund with a massive "compensation" discount for their wasted tine and travel costs.
- **The Banking App Trick:** If you try to refund their bank transfer, they will often use fake banking apps to show you the money left their account or demand you transfer the refund to a completely different bank account. In some variations, their original payment was made using a stolen account or a bad cheque, meaning the initial money they gave you will eventually be reversed by the bank – leaving you completely out of pocket for the "refund" you gave them.

### Immediate Steps to Take Right Now

- **Freeze Your Accounts:** Contact your bank's fraud department immediately. Inform them of the exact time and nature of the transaction. If you transferred money back to them, tell them it was done under intimidation and duress.
- **File a Police Report:** Report the incident to your local constabulary or use the ReportFraud website