<u>Avoiding The Scammers In The</u> <u>Private Jet Charter Space</u>



In today's fast-moving world of luxury travel, private jet charter scams are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

This essential guide equips you with the knowledge and insight to confidently navigate the industry, spot red flags, and verify legitimate brokers & operators.

Whether you're a first-time flyer or a seasoned traveler, this document empowers you to make informed decisions, safeguard your finances, and enjoy the peace of mind that comes from knowing you're in safe hands.

Inside you'll find:

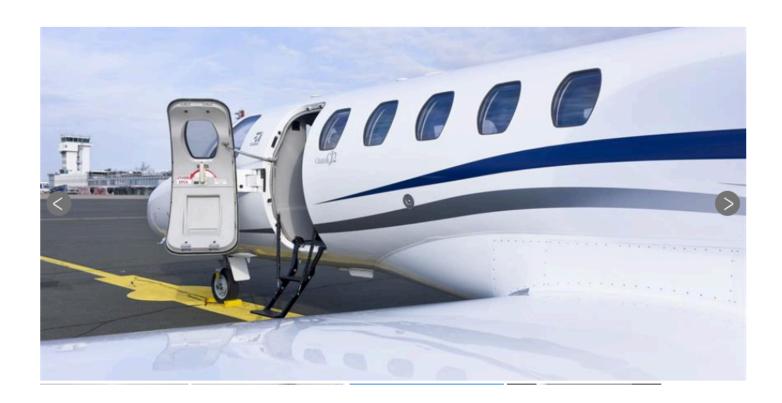
- How do the scammers work?
- What signs do scammers give off?
- How to spot the 'red flags'
- Evidential proof of known scammers
- Tips to avoid being scammed
- Finding someone reputable

This information is meant as a guide only, and doesn't guarantee immunity from being caught out by a scammer. Furthermore, the information contained within is relevant to Facebook groups and does not cover other social media platforms, although the tips and information can be used elsewhere.

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1: Why make this guide?

Being a private jet charter broker is a tough job. There have been many occasions I've personally seen posts and comments on social media from people proporting to be a genuine broker, but I could see clearly they were not.

Sometimes, when I tried to get in touch with prospective clients, they would come back to me telling me that I'd provided a price for a flight that was significantly more expensive than 'someone else'. When I questioned who that person was, more often than not it was someone who was (to me) blatantly trying to scam people out of their money.

Not only was this disappointing and frustrating, it was also making my job as a broker (and every other brokers job) significantly more difficult as it was distorting the clients expectations in relation to private jet charter pricing. Private aviation is not cheap, and it will never be so.

It would be within many of the Facebook groups that I'm a member of, and included the two group that I administrate and look after that I would see these types of scammers operating, and I realised that anything with a very high ticket price, especially private charter, was a target and potentially a gold mine for the scammers that refuse to earn a legitimate living.

To this day I go out of my way to try and point out to people when a known scammer has been in touch with them - sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. Therefore I decided to put a guide together to try and help more people spot the signs, and give some information regarding what I do myself, to see if someone is real, or just after a quick money grab.

So, over the next few chapters I will go through the aspects of how the scammers work, what they do, how to spot them, and how to drastically reduce your chances of falling victim to them.

2: Private Jet Charter Scams - What are they?

Private jet charter scams are fraudulent schemes designed to deceive individuals or businesses seeking to hire a private aircraft. These scams often involve fake operators, brokers, or listings that misrepresent aircraft availability, inflate costs, or collect payment for flights that never take place. The goal is usually to extract large sums of money quickly, often under the guise of urgency or exclusivity.

Common Types of Private Jet Charter Scams:

1. Fake Charter Companies or Brokers

Fraudsters set up convincing websites or impersonate legitimate operators to collect deposits or full payments without ever arranging a flight.

2. Non-Existent Aircraft Listings

Scammers advertise private jets they don't own or have access to—often using stolen images or details—to lure clients into making payments.

3. Misrepresentation of Aircraft or Services

Some bad actors promise a luxury aircraft or certain amenities, but deliver a far lower standard—if anything at all.

4. Last-Minute Cancellations with No Refund

After receiving payment, a scammer might cancel the flight citing mechanical issues or regulatory problems, then disappear with the funds.

5. Impersonation of Legitimate Operators

Sophisticated scams may involve cloning real business details or email domains to appear authentic and trick clients into paying to fraudulent accounts.

The Risk:

Due to the high value of private jet bookings—often tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars—these scams can cause significant financial loss, reputational damage, and travel disruptions.

Understanding how these scams operate is the first step toward avoiding them, which is why awareness is so crucial in the private aviation space, both for brokers & operators, and clientelle alike.

Why you need to be worried about scammers!

For Clients (Charter Customers):

- **Financial Loss**: Private jet charters involve high-value transactions. A single scam can cost a client tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars.
- **Personal Risk**: In some cases, fraudulent flights may involve unlicensed aircraft or unqualified crew, potentially endangering passenger safety.
- **Disrupted Travel Plans**: Victims often discover the scam at the last minute —resulting in missed meetings, events, or urgent travel.
- **Reputational Damage**: High-profile individuals or corporations falling victim to scams can suffer public embarrassment or scrutiny.
- **Data Theft**: Scammers may also collect sensitive personal or financial information during the booking process.

For Operators (Aircraft Owners/Managers):

- **Brand Misuse**: Fraudsters often impersonate real operators—using logos, aircraft photos, or certificates—damaging the operator's reputation when clients are defrauded.
- **Loss of Trust**: Repeated impersonation can cause legitimate customers to lose faith in the brand or avoid direct bookings altogether.
- **Operational Disruption**: Scams may cause confusion or disputes over legitimate bookings, wasting time and resources.
- **Regulatory Scrutiny**: If a scam is linked to a legitimate operator's name, they may face audits or compliance checks—even when innocent.

For Brokers (Middlemen Arranging Flights):

- **Liability Concerns**: Brokers who unknowingly arrange flights with fraudulent operators may face legal action or financial liability.
- **Reputational Risk**: Being associated with a scam—even indirectly—can damage client relationships and harm long-term business prospects.
- **Client Mistrust**: With scams on the rise, clients may become more skeptical of brokers, demanding more proof and transparency.
- **Increased Due Diligence Pressure**: Brokers must now vet operators more thoroughly, increasing workload and compliance responsibilities.

In Summary:

Scammers don't just target one group—they damage the entire ecosystem. From financial losses and reputational harm to regulatory issues and trust erosion, the ripple effects of private jet charter fraud affect everyone involved. That's why awareness, verification, and vigilance are essential across the board.

To effectively mitigate the risks of being scammed when chartering a private jet, clients, brokers, and operators must take a proactive and vigilant approach.

Here are some key actions clients can take:

Verify the Operator's Credentials

- Ask for the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) and verify it with the relevant aviation authority.
- Ensure the operator has appropriate insurance and safety ratings (e.g., ARGUS, Wyvern).

Work with Reputable Brokers or Companies

- Choose established brokers or charter companies with verifiable track records, strong online presence, and industry affiliations (e.g., ACA, NBAA).
- Check reviews, references, and testimonials—but don't rely on these alone.

Confirm Aircraft Details Directly

- Ask for the aircraft tail number, age, and photos—then cross-check this information independently.
- Use services like FlightRadar24, FlightAware or JetNet to verify aircraft activity and ownership.

Use Secure Payment Methods

- Be cautious with wire transfers to unfamiliar or offshore accounts. Credit card payments often incur a fee levied by the issuing bank (3-5% typically) and can add a signifianct amount overall. Payment services like PayPal are ok, but we very wary about sending money to anyone with generic email account, like gmail. or yahoo.
- Avoid making full payment upfront unless confident in the legitimacy of the provider. Depending on the time frame this is not always possible.
- Use **escrow services** or platforms that offer client protection.

Watch for Red Flags

- Deep discounts, pressure to book immediately, or inconsistent communication should raise suspicion.
- Be wary of generic contracts, lack of detail, or unclear terms.

The Scammer's Mindset in Private Jet Charter

1. "High-Value Targets, Low Regulation = Big Opportunity"

Scammers are drawn to private aviation because:

- Transactions are large, often \$20,000–\$100,000 or more per flight.
- Urgency is common—clients often book last minute.
- There's no central booking platform, making it easier to operate in the shadows.
- Private clients tend to be discreet, which means scams can go unreported or unresolved.

They see a goldmine in an industry that relies heavily on trust, speed, and luxury expectations.

2. "Create a Sense of Legitimacy—Fast"

Scammers often build convincing digital fronts:

- Professional-looking websites and logos
- Fake aircraft photos, certificates, and even team bios
- Impersonation of real operators or brokers using lookalike emails and spoofed domains

Their goal is to build trust quickly—enough to receive payment—before questions are asked.

3. "Exploit Pressure and Emotion"

Scammers prey on:

- Urgent travel needs (medical flights, last-minute business trips, holidays)
- Ego or status ("This jet is only available for VIP clients like you")
- Fear of missing out ("Only one slot left, need a deposit now")

By creating urgency or exclusivity, they push victims into fast decisions with minimal due diligence.

4. "Stay Just Out of Reach"

Scammers typically:

- Use offshore bank accounts, crypto wallets, or fake business names
- Operate from non-traceable email addresses
- Avoid live phone or video calls
- Use aliases or steal identities of real people in the industry

They aim to remain faceless, untraceable, and gone by the time the client realizes what's happened.

5. "Count on Shame and Silence"

Many victims are embarrassed to admit they were scammed—especially highprofile clients or corporate entities. Scammers exploit this silence, knowing:

- It's less likely to be reported publicly
- Victims might not pursue legal action for reputational reasons
- They can repeat the scam without being blacklisted

Key Takeaway:

The scammer in private jet charter is smart, manipulative, and strategic. They understand the psychology of urgency, trust, and status. By studying how they think, you can spot their traps faster and act more decisively to protect yourself, your clients, or your company.

If you'd like, I can provide a checklist of questions to ask or documents to request when booking a charter to help weed out fraud.

Just send an email to <u>paul@intellijet.co.uk</u> with any questions you have, and to ask for a list of essential questions you should be asking when looking to charter a jet from a reputable operator or broker.

Signs Scammers Give Off - "Red Flags"

1. Too Good to Be True Pricing

- Deep discounts or below-market quotes with luxury aircraft
- "Last-minute deal" or "exclusive VIP rate" pushed aggressively
- Quote doesn't include all the usual costs (taxes, repositioning, etc.)
- ← Reality check: Private jet pricing is expensive. If the offer is drastically cheaper than competitors, it's likely a scam or bait-and-switch.

2. Pressure to Pay Quickly

- Urgent demands like:
 "We need full payment within 2 hours or the jet will be gone."
- Hesitation or refusal to allow time for due diligence or third-party verification
- Pushback against using escrow accounts or secure payment platforms
- Scammers thrive on urgency to prevent you from thinking clearly or verifying details.

3. Vague or Incomplete Details

- No aircraft tail number, operator name, or insurance information
- Unclear itinerary or missing airport details
- No contract or a generic, poorly written one
- Legitimate operators and brokers are happy to provide detailed documentation—including the aircraft operator certificate (AOC), photos, and insurance. Brokers are under no legal obligation to do so however, unless they are asked to.

4. Unverifiable Operator or Broker

- No traceable business registration, office location, or phone support
- Website has minimal or fake-looking content (e.g., stock photos, vague bios)
- Lack of social proof: no reviews, testimonials, or online presence
- Research the broker or operator: check their license, reviews, and domain history.

5. Unusual Payment Requests

- Payment to an offshore or personal bank account
- Cryptocurrency-only transactions
- No invoice or vague billing information
- Reputable companies use traceable, business-grade payment methods. Always verify account ownership.

6. Email or Domain Red Flags

- Email comes from a free service (e.g., Gmail, Outlook) or suspicious domain
- Company website domain differs slightly from the known legitimate one (e.g., jetluxuryflights.co instead of jetluxuryflights.com)
- Poor grammar, typos, or inconsistent formatting in emails
- These are common signs of spoofing or impersonation.

7. Refusal to Share Credentials or Verify

- Won't provide operator certificate, insurance documents, or safety rating
- Avoids phone or video calls
- Dismisses your verification questions or becomes defensive
- Transparency is a baseline expectation in private aviation. Avoid anyone unwilling to prove their legitimacy.

Bonus Tip: What Should You Expect from a Legitimate Provider?

A real charter company or broker should:

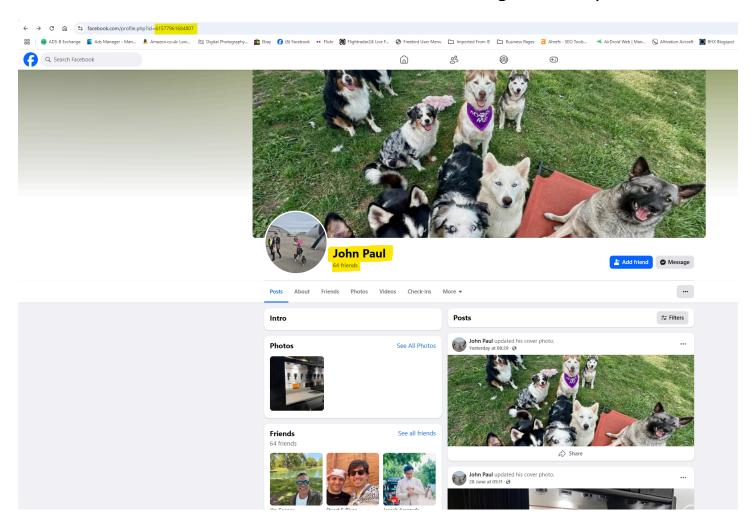
- Provide a detailed quote, including aircraft model, tail number, and operator
- Offer a clear contract with cancellation and refund terms
- Allow time for questions and third-party verification
- Use a business account and issue a proper invoice

<u>Tips to Assess if Someone is a Scammer</u>

A number of good ideas have been mentioned in previous pages, but here are some other things I do myself to check up on someone to see if they are legitemate or otherwise (all relevant to Facebook).

Lets say for example you put a post up in a group asking for a quote for a flight, then you get a number of comments on the post. First thing I look at is who exactly is commenting. Sounds silly, but just a name can give you a hint.

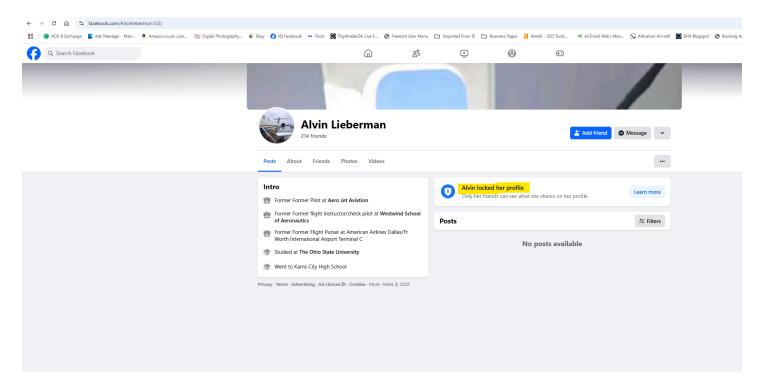
In my extensive experience, someone from Africa (for example) will use two christian names as their whole name. Screenshot of a good example below:



In this case, the profile is using the name "John Paul" and you can see that he does at least have a profile picture and banner picture on the profile.

Another sign in this example, is the 'Facebook Profile Link' which is at the top of the page. More often than not, someone genuine will have a name at the top of the page within thier profile link, but scammers have a number of profiles, and most will have only numbers, mostly starting with '615'.

Below we see an example of a 'Locked Profile'



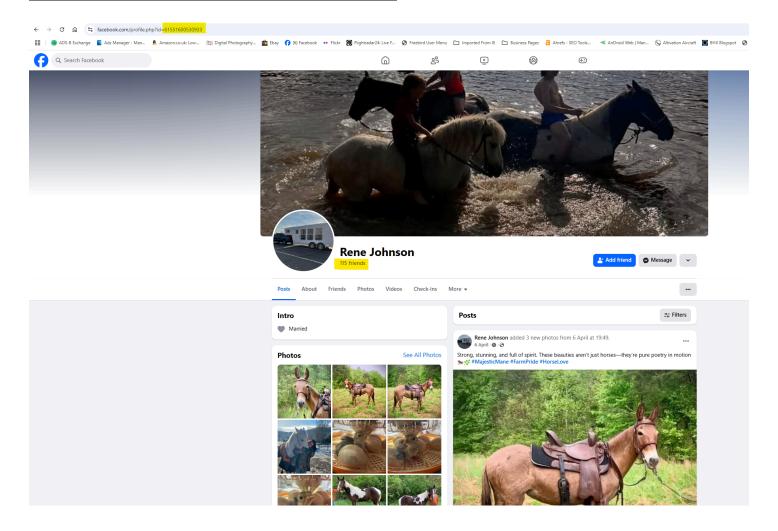
People 'lock' their profiles for a number of reasons, some of which are likely prefectly understandable for security reasons and so on. However, when it comes to sending large sums of money to someone for a private jet charter, you need to be able to check that person out if you so wish (and you really should).

Locked profiles don't encourage transparency and because of this they should be avoided.

Also, note the name of this profile - "Alvin Lieberman" - if you look closer, you'll notice Facebook tells you that "Alvin locked **HER** profile".

It could be the case that I'm assuming incorrectly, and Alvin is in fact a female, or maybe even transgender, but it's far more likely the scammer simply hasn't bothered to check it properly when they've created the profile, or the scammer is indeed a female trying to impersonate a male for the purposes of scamming someone.

Check Their 'Friends' List

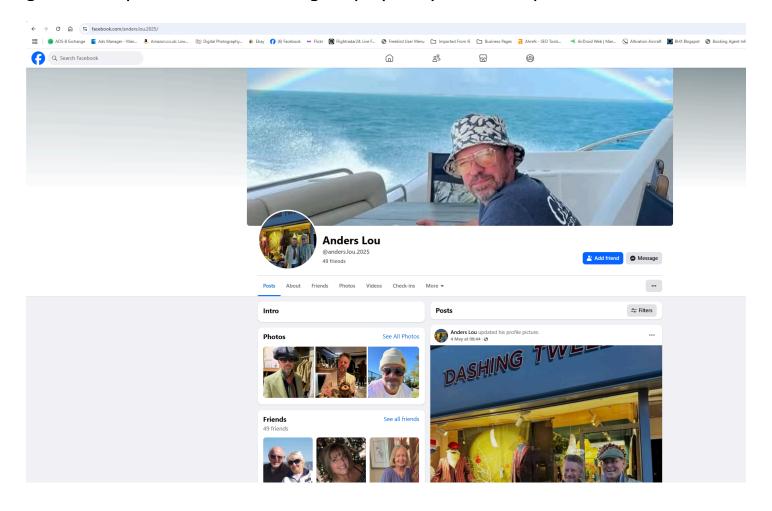


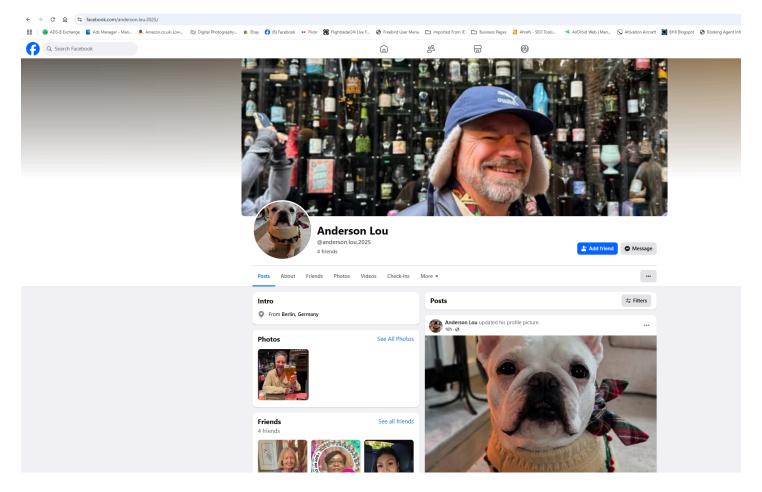
Facebook profiles can tell you a lot about a particular person. In the screenshot above, we have a profile that says they have 115 friends. When I clicked on that, none came up - why? Simple, they don't actually have any friends on their profile, because it's a fake one.

If you come across anyone that you feel might be a scammer, see how many friends they have, and click on the friends link. You might be amazed at what you find.

Many will say in their profile that they live in Texas for example, but of the 94(?) friends they have, not a single one of them lives in Texas, maybe they're all from Bangladesh, or the Phillippines. A sure sign they're hiding something or at the very least, probably being economical with their truth.

Scammers can also show up with profile names that are similar. See below a great example of this tactic being employed by the same person:



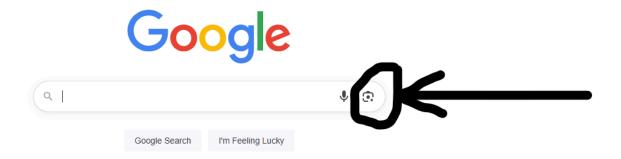


In this case, the 'Anderson Lou' profile will be the newer of the two, given that it has only 4 friends, and the other one has 49.

Perform a Google Image Search

Another great way to see if someone has genuine pictures on their profile or not, is to conduct an image search using Google Lens.

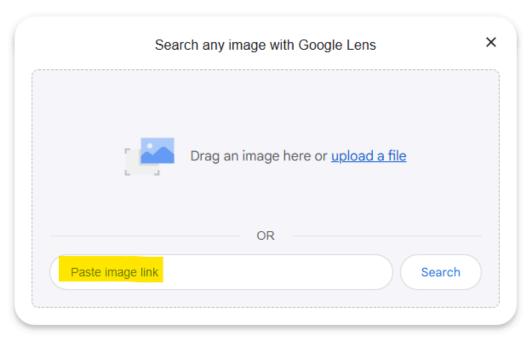
Simply go to Google.co.uk, and click on the camera icon in the search bar.



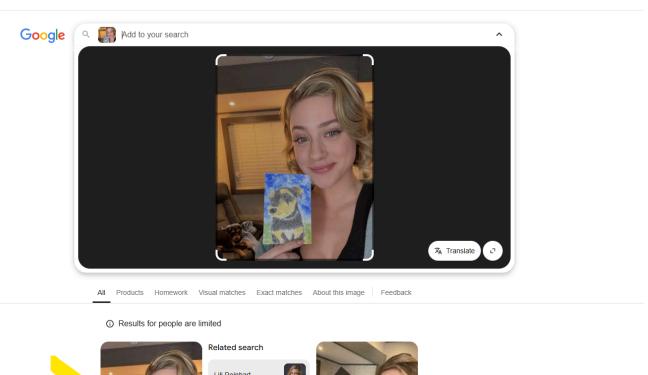
Then go to the image you wish to search, and RIGHT CLICK anywhere on the image, and select 'copy image address' (or press CTRL + C).

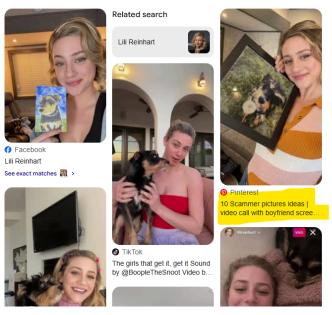
Then 'paste' (or CTRL + V) that image address into the search bar, and click search. Sometimes nothing much of interest will come up, other times it finds exact matches and will tell you where the original image has come from.

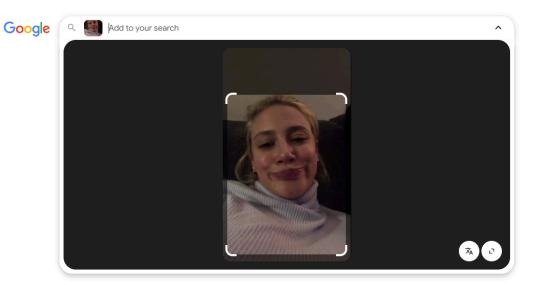


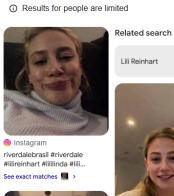


Below is a great example of what I've found previously:













All Products Homework Visual matches Exact matches About this image Feedback



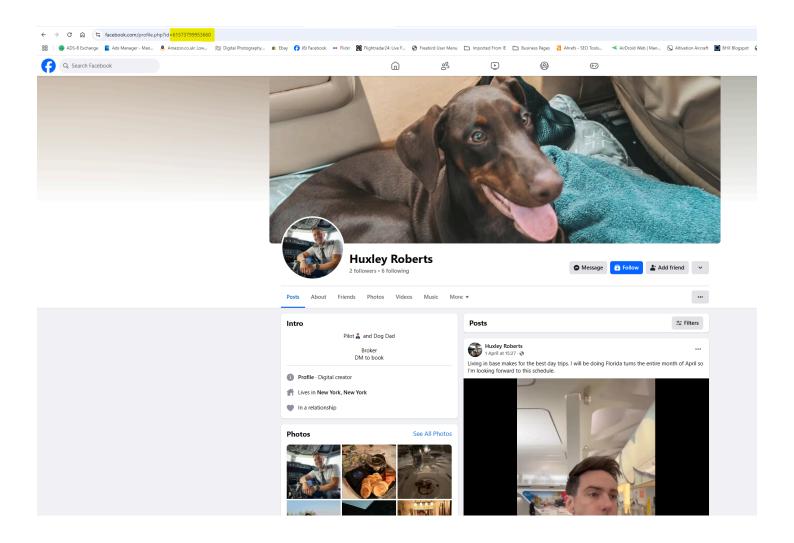
Instagram



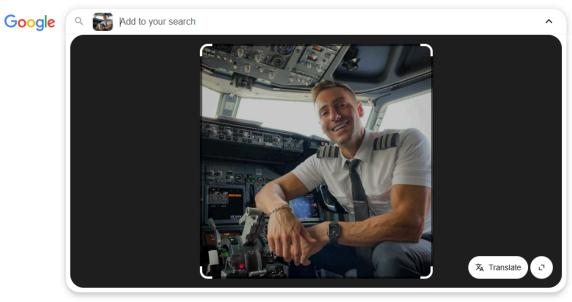
Facebook Betty Cooper - Betty Cooper added a new photo.

Impersonation is another tactic widely used in the industry.

Below we see a profile from someone apparently called 'Huxley Roberts' but after a quick image search of his profile picture, I found out the real person was a guy called 'Garret' who is a real commercial airline pilot, with his own YouTube channel. Note the profile picture, and the '615' profile link address.







Results for people are limited



Instagram Garrett Ray | There's not a single thing I don't love about this job...

Garrett - There's not a single thing I don't love about this job...

See exact matches 🔯 >

All Products Homework Visual matches Exact matches About this image Feedback

Facebook

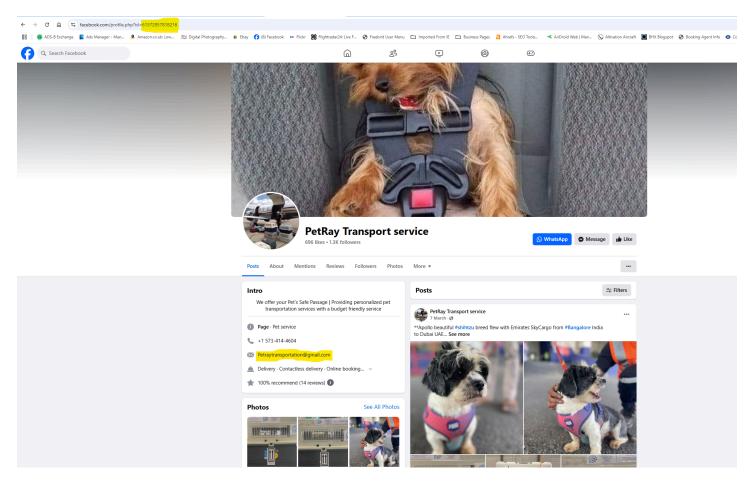


YouTubeflywithgarrett - YouTube

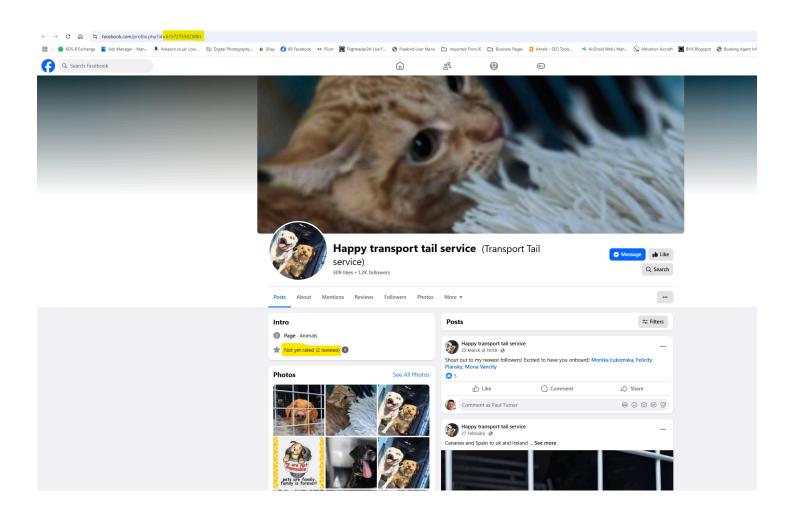


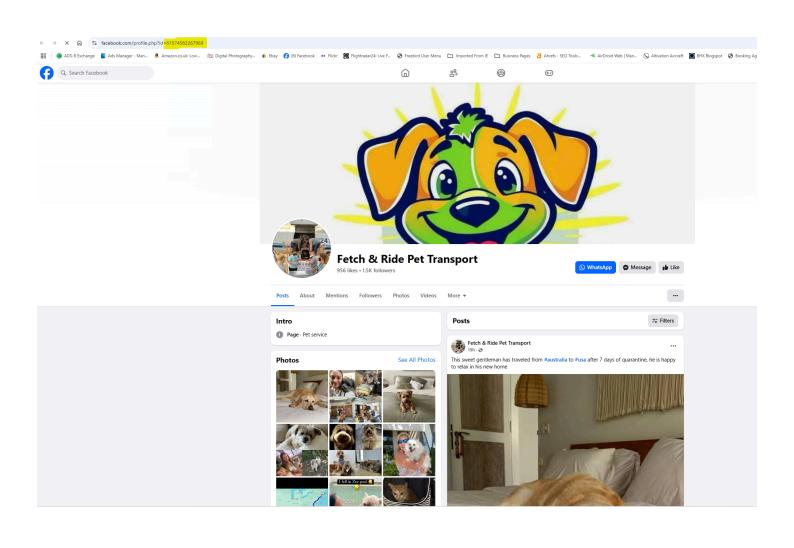
80 Pilot YouTubers You Must Follow in 2025

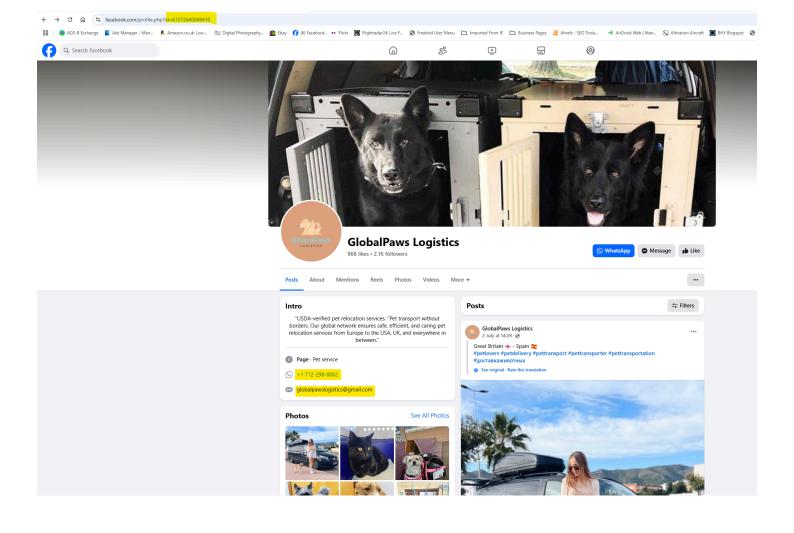
Another prolific scammer in many Facebook groups is Pet Ray Transport Services. Many people have placed reviews on their page saying they are a scam company / profile, and yet still people keep getting caught out. The group admins don't seem to be worried about them either, which is another reason I decided to create this guide.

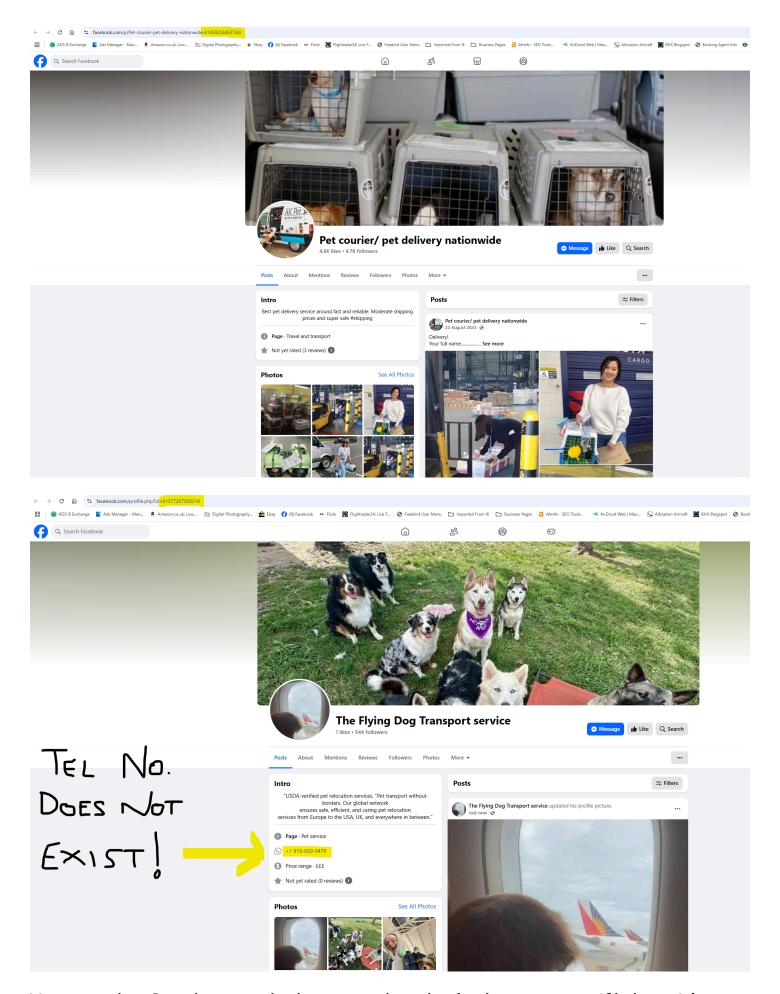


The pet transport groups seem to have more than their fair share of scammers, I have come across at least five different profiles and others who recommend them to unsuspecting clients.







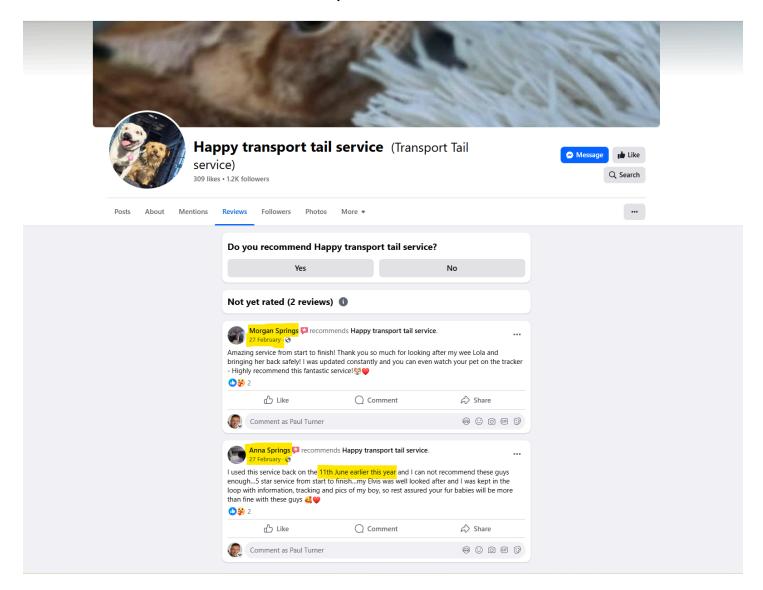


You can also Google any telephone number that's ahown to see if/where it's located and if it's a genuine telephone number.

Something else that's very well worth checking out, are any reviews on profiles advertising transport services, especially pet transport.

Have a look at who has written the review, what they've written, and most importantly, when they've written it.

I found these reviews for one such provider:

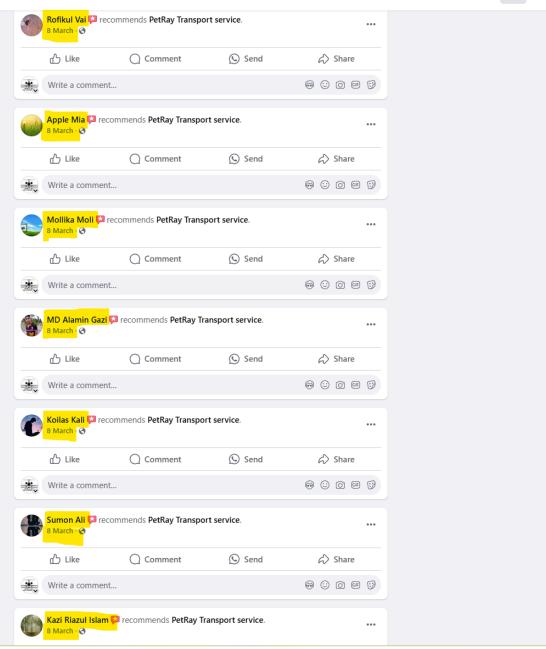


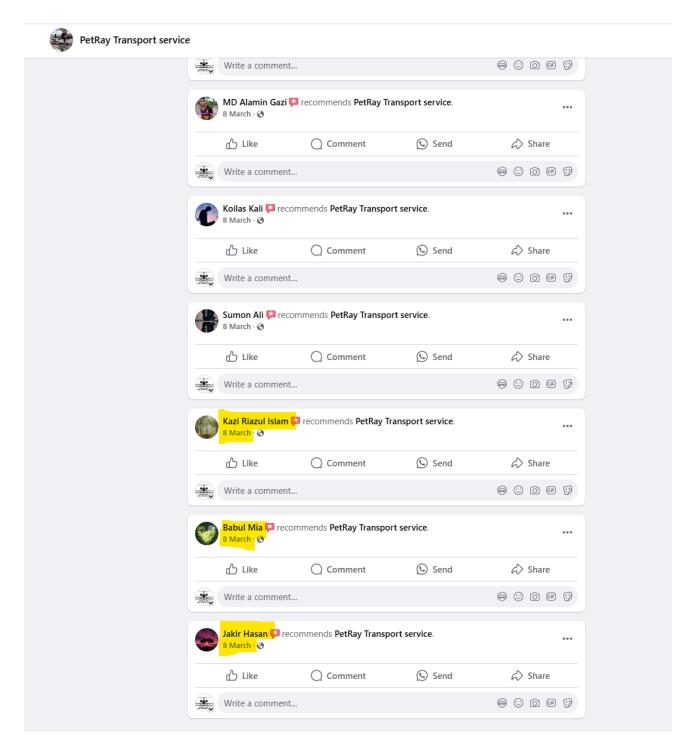
Morgan Springs and Anna Springs both writing a review on the very same day - coincidence? I suspect not.

Below are the reviews of PetRay Transport Service. Check the dates of the reviews.









Quite amazing all these people posted a positive review within the space of just 2 days, and even more amazing who they claim to be. Seemingly, not an American name between them and at least two of the people posting a review I have on my known scammers list!

Advice to Avoid Becoming a Scam Victim

A lot has already been said in regard to mitigation of risk but if you remember the essentials, you greatly reduce any likelihood of falling victim to a scam.

- Be vigilant Make sure you do you due diligence.
- Check any email address, ensure you don't get involved with generic email accounts. A business email account is very inexpensive and really should be in place for anyone doing business in the private jet charter world.
- Don't deal with anyone who does NOT have a profile picture.
- Ignore anyone with a Locked Profile.
- If you've had quotes from 10 different brokers, all in the region of the same (ish) price, then get another one which is at a 90% discount, it's fake. As with everything, if it seems too good to be true, it is.
- Don't accept the first quote you receive. Make sure you ask 2-5 brokers or operators for pricing to get a feel of the real costs.
- Remember to check Facebook profile link addresses. Any that start with '615' be very cautious indeed.
- Check reviews if you can find them, and don't just read them, check the dates they were posted, and who by.
- Remember to check out contracts, and terms and conditions carefully.
 Sometimes there can be clauses in there that weren't communicated verbally or via message and sometimes these can come as a big surprise, like a \$1500 pet cleaning fee payable post flight.
- If someone says they work for a particular broker or operator, ask them who. Then, get the telephone number via a search and give them a call direct. Ask them if they know who the person is.
- If you're looking at booking an empty leg flight, find out who the operator is, and call them directly to find out if it's a genuine empty leg and how likely it is it'll operate. Many scammers sell flights that don't even exist.
- When in conversation with a potential scammer, if their profile says they're in the UK or US, or any other English speaking country, does their language seem genuine? Many scammers are foreign nationals and English isn't their first language which trips them up.
- Be VERY distrusting!

Reputable Brokers

If you're still looking to find a private jet and now have no idea where to turn, below is a list of trusted reputable brokers I know of personally.

- 1. Paul Turner Intelli.Jet (UK & Europe Charters) www.intellijet.co.uk
- 2. Ari Wohl Tribeca Jets (US Charters) www.tribecajets.com
- 3. Neil Baines Flitestar (UK, Europe & Africa Specialist) www.flyflitestar.com
- 4. Austin Hall Air Charter Service (Commercial Jets) www.aircharter.co.uk
- 5. Guy Harrison-Murray Porter Jets (US) www.porterjets.com
- 6. John Gray J2 Air Charters (Germany) www.j2aircharters.com
- 7. Ian Morrow Embracing Luxury (Ireland) www.embracingluxury.com
- 8. Cassandra Bitterwolf Mach Point Aviation (US) www.machpoint.com

Over time I may well add to this list, but it's a very good starting point for anyone looking for a good charter broker.



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