

I Fell for a \$1.25 Million Scam – Now MrBeast Is Helping Me Hunt Down the Scammers

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This is hard to admit, but I got scammed out of \$1.25 million.

The money is gone, and I can't get it back. But instead of hiding, I've decided to share my story. My recent post on X about the \$1.25 million scam went viral with more than 4 million views and thousands of reposts and comments.

MrBeast even chimed in that he would give a \$100,000 reward to anyone who could help track down the scammers.

Now that I've had even more time to process the situation, I think it's time to share the lessons I've learned from my \$1.25 million mistake.

How it began

A few years ago, I donated \$1.2 million to MrBeast's #TeamSeas campaign to help clean up the oceans. After the donation, I was invited to spend a few days with Jimmy (MrBeast) and his team.

So, when they reached out to me again for a donation to MrBeast's Team Water campaign, I naturally wanted to help. During the discussion, we even talked about planning another meet-up.

A few weeks after I donated \$1 million to the project, I was added to what looked like a private group text with other

major donors; it didn't feel out of place at all. In fact, it seemed like the natural next step.

The group looked legitimate. The names were impressive: Mark Rober, Shopify's Tobi Lütke, Stake's Ed Craven, Adin Ross. There was banter, casual voice notes and even more talk about the donor trip. It all lined up with what I'd been expecting – and I felt like I was in the “cool crowd.”

Then came the pitch: a crypto investment tied to a major exchange. Everyone in the group “joined.” I didn't want to be the outsider. So I wired the money. \$1.25 million.

Later, I checked in with the real Jimmy and felt my stomach drop. The group text was fake. My money was gone.

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Lesson 1: Don't make big decisions when you're distracted

When the scam was unfolding, I was away at a retreat that I'd been planning all year. This was terrible timing for me, but perfect for the scammers.

I was relaxed and in the completely wrong headspace for any major decisions. My guard was down, and I was the perfect target.

Having reviewed the texts afterward, I see several red flags that would have given me pause any other day. However, I was distracted and made a rash decision.

Tip: Don't make major decisions when you're distracted, traveling or emotionally charged. Give yourself the space and energy to sit with the choices and only make a decision with a clear head.

Lesson 2: Listen to reality, not the story you're telling yourself

When I was added to the text group, I honestly wanted it to be real. I'd talked with MrBeast's team previously about planning a trip, and my brain connected the dots, telling me this was all part of the plan.

This also had me overlooking red flags. I didn't verify the phone numbers, and I didn't double-check anything. I trusted what I *wanted* to be true instead of what the evidence showed. I was naive, and it cost me \$1.25 million.

Entrepreneurs make this same mistake all the time. We fall in love with our product, our marketing strategy or our "next" big idea. When our customers and data tell us otherwise, we often struggle to accept that reality and continue pushing what we *want* instead of what is *right*.

Tip: Don't fall in love with the story you tell yourself. Trust the data, trust what your customers are telling you, and be willing to adjust or pivot.

Lesson 3: Don't be afraid of mistakes – share them

This was easily the most embarrassing mistake of my life. I'm a successful entrepreneur, and I made more than \$50 million before 30 – being scammed was *not* supposed to happen to me.

But, it did.

The easiest way to deal with this mistake would be to hide it. But, I didn't.

Instead, I shared it. First with my family and close friends, then publicly online. The responses ranged from "idiot" to

“martyr,” but overwhelmingly, people appreciated the honesty. Some even admitted they’d been scammed too, but had never told anyone.

And then something unexpected happened: MrBeast himself spoke up. He offered a \$100,000 reward for credible information leading to the scammers.

Sharing reframed the story. From personal embarrassment to a community problem worth solving.

Tip: Don’t hide from your mistakes. Own them, talk about them, and turn them into lessons others can learn from.

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Final thoughts

I’ll never see the \$1.25 million I lost again. But I can use it as the most expensive learning experience of my life.

If you take nothing else from my story, take these:

1. Don’t make important decisions while distracted.
2. If it’s too good to be true, it probably is.
3. Don’t be afraid to talk about your mistakes.

If you’re curious about how this scam actually played out, I’ve made everything public. On Great.com, we’ve posted the full chat logs, the wallet addresses and even the phone numbers tied to the scammers. You can see exactly what I saw – and if you spot something that could help track them down, you could earn the \$100,000 reward from MrBeast.

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