

Voice Clones and Vanished Millions: How AI Scammers Duped Italy's Elite

Everything Seemed True": Inside the AI Voice Scam

It started with a phone call that sounded exactly like Italy's Defense Minister Guido Crosetto. But the voice on the line was an AI clone, and it was about to pull off one of the most sophisticated frauds in modern history.

The target? Massimo Moratti, the former president of Inter Milan football club. The hook? A secret government mission to rescue kidnapped journalists.



"These are good, in the sense that absolutely everything seemed true," Moratti told an Italian media publication.

He eventually sent over \$1 million to the scammers because he believed the person he was speaking to was indeed Guido Crosetto. The deepfake was that good.

The Perfect Setup

The scammers' story was masterfully crafted and must have taken some time to create. They claimed Italian journalists were being held hostage in Iran and Syria, and the government needed private help to pay ransoms.

"There are Italian journalists kidnapped in Iran and Syria. It's top secret. The State is asking for your help. We will return everything through the Bank of Italy," the scammers would say, their AI-generated voices matching the cadence and tone of Minister Crosetto and other officials perfectly.

Many High Profile Victims Were Targeted

The criminal operation didn't limit itself to small targets. According to investigators, the group attempted to deceive some of Italy's most prominent business figures, including fashion mogul Giorgio Armani, Tod's CEO Diego Della Valle, and Pirelli's Marco Tronchetti Provera, though these individuals did not fall for the deception.

The scam first targeted the assistants to the victims. They would receive a phone call from Guido Crosetto himself that spoke of "national security issues" and of something "urgent", promising that "the Republic will thank" for any help.

They were instructed to hand the phone over to the victim and speaking in the voice of the Guido Crosetto, would convince the victim to wire transfer money.

A similar story for Giorgio Armani. The stylist's secretary also received the call, but replied that it was necessary to send a written request from the ministry, a request that never arrived, so they knew it was a scam.



The Bank of Italy's warning

The scam in which Crosetto's name was used, however, does not seem to be the only one that has happened recently.

The Bank of Italy has called for caution. "Some scam attempts have recently occurred that improperly use the name and logo of the Bank of Italy, such as requests for money to free journalists kidnapped abroad, with the promise of restitution by the Bank of Italy," reads a note from the institute, which is completely unrelated to these requests. "We recommend that you do not provide any response and report the cases to the judicial authorities."