How to recognise & unmask the swindler

Clue 1:

The advertisement for the room or apartment on Facebook has disabled commenting. Upon responding, you are referred to a 'family member' that owns the apartment.

 Tip: Check the Facebook profile of the person who placed the advertisement. Having only a few or 'strange' friends who write spam-like responses to messages on the profile are clear warning signs. You can use reverse image search (**Google** or **TinEye**) to check if the profile photo matches the actual profile.

Clue 2:

After contact by email, the owner turns out to live abroad. There is no option to see the house, but you are asked to transfer a month's rent or a security deposit.

 Tip: To see whether the email sender is physically located where they say they are, you can check their IP address. You do this by looking at the email's source code. To get to the source code, click on the downward arrow next to the reply button (in Gmail) of the email. Select 'show original' in the menu. Next, copy the information to a website that retrieves IP address, such as **this one**. This method is more successful for Outlook email addresses than for Gmail addresses.

Clue 3:

The photos of the apartment look like they do not belong together, or as though they come straight from a realtor's brochure or magazine.

 Tip: Use reverse image search here to find out where the photos come from.

Clue 4:

The 'owner' sends you an ID card or passport to prove his or her trustworthiness. Swindlers often ask you to provide a copy of your ID as well: never do this!

 Tip: Verifying whether identification is real is tricky. Do you have questions about Dutch identification? Call the municipality. It is also a good idea to google the name on the passport, potentially together with the place of birth. To find out whether this person was connected to fraud before, google "name AND fraud" or "scam". No hits? Try variations of the name! The app DutchID2 can help you check Dutch IDs for security features.

Clue 5:

You are emailed a rental contract that at first glance looks legitimate.

 Tip: Find out whether the contract appears on other websites by googling a sentence from the contract. Use the search operator " " to only get exact search results. Did you find the contract on other websites? Use **this website** to check for differences and similarities between your version of the contract and the one you found.