REVERSE MORTGAGE LIES THAT CONTINUE TO MISLEAD HOMEOWNERS

Few financial products carry as much misinformation as the reverse mortgage. Some of it comes from outdated horror stories about loans that haven't existed in over a decade. Some of it comes from well-meaning relatives repeating something they half-remember. And some of it, frankly, comes from people on both sides of the industry with something to sell.

So let's do something different.

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We’re going to walk through the lies one by one, tell you the truth, and where the truth is more complicated than a simple “myth busted,” we’ll tell you that, too. Because the goal here isn’t to talk you into anything. It’s to make sure that whatever you decide, you decide it with clear eyes.

Lie #1: “The Bank Takes Your Home”

This is the big one, and it’s flatly false.

With a reverse mortgage, the homeowner keeps the title to the property, just like with a traditional mortgage or a home equity loan. The lender places a lien to secure repayment, exactly as your original mortgage lender did, but your name stays on the title, and you remain the legal owner.

Where does the lie come from?

Honestly, it’s an understandable mix-up. In a standard foreclosure, lenders do take homes, and people incorrectly apply that model to reverse mortgages. But the structure here is the opposite of surrendering your home. You own it, you live in it, and you control what happens to it.

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Lie #2: “Your Heirs Will Be Stuck With the Debt”

Also false, and this is where a reverse mortgage is actually safer than most people expect. A HECM is what’s called a non-recourse loan. That means neither you nor your heirs can ever owe more than the home’s value.

If the loan balance ever grows larger than the home is worth, the federal insurance, which you pay for through your mortgage insurance premium, covers the gap. Your heirs are never chased for the difference, and no other assets in your estate are ever on the hook. When the loan comes due, your heirs simply choose: repay the balance and keep the home, sell it and keep any remaining equity, or hand it back and walk away owing nothing further.

The choice is theirs, not the bank’s.

Lie #3: “You Can Be Kicked Out of Your Own Home”

False; with one important asterisk. As long as you meet the basic terms of the loan, you cannot be forced out. Borrowers who continue to live in the home as their primary residence and stay current on taxes, insurance, and maintenance cannot be forced out.

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Here's the honest part most ads skip: those conditions are real, and ignoring them is the most common way reverse mortgages go wrong. You still have to pay your property taxes, keep your homeowner's insurance current, maintain the home, and live there as your primary residence. Do those things and your home is secure. Don't, and the loan can be called due. This isn't fine print designed to trap you, it's the same obligation any homeowner has, but anyone who tells you a reverse mortgage has no strings attached is lying to you.

Lie #4: "Reverse Mortgages Are a Scam for Desperate People"

This is the lie that does the most quiet damage, because it stops people from even asking the question. The reality is that today's HECM is one of the most heavily regulated loan products in America. Modern reverse mortgages include mandatory HUD counseling, financial assessments, non-recourse protections, and strict disclosure requirements; rules designed specifically to prevent the problems seen in earlier products.

You're required to sit down with an independent, HUD-approved counselor who doesn't work for the lender, before you can even apply.

That's not how scams operate.

That said, a reverse mortgage genuinely isn't right for everyone. The product isn't a scam, but it can be the wrong fit for the wrong person. The "scam" framing and the "everyone should get one" framing are both lies. The truth lives in between, and it depends on your situation.

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Lie #5: "It's Free Money"

We're including this one because it's the lie told by the other side; the over-eager salesperson. A reverse mortgage is not free money. There are real upfront costs, including FHA mortgage insurance, though these are often rolled into the loan rather than paid out of pocket. Interest accrues on the balance over time, because you're not making monthly payments to bring it down.[1]

Whether those costs are worth it depends entirely on your plan. Compared to long-term HELOC interest, selling investments, or paying for private insurance products, a reverse mortgage can be cost-effective depending on how long you stay in the home. But "cost-effective in the right circumstance" is a very different claim from "free," and anyone using the second phrase is someone to be wary of.

So Who Do You Trust?

Here's our honest answer: trust the person who tells you the cons as readily as the pros. The fearmongers want you too scared to ask. The hard-sellers want you too excited to think.

Both are steering you, and neither is serving you.

The facts are reassuring enough on their own. You keep your home. Your heirs are protected. Your core benefits are safe. The loan is heavily regulated. And it has real costs, real obligations, and real situations where it's the wrong choice.

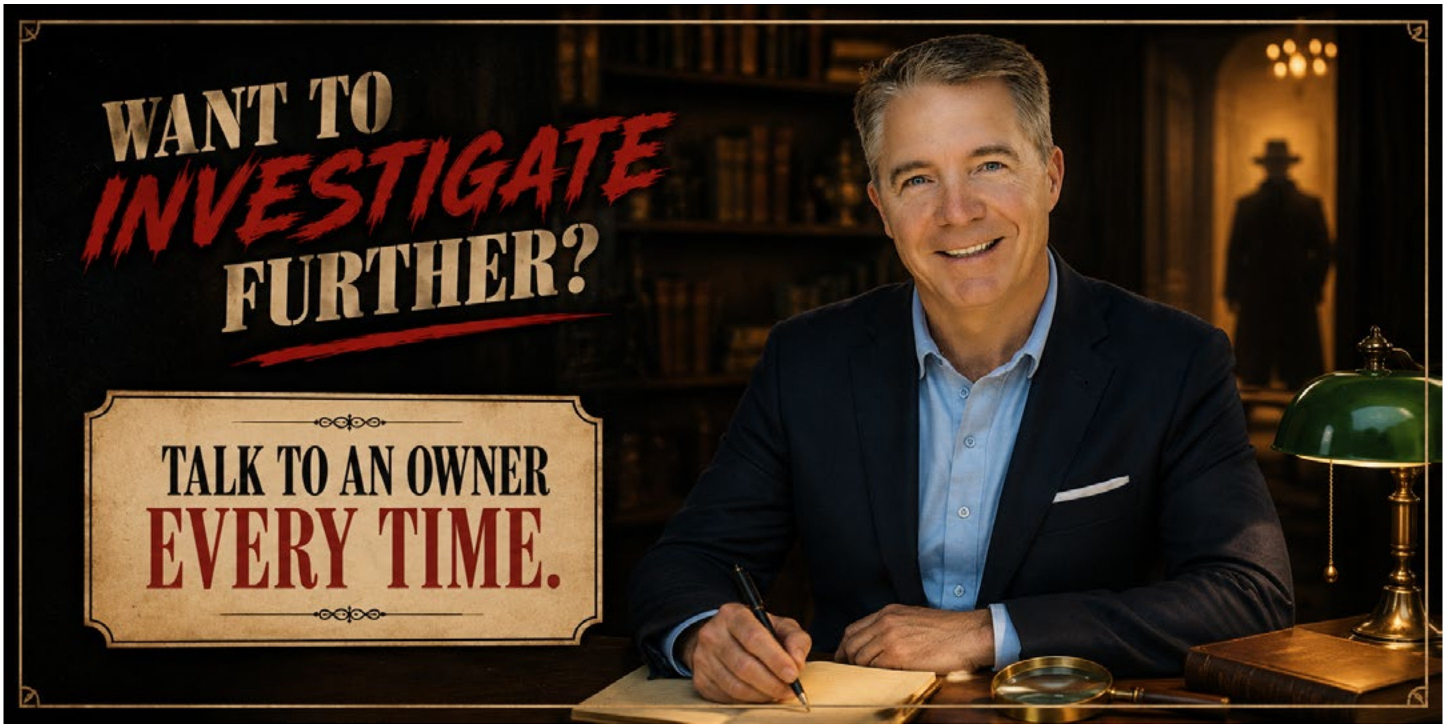
All of those things are true at once.

We'd rather lose your business by telling you a reverse mortgage isn't right for you than win it by repeating a comfortable half-truth. The homeowners who get burned are rarely the ones who understood the loan.

Still Doing Your Homework?

That's exactly the right instinct. Keep reading through our educational library at www.greenmonarch.com, where we answer the real questions without the spin.

When you want to talk it through, call us at (800) 345-2041.



SOURCES

1. https://www.bankrate.com/mortgages/fha-mortgage-insurance-guide/#how-much

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