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Wednesday, November 29, 2006

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Lies fuel Illinois firm that charges for alibis

Roughly 50 percent of the company's business revolves around hiding infidelity from loved one.

Abigail Goldman / Las Vegas Sun

Mary is married, and Mary is having an affair. The Chicago wife told her husband she was sightseeing in Los Angeles last August, but that was a lie. Mary and her boyfriend were vacationing in Las Vegas, and Mary paid a professional cover-up company \$350 to ensure that her husband would never find out.

He didn't. The Alibi Network, an Illinois company that specializes in its namesake -- alibis -- armed Mary with a fake airplane itinerary, fake hotel reservations and a fake hotel answering service; when her husband phoned Mary's fake room in Los Angeles, the call was routed to her real cell phone in Las Vegas. Three months later, Mary doesn't want her name printed in the paper. She's planning on using Alibi again.

"I needed to get away," she said. "I set something up."

Mary isn't the only person whose tracks can be covered for a cost.

Michael DeMarco, the Alibi Network's vice president of marketing, says Las Vegas is a top destination for the company's clientele.

It's only natural, DeMarco says, in a city where what happens, stays.

Costs for cover-ups range anywhere from \$75 for a temporary untraceable phone number to \$1,500 for a "full-blown alibi," DeMarco says.

The Alibi Network doesn't give out business figures, but DeMarco estimates that 20 percent of the clientele who hire the company do so to stage their attendance at fake work seminars -- complete with fake seminar schedules, fake seminar registrations and optional fake certificates of seminar completion.

Roughly half the Alibi Network's clients use the service to hide an infidelity. DeMarco doesn't feel guilty.

"If there was no demand, we'd have no company," DeMarco said. "We didn't invent lying.

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We didn't invent infidelity. We just found a niche in an existing market."

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[Bullard's Pundit Blog](#)
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