

# THE Daily Telegraph

## Dial-an-alibi for Valentines

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Article from: Agence France-Presse

February 14, 2007 12:00am

**MOST Americans will be celebrating Valentine's Day this year with the usual chocolates, teddy bears and romantic dinners, but some will be going to great lengths to get away from their lovers.**

One man not keen on spending the evening of February 14 with his mistress has arranged to have a bogus veterinarian place an emergency call to inform him that his pet is ill and needs tender loving care.

Another will have a fake public works officer call about some urgent pipe repair at his home.

The two have turned to Alibi Network, an Illinois-based company that specialises in covering the tracks of its wayward customers.

Mike DeMarco, who runs the company, said he is puzzled to see that many of his customers, both male and female, are plotting to stay with their spouses on Valentine's Day this year - rather than try to escape to the embrace of their lovers.

"It's kind of odd this year, because rather than people getting away from spouses, it's more people getting away from lovers," DeMarco told AFP.

"I guess some people want to stay home with their family on that given day.

"It's not across the board, but it seems to be a trend this year."

DeMarco said his business surges by 30 percent on Cupid's day, with an equal number of men and women seeking alibis.

"The men don't quite know how to pull it off, whereas the women are much more organised, more calculating and tend to look before they leap," he said.

"They tell us, 'This is what I want,' boom, boom, boom."

Some customers have arranged to have two alibis for Valentine's Day: one to spend part of the day with their lover and the other to spend time at home with their spouse.

"We'll do 'Honey, I've got a work meeting in the early part of the day' and then switch to another alibi for the afternoon," DeMarco said, adding that no discounts are offered for double alibis.

He said his customers range from 24 to 65 years old and are located across the country. Though most are in the United States and across the border in Canada, he also has a few as far away as Britain.

On average, customers pay between \$US35 - which gets you a fake phone call - and \$US1,500, which gets

you an alibi for a phony out-of-town seminar. They must also pay a \$75 membership fee to Alibi Network.

DeMarco said the membership fee is similar to one for a motor club.

"You don't know if you're going to have a flat tire, if your transmission is going to fall out, and God forbid your fuel pump goes out," he said.

"Alibi Network is the same - as things come up, you call us."

Some of the scenarios he and his co-workers are concocting for Wednesday involve food poisoning or other illnesses and several related to the bitter cold that has gripped part of the United States.

"We've got a lot of pipes bursting in the Chicago area because of the darn cold, and that's going to be almost a no-brainer," said DeMarco, who is 38 and single.

"The city on Valentine's will be checking a lot of pipes, and we'll help formulate, depending on a person's individual circumstances, a story that really fits."

But while some alibis seem simple enough and require only a phone call, others are much more elaborate and involve days of preparation.

Take the man who has told his wife he is going on a fishing trip with his buddies, when he is really planning a romantic getaway with his mistress.

Alibi Network managed to get him a phony plane ticket, fishing gear, a fake telephone number and even pictures and some fish so that he will not be nabbed by his wife.

Asked why someone would spend several thousand dollars to go through such a hassle, DeMarco had a simple response.

"I think, in part, it's to spare the feelings of a husband, wife or fiance," he said.

"But it's also part of that old song, 'it's cheaper to keep her'."

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