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Woman sought in puppy deception

By FRANK GEARY
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Las Vegas fraud investigators are looking for a woman who received about \$20,000 for her phony promises of cuddly companionship.

Cora Robinson, 60, is suspected of running advertisements on an Internet site for pure-bred puppies that she never delivered, Detective Larry Smith said.

Victims from around the country each sent between \$500 and \$1,700 to Robinson's Las Vegas post office box, but never received the Yorkshire Terrier puppies she promised them, Smith said.

"She gets on a legitimate Web site and puts in a fraudulent ad that she is a breeder," Smith said. "She had a bunch of different ads for the same dogs. One person had bought several dogs through the same Web site."

Yorkshire Terriers are long-haired toy dogs whose coat is parted from the face to the end of the tail and hangs evenly down each side of the body. They generally weigh less than seven pounds, according to the American Kennel Club.

Robinson won confidence through e-mail messages and by going so far as to make arrangements for transporting the puppies, Smith said.

To come off like a reliable, responsible breeder, Robinson instructed each customer to sleep with a T-shirt or towel and then mail it to her, he said. Robinson indicated that she would place the garment or towel in the puppy's cage so that the dog would be familiar with the scent.

"It's a trust issue. She says the puppy has to get acclimated to you so send some clothes or something that smells like you," Smith said.

Robinson also made shipping arrangements. Each victim was given a shipping number, but the dog they were promised was not delivered to the shipping company, Smith said.

The first victims who contacted Las Vegas police were elderly women from the East Coast, but soon, victims of all ages called with the same complaint, he said.

"All the victims are out of state, and there are close to 20 victims," Smith said. "Every day I am getting a couple more."

Cora Robinson was eventually located in Texas and arrested on fraud charges.

