

# Attorney General Raoul Charges Lake County Man Over Online Puppy Scam

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CHICAGO - Attorney General Kwame Raoul today charged a Lake County man with multiple felonies for allegedly orchestrating an internet scam that advertised puppies for sale to lure in its victims.

Attorney General Raoul charged Mondum Hycenth, 41, of Round Lake, Illinois, with one count of theft, a Class 3 felony punishable by up to five years in prison; one count of wire fraud, a Class 3 felony punishable by up to five years in prison; seven counts of

burglary, Class 2 felonies each punishable by up to seven years in prison; and seven counts of forgery, Class 3 felonies each punishable by up to five years in prison. Hycenth pleaded not guilty, and his next court date is March 12.

“People trying to add a pet to their families or find a furry friend for companionship instead fell prey to a scam. I encourage consumers to thoroughly research online sellers and be wary of sending payments through nontraditional methods, such as money transfers and peer-to-peer payment services,” Raoul said. Today’s charges are the result of collaboration with Homeland Security Investigations and our retail partners. I would like to thank them for their work to hold this alleged scammer accountable.”

Raoul alleges that victims attempted to purchase puppies through online advertisements. However, victims did not receive puppies and were not able to get their money back after sending payments through a money transfer service. Hycenth allegedly used falsified identification and forged a signature to collect the money from transfer services located in retail stores.

Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) assisted with the investigation of this case.

“Puppy scams aren’t much different than romance scams, in that they manipulate an individual’s emotions and desire for companionship in an effort to steal from them,” said HSI Chicago Special Agent in Charge Sean Fitzgerald. “As with any business transaction, I urge consumers to research the seller, request recommendations and to refrain from purchasing a pet without seeing it in person. Conducting this type of research, prior to sending a payment, can help save consumers from experiencing a significant financial loss.”

The public is reminded that the defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty in a court of law.

Raoul’s Statewide Grand Jury Bureau is authorized by Illinois statute to prosecute multi-county cases involving drugs, money laundering, guns or electronics. Working regularly with state and federal counterparts, the bureau focuses on complex, often large-scale, organized criminal activity.

Assistant Attorney General Steven Knight is prosecuting the case for Raoul’s Statewide Grand Jury Bureau.

If you believe you have been the victim of a scam, Raoul encourages you to file a complaint on the [Attorney General’s website](#). Consumers can also call one of the Attorney General’s Consumer Fraud Hotlines:

1-800-386-5438 (Chicago)

1-800-243-0618 (Springfield)

1-800-243-0607 (Carbondale)

1-866-310-8398 (Spanish-language hotline)