

## FAMILY OF CON-GAME SUSPECT REPORTED LIVING ON WELFARE

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Con-Game Suspect's

Family Reported

On Welfare

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Of the Post-Dispatch Staff

The family of Jackie G. Turner, accused of being a computer con artist, has been living on welfare assistance while he has squandered thousands of dollars at a race track, investigators say.

Police have interviewed several more victims since Turner, , was charged with deceptive business practices and attempted theft of \$3,500 last weekend. Police say they are investigating losses attributed to Turner that exceed \$50,000.

Police reported last week that Diane Turner, his estranged wife, and their four children had suffered from his schemes. The family has had to seek funds from the Missouri Division of Family Services since the Turners separated.

Mrs. Turner said in an interview that she left Turner a year ago because of a business deal that she said had been hurting other people. Turner has not supported his family since then, she said.

'He was involved in something, 'she said, 'that I did not like -- not at all. '

A former girlfriend said Turner had gambled heavily, losing hundreds of dollars a night.

Police say Turner had run several confidence games based on his knowledge of computer operations and programming. He formerly taught computer courses and headed the computer sales department at a south St. Louis furniture store.

Turner was charged in warrants issued May 15 after a victim reported that he had paid Turner for computer service training at a school that police said did not exist. Police said Turner had used the false name Scott Thompson but had been unable to cash the victim's check because he had no identification.

Another person became suspicious after answering an advertisement placed by Turner offering

Louis County police on bad check charges and by Texas authorities on a charge of probation violation.

Police reported that they recovered a computer programming reel last week from his wife's North Side home that they say Turner stole from the furniture store. His former employer said the reel would have cost as much as \$50,000 to replace.

One investor told police that he had answered a classified advertisement in the Post-Dispatch on Feb. 17 for business partners. He was not identified by police. Turner told him that he needed \$8,500 right away to start a computer store and promised to repay him in 12 monthly installments, the man said.

The businessman gave him the money, plus another \$8,000 on other occasions, before the former girlfriend warned him that the business was a fraud, police said. The man told police that he had not reported it sooner because he had thought that his only recourse would be a civil lawsuit. 'Turner took nearly all of this victim's savings in this scheme,' Young said. 'But it might have a happy ending after all. '

The detective explained that at one point Turner met with the businessman and three others who were interested in investing in the store. The others were warned of the scheme before putting up any money, police said. Police said they are wiser for the experience and have now gone into business together, with a legitimate partnership to open a computer store.

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