



Fact Sheet About Investigations Reality vs Media Inaccuracies

Technological advances in our [private investigation] industry has certainly enhanced investigative outcomes; however, the media and television / movies has spread sensational inaccuracies which leaves the consumer with unreasonable expectations. This fact sheet was designed to provide you with a reasonable expectation when you hire a private investigator. We will identify two standard investigative service areas and provide you with the truth regarding what you can expect when you hire a private investigator.

SURVEILLANCE

In the movies the media portrays mobile surveillance of people who drive around metro areas and heavily populated areas in heavy traffic, running red lights and breaking all of the traffic laws on the books and are able to maintain a “tail” without being spotted. In reality, surveillance is a balance of skill and luck. You should be very wary of any investigation firm that boast a zero percentage of loss rate. They are likely lying or engaged in questionable methods. Either way, you will want to consider using another company. A healthy dose of paranoia is what makes a good surveillance investigator and losing someone you are tailing is an eventual reality and should be expected. There is a delicate dichotomy of keeping distance between you and the subject vehicle and staying close enough to see every turn they make. Once a subject is lost, a good investigator will canvas the immediate area, any known locations visited by the subject, area shopping centers, as well as any social media in an attempt to reacquire the subject being followed.

SKIP-TRACE / LOCATING A SUBJECT

A Skip-Trace (locating a subject) investigation is generally portrayed with someone searching a computer database and voila, they located the person they were looking for. In reality, a skip-trace investigation is used to locate the whereabouts of an individual such as birth parents/children, an old friend, a witness, a former employee or a person being sought in a legal action or someone who has fled to avoid payment of a debt or judgment. Your un-locatable (or lost) subject usually fall into one of three categories:

- People who aren't really “lost” or hiding at all, they just don't know you are looking for them;
- People who are hiding, but not from you; and
- People who are hiding – from you.

The process of conducting a skip-trace investigation does entail searching databases, general several databases to develop a list of possible addresses, then conducting follow-up investigative efforts to confirm an address. You should be cautious of any paid search site which promises to locate your subject. It takes an experienced investigator to sift through all of the available data and false positive hits to find the real information. These databases use what is known as “credit header” information and rely on information that is self-reported by the subject or reported by various sources such as creditors and utilities. Not all skip-trace investigations are equal, and some may take a significantly greater effort and cost to locate than someone who is not hiding.

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