



# IAPI NEWSLETTER

IOWA ASSOCIATION OF PRIVATE INVESTIGATORS

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## President's Message By Dan Conroy

The 2015 Iowa Association of Private Investigators conference is right around the corner. The conference committee and Board are really excited for the 30<sup>th</sup> year anniversary program and know our IAPI members will enjoy it! The conference dates again are 7/23/14 and 7/24/14 in Des Moines, Iowa at the Holiday Inn on Merle Hay Road.

We have added speakers for tax laws, GPS and surveillance laws and self-defense topics as well as having Jimmie Mesis of PI magazine in attendance for the whole conference.

IAPI will also be extending an invitation to all past Presidents to join us for our special Anniversary banquet. They are the founders and leaders who helped pave the way for this organization back in 1985 and we can't wait to recognize them for their contributions.

In closing I would ask again our members to keep looking for new members for our organization and ideas on how we can become a better organization.

Take care and thanks for all of your support,

Dan Conroy

### What's Inside...

Page 2	<i>IAPI Officers, Advertising</i>
Page 3	<i>GPS/Stalking in Iowa</i>
Page 4-5	<i>PI Hacking</i>
Page 6-9	<i>IAPI member Dar Rittgers</i>
Page 10-11	<i>IAPI member Tom Smith</i>
Page 12-13	<i>Knowing your worth as a PI</i>
Page 14-15	<i>GPS/Stalking article cont.</i>

### Advertisers

<i>Page 16 BRB Publications</i>
<i>Page 17 PI Magazine</i>
<i>Page 17 NCISS</i>

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# Iowa law tackles use of GPS for stalking

Bill aims to address growing abuse of GPS devices for violent, controlling purposes

*Lee Hermiston, The Cedar Rapids Gazette*

*March 28, 2015*

IOWA CITY — Among the screening questions for new clients at the Domestic Violence Intervention Program’s shelter are a few about cellphones.

Who had access to the phone? Who gave it to you?

DVIP Executive Director Kristie Doser said the reason for the questions are simple — batterers, in an attempt to track their victims, often will add applications to the phone that allow them to follow its owners.

“It’s common for us to see batterers give phones as gifts to victims,” Doser said.

Doser said stalking someone with a phone is frequent enough that all new DVIP clients are asked about their phones.

“That’s how often it’s happening,” she said. “It’s become a regular part of our screening.”

Tracking someone’s whereabouts — whether through smartphone apps or a GPS tracker placed on a vehicle — is just one of the ways batterers can revictimize their partners, Doser said. When batterers threaten that they’ll always know where the victims can be found, it keeps the victims “off balance” and in a “hypervigilant state,” she said.

“It reinforces that sense that you can never escape that person,” Doser said. “You’re always looking over your shoulder.”

But now a new bill working its way through the Iowa Legislature would penalize anyone who places a GPS tracking device on someone’s vehicle without that person’s consent and “with intent to intimidate, annoy or alarm another person.” Violating the law would be a serious misdemeanor, punishable by up to a year in jail.

*Continued on page 14*

# Private Eye Is Said to Face Prosecution in a Hacking

By Matthew Goldstein, February 12, 2015

Private investigators may be the newest front for federal prosecutors in cracking down on the hacker-for-hire business.

In the coming weeks, a private investigator in New York is expected to plead guilty to charges of paying a so-called hacker-for-hire firm to steal email passwords and credentials, said three people briefed on the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because no charges had been filed yet. The guilty plea would wrap up a nearly yearlong investigation by the [Federal Bureau of Investigation](#) and federal prosecutors in New York.

Separately, federal prosecutors in San Francisco on Wednesday announced the indictment of two private investigators and two computer hackers on charges that they illegally entered email and [Skype](#) accounts to gather information for matters they were working on for clients. Some of the illegally gathered information was intended to support a lawsuit, authorities said.

The identity of the private investigator in New York, who works for a small firm, could not be determined.

Law enforcement authorities focused on the investigator because of the clients he has worked for, including some lawyers, the people briefed on the matter said. The investigation is loosely related to another one that led to a New York City police officer's guilty plea in federal court in 2013 to charges that he paid a company to hack into the email accounts of some colleagues.

In that case, Edwin Vargas, who was a detective at the time, was accused of paying \$4,000 to an unidentified firm to hack into the email accounts of 43 people, including current and former New York police officers. Mr. Vargas, who was sentenced last year to four months in prison, said he had been motivated by jealousy and wanted to determine whether any of his colleagues were dating a former girlfriend who is the mother of his son.

The investigation into Mr. Vargas was prompted by information developed by the federal authorities in Los Angeles during a two-year investigation into the hacker-for-hire business. That inquiry led to the filing of charges against more than a dozen people nationwide involved in either breaking into email accounts or soliciting hackers for the job.

The investigation in Los Angeles, called Operation Firehacker by the F.B.I., uncovered a cottage industry of firms that claimed they could gain access to email accounts in exchange for fees of \$50 to \$250, depending on the complexity of the job. These firms, several of which were shut down by the F.B.I., typically are paid through PayPal or another online payment processor.

It is thought that the private investigator in New York used one of these firms, those briefed on the matter said.

It is not clear whether the private investigator has cooperated with the federal authorities or intends to plead guilty simply to avoid a potential trial.

The investigation, however, has the potential to shed light on a less-than-savory activity that has been the subject of speculation in the legal community: the hiring of private investigators by lawyers to hack into email accounts to learn more about potential witnesses and gather evidence for trial strategies.

The notion that lawyers would countenance the hacking of emails appears to flout the legal profession's most basic ethical standards. But security experts and former prosecutors said that investigations over the years had unearthed evidence that some lawyers hire private investigators to obtain information for cases without delving too deeply into how it is gathered.

In effect, these lawyers are seeking to hire a private investigator who is willing to skirt the law but do so in a way that gives them plausible deniability of any potentially illegal activity.

"Any firm operating with ethics, governance and integrity that is concerned about breaking the law will not do that kind of work, as it could be illegal without authorization from the email account owner," said Rocco Grillo, a managing director and leader of the global incident response and forensics investigation practice for Protiviti, a global risk consulting firm. "But does it go on? Sure, in some cases."

Daniel B. Garrie, executive managing partner with Law and Forensics, a computer security consulting firm that specializes in working with law firms, said that because some private investigation firms are known to sometimes engage hackers, lawyers needed to be careful about hiring outside investigators.

"A law firm is well advised to create a written record with the private investigator so there is no misunderstanding later on," said Mr. Garrie, who is a lawyer. "A lawyer should never hire an individual to hack except in a very narrow and limited circumstance where the side being hacked has consented to the action or there is a court order permitting the hacking."

In London, a private investigator played a chief role in the criminal prosecution of Andy Coulson, the former editor of the tabloid [News of the World](#), which had a practice of hacking into voice mail messages left on mobile phones. The investigation found that some editors of the tabloid, which is now defunct, had paid an investigator to hack into voice mail messages as a source of leads for articles.

In the United States, the hacking that some private investigators are involved with is far different from the recent prominent online attacks on companies like Anthem, [Target](#), [Sony](#) and [JPMorgan Chase](#). In those cases, cybercriminals or hackers, often working with the blessing of foreign governments, initiated large-scale assaults to obtain the internal emails of executives or sensitive personal information about customers or employees.

Much of the hacking by private investigators is narrower in scope, usually limited to obtaining email login credentials or unearthing information from social media accounts, security experts said. It is similar to many of the dubiously legal jobs now being advertised on Hacker's List, a four-month-old online forum where hackers can bid anonymously for a job posted by person looking to conduct some espionage.

## Iowa Private Investigator's Unexpected Journey

In summer of 2006 I was doing surveillance in the Decorah area. It seemed to be a very long day. I felt very tired and light headed. I finished for the day and met with the client, I then started for home. I knew I needed to get some rest because I had to return the following day to complete the surveillance assignment. The following morning it was difficult to get started. Still tired and a little lethargic. This still seemed to be a very long day even though the surveillance was only three hours.

Once returning home I made an appointment to see a doctor. During the appointment several tests were done. In this little room I was watching the doctor as he looked at all the paperwork. I could tell by the look on his face that this was not going to be good. The doctor started out by saying that he wanted me to see another doctor, a nephrologist. I knew that this was a specialist but I was not sure what kind. I was told that a nephrologist was a Kidney doctor. My current doctor said that he thought there may be a kidney issue.

I was able to get into the specialist right away (Which I thought was unusual). I went through numerous test procedures. I felt like I had no other blood to give. After all tests were done I met with my specialist. Then the news, He told me that I had Stage One Kidney Renal failure. I just sat there not knowing what to think. I was told that with stage one a person could live a long life with medications and aggressive treatment. I agreed to the treatment that currently would include medications, regular blood and urine test along with doctor's visit. I continued with this process until June of 2009.

Just before my June appointment I received a call from my doctor's nurse she said that when I come to my next appointment have my wife come along. I said to myself this cannot be good. Carolyn my wife went with me to the next appointment. My nurse did her normal routine weight, blood pressure and temperature. Then we met with the doctor, he said that he had been watching closely all my labs and that he has noticed a further decline in kidney functions. He told me that I had declined into an area between stage 2 and 3. That I would now need regular injection to stabilize blood counts. So every two weeks I would go in to have an injection.

Early fall we had another appointment. The doctor said that we should be thinking about the future. We may have to consider dialysis. Carolyn and I went to a class to learn more about dialysis. We were told that my kidney was still declining and we should be prepared. The Doctor told us about transplants. He said that I could be a good candidate for one. In the meantime I had a surgery to place a fistula in my left arm. This was not a good experience I woke up during the surgery. And could smell the burning flesh as the surgeon was cauterizing the opening. I know I made some noises and then back to sleep. I was very sick afterward.

My nephrologist made an appointment at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics in Iowa City. This was so I could be evaluated for possible kidney transplant. This was all day testing of Labs, X-rays, stress test, EKG, Pet scans and Cat scans. It was a long day. After all was finished I was told I could be a candidate. They told me the wait could be up to and over five years unless I could find my own living donor. I was a little over whelmed by the number of people that said they would donate a kidney to me. From family, friends, Investigator associates, clients that I had worked for, I had two people that I had arrested as a police officer afford to donate. One client that I helped defend in a criminal that we lost and he was sent to prison. Once out of prison I was one of the first persons that he called. He had the same blood type and wanted to donate. For various reasons all turned out not to be a perfect match. I was disappointed but that was ok.

We continued to look for a donor. We stayed on the routine of Labs and doctor's appointment and I remained at a stage 3 kidney disease level. Carolyn continued to tell me she wanted to find out her blood type to see if she could be my donor, I tried to discourage her. I did not want her to have to go through the surgery and have both of us down at the same time. On her own see went to have her blood tested and found out that see had the same blood type as I. A few months later she was able to receive an appointment at Iowa City Hospitals. We went to the appointment together for the day of testing. After meeting with all the staff they told us that she was a perfect match and we could plan a joint surgery date. Carolyn was very happy and I had mix emotions. About three months later Carolyn was having a routine checkup when we received devastating news. Carolyn has a large tumor on her ovaries and she would be needing major surgery soon.

In the meantime our children and family are planning a fund raiser for us. At the time our medical bills are going through the roof. In December Carolyn had her surgery they removed nearly an eight pound tumor. We were so thankful it was not malignant. The doctor's said that if she wanted she could still donate a kidney to me. Carolyn still insisted that we go forward with the transplant. We still was planning the surgery after the first of the year.

The fundraiser was held January 8, 2011 in Waverly. Many friends, families, clients, along with many IAPI members. There was a lot of community people of Waverly and the news media, the outpouring of support was very over whelming at times. With this event we were able to get caught up with are medical bills. What a blessing. To maintain my status on the transplant list I had to go through a yearly evaluation that consisted of all the test from my first evaluation. Carolyn told Iowa City that she wanted to move forward with transplant. The transplant team wanted to see her one more time for a kidney function test. After this test we were informed that Carolyn had failed this test by one tenth of one percent. This was just another setback. I was starting to feel real bad. I had no energy, felt weak and my blood levels were declining.

I now have been through four transplant evaluation and two and a half years on dialysis. I asked my doctor if I could take a little break from the dialysis. I was told my kidneys are producing so little urine that he would not recommend it. I would not last more than a few days if I would stop. By now I have been on the transplant list for over four and a half years and dialysis two and a half year. I was starting to wonder if a transplant was ever going to come. I was going through a lot of different emotions. I seem to be getting sicker every day and started to feel like I was becoming a burden to my wife and family. I continued to do the things I was told. However I was becoming very discouraged.

It was October 30, 2014 I was finishing up dialysis for the morning when our phone rang, It was a nurse from the University hospital, she said Darwin we have a potential cadaver donor for you. Your transplant team feel this would be a perfect match for you. The nurse said that the only thing was that the kidney is at least a four hour flight from here. I needed to tell them if I wanted it within the hour, so they could offer it to some else. I told her that if my transplant team said it was a good match I would take it. She told me I would receive a call within an hour to confirm. I sat at the edge of my bed thinking is this really going to happen. I called my wife at work I could not hardly tell her about the call, to the point she thought something was wrong. I also called my sister that lived here in Waverly. I did not call anyone else so in the event this fell through.

I finally received the call about an hour and a half later. The nurse said the transplant is a go. She gave me some instructions and things to do at home and then I could report to the hospital early that evening. Once at the hospital I was met by three nurses that took me right into a prep room. After several labs and two showers I was able to talk to one of the doctors. He told me I was ready to go and the kidney was being flown in and the surgery would be at six o'clock am. I don't think I slept all night.

At my February 2012 nephrology appointment I was told that I would need to be on dialysis before long. We talked about different options. We decided on peritoneum dialysis. A home dialysis system. Carolyn needed to attend a five week course to learn the operation of all the equipment. I also needed surgery to have a catheter placed in my abdomen. After all the training our supplies started to come, boxes and boxes of equipment. This all came on a 26' straight truck. I started home dialysis on May first. My routine was nine hours a day every day. Most of this could be done at night.

The dialysis did make me feel a little better however being hooked up to a machine was some want disheartening. With this type of dialysis we could travel a little. We needed to load all our equipment and enough supplies for the number of days gone. We would need to set up a hotel room and sterilize the room. This took a lot of time. I continued with this process for about a year when our doctors told us that my kidneys have declined even more. They were functioning at a very low level and I needed to up the dialysis. I was now doing dialysis 13 hours a day every day. Most at night and one time during the afternoon. This was a lot. I would have somewhat good days and bad. At times I did not want to get out of bed. I was much tired and would lay in a fetal position. I would also go to a dialysis center and see a nurse every week sometimes two weeks. I would have Labs and shots.

At about five thirty am my brother and sister along with their spouses came into my room I know that there was some laughing and crying. Shortly later the doctor came in and met my family and told us they would be coming to get us shortly for the surgery. After we prayed together we were all set to have the surgery. I was nervous and calm all types of emotions. By about six fifteen I was on my way to the surgery prep room. I met with the doctor and surgeon. On my way into the surgery unit I was able to see my kidney being prep. Once on the table I don't remember much else.

They tell me I was in surgery about five hours and another five hours in recovery. I started to wake up. A side of feel drogue and tired I was feeling pretty good. I was able to see my family .They tell me I was a little goofy and funning. I really don't remember much of this. I did have 2 IV's in my arm and one in my neck along with drain tube in my abdomen. As I awoke the following morning I was amazed how well I felt. As I laid there I was pain free. The doctors and surgeon came to my room. They told me everything went well and that my new kidney was working well and was producing urine before I left the surgery table before long nurses had me up and walking. I spent four days in the hospital. I could tell right away that I was feeling better. As I left the hospital I was a little sore. I did not take much for pain meds. I got along really well.

Since being home I feel like a totally different person. My physical and mental status is a 180 degree turn around. More energy, wanting to get out I cannot wait for spring. This whole process was been a life changing experience. I could not have made it without the help and support of Carolyn my wife. She believed in me and always told me we will make it together. My transplamt team has told many times how well I have been doing. To think a family many miles away thought enough to donate a loved one's organ to save the life of mine. Just a marvelous miracle. My wish is now that I may be able to meet this family someday. The only thing I know about the donor at this time is he was a 20 something year old male that had been brain dead for four days, and that it was over a four hour flight to get the kidney here.

Throughout this past five years I have had phone calls, visit, and many well wishes from so many people. One group that does standout is the Iowa Association of Private Investigators. From our fundraiser and all the cards, calls and to the company's that took some of my cases just to help. Something I will forever be grateful.

One of my near further plans are to join the Iowa Donor Network to help promote Organ Donors Project. I am looking forward to seeing you all at The Iowa July Conference.

Darwin E Rittgers

God Bless

# From Electronics Engineer to Private Investigator

## By Tom Smith

I'm often asked "Why did you decide to become a private investigator?" To me, life is about collecting experiences, and in some ways becoming a P.I. is the sum of all my experiences so far.

I graduated from college in 1984 and worked as an electronics engineer from then until I retired in 2011. Once I retired, I decided it was time to work on my bucket list, which included sailing and learning to be proficient with a firearm. But that all changed.

In early 2013, I took several defensive handgun and shotgun courses and had the pleasure of partnering up with several different law enforcement officers. I became fascinated with solving crime and while, yes, I was too old for police work, I realized I could get a license as a private investigator.

My electronics background makes me somewhat unique in this industry. Most of my P.I. friends are not technically inclined, so when they see how I set up my surveillance vehicle, they were pretty impressed.

I added on additional wiring and [switches](#) to my vehicle so that I can turn on or off light circuits if I want to alter the appearance of my vehicle at night. I can also disable my horn and my license plate light for when I go into stealth mode.



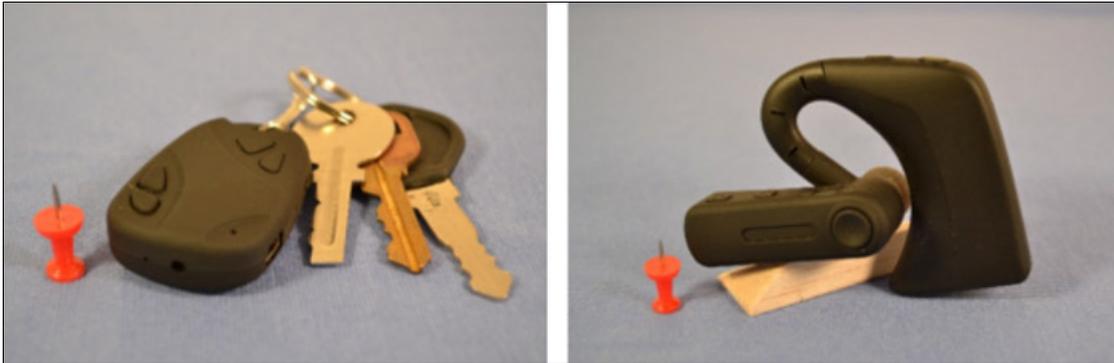
I installed a separate [12V power supply](#) and converter behind the driver's seat, so I have access to 120VAC and an additional [12V socket](#) so I don't have to suffer during those long stake outs. Now I can run my laptop, charge my cameras and not worry about running down my vehicle battery.

I have a wealth of electronic gadgets including a digital tape recorder, GPS navigation, Mac Pro laptop, various [battery chargers](#), an additional 12V power supply and converter, and [various cameras](#).

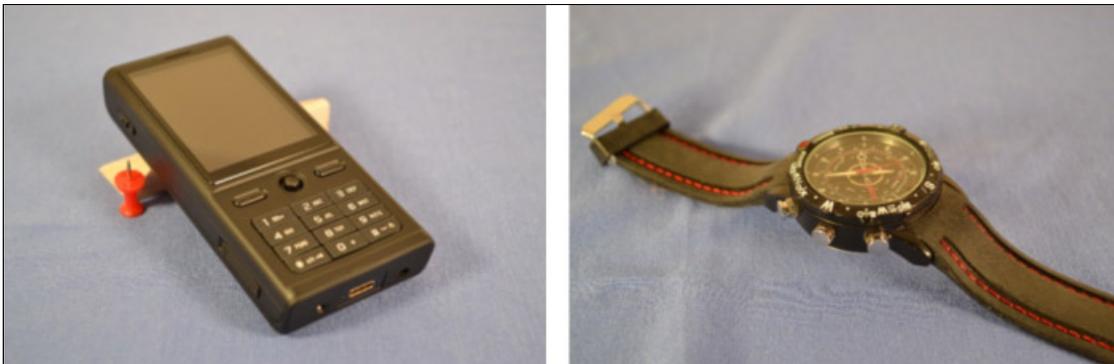
The majority of my work involves surveillance for workman's compensation cases. The client is primarily interested in video of the claimant performing activities that he has claimed he can't do. So for that reason, the digital video camera is the work-horse of this effort and my primary tool.

For me, the critical capability of a digital video camera is a continuous date/time stamp. Only the high end cameras automatically embed this metadata. On most consumer video cameras this information has to go through a third party software program to be burned into the final video.

Sometimes, a case requires close-in work in a public setting. This calls for smaller, [covert cameras](#). Cameras without a monitor are quite small – about the size of a tube of lipstick – and can be hidden in a wide variety of ways.



*Key Alarm and Bluetooth Ear Piece Covert Cameras*



*Cell Phone and Wrist Watch Covert Cameras*

They are very simple to use but limited to a fixed focus and have a running time of only one to two hours. The biggest disadvantage is that you have no idea of the quality of the video until you download the footage onto your computer.

Cameras that allow you to monitor while you are taking video are bulkier, contain interface wiring and are harder to conceal. They do have the advantage of confirming in real time the quality of the video. Each job calls for a unique solution, so the average PI will have a need for a variety of cameras with slightly different capabilities to fit each scenario.

[Wires](#) are always breaking off from connectors, so I occasionally need to make basic repairs to my equipment. At home, I have a full blown electronics workshop stocked with tons of Jameco parts and [tools](#). It's nice to be able to heat up my trusty, old [soldering iron](#) and fix these problems myself. Sometimes I need to change the interface completely. For that, I use a [multimeter](#) to identify which wires go where and then install the new connector.

Going from retired electronics engineer to PI has been like beginning a new life. I'm enjoying it and plan to continue collecting experiences, both on and off cases.

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***Tom Smith lives in Marion, Iowa and is a private investigator doing business as Patriot Investigations. His interests include electronics, firearms, ocean sailing and constantly learning new things.***

## Knowing Your Worth in a Bargain-Basement Market

**Investigators: Are you trying to compete with fly-by-night background search sites? Here's why you should stop doing that right now.**

*"What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value..."* Thomas Paine, *The American Crisis*

In the quotation above, Thomas Paine was talking about freedom. But if I may expand his point a bit, I'd say that anything obtained on the cheap tends to be undervalued, including the products of human labor—our services, our expertise, and our time.

Nominal fee-based sites such as Intelius, PeopleFinder, Pipl, Spokeo, and BeenVerified have thrown the professional investigator under the bus, as it were, by giving people the illusion of instant access to seemingly credible information.

Perception is reality for most people, and the perception that "fast and cheap" will do just fine has done lasting damage to the market for professionally-conducted background checks and due diligence investigations. Even companies who should know better aren't above being romanced by fast-and-nearly free information on potential new employees or business partners.

One of the greatest challenges we face as professional investigators is communicating the value of our services to clients in a marketplace glutted with mass-market information providers.

### **"But I can do it myself, right?"**

I find that few people (and few companies) fully understand what is and what is *not* involved in the process of due diligence. Yes, the Internet is an amazing invention, making information more accessible to virtually anyone on the planet with a computer and a Wi-Fi connection.

News flash: *Not all of the information floating around in cyberspace is accurate.*

When it comes to due diligence and background checks, many clients don't know what they don't know. They're not sure what they're looking for, let alone how to ask for it. And they have no idea where to begin the search.

Still, many clients feel sure that they're just as capable as I am of doing the due diligence. When I advise against taking the quick-and-dirty route, most potential new clients are genuinely confused. "Why would I pay the company you work for X number of dollars for XYZ information when I can just Google it?" they ask. "After all, it *is* the Information Age and, well... ya know, anyone can Google, even my cats!"

And then there's my absolute favorite: *"I was watching NCIS the other night and..."*

I love this one! Please, folks: *Tell me again how you watched an episode of CSI: Insert Name a Major City and are now an expert at body language, psych-linguistics, ballistics, blood spatter analysis, background investigations, interview and interrogation, and data retrieval.*

***Dear clients: I am here to tell you that CSI has as much to do with the reality of our work as Star Trek has to do with actual space travel.***

I also get lots of requests from clients for "tips": *What is the best site to run someone's name through?* people ask, or *Can you teach me how to run a license plate?* What they're really asking is: *How can I do your job? Because I don't want to pay you.*

Sure, there are a few basic techniques clients can master on their own. But those of us who do this work for a living don't play at it, we work at it. Every. Single. Day.

## Valuing What We Do

Many clients have no idea how to assign a value to the information retrieval and research process. Many first-time clients expect immediate *while-I've-still-got-you-on-the-phone* results, without understanding what's involved in conducting a detailed investigation.

Routinely, new clients expect us to retrieve the full name, date/place of birth, pet's middle name, dental records, favorite yoga position, blood type, current toenail polish color, stock holdings, personal assets, horoscope, food allergies, and a lock of hair from some mysterious instantaneous database, all for the low-low price of \$9.99.

Add to that the fact that we, as investigators, sometimes fail to ask for precisely what information clients are looking for; instead, we run with what we *think* they want. This lack of communication produces mixed results.

So, with Google, social media, and dozens of McBackgroundSearch.com sites out there, luring clients into believing that information is cheap, if not free, where is the incentive to pay us well for our work?

Thousands of dollars vs \$9.99 isn't a tough choice to make if we let clients hold onto their misperceptions of how a proper background check is done. I often want to ask clients, "Why are you seeking my services in the first place if you think that you can do it yourself with the click of a mouse and for free?!"

What I think I've discovered is this: Businesses and individual seekers of information routinely assume that I use the same databases they do, but that I am somehow able to extract faster and more accurate information than they could. They also assume that it requires little or no time, money, or skill to produce this extra information; therefore, they shouldn't have to pay much for what they want.

## Shattering Illusions

As professional investigators, how do we reverse this trend? How do we convince potential clients that they not only *need* us to provide the information which they seek, but they also need to *pay* us more than \$9.99 per information request?

The Internet is a beautiful thing, but in the wrong hands, it's scary—especially when it comes to digging for accurate information. Accessing and synthesizing such information happens to be my one of my strengths, but even I run the risk of putting the pieces together incorrectly if I'm not detailed, methodical, and let's face it, s-l-o-w. Why? Because speed of information retrieval doesn't guarantee accuracy of information, and we all know this by experience.

I'm coming to terms with the fact that most people don't see it that way, particularly paying clients. They tend to like the illusion of free instant information that they can pull from any questionable site promising quick results from the latest Fly-By-NightBackGroundChecks[dot]com.

It's time we started to challenge that illusion. We can never compete with our fly-by-night "competitors" strictly in dollars and cents. Instead, we must find a way to educate clients about the differences between the work of professional investigators and cheap-and-easy McSearch background-check results.

And to do that, we've got to value ourselves.

### **About the Author:**

*Amy Lynn Burch is registered private investigator in the Commonwealth of Virginia employed by various agencies in the Virginia/DC/Maryland area. Amy is also a [sexual assault advocate](#) who devotes her time pro bono to victims of assault and those falsely accused of sexual crimes.*

Mathis said her interest in the measure was born out of separate calls from two constituents — women who were afraid they were being stalked. One believed an ex might have placed a GPS tracking device on her vehicle.

“She asked me if that was illegal,” Mathis recalled. “I started looking up some things about the illegality of it.”

What Mathis found was that while Iowa has harassment laws covering intimidation via electronic communication, there are no measures relating to GPS devices. Legislation as of last autumn had been enacted in New York, and 10 states soon followed, she said.

According to a 2009 U.S. Department of Justice report, 3.4 million people were victims of stalking over a 12-month period. Thirty-four percent of stalking victims reported being followed or spied on, and one in 13 stalking victims said electronic monitoring was used.

Of those, GPS technology accounted for about a 10th of the stalking cases.

“In New York, there was a woman who was being stalked by her surgeon ex-boyfriend,” Mathis said. “He put this GPS device on her car, found her and killed her.”

Mathis said the bill — which received unanimous approval in the state Senate — wouldn’t affect legal applications of GPS technology, such as farming or parents keeping tabs on their children.

It also will not change things for law enforcement, who are required to obtain a warrant before placing a GPS unit on a suspect’s vehicle.

Scott Stevens, the Iowa City Police Department’s domestic violence investigator, praised the bill.

“That’s the same language that’s used in the harassment statute,” he said.

“It’s specifically directed at someone trying to harass another person. If it wasn’t spelled out clearly before ... it would be with this bill, and I think it’s great.”

While Stevens said he has not had any cases involving GPS tracking in his past couple of years as the domestic-violence investigator, that doesn't mean it's not happening. He also has seen how relentless suspects can be in harassing their victims.

Earlier this month, Stevens filed 11 no-contact order violations against 36-year-old Virgil E. Holderness of Iowa City after he reportedly contacted the protected party dozens of times via text messages — including sending 200 messages in a day.

“The suspects I handle are sometimes relentless at following the victim,” Stevens said.

“I'm not sure what it satisfies for them. I think they like to let the victim know they were following them. They like to make a phone call and tell them every stop they made that weekend.”

“A GPS device would be ideal for someone who wanted to do that.”

While Stevens and the DVIP's Doser applaud the bill, they say it still doesn't cover all the ways in which technology can be used to victimize someone, especially smartphone technology.

Doser said that batterers with the capacity to monitor someone else's phone can use private email, text messages or other potentially damaging information against the victim.

Doser wants law enforcement and the criminal justice system both in Iowa and across the state to do a better job of keeping up with evolving technology.

“I think the biggest thing is ... we need to come up with a way to keep up with technology as a social construct,” Doser said.

“We also know how technology is used for grooming potential victims. We know how technology is used in all sorts of criminal activity.

“Batterers are a good example of someone who exploits (technology) because it's not being monitored across the scope of our communities,” she added.

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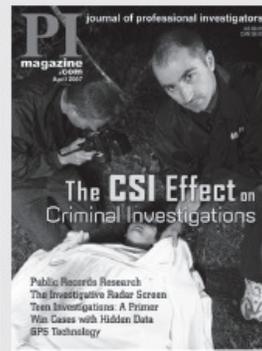
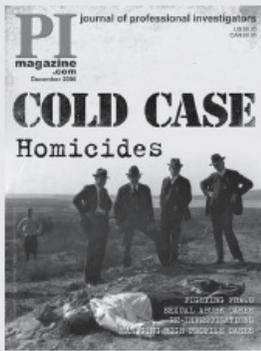
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