

# **BASIC PRIVATE INVESTIGATION**

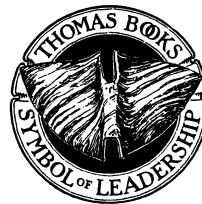


# BASIC PRIVATE INVESTIGATION

**A Guide to Business Organization,  
Management, and Basic Investigative  
Skills for the Private Investigator**

*Edited by*

**WILLIAM F. BLAKE, MS, CPP, CFE**



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## PREFACE

Today's private investigator comes from two primary sources: (1) law enforcement agencies and (2) academic environments. As a result, the experience gap varies widely. Those coming from law enforcement agencies normally are retirees, and private investigation is a secondary full- or part-time occupation. They normally have a minimum of twenty years' law enforcement experience. These are the most experienced individuals. Those coming from the academic world have the advantage of exposure to the latest in investigative techniques and legal knowledge. They only lack in the application of their knowledge to real-world situations. Each group comes with a different outlook, perspective, and set of values as well as experience. To be successful as a profession, these groups must be melded to a common group of values and objectives.

The purpose of this book is to provide the private investigator, regardless of experience, with information that will result in business and personal success. It is not our purpose to make an individual a highly skilled private investigator in every conceivable investigative arena. We only want to provide information that will lead to success in a particular chosen area of interest. It is impossible to be an expert in every possible investigative area, but with some general knowledge in a specific area, the private investigator will be able to better determine the qualification of associates who have the necessary expert skills.

The authors of this book are a unique group of professionals. Each author has a minimum of ten years' investigative experience, and there is an average of at least thirty-five years of experience in the private sector and with various military and governmental investigative units. They have extensive expertise in many areas. The professional certifications earned by the authors demonstrate their quest for professionalism and current knowledge due to the requirement for continuing professional education.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I discusses basic business organization and management subjects applicable to those who desire to be a successful business owner. It covers material for those just starting a business as

well as information that is of value to those who want to better organize and manage their current business.

Part II discusses basic investigative skills applicable to all levels of experiences and areas of personal interest. This information comes from experienced private investigators and takes a step beyond the traditional “school solution.” These are the skill sets normally used by an investigator who is just starting out in business. These are normally considered as general investigative skills that serve as a foundation for more specialized experiences.

Success as a private investigator is influenced by two different business options. An individual may portray his activities from a business perspective and dispense investigative services to all possible clients through the use of his own skills augmented by investigative resources of other qualified associates. Second, an individual may rely strictly on current skills and operate within a limited scope of activities.

W. F. B.

## INTRODUCTION

The world of the private investigator has evolved from a very simple to a very complex business. In our early history, the private investigator primarily operated like a law enforcement officer but was employed by an individual or corporate entity. The basic qualifications of the private investigator were being able to find people who may or may not have committed a crime and, when the circumstances required, being able to shoot first and accurately. There were no legal restrictions on the activities of the private investigator, and in some cases, their activities were clearly criminal violations of law. There was no public outcry for restrictions on their activities because there was a general public opinion that the perpetrators probably deserved what happened to them. There was also a common opinion that a person had a right to protect his personal reputation and business interests by any means possible. This attitude was portrayed in the early Western movies where John Wayne, Hopalong Cassidy, and Gene Autry portrayed the white hat savior of the common person being persecuted by the black hat bad guys.

When the possibility of being a viable business opportunity became apparent, individuals put together business ventures advertising their skills, resources, and abilities to operate in numerous geographical areas. In 1850, Allan Pinkerton established what is purported to be the first nationwide detective agency in the United States. Originally known as the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, it later became known solely as Pinkertons. Pinkerton became famous when he foiled a plot to assassinate President-elect Abraham Lincoln, who later hired Pinkerton agents for his personal security during the Civil War. At its height, Pinkerton employed more agents than there were members of the standing army of the United States, causing the state of Ohio to outlaw the agency due to fears it could be hired out as a private army or militia. Pinkerton's operations moved into the areas of infiltration of labor unions, strikebreaking, securing property, and interference with work disputes. Currently, Pinkerton has business operations in a number of investigative and security functions on an international basis.

Through evolution, private investigation companies proliferated and engaged in many diverse activities. Some companies involved in strikebreaking and protection of corporate interests freely used deadly force to obtain their objectives. These private security guards and investigators were responsible for many deaths. These forces also engaged in the apprehension of wanted persons, as well as the protection of valuable shipments of gold, silver and other valuable commodities. Because of conflicts with labor unions, private security guards and investigators continue to be associated by labor organizers and union members with strikebreaking.

The actions of the original private investigators were not without an influence on our current-day law enforcement and investigative operations. In 1871, Congress appropriated \$50,000 to the new Department of Justice (DOJ) to form a suborganization devoted to “the detection and prosecution of those guilty of violating federal law.” The amount was insufficient for the DOJ to fashion an integral investigating unit, so the DOJ contracted out the services to a private agency. Private investigation work suffered from the police modernizations movement that saw the rise of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the bolstering of detective units and resources of public police.

The successes as well as the problems of earlier private investigators have had a significant influence on the modern-day private investigators. Most state governments have instituted legal requirements for private investigators, among which are minimum experience, and insurance and educational requirements. These actions were undertaken to protect members of the public. Current and pending legislation will also have an impact on what can be accomplished by the private investigator. These restrictions are a result of the outcry for personal privacy and the inappropriate and highly publicized criminal activities of a small number of private investigators.

The role of the current private investigator primarily encompasses those areas that are not criminal in nature or are of sole interest to the business community, such as internal matters and civil litigation. There are also situations in which the private investigator may become involved in criminal matters because of jurisdictional problems and financial limitations of public law enforcement. This has created a wide variety of business opportunities for the qualified private investigator.

Because of the ever-increasing public outcry and governmental legislations, the private investigator must develop a recession- and legislative-proof business niche to remain a viable business entity. One example is the current and pending limitations on obtaining personal information from public records. The private investigator whose business is primarily based on obtaining personal information will find ever-increasing difficulty in obtaining the

desired information. Now is the time to reevaluate business opportunities and identify goals for the future. At this point, the individual is no longer just a private investigator but a business person who provides investigative services. The emphasis is on “business.”



## WHAT IS INTELLENET?



**I**nternational Intelligence Network—Intellenet—is a worldwide network of private investigators and security consultants. Intellenet’s membership is by invitation only and is restricted to highly qualified individuals with extensive experience in law enforcement; intelligence; private security; and public, private, and corporate investigations. Intellenet offers an extensive array of diversified services and operational scopes that are virtually unlimited throughout the United States and the international community. Members represent some of the most competent investigators available in the world. Many members have served in highly sensitive supervisory and management positions in government and corporate business entities. Regardless of client needs—regional, national or international—Intellenet members provide unique services to individuals and businesses.

Intellenet operates as a closely knit association. It is an alliance of experienced professional investigators and security experts adhering to a set of bylaws and a code of conduct that stresses ethical, professional, and expert business conduct. Member’s many-faceted skills are acquired or enhanced

through seminars, conferences, and training experience available through Intellenet training activities.

Intellenet members number over 400 individuals, with at least one member in every state and virtually every country throughout the world.

Unlike the majority of private investigation and security associations, Intellenet membership is not a right and is by invitation only, which allows for maintenance of high standards of professional experience and conduct by the members. Membership requires a personal recommendation by an Intellenet member in good standing. Possible candidates must have a minimum of 10 years' experience and comply with all state/country licensing and business requirements.

The membership selection process is structured to ensure the professionalism and ethical conduct of the membership. Secondly, it is designed to maximize the specialized expertise of the membership while ensuring that any one area of professional expertise or geographical area is not oversaturated with members. This is designed to ensure an equitable distribution of work for each member.

### **MEMBERSHIP CRITERIA**

1. Each prospective member must have a minimum of ten years of verifiable experience in investigative or security activities with emphasis on increased responsibility of the member's years of experience.
2. Each prospective member must be personally recommended by a member of Intellenet in good standing who must attest to the personal and professional experience, conduct, and reputation of the proposed member.
3. The prospective member must complete an application that documents the prospective member's professional employment and experience. The applicant must provide three character references who have known the prospective member for a minimum of five years and can attest to the prospective member's personal and professional qualifications.
4. All prospective and active members must be currently licensed in those jurisdictions where licensing is required. Failure to maintain current licensing will result in immediate termination of membership.
5. Annually, all prospective and active members must agree in writing to abide by the Intellenet code of ethical standards and conduct and the Intellenet bylaws.



## **Selection Process**

Verification of the prospective member's application will be conducted by a designated Intellenet member appointed by the executive director.

1. The scope of the background check will include record checks as appropriate. Conviction of any felony or major misdemeanor offenses will be disqualifying.
2. In those jurisdictions where licensing is not required, criminal record checks will be conducted.
3. Interviews of the applicant's references will be conducted. Additional reference interviews may be conducted at the sole discretion of Intellenet.
4. Any material or deliberate falsification or omission of fact will be disqualifying.
5. Upon completion of the background screening, the application will be forwarded to the Intellenet Executive Director, other designated individual, or the Membership Committee for determination of the applicant's qualifications for membership.
6. The applicant may be approved; disapproved for failure to meet the required minimum professional, ethical, or experience requirements; or placed in abeyance to a later date due to oversaturation of members, expertise, or experience in a geographical area.

## **FORMER AGENCY AFFILIATION**

The breadth of the former agency affiliation of Intellenet members demonstrates the varied experience background available for consultation by all of the membership. In addition to various local and state law enforcement agencies, Intellenet members have served, *inter alia*, with British Customs, Canadian Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hungarian Intelligence Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Israeli Mossad, Italian Carabinieri, New Scotland Yard, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Russian KGB, U.S. State Department, and various military intelligence and investigative agencies.

**LANGUAGE SKILLS**

The many language skills of Intellenet members include Arabic, Bosnian, Cantonese, Chinese Mandarin, Czech, Farsi, Guarani, Hungarian, Lithuanian, Pashtun, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Slovakian, Tagalog, and Urdu.

**AREAS OF EXPERTISE**

Members' areas of expertise include accident reconstruction, arson investigations, asset tracing and recovery, computer forensics, corporate investigations, document examination and analysis, due diligence, executive protection, expert witness, forensic accounting, insurance investigations, litigation support, and missing persons investigations.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all of the authors who took valuable time out of their workday to assist with this project. Each author is a member of Intellenet and an experienced professional. This project was undertaken following numerous comments and discussions, and, in some cases, complaints about the problems encountered in transitioning from positions as investigators in various agencies where there was no need to be concerned with marketing, developing clients, and other business activities. We never worried about these issues—work always came to us, sometimes in far greater quantities than we could control. If there was an administrative concern such as getting new equipment, there was always someone to take care of it. Over the years we have all developed our own niche of expertise, thanks to the training programs someone else paid for us to attend.

When we started our private investigation business, we wasted many hours and large sums of money taking a “hit or miss” approach to business requirements. It soon became obvious that we needed a basic education to enter the business world. Over the years, many of us learned expensive lessons and this led to our desire to impart our experience and knowledge to those who will follow us. Each of the authors developed his or her own way of doing business and adopted some strategies that only work for him or her. Others used the more traditional business approach.

There are no written plans or programs designed for organizing a private investigation business. The important thing is to identify a business goal or objective, choose parts of some existing concepts, and do not be afraid to alter your operational plan as necessary changes are identified as you move ahead in your business venture.

The authors’ unanimous judgment was that one method for sharing what we learned from our mistakes would be through this publication. There are more comprehensive tomes written on business organization and management but we wanted to provoke the reader’s thinking and encourage further inquiry into those business and administrative areas for your success. You are also encouraged to contact the authors for further advice.



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# **BASIC PRIVATE INVESTIGATION**



**Part I**

**BUSINESS ORGANIZATION  
AND MANAGEMENT**



## Chapter 1

# PRIVATE INVESTIGATION AS A SECOND CAREER

WILLIAM F. BLAKE

Individuals entering the private investigation career field come from many different backgrounds. The vast majority come from law enforcement agencies within the federal and local governments as well as the military services. In recent years, many have come directly into the private investigation market from colleges and universities where they have received degrees in criminal justice, forensic science, or related fields. The influx from the college environment has been greatly influenced by the proliferation of forensic science and investigative television shows. Each of these groups has unique advantages and disadvantages.

Experienced investigators, frequently retirees entering a second career either for additional financial resources or for the love of the business, normally have many years of investigative experience. Depending on the organization from which they retired, they may not have the appropriate management skills for business success. During their career prior to retirement, the organization with which they were employed had a support staff to take care of all of the noninvestigative matters, such as financial administration, supply acquisition and personnel management. Retirees desiring to be business owners must acquire these skills to be successful.

Newcomers from the academic environment may have developed some theoretical skills but lack practical application of these skills. Many of these individuals have been exposed to the latest information