

# Eight reasons to hire a PRIVATE INVESTIGATOR



1. **Experience.** The investigative knowledge attained by a private investigator in the course of their first month of employment probably equals or exceeds what most people will learn in a lifetime. A simple mistake during an investigation can destroy any chance of success in the future. Remember, if you make a mistake while attempting to conduct your own investigation, it may well require even the most talented investigators to spend measurable amounts of additional time to complete an assignment. More time translates to more expensive.

2. **Aptitude.** One of the greatest advantages of using a licensed private investigator is his or her ability to conduct an assignment, surreptitiously. If, for example, you attempt to undertake your own surveillance and you are detected, or even suspected, you can pretty much be assured that whatever the object of your investigation was will now change. Criminals, once aware, or even suspicious that they are being watched will now employ different methods, or perhaps stop their illegal activities at least for some time. The same applies in domestic (marital) investigations.

3. **Legal Compliance.** If you are investigating for a relative or a friend, you may be in violation of the laws governing licensed private investigators. The fines can be steep, and yes, jail time is also a distinct possibility.

4. **Professional Peril.** Danger is always a consideration. Ask any seasoned P.I. and they will surely explain that their highest priority is the safety of his or her clients and themselves as well. Investigators are generally well trained in how to handle themselves in the remote event that they are detected and even confronted. The consequences of being detected might include retribution. Sadly, this happens more often than you might imagine when someone is detected conducting a surveillance or stakeout. In domestic investigations, an unlicensed or untrained investigator when detected might incur the wrath of such detection, not only for the investigator, but for his or client(s) as well.

5. **Skill and Talent.** Television does not prepare anyone for real life investigations. Nothing compares to hands-on experience. When we hire our doctors, lawyers, accountants, mechanics and plumbers, we always seek highly trained and credentialed experts to assist us. Most of us have been burned at least a few times by unskilled workers, and those mistakes generally prove to be quite costly, emotionally and financially.

**6. Cost.** It is always somewhat amusing when clients contact a professional and their very first question is "How much to you charge?" That generally signals that the caller has little regard for the quality of the service, the experience of the vendor, or the service or product being considered. It also signals unscrupulous investigators to offer "low-ball" fees just so they can get new business. In those instances, you can be assured that the quality of work will suffer, and in some cases you might be lucky just to get any work done at all. Cost should be a consideration....always, but it must be measured and balanced with other considerations. How long do you think the assignment might take, when will it start, do you work nights and weekends as necessary, and how long does a typical case such as my own take to be completed? These are just a few of the questions that you might want to consider before hiring anyone. Consider the highly experience investigator who may charge double, or even triple that of the inexperienced firm. One must consider that if the experienced firm completes their assignment in one fifth the amount of the time of that taken by the amateur, you are still paying less for your work in spite of the disparity in hourly, or daily fees.

**7. Courtroom Experience.** In the event that your investigator needs to testify, how well will they present themselves on your behalf? Who is more believable, the investigator who has never testified, or has only testified a few times, or a seasoned investigator who has testified dozens, or even hundreds of times in both state and federal court as well as mediation/arbitration testimony? Is your investigator going to appear rough and garrulous, or sophisticated and well versed on the matters that they will address? Can they testify that they have been qualified as an expert within various skills of their own profession and about a wide spectrum of skill sets?

**8. The Law.** Private investigators are licensed in most states and are vigorously tested in order to be issued a license. Even at the real risk of putting a potential client off, they must be prepared to keep their clients well informed. Some examples are in the tape recording of others, the Gramm, Leach, Bliley Act (Privacy Laws) and the Federal Polygraph Protection Act (1988). All investigators have a responsibility to inform any potential or current client if they appear to be headed in the wrong (and illegal) direction. The recent sensational trial and incarceration of Anthony Pellicano, once known as the "P.I. to the stars" should be all that is needed to guide the investigator and client alike that violating even the spirit of the law is something not to be taken lightly. Mr. Pellicano invited other specialists, including police officers to join him in his criminal acts and many of these people, including his own clients were ultimately detected and prosecuted. Never put yourself at risk and do not allow your investigator to expose you to potential criminal and civil penalties. Legitimate and well versed investigators will advise you how to meet your goals while staying well within the legal guidelines that govern investigative work.