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THE OREGON INVESTIGATOR

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Cascade Head, Oregon

Note from the Editor.....

Welcome back to the Oregon Investigator!

As many of you know, our journal has not been published for quite some time. As we have a lot of new members, I just thought I would bring up a couple of points to familiarize them...(and RE-familiarize seasoned members) with the journal's process. We do not have a dedicated staff to produce this journal. This journal is and should be, the product of submissions from association members. There is a volunteer who will put the submissions together and publish the journal. It is a resource for articles of interest and information which you have and can share with your fellow members for the benefit of all. The quality and frequency of this journal is **DIRECTLY** tied to the membership's participation. On that note, I invite all to submit an item to be used in future journals. What may seem like "common knowledge" to you...may be just the bit of "new idea" another investigator can use!

Some ideas: List of resources and links, Photos and summary of a seminar .. including regionals!, Appropriate cartoons. If you read a good article...let us know the name of the article and the source and author...we can either reprint it or refer folks to it! You can submit items to any board member, or email them to webmaster@oali.org.

That being said, starting with this issue, we will be publishing a series of articles by John Rose of the Academy of Legal Investigators. It will be a series covering sixteen (16) topics for the Professional. The first installment is three (3) articles on the topic of Business.

We would like to thank Mr. Rose for his generosity
in allowing us the use of his articles.

John Rose is Director, Academy of Legal Investigations, Salem, OR And Author, \$10,000 Per Month As A Private Investigator



Here is a sincere wish that each reader will have a happy, healthy and financially rewarding New Year. In my effort to contribute to the latter part of that wish, this article will be directed to the beginner for 1995; however, some of the old timers may want to continue reading.

To succeed in investigations we must have happy, satisfied clients because those clients provide word of mouth advertising which can neither be bought nor obtained by paid advertising. To accomplish this every time should be your desired goal.

Many very good investigators fail at the Business of Investigations because they do not understand the business aspects of the profession. Understanding investigations as a business is not unlike Newton's theory ... "For every action there is a reaction." Although we realize this, many times our actions are the true cause of client problems. We must think about our acts long before we cause them to happen.

Sources is one example: If we wait to develop a source of information until a client asks for that information there is little chance of impressing that client or gaining that necessary word of mouth advertising.

The successful investigator will realize that human relations play a major role in the business of investigations from the moment the name goes into the Yellow Pages.

All of the keys to success should be blended together like the ingredients of a good soup or stew. One ingredient left out of an otherwise excellent gumbo can produce a bland or unpopular flavor. The same is true in this profession. The investigator that has all the sources in the world but does not know how or when to smile is doomed.

The business aspects of your investigation start long before the job is actually given or accepted. When you introduce yourself and shake hands with the client is usually the beginning of most investigations; however, in some cases a telephone call or letter may get you started.

You are the professional, start with a cheerful attitude and a firm handshake. (Not the dead fish [limp wrist] or bone crusher.) In the beginning, be sociable, talk in terms of the other person's interest. If you do not know your client's interest, talk about the tornado, heat or the weather but do not get into politics or religion. When your client is talking, it is most important to "listen."

After you start talking business, do not take their problem lightly. Set a sincere tone to the conversation by being open and honest. This client has come to you for professional assistance, provide it. You must sell yourself before you can sell your investigative service. This is accomplished by being humble and courteous without being arrogant. Show confidence and be optimistic but do not promise to accomplish the impossible. Remember, the only thing a professional can guarantee is a "Professional Effort." By all means, avoid the "take it or leave it attitude," be flexible within reason rather than demanding. Allow your client the opportunity to suggest his thoughts and desires.

You should be in control of the conversation at all times without making a second class citizen out of your client. Generally, the client will know what the problem is. It is your job to know how to solve that problem. Do not allow the client to tell you how to conduct the investigation; however, if the client does talk in those terms listen to what is being said but do not debate the issue. There are times when the client is on the right track and you can follow their thinking. Domestic is an example: When following a spouse it will be necessary to know some specific information and your client is the only person who can provide those facts. Do not allow a client to accompany you on surveillance! As a general "rule" do not tell the client how you intend to solve their problem. You are in the business of investigations, do not attempt to teach your clients to solve their own investigative problems.

After there is an agreement and/or understanding in regard to the client's problem and it is understood that you are going to conduct the investigation, make sure the client also understands the costs. If you have not discussed expenses, do not expect to bill

later for expenses and keep your client a happy camper. When dealing with the private party, it is much better to ask for a retainer fee up front and explain in detail exactly how each dollar will be used. Example: If you have an hourly rate, mileage and per diem, explain those fees.

When the retainer has been exhausted, explain that you will notify the client either by telephone, letter or report of what has been accomplished and what can be expected from further investigation. At that point, the client will be provided the opportunity to discontinue the investigation or advance additional fees to continue the investigation. This procedure can continue until the investigation has been successfully concluded.

Another financial approach is the flat rate, which works very well with many phases of investigation. Example: Skip tracing. You may want to tell the client that it will cost "X" amount of dollars to locate the missing person, no charge if not located. Don't expect to keep this client happy, if you attempt to impress with your speed and efficiency by pressing a couple of keys on your computer to come up with the current address in thirty seconds after agreeing to a fee of \$100.

After you understand the client's problem and/or job assignment, and you have agreed on the fee, take the time to go over the entire agreement to be sure you and your client have a mutual understanding of all financial agreements. Now, you can bid your client good day.

After the client has left or you have returned to your office is the time to start the investigation. The difficult work has already been accomplished. The investigative part of this business is easy but should you have any problems, give me a call!



Case Management - by John R. Rose

John R. Rose is Director, Academy of Legal Investigators, Salem, OR, and Author, \$10,000 Per Month As A Private Investigator

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When you start your business, start as if you are going to be successful with a million clients and the business will continue forever. There are many ways to manage your case filing system. However, there is only one way that will work correctly and last forever. Here are a few points this system must contain:

The system must include a written record of clients, jobs, billings, reports in such a manner that you can answer any client's question within 30 seconds after the telephone rings.

Absolutely, you can do this with the computer. If the instrument is on and operating with the correct software on the screen when the telephone rings, you may be able to answer your client's question within 30 seconds. On the other hand, the paper file is always there in immediate reach and will not go out! The computer generation wants to do everything with the computer today, and it certainly can be accomplished. However, you had better have a hard copy as a backup. It's not IF the computer is going out, but WHEN. Like John Henry said, the steel driving man, I can find the information

quicker with my paper file than anyone with their computer. If you insist on using the computer you should get "investigative software" and one of the best that I have seen is sold by Roy Miller (no profit in this for me). His e-mail address is roy@case-works.com.

One for the FILES

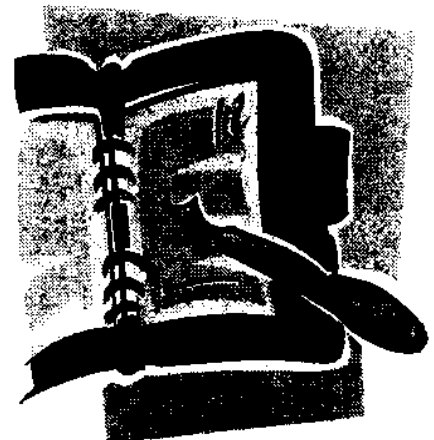


Either way, computer or paper, the record must contain a Log Book to enter each case as they come into your office. You must cross-reference these jobs alphabetically and numerically. This way you will be able to find the file with either the name or number. The computer will bring them up by using either the name or number, but the paper file would contain a number and the rolodex would list the names alphabetically. The log book would show the name of the subject under investigation, date of assignment, date the job was finished, date of billing, date paid, type of investigation, (coded for future reference), and provide the number for the rolodex.

Do NOT get billings mixed up with income. You may send out a billing, but it is not income until the check is

received from your client. This is why you need a separate billing journal that is a quick and simple way to know, if and when, your billings are paid. That journal should be reviewed and updated daily. If you make a monthly journal of your billings, you can toss them in the round file. This is for your record only, there will be a complete income and expense ledger for the IRS.

Expenses—this profession is unique in that we spend our client's money before we get it. The IRS says that we should keep a daily record of out of pocket expenses. The best way to do this is by keeping a small, pocket size daily expense book with you at all times. Then record all your expenses in that book. The credit card statement will record the same thing if you buy everything with a credit card. Generally, we do not use credit cards to purchase small items, and from time to time, everyone does not accept credit cards. It is best to record the credit card purchase in your daily expenses also.



Recognizing The Investigative Opportunity - by John R. Rose

John R. Rose is Director, Academy of Legal Investigators, Salem, OR, and Author, \$10,000 Per Month As A Private Investigator

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Before I really understood what a subrogation investigation was, one jumped up and hit me over the head quite by accident. This was during the period of the Pinto fires and Ford Motor Company was in trouble frequently.

A friend of a friend called asking for an opinion to discuss a neighbor's house fire. The story was sad. However, my human compassion was lost during my first five years in business. Working for nothing does not put beans in the pot and beans do go better with some ham hock! This was an exception or so it appeared, and I agreed to donate some time. After explaining in depth that I was not a fire cause expert and knew very little about this type of investigation, they still wanted my assistance. They did not have insurance and could not afford to pay.

The only way I could possibly get paid for my time was to find some way to subrogate, but that word was never discussed. The owner of the burned house did not know the meaning of subrogation. Not unlike some of the ladies who 'just want to know' who the other woman is or, if in fact, there is another woman. This young couple wanted to know what they did wrong and/or what caused their new house, furniture and all their dreams to go up in flames. They had fire insurance outlined in their budget, but the call to the insurance agent was not made.

They agreed to pay for my time and expenses if my investigation developed some avenue for them to recover damages. I planned to donate a couple of days just to keep my friend and associates from thinking I was a hard-hearted jerk.

My next step was to talk with the owner of the home. He provided me with a rough sketch outlining the location of all kitchen appliances. On returning to the fire scene, my effort was to locate all the small electrical appliances, such as a waffle iron, toaster, electric clocks, coffee maker, mixer, etc. Some of these items were not plugged in, but some may have been. The house did burn and something did cause that fire. Some of these items were burned into vapors, and others were melted down into a pile of metal parts. Before the fire, the coffee maker was, according to the sketch, sitting on one end of the counter next to the stove. The remains of the coffee maker was not easily found. I gave up digging with my hands, then went home to get a shovel and a garden rake. With these tools I dug the debris out and away from the area I was searching and found a glob of melted plastic. There was no way to recognize this blob as having once been a coffee maker.

After a few moments with the Fire Marshall, who had seen many melted coffee makers, I learned that it could be. He also explained that if that blob was sent to a lab in Seattle they would run it through a "cat-scan" to determine if that was the culprit which caused the fire. The problem—they charge \$600.00 an hour.

It took a couple of weeks for me to talk the young couple into

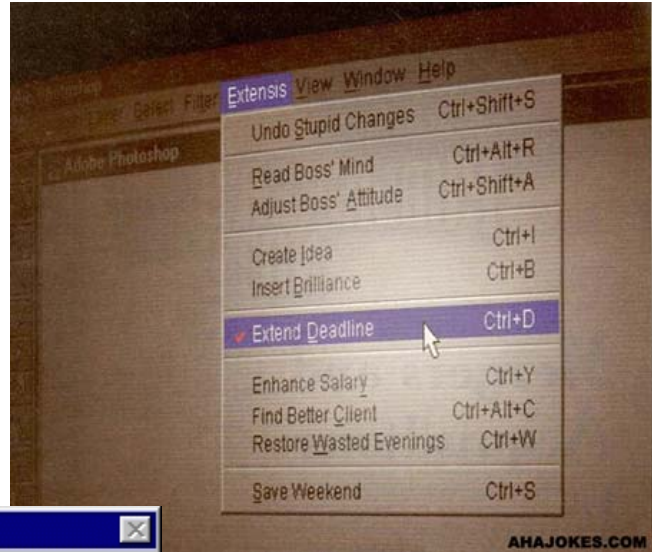
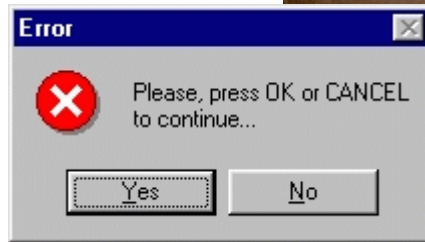
borrowing the money to send the blob of plastic to the lab. They finally agreed and today they tell you that was the best investment ever made.

Three hours of work in the lab provided the fact that the coffee maker did cause the fire. The computer sketch that outlined a part of that coffee maker appeared after going through the process. That "after the fire" outline compared by computer with the original schematic from the manufacturer. The comparison could easily be recognized by anyone like me. It was obvious from the computer print out what caused the coffee maker to over heat at the house. (This was now a fact.)

The manufacturer of the coffee maker built a new home for the furnishings, paid investigation attorney fees. They settled out of court because someone else had already taken them to court and reaped the harvest of those trials and settlements.

That fire was nearly under the rug! Many good cases passed up, as I almost passed up by. Not being a fire-cause expert I did not feel qualified to investigate that fire. However, I was qualified to do what I did. Each of us has an effort to do the right thing and many opportunities. One of the keys to success in this profession is to know how to recognize an opportunity when one jumps. Take advantage of all opportunities and have a happy prosperous NEW YEAR!





DON'T FORGET!

GET INVOLVED

**OALI Board Elections
Annual Meeting
June 25, 2010**



April 21st, 2010

**OALI Donation of card stock and printer ribbons for the
Private Investigators new ID cards to DPSST**

Left to right: OALI President Patrick Higgins, Director Eriks Gabliks, Captain Teresa Naugle Private Security / Private Investigator



Mark your calendars!

June 25-26, 2007 OALI Annual Summer Conference and Seminar

Black Bear Inn Conference Center
1600 Motor Ct, Salem, 97301
503-581-1559
CEU 8.0 hrs.

Friday, 12:30-4:30 Annual Meeting

Saturday, 8:00-5:00 Seminar

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