

# NEWS

Information & Insights from **RICK JOHNSON Private Investigators**  
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## Domestic Relations: A Family Matter

### Rick Johnson & Associates Private Investigators

There is no trust more important than the trust that cements a personal relationship. A suspected break in that trust can be devastating. Suspicion, alone, can seriously undermine even a long-standing and previously solid marriage.

A private investigator often is called upon to uncover the facts and circumstances that can convert suspicion into evidence, but the job of a good private investigator is to uncover the facts, wherever they may lead.

### Where To Start?

It's almost inevitable that the first thought of a spouse in marital difficulties is surveillance, with the goal of producing still and video evidence.

There's no question that surveillance can be an option, but rarely is it a first option. And surveillance never is conducted by a reputable investigator in order to obtain proof.

It's a tool that may provide testimonial or visual evidence, and

### The Asset Investigation

This is an important variation on the background investigation.

One spouse may have no real or sufficient awareness of the assets held by the other spouse, including business interests, property, and the like – and some assets may be in the name of a third, unknown party.

Where substantial financial assets are available to one spouse, vehicles, property, and other large assets may have been purchased for the benefit of a third party.

Motor Vehicle Records, Assessor Records, Clerk & Recorder records, and Filings under the Uniform Commercial Code with a county or the Colorado Secretary of State may reveal the assets.

We have national corporate tracking sources that can reveal the full extent of business financial information. Liens, judgments, and bankruptcies may exist, and may represent assets, as well as liabilities.

### Children: Special Handling Required

An important part of our work is in the coordination of efforts to properly execute out-of-state court orders in child custody matters.

Rick is the founder and president of the Private Investigator's Academy of the Rockies, a course of study for new and prospective private investigators.

He also teaches an introductory course through the Colorado Free University for those considering entry into the profession.



**Discreet, Thorough,  
Accurate & Creative**

- **Former Investigator for the Denver and Jefferson District Attorney's Offices**
- **Police misconduct and related investigations for Central City, Breckenridge, Fowler, and Fort Lupton. And Risk Assessment investigations for Denver.**
- **The only private investigative agency in Colorado to be hired by the Denver Election Commission to investigate allegations of campaign fraud and kickbacks.**
- **Broad knowledge of criminal & civil law, insurance regulations, and common sense acquired**

the evidence often is inconclusive.

### Questions...

Is there anything in the vitae of the other side's experts that can be used to challenge credibility?

Is there anything in the background of any other opposing witness that can be used to challenge credibility? What about your own witnesses?

As depositions are completed, what leads do they contain and how do you find and pursue them?

### The Background Investigation

Often the most useful first option, a background investigation may focus on a spouse and his or her secrets, or it may focus on a third party, and his or her secrets.

After 10 years as a DA's investigator and almost 20 years in private practice, I'm rarely surprised by how much one spouse can hide from the other.

- Statewide Arrest Records
- Sexual Offender Registry
- State Criminal Court Records
- State Civil Court Records
- Federal Court Records
- Civil, Criminal, Bankruptcy
- Motor Vehicle Records
- Property Records
- Business Records
- National Records Traces

A National Records Trace can point an investigation to jurisdictions in other states.

Civil court records can identify previously unknown domestic violence matters and restraining orders.

So, all of these elements can be important.

This often entails an effort first to locate the children, followed by the filing of paperwork necessary to the enforcement of an out-of-state order in Colorado, and finally the return of the children to the custodial parent.

When questions exist as to the conduct of one parent or the other with regard to the welfare of the children, a background investigation again is an important option.

Often where children are involved, it's not just a party to a divorce that is important... the people with whom that person associates while caring for children can be extremely pertinent, especially where a third party has moved in with the opposing spouse.

### The Surveillance Option

The keys to the value of surveillance:

A well-defined and useful goal is essential. It must have a reasonable chance of success and the result must be something that the attorney can use.

A desire to "get the S.O.B" never is enough.

It also must have a good starting point... a known or at least suspected... point at which contact can be made. And factors that suggest a risk of discovery must be considered.

And then there are all of the factors that can deny success... traffic, crowded public places, offices with multiple entry and exit points, private or otherwise protected locations.

The rule is simple: surveillance requires purpose and care.

**through almost 30 years of investigative experience.**

- **One of the few investigative firms in Colorado to carry \$2 million in liability insurance.**
- **More than 22,000 civil and criminal cases investigated.**
- **Member:**
  - **World Association of Detectives**
  - **Intelnet**
  - **President, Professional Private Investigators Association of Colorado**
  - **National Council of Investigation and Security Services**
  - **California Association of Legal Investigators**
- **Associate Member, Colorado and Denver Bar Associations**

**24-Hours/7 Days a Week**

## The Paper Trail

People generally are not experts in the practice of deception. Paper records may exist – credit card receipts, telephone bills, bank statements, and the like.

Credit card receipts may identify unusual or unexplained purchases. Telephone bills can identify long distance numbers that don't appear to correspond to normal personal or business use. Withdrawals of cash from ATM machines are identified by locations that may be illuminating.

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