**Revised How to be your own Private Investigator ( picture of one )**

An investigator’s duty isto gather facts, not take sides.

Whether you are in the midst of a Divorce, Child custody, trying to collect current or back child support, locate a missing person, building a case against someone, or any situation you need to defend yourself or your child or your family, it could be your work place, if you have an instinct something is not right, something does not seem legal, chances are your instincts are right. Listen to your god given intuition, follow your gut, and do some investigative work.

Start with a piece of paper and pen. Write down all the facts as you see them, now turn the paper over and write down what is needed to prove those facts, or what a judge or attorney would need to be persuaded to believe what you are saying is the truth.

**In Legal research they use what is called the TAPP rule.**

**1.** Thing

**2**. Act

**3.** Person or persons involved

**4.** Place

Ask yourself “ who would know, or who would have the information” take photographs, & conduct interviews

**Here are some helpful resources to start your investigation.**

**Local State Web Site -** Most all States have up to date information that will guide you to the resources your looking for. This is a good place to start. [www.virtualchase.com](http://www.virtualchase.com) click legal research, scroll down look for County & Municipal law, scroll toward bottom of page click stat & local government on the net. The names of each state will come up, you can then choose the city or states web site.

**County Assessors office - This** office is the easiest way to determine if someone owns property in a particular county. Name, address or parcel number can search the records. These records will usually show the owner of the property but not always. There job is to collect the property taxes, therefore their records contain the name and addresses of the person who pays the property taxes. It can determine if a property is owner occupied or rented. The records will show the site address and the mailing address where the tax bill is sent. Title companies have access to this information too, and will usually give you the information on a one-address basis if you tell them you are interested in the property and would like to know who is the current owner. There is usually no charge for this service.

**County Recorder –** This is where true copies of documents are kept. Real Estate transactions and Judgments. The records are searched by last name, first name on a county basis. Deeds, quit claim deeds, trust deeds, reconveyances, mechanics liens, tax liens, and other documents as required by law are listed here by date and document number, you can review the actual document, and obtain a copy is needed. It will also tell you who sold the property and how much the loan amount is if one exists. Click here to find your state’s contact information [www.BRBpub.com](http://www.BRBpub.com)

**The U.S. District Court – Local County Court House -** This varies by state, and the size town you live in. Go to your local courthouse for your County and ask to be directed to the right source & location for your need. In most states it will be the Clerks office. Its all public information all you need is the last and first name, although some states require Date of Birth which makes it more difficult but not impossible to get, and they are always happy to assist. Here is where you can find out if an individual has any civil or criminal charges, also for Domestic issues, Divorce, Domestic violence. You search all records on line with their computer, or they have staff to assist you. This information includes traffic tickets, DUI, suspension of license, drug charges, bankruptcy, & civil Judgments. You have to search each category individually, Civil index, criminal index, and you also have to know what county the incident might have occurred, or the person your looking into lives, to be thorough check out all surrounding Counties. Some states have a State wide criminal index, and some have a web site with the information you can get from your home, but you will still have to go to the courthouse for actual documentation. Again ask the clerk

Now if you find information that is useful to your investigation you can request copies from the clerk. This is how many attorneys get their information. You can also request the file, in this file you now have more in depth information, police reports, names, witnesses, lawyers, past court dates, and upcoming court dates. Don’t be afraid to ask questions. It helps to be polite, patient, and professional. Click here [www.BRBpub.com](http://www.BRBpub.com) for your states information.

**Tip of advice** – Never assume you know someone; you have to plug in every and any ones name that you feel is involved with what ever your situation is.

**Local Police Station -** This varies by state also, but you wont know until you go there what services they will provide for your investigation, You now have from going to the Court House, Ticket or citation numbers, dates, officers reports, names witnesses. Now ask for the copies of the actual reports, there is a fee involved but not much, now you could have access to photos taken at the scene, more in depth reports. You can also request any phone calls that might have been made to the police station on someone else’s behalf, for instance if someone made a call to the local authorities (police) they should have record you must have the dates. You can see what action if any they took. Something I have done, tell them you are saving your attorney time, and he asked you to get the information. For all they know you could be a reporter for the newspaper. It is public information.

**Search Warrants - They** are public record. The property report will list what the officers found at the location; 10 days after search warrant is served it will be filed. It is public information.

**Domestic files –**  (Divorce) Listed by either party’s name, public information found in the Clerks office, good way to find an Ex Spouse.

**Probate records - Using** a deceased’s name will show property and whom it was left to.

**Occupational licenses - If** a particular state regulates or issues a license for an occupation or a professional license, and then those records are public information.

**County Clerk - City Records –** Varies by State but maintains records of fictitious business statements, also known as DBA **&** Business licenses. Any business operating under a name other than its own legal name must file a fictitious business statement, files are indexed by owners name and business name, it will list if it is a sole proprietor or partnership, it may provide you with the partners name. Always run the owners name to see if he has any other businesses. **Corporation records -** In most states corporation records are public record. In California records are registered with the secretary of state. The Secretary of State has records on all Corporations Incorporated in the State of California or doing business in the State. Corporation name, corporate officers or agents for service can access the records. This information is available by mail for free or in person. Contact your local State for your access & availability. Click here [www.BRBpub.com](http://www.BRBpub.com) for your state & county information.

**Registered Agent -** Each **Corporation** has one and it is the person who legally accepts any lawsuit filed against that Corporation, it could be there attorney. All out of State Corporations should have someone in the state that can legally accept the complaint?

**Marriage Licenses –** You need full names of husband and wife, including the wife’s maiden name along with the date. The cost is nominal and is public information.

**Social Security Administration –** Ex wives check your benefits, if you were married for 10 yrs or more and your divorced spouse dies, you could get benefits just the same as a widow or widower.

**Change your social security card.** Apply for SSI, survivors or family benefits, estimate your retirement benefits. Employee’s benefits under **Cobra.** Call 1-800-772-1213 or go online at [www.ssa.gov](http://www.ssa.gov)

**Did you know a persons Social Security number indicates which state that card was issued**? Legally applied for and usually takes place in a state in which a person was born. The first 3 digits indicate location the East Coast is 001- mid west states 330 digits, and West Coast like California in the 500’s the next 2 digits sometimes but not always indicate the year it was issued.

All of your Federal, State, and County offices are listed in the front of the white pages section of the phone book. You can also goggle your local offices.

**Libraries - Not** only can you use their computers for your online research but they also have Phone books for other cities, counties in your State. Newspapers too. A good resource is Polk Directories this is a reverse directory that can find a person by the address, they also have directories that indicate who owns what companies.

* Books to purchase [www.polkdirectories.com](http://www.polkdirectories.com)

The public record research tips book

By Michael Sankey

Barnes and Noble

Online web site information [www.BRBpub.com](http://www.BRBpub.com)

**The key knowing where to obtain the required information**