



CALI JOURNAL

CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF LICENSED INVESTIGATORS



Los Angeles District Meeting



About the California Association of Licensed Investigators (CALI)

Founded in 1947, CALI is a not-for-profit organization devoted to protecting and enhancing the private investigation industry in California and the United States.

CALI is the largest Private Investigator association in the world. With more than 1100 members throughout the country, CALI is focused on advancing the industry through a strong legislative program and numerous educational offerings, including an annual conference, Webinars, new licensee training, professional development programs, and CALI's proprietary Certified Professional Investigator (CPI) designation to qualified investigators in California.

CALI has a full-time lobbyist in Sacramento. CALI's legislative advocate interfaces with California legislators to protect Private Investigators' ability to serve their clients, as well as to support and oppose legislation impacting all California Private Investigators.

CALI strives to protect the consumers' rights while advocating for access to all public records and data that professional investigations can responsibly access.

CALI Active members are licensed by the California Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) and the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS). As a professional organization, CALI is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprising members throughout California and an Executive Director, retained full-time to support CALI and its programs.

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Executive Director
Maria Lagunas

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President's Message

Frank W. Huntington, III, CPI



First and foremost, I want to thank everyone who attended the 2024 CALI Annual Conference in Palm Springs. This event was another rousing success for CALI.

The weekend started on Thursday with the first-ever Jim Zimmer Memorial CALI golf tournament, in which 27 players enjoyed a wonderful, sunny day on the course. Those who stayed back at the hotel attended an in-depth pre-conference session on background investigations by Chris Reynolds. And, of course, we can't forget our newest CALI event, the pickleball tournament.

After Friday morning's business meeting and legislative report (thank you, Francie Koehler and Jerry Desmond), we kicked things off with our opening keynote speaker, Chris Goffard, on the case of "Dirty John." The day continued with many excellent breakout sessions, and the evening capped off with the President's Banquet. We were honored to have Julie Zimmer with us, and at the banquet, Golf Chair Chad Ragan presented her with a Memorial Golf Trophy.



Saturday continued with more breakout sessions and concluded with what I can only describe as a phenomenal closing keynote speaker, Kim Cross, author of *"In Light of All Darkness: Inside the Polly Klass Kidnapping and the Search for America's Child."* Kim is a gifted author and speaker, and a truly friendly individual whom we all got to know and like throughout the weekend. The first 200 attendees at the conference received a free copy of her book. If you were not lucky enough to receive one or did not attend, I highly recommend it, available on Amazon.

Kim's father-in-law, Eddie Freyer, was the lead FBI agent on the Polly Klass case. As he lives in the Santa Rosa area, we are discussing the possibility of presenting Polly Klass part 2, where he can share his insights into the interviewing do's and don'ts he and other investigators learned from the case.

It is never too early to mark your calendars for the 2025 CALI Annual Conference, August 21-23, at the beautiful Sonoma Wine Country DoubleTree Resort. As you recall, numerous flights from throughout the state and country go directly into the Charles Schultz Airport in Santa Rosa, which is just a short drive to the venue.

I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to those CALI members who volunteered their time and efforts in planning, setting up, and running the conference. You all did a fantastic job, from registration to room monitors, sponsor coordination, the hospitality suite, and everything else. Without your efforts, we could not have done this. Please remember that events such as these do not pop up overnight. The planning and execution start months in advance. If you are interested in helping with the 2025 conference or any other CALI event, please let me know; I will gladly put you to work.

Finally, a huge shout-out to our sponsors and exhibitors. These folks make our conference affordable for our members and, in all sincerity, are a kick to hang out with as well! You know who you are; we always look forward to seeing you!

By the time you read this, we have voted for some bylaw changes. I had just a couple of goals when I came on as President; one was to move our conference out of June, which we have successfully done, and the other was to start streamlining some CALI operations. Through CALI leadership and various chairs, we weathered the COVID-19 storm and developed an excellent webinar training program. With that, we phased out the requirement that districts hold training sessions and instead asked that they concentrate on mixers, at which we encourage new members and non-members to attend and get to know us. So far, we have been quite successful.

With the elimination of the training requirements and the position of district governors, I believed now was the right time to bring CALI down to just one Vice President. For those newer members, CALI used to have three VP positions. We went down to two several years ago, and, like I said, I think we will do fine with just one now.

CALI was founded over 50 years ago to protect our rights and represent our industry at the state capitol. Last June, we were hit with a pretty significant new regulation that would require, among other things, a signed retainer agreement with ALL clients regardless of the type of case or client.

In our discussions with the Bureau of Security and Investigative Services (BSIS), I had somewhat of an epiphany. Whereas the BSIS is responsible for regulating industries such as security guards, alarm companies, locksmiths, and repossessioners, the duties of those fields are relatively self-explanatory. As private investigators, we conduct a wide range of investigations involving varied tasks, responsibilities, and clients. (Currently, on the CALI website, there are more than 75 different specialties in our drop-down menu.) Having realized this, I think CALI's job is to help the bureau understand what our members do daily. With such an understanding, we can continue to work closely with the bureau to protect our interests and that of the consumer.

So, as we continue to monitor and do our best to improve on these rules that impact us, please pay heed to our Government Affairs Committee and Chair Francie Koehler when she and our legislative advocate, Jerry Desmond, ask you to contact your legislature. By the way, every one of you should know and have in your contacts who that representative is. If you don't, you can quickly look them up [here](#).

Although keeping in touch with your legislature should be a full-time job, we meet once a year in a more formal setting to march on the State Capitol and share our concerns. The 2025 Legislative Day will be held on March 10. Please attend as this is a crucial day for our Association.

Also in March, on the 8th, CALI will be holding another Newly Licensed Investigator Training Event (NLITE). If you are a newly licensed investigator, please plan on attending, as this has proven to be a very informative class. If you know of a newly licensed investigator, please let them know. Additional details regarding NLITE may be found [here](#).

Earlier, I mentioned my gratitude for those who helped at our conference, yet one person was glaringly missing. That is simply because she deserves her own paragraph! I speak, of course, of CALI's Executive Director, Maria Lagunas. Maria is indeed the backbone of this Association, and I cannot imagine what we would do without her. Maria not only plans the conference and all the other CALI events but also handles the day-to-day CALI operations, which are too vast to list here. Please, always thank Maria when you see her. However, if you have a question or issue about CALI, please get in touch with your District Director, Officer, or me before contacting the CALI office. This will significantly help Maria continue with the business of CALI.

Lastly, we lost some fine people this last year. As we wrap up the year, please never forget to tell your loved ones, neighbors, and friends how much you care for them. We never know when our time will come, and we should never have regrets.

May you all have a blessed, safe, and Happy New Year!

Frank W. Huntington, III

Frank W. Huntington, III, CPI
CALI President



Save the Date!

California Association of Licensed Investigators

CALI Annual Conference

August 21-23, 2025

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Sonoma Wine Country

www.cali-pi.org/conference

Welcome New Members!

Please join the California Association of Licensed Investigators in welcoming our newest members who joined between August 1, 2024 and December 23, 2024.

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT

Abel Hernandez
Joshua Ronquillo, *Ronquillo Investigations*
Jayme Seeger, *Seeger Investigative Services*
Gary Siegel, Jr., *Siegel Investigative Services*

EAST BAY DISTRICT

Michael Kelley

INLAND EMPIRE DISTRICT

Coby Alaoui, *MC Ballistics Enterprise*
Edward Arevalo, *A & A Investigations*
Nathan Bradway
Jason Corey, *Corey Investigations, Inc.*
Ray Hernandez, *Nebula Enterprises, Inc.*
Brian Messina, *BBS Solutions, Inc.*
William Mikol, *Dynamic Consulting*
Shaun Myers
Carlos Rincon, *Detectigators*
Paphaychith Sivilay, *Sivilay Private Investigation*
Frank Tiburzio, *Tiburzio Investigations Inc.*
David Vialpando, *Vialpando Investigative Services*

LOS ANGELES DISTRICT

Dushon Burse, *Deep Discovery Investigations*
Robert Crenshaw, *Crenshaw Investigations*
Reece Haile, *Hooked Investigations*
Timothy Johnson, *Johnson 225 Investigations*
Sophath Meak, *Avella Private Investigations, LLC*
Mary Morse Pilon, *Harrogate Research*
Robert Palmer, *Galahad Investigations*
Victor Pattarroyo, *Voss Investigations*
Eddie Peralta, *Peralta Associates and Investigations*
John Romero, *Black Box Security, Inc.*
Jose Solorio, *Solarium Investigations*
Shawn Stallworth, *Nova Investigations*
Reginald Stewart, *R. Curtis Stewart and Associates*

NORTH BAY DISTRICT

Donald Bevins

ORANGE DISTRICT

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Julia Engen, *Engen Investigations*
Tamer Farah, *Above Limits PI*
David Henderson, *FourFend LLC*
Ron Williams, *Talon Companies*

SACRAMENTO DISTRICT

Adrian Retiz, *Retiz, Ordway and Associates*
Kelly Spencer, *Kelly Spencer, Private Investigator*
Aurelio Villegas, *S.I.S.O. OPS LLC*

SAN DIEGO DISTRICT

Jeremiah Baechler, *Baechler Investigative Services, Inc.*

SAN FRANCISCO DISTRICT

Laura Casey, *Investigative Services - Laura Casey*
Francis Hall, *Francis Christopher Hall, Private Investigator*
Jonathan Robinson, *Optimal Intelligence, Inc.*

SAN JOAQUIN SOUTH DISTRICT

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Richard Garrett, *B.L. Solutions*
Christian Martorana, *Summit Consulting*
David Opfergelt, *Apex Private & Fire Investigative Services*
Nicholas Paxton
Corben Whitney

SAN JOSE DISTRICT

Juan Guerrero, *Guerrero Investigations*
Jonathan Simon, *Arcana Investigative Solutions*
Andre Thom, *Stryker Investigation Services, Inc.*

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Andrew Eredia, *The Website Exchange*
Sal Pujol, *Commercial Process Serving*
Linda Wilde, *Ace Administrative Services*
Steve Buller, *Stutchman Forensic Lab LLC*
Zachary Navo, *OCU Enterprises, Inc.*

OUT-OF-STATE

Cindy Barreras, *Specialized Investigations Consultants*
Walter Busby, *AAAAA Private Investigator*
Eric Fazzi, *Specialized Investigations Consultants*
Robert Kowalkowski, *Badac Agency Investigations*
Nathaniel Lee, *Reveles Intelligence Group*
Alan O'Neal, *O'Neal Investigations, Inc.*
Mike Thompson, *Bearden Investigative Agency, Inc.*



DISTINGUISHED ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

California Association of Licensed Investigators

Most Prestigious and Honored Award Proudly Presented to Anthony Hopkins, CPI

By Anne Fields, PI, CALI Treasurer and Past President



On Friday, October 18, 2024, at the President's Dinner in Palm Springs, Calif. longtime CALI member, Anthony Hopkins, was honored with the Distinguished Achievement Award. The Distinguished Achievement Award is CALI's most prestigious and honored award. It is not an annual award and is not intended to be awarded every year. It is an honor bestowed on those individuals who have made their contributions over an extended period of time. I had the honor of presenting the award to Anthony Hopkins.

Anthony has been a private investigator for over 21 years. He is known for helping apprentice investigators and mentoring them. Anthony has served CALI as District Governor, Vice President of Administrative Services, Vice President of Investigative Services and Board member for many years. Anthony never missed a board meeting.

Anthony has been the Chairperson of many committees. He was instrumental in developing the CALI Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct. Anthony is the Chair of the Certified Professional Investigator Committee and CALI's Political Action Committee. In 2023, Anthony was the Chair of the Professional Development Committee. Anthony serves on the Listserv Committee and Governmental Affairs Committee. In each case, Anthony excelled and demonstrated exceptional leadership skills to improve CALI.

Anthony is an investigator who helps people. He spends a lot of time mentoring new investigators. He spends many hours helping people in his community. During a crisis, Anthony creates ways to help people and solve problems. During the COVID lockdown, Anthony created webinars for our members. This program is a huge success and still in use today.

Anthony has conducted investigations that have had good outcomes for his clients. One of the attorneys Anthony conducts investigations for wrote, Anthony knows what follow up work I want before I ask for it. Anthony's dedication to his work is unfaltering.

Another client wrote that she has worked with many investigators, but few have had the integrity, credibility and diligence of Anthony.

Another attorney client wrote that Anthony's work is consistently superior to the work of other investigators that the attorney has worked with. A District Attorney who was opposing counsel on a case Anthony investigated praised Anthony's investigative work in the field and his comportment on the witness stand. In 2021, a case that Anthony investigated for his client was appealed to the United States Supreme Court. The case was upheld. The Court ruled that a warrantless entry into a home by police under exigent circumstances in pursuit of a suspect for a minor traffic violation is not unequivocally justified.

Anthony is a good listener, thoughtful and a caring person. He makes people feel valued and appreciated. Anthony's presence and service to CALI makes CALI a better association. Anthony always does what he believes is in the best interest of the association and our profession.

Congratulations Anthony for an honor well deserved!

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Investigator of the Year Award

Proudly Presented to Justin Hodson, CPI

By Roberto A. Rivera, CPI
CALI Vice President of Investigative Services



L-R: CALI VP Roberto Rivera, Justin Hodson, and CALI President Frank W. Huntington, III.

This year's CALI Investigator of the Year award was given to Justin Hodson, PI, who has dedicated 20 years to the field of private investigation and has been a member of CALI for 20 years.

His commitment to excellence and integrity in investigation has been nothing short of inspiring. Over these years, Justin has not only enhanced his skills as an investigator but has also taken the time to mentor and sponsor others in our field. His initiative to support four members in obtaining their CALI membership is proof of his belief in the power of education and professional growth. He has not only guided them on their journey to becoming licensed private investigators but has also laid the groundwork for several others who are currently following in their footsteps.

Justin's impact goes beyond individual mentorship. Through his insightful articles, such as *"A Guide to Navigating Surveillance and Audio Recording Laws in California for Fellow Investigators and Attorneys,"* he has equipped countless investigators and attorneys with the knowledge they need to navigate the complexities of our profession.

His other articles, including *"Standing Up for Respect in Professional Relationships"* and *"Nurturing Trust: Basic Marketing Strategies for Private Investigators Targeting Attorneys,"* demonstrate his commitment to elevating our industry and promoting best practices.

In April 2024, Justin was recognized for his contributions to the field in PI Magazine, further highlighting his influence and the respect he has earned among his peers. This recognition is evidence of the hard work and dedication in his career.

This year, his contributions extended to creating and presenting at the CALI Professional Development training, where Justin shared invaluable insights on growing your business and social media tools. His willingness to share his expertise with others not only enhances the skills of his peers but also strengthens our entire Investigative community.

Justin is also recognized equally as a charitable and responsible citizen in his own community. Some of the organizations he volunteers his precious time and donates to are the Boy Scouts, the Ronald McDonald House, and the Surfrider Foundation.

His dedication to our profession and his unwavering support for his colleagues embody the spirit of what it means to be a true leader in the field of private investigation. His influence will undoubtedly shape the future of many investigators, and for that, we are immensely grateful.

Thank you for your years of service, your guidance, and commitment to excellence.

Congratulations Justin!

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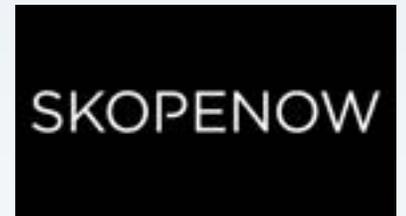


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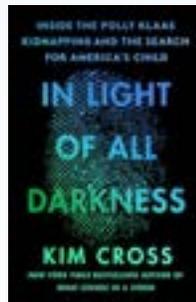
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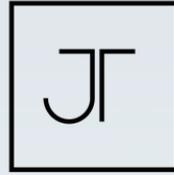
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CALI LEGISLATIVE DAY

MARCH 10, 2025

SACRAMENTO, CA



Message From the Vice President of Administrative Services



I hope you are all enjoying the holidays with your families and loved ones and taking some time off to enjoy them. How many of you have had the chance to attend a CALI District Mixer this year? These mixers are designed so CALI Members can attend to networking with one another as well as bringing a friend or associate who may be interested in joining the association. I have recently had the opportunity to attend three CALI Mixers.

The first mixer I attended was the Los Angeles District Mixer on December 5th. Los Angeles District Director held the mixer at Laurel Tavern in Studio City, California. Attendees also brought unwrapped toys which were going to be donated. The attendees came from Ventura County, Inland Empire, South Orange County and of course Los Angeles. There was great interaction and networking with attendees. Some who have been in the business for 30+ years to an attendee who had been licensed less than a month. This was a great example of what these mixers are about. The event was attended by several of CALI's board members as well, Los Angeles District Director Howard Dratch, Director at Large, Chairman of the Board Jay Rosenzweig, and Inland Empire Director Dan Alvarez.

On December 12th, I attended the Sacramento District Mixer held at Serritella's Ristorante & Pizzeria. It was nice to network with several members from northern California who you normally communicate with via email or over the phone. Again, this event was well represented by the CALI Board of Directors with Sacramento District Director Anna Stowe, CALI President Frank Huntington, Vice President Roberto Rivera and Secretary Mayra Mira were all in attendance.

On December 21st, my daughter and I drove to San Diego for the San Diego District's Teddy Bear Drive held at the Law office of Casey Gerry. There San Diego District Director Jay Paulino had bagels and juice available for the attendees during this morning mixer. Jay spoke about the Monarch school and the kindergarteners who would be receiving the teddy bears. Jay then went into giving a very informative presentation on how he utilizes AI and drones in his investigations.

These have all been great events that I have attended this last month. The districts have done a great job in organizing and making donations to the local communities for those in need. But most off all it has been great to visit and network with new and old CALI members who I do not get to see on a regular basis.

I highly recommend you taking the time to attend a mixer this coming year. The next scheduled mixer will be Friday, January 10, 2025, in Costa Mesa, California at the Fireside Tavern. I look forward to seeing you all there.

Happy New Year!

Chad Ragan, PI
Vice President of Administrative Services



Inland Empire District Mixer



By Dan Alvarez, CPI, CALI Inland Empire District Director
Alvarez & Associates - CPTED, Inc.



The Inland Empire Mixer & Networking Event, held November 7, 2024, was a huge success. A total of 35 members and guests attended. Also in attendance were the following current and former CALI Leadership & dignitaries:

- Nick Savala, Past President
- Tony Suggs, Director at Large
- Paul Mason, Former I.E. Governor
- Don Lewis, Former I.E. District Director
- Dan Goldsmith, Former I.E. District Director, Investigator of the Year

At the event, we had every attendee introduce themselves and tell us about their respective businesses and professional offerings.

During the event, prizes were given away. The prizes included CALI apparel, CALI lapel pins, Inland Empire coffee cups, challenge coins, and a case of wine bottles courtesy of Ray Hernandez.

At this event, we as a District were also proud to present the Inland Empire's Highest Award, the "Profession Service Award" to our members for their respective professional achievements and our District's appreciation of their membership and service to CALI.

2024 Inland Empire Awards winners are:

- | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| Jody Ahrens | Ray Hernandez | Angelo Roman Jr. |
| Juan Alarcon | Don Lewis | Daniel Sanchez |
| Andrea Aravalo | Richard Maldonado | Nick Savala |
| Ed Arevalo | Paul Mason | Tony Suggs |
| Brandon Boyce | Pat McNamara | Terry Thompson |
| Jason Corey | Ernie Mireles | Shelly Vander Veen |
| Dan Goldsmith | Charles Nichols | Linda Wilde |
| Chris Grandour | Eddie Peralta | |
| Dan Green | Scott Purcell | |

After the awards, pizza and beverages were served and the networking lasted for two hours. Great group and great event. We truly appreciated everyone's professionalism and courtesies at this event. Our next Inland Empire Networking event will be in early February 2025.

Introducing New in 2025:

For 2025, the Inland Empire will be introducing a new quarterly membership meeting event called "SPOTLIGHT". At this quarterly event any member that attends will have 10 minutes to tell us about themselves and "SPOTLIGHT" their scope of services to the attendees.

Our plan is to also invite representatives of various companies, law firms and others that can and would benefit from meeting of meeting us to learn of the services we can assist them with.

We look forward to an incredible 2025 for our Members.



JOINT DISTRICT MIXER *Toys for Tots Drive*



Networking Mixer Hosted By the East Bay, San Francisco and San Jose Districts



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North Bay District Mixer & Toy Drive



Sacramento District Mixer





San Diego District Teddy Bear Drive



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Ashley Torbohn is the Operations Manager for Anna Stowe Investigations, Inc., where she has spent the past several years intentionally honing her skills to become an elite private investigator. Her journey into the field was anything but typical, starting with her time working at a Sacramento-area law office while earning her Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from California State University, Sacramento.

During her decade at the firm, Ashley played a pivotal role in expanding the business through her marketing and business development skills. She was instrumental in hiring and training new staff, ensuring the team operated efficiently and effectively. She worked closely on a wide variety of cases while training under some of the area's most well-respected attorneys. Without realizing it, Ashley was broadening her investigative skillset. From drafting pleadings and managing strict case deadlines to matching her organizational strengths with the legal knowledge of her mentors, she helped create a powerhouse law firm. The countless hours she spent supporting attorneys finely tuned her ability to see the bigger picture in every case and prepared her for a seamless transition into the investigative world.

Ashley's introduction to private investigation came in 2017 when her firm hired Anna Stowe to assist with a case involving alleged financial elder abuse. Working closely alongside Anna, Ashley was immediately intrigued by Anna's investigative abilities and the critical role private investigation played in uncovering the truth. Inspired by this experience, she officially began training under Anna's mentorship in 2019 and earned her private investigator license in June 2020. Ashley is passionate about continually developing her skills, earning her Qualified Manager designation in 2023 and her Certified Professional Investigator (CPI) credential through CALI in 2024. She also completed the Non-Capital Mitigation Certificate program through the National Organization of Forensic Social Work and additional training through the National Alliance of Sentencing Advocates and Mitigation Specialists.

In her current role as Operations Manager, Ashley works closely with newly licensed investigators, teaching them the practical and ethical skills needed to succeed in the field. She enjoys mentoring and helping others navigate the often-complex world of private investigations, a role she finds deeply rewarding.

Ashley has a strong interest in Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT), where she enjoys the endless possibilities of uncovering critical information through creative and strategic research. She thrives on the challenge of thinking outside the box to find new ways to obtain case-specific information, knowing that no two cases are alike. Each investigation presents a unique opportunity to explore new data sources, refine her approach, and uncover details that others might overlook. This constant evolution and the need to adapt her methods keep her engaged and excited about the ever-changing landscape of OSINT.

Ashley remains actively involved with the California Association of Licensed Investigators (CALI), contributing to committees like the Virtual Professional Development Committee, the Membership Committee, and various subcommittees supporting CALI's annual conferences. She values the sense of community CALI fosters and the opportunity to give back to the profession that has given her so much.

Originally from a small town in Northern California, Ashley now resides in the Greater Memphis Area, where she continues to manage investigations in California from her home office.

In her spare time, Ashley enjoys traveling, spending time with family and friends, and doting on her animals. She is grateful for the experiences and people who have shaped her career and is always looking for ways to learn, grow, and give back in both her professional and personal life.

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A BRIEF REFRESHER OF LEGAL RESTRICTIONS IN CALIFORNIA

By Anna Stowe, CPI
Proven Private Investigators



Private investigators in California play a crucial role in gathering evidence, assisting attorneys, and providing clients with information they wouldn't be able to obtain themselves. However, California has strict laws governing what PIs can and cannot do. Below is an overview of services that private investigators cannot legally perform in California:

1. Engaging in Police or Law Enforcement Activities

Private investigators are not law enforcement officers, and they do not have the authority to act as such. This means they cannot make arrests, execute search warrants, or engage in any form of law enforcement activity reserved for police.

2. Wiretapping and Eavesdropping

California's laws regarding privacy, such as the Invasion of Privacy Act, make it illegal to record conversations without consent. Private investigators must obtain consent from all parties before recording audio of private conversations. Unauthorized recording or "wiretapping" is a criminal offense, and breaking these rules can result in severe penalties.

3. Trespassing

Trespassing is another area where PIs have strict boundaries. A private investigator cannot enter someone's property without permission. Doing so is not only illegal but could also jeopardize any evidence collected in the investigation. Instead, PIs must conduct surveillance from public places or areas where they have the property owner's permission.

4. Impersonating Others

It is illegal for private investigators to impersonate another individual or a government official to obtain information. This includes posing as law enforcement, employees of utility companies, or any other form of misrepresentation that may allow them to access restricted information.

5. Obtaining Protected Personal Information Illegally

While private investigators can access certain public records, they are prohibited from accessing restricted personal information such as Social Security numbers, medical records, or credit reports without proper authorization. In California, PIs cannot use pretexting (pretending to be someone else) to access this data. Violating these rules is a violation of both state and federal law.

6. Stalking or Harassing Individuals

Private investigators must respect the privacy and safety of the individuals they are investigating. Stalking, harassing, or intimidating behavior is not only illegal but can also harm the PI's credibility and lead to legal consequences.

7. Hacking or Accessing Private Digital Information Without Authorization

With digital investigations becoming increasingly common, it's important to note that private investigators cannot hack into someone's computer, email, social media accounts, or other electronic devices. Accessing such data without permission violates the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act and California's Computer Data Access and Fraud Act.

8. Tampering with Mail

Tampering with another person's mail is a federal offense. Private investigators cannot legally intercept, open, or read someone else's mail, even if it may contain valuable information for a case.

9. Performing Unlicensed Legal Services

PIs often assist in legal cases, but they are not attorneys and cannot provide legal advice. They may work closely with attorneys but must refrain from interpreting the law or advising clients on legal matters unless they are separately licensed as attorneys.

10. Surveillance in Private or Restricted Areas

Surveillance is one of the main services PIs provide, but it must be conducted within legal boundaries. Private investigators cannot conduct surveillance in areas where a person has a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as private residences, bathrooms, or changing rooms. They must rely on observation from public spaces or locations where they have permission to be.

The private investigation field requires careful navigation of state and federal laws to ensure that services are conducted legally and ethically. In California, these legal boundaries help protect individual privacy while allowing investigators to gather information on behalf of their clients. By adhering to these restrictions, private investigators maintain professional integrity and ensure their findings are admissible in court.

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Understanding Privacy & DNA

By Jay Rosenzweig, CPI, Founder/CEO
Birthparentfinder.com &
Misty Gillis, Genetic Genealogist

A significant concern for many potential clients revolves around the privacy implications of submitting their DNA to testing services such as Ancestry or 23andMe. We will explain how these platforms handle your DNA and the measures you can take (or your clients can take) to safeguard privacy during the testing process.

Starting with AncestryDNA, the company prioritizes your privacy by anonymizing your data once your sample is dispatched to their third-party laboratory. They adhere to a strict policy of not sharing any identifiable information associated with your genetic or health data with external parties unless you provide explicit consent.

What does this entail for you? Your data is anonymized using a unique identifier, which is not linked to your name or address. Consequently, the personnel handling your sample in the laboratory remain unaware of its owner. If you wish to enhance your anonymity further, consider registering under various options. For those primarily interested in connecting with biological relatives, using your birth name (if known) is advisable, as it will only be recognized by your biological family. Alternatively, you can register using your initials or a username, which adds an extra layer of security to your personal identity. For maximum anonymity, consider creating a completely new username that is not indexed by search engines, ensuring it cannot be traced back to you.

We encountered a situation involving an individual who shared the common concerns expressed by many regarding privacy. To address this, we advised him to register his DNA kit using the birth name listed in his non-ID, a name known only to his biological relatives. Remarkably, this name was recognized by his top match on Ancestry, who turned out to be a half-sibling searching for their adopted brother.

This connection allowed him to engage with her immediately, bypassing the need to determine their relationship, and he successfully removed his sample from Ancestry the following week.

Ancestry, similar to 23andMe, prohibits law enforcement from accessing their database. If you have concerns about your DNA being utilized in legal matters, these two platforms are the most suitable options for testing.

23andMe adheres to stringent privacy policies akin to those of AncestryDNA. They do not disclose your genetic or self-reported information to employers, insurance providers, public databases or marketing firms without your explicit permission. This means you maintain control over what information you share and with whom. Additionally, like AncestryDNA, you are not required to use your full name when creating your account.

What if you locate your family and no longer wish to have your DNA online? The great advantage of both platforms is the ease with which you can delete your DNA file from their databases. If you have achieved your goals or simply reconsidered your decision, you can remove your kit at any time.

Taking a DNA test can be daunting for some individuals, but this article aims to clarify common privacy concerns and demonstrate that it need not be a frightening experience. You have full control over your DNA sample and can delete it whenever you choose, along with the option to remain anonymous.



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People v. Don Defore Watson



By Sylvia Palma, CCDI, CPI
Palma & Palma Investigations

In 2004, I was assigned a defense investigation with a new panel attorney, May Mar, of the San Mateo County Private Defender Program (PDP). Our case was a three-strikes matter regarding a carjacking, amongst several other felony charges that occurred at the San Francisco United Airlines Employee Parking Garage. The District Attorney presented DNA evidence against our client and seemed to have a slam-dunk case.

As the matter progressed, May and I became fast friends and appreciated meeting and collaborating with our client, Don Watson. We met with him nearly every week at the jail; all the while, he reviewed pounds of discovery, highlighting and making notations. He was a great thought-partner and an integral part of his own defense.

For my part, I ventured into the field interviewing heroin addicts and a percipient witness with murder in her background.

I went from SFO to the streets of East Oakland to the San Francisco District Court. At the court, I obtained transcripts of the victim's civil lawsuit against SFO revealing she knew Don Watson by name and believed he attacked her in the parking garage. She put his name on the record as the man an SFO Police Detective informed her was the person who committed the crime, and they had his DNA to prove it.

Multiple issues were found with the prosecution's case; chiefly, the victim described her attacker as a Black male in his 20s, about 6' feet tall, completely bald, and clean-shaven. Our client at the time was a 48-year-old man with a goatee, wearing eyeglasses, and sporting a short haircut; most distinctive of all, he was only 5 feet 4 inches tall. Considering the victim was 5 feet 7 inches tall, if our client had been her attacker, she would have noticed he was significantly shorter than she was.

The victim stated she stabbed her attacker in the head with her car keys, and she was certain there would be evidence of his blood on those keys. For reasons unknown to any sane legal mind, blood samples from the keys were never assessed by the DA's office. May and I requested testing by our defense lab, which revealed the only blood on those keys belonged to the victim.

Where was the DNA of our client actually found? Inside the car. Well, then, he must be the carjacker, right? No! We had a witness to explain that it got there when Don was shooting up heroin during a visit with his supplier in East Oakland. (This facet of our client would haunt his and our lives again many years later.)

I'll never forget the call I made to May following a background check I made of our star witness: "May, are you sitting down?" Classically, May replied, "What, Sylvia? Did she kill somebody?" I said, "Well...yes." There was lots of swearing after that, but we managed to figure out how to turn what seemed to be a blow to our defense into an advantage. We highlighted the witness' experience with domestic violence, solidifying that she would never lie on behalf of a man who would violently attack a woman.

The trial in 2007 was nothing short of awesome, exposing a detective who would cross the line of legality in his effort to "assist" the victim in selecting a person from a photographic lineup. (She had mistakenly chosen a tall, Black, bald male, who was not our client, but after about 3 hours of talking with the detective, she suddenly pointed to our client on the photo lineup.) The very next day, despite having chosen our client from a photo lineup, she failed to identify him as her attacker in a live lineup. She chose a taller, younger, bald man instead - one who fit the original description she provided the police.

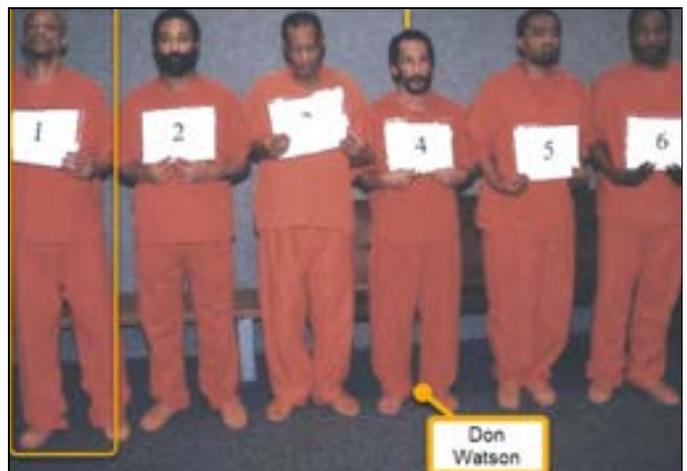
An Oakland Police Officer lied under oath when testifying there was no way Don was shooting up heroin in the car because the officer "sat on it" (his words) while conducting surveillance of the vehicle.

Upon review of photographs I had taken at the scene, it was apparent there was no way the Oakland officer could have seen the carjacked vehicle from the vantage point he described.

We then decided to subpoena the Oakland PD's dispatch records from that time period, and learned the officer was sent to a completely different geographic location during the time period in question. The officer had the nerve to call the dispatcher the night before he was set to continue the second portion of his testimony and tried to convince her the record was incorrect. The judge and the jurors were shaking their heads in disbelief as the depth of his lies was exposed.

May was impressive in the courtroom, smoothly revealing the lies of the prosecution's witnesses, telling the defense story with evidence and witnesses, and preparing a rare defense that included our client's testimony. One of my favorite moments was when the very prim and smug DA, whom we nicknamed the "Porcelain Doll", slammed her hand down during the cross examination of one of her witnesses.

Fast forward to the verdict on Oct. 21, 2007, our client's 51st birthday, when he faced 51-years-to-life in prison if found guilty. The three of us held hands as the verdict was read, and our client's low moan of relief emerged as the first charge was announced "not guilty"! In this case, without the first charge, all of the other counts failed.



Don Watson #4. Victim chose #1 from a live lineup even after choosing #4 in a photo lineup the day before; she had described her attacker as a Black 6' tall bald male with no facial hair in his 20s.

May and I practically ran from the courthouse to the PDP to announce the amazing victory for our client. It was truly a joyful moment, and the case itself is one that I've measured every case thereafter against. I can nearly hear May's voice now, "Sylvia, you did an incredible job. There's no way we could have won this without your tenacious work." She and I traded compliments like dueling swords, each swearing it was the other who won the case.

Don remained in touch with May and me over the years, a rare exception of continuing client contact following a case. Don was not perfect, and he stumbled within the justice system again. But, fortunately, those were mild in comparison.

The best part of the story is when Don reunited with his high school sweetheart, married her, and moved to Omaha, Neb., in 2015. Seeing Don doing so well and living happily was a joy. It was particularly fun to see the photos he shared of himself from the 1970s wearing a leisure suit with his prom date, who now, decades later, was his wife.



Don Watson left, his bride on the right

Don, May and I always remembered one another's birthdays. Don's fell on that incredible day when he was found not guilty of all charges in a three-strikes matter. He remembered our birthdays because May and I, who are only three days apart in age, are true Gemini sisters. Don liked to call us his "Angels," and often thanked us for saving his life.



From left May Mar, Don Watson, Sylvia Palma

Unfortunately, on Aug. 8, 2023, 16 years following the trial, Don's drug addiction suddenly took him from our lives. May and I were shocked and saddened to hear about our dear friend's passing. But I took solace in knowing Don is now our Angel watching over us.

Working for the defense can sometimes be brutal, but I respect and care about my clients and am truly honored at the level of trust they place in our hands.

Rest in peace, Don.

PICKLEBALL

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2024 CALI Pickleball Players group photo

Pickleball has become one of the fastest growing recreational sports across the nation and internationally. In response to CALI members wanting to get some healthy exercise and engage their friends and colleagues in fun, Pickleball was introduced at the 2023 Sonoma Wine Country Conference. A small group of members enthusiastically embraced this new conference activity. Due to greater interest, the Pickleball activity attracted an even larger turnout at the 2024 Palm Springs Conference. The Pickleball activity was held on Saturday afternoon after the conclusion of the last keynote speaker. Participants were able to play some Pickleball games and still make it to the conference cocktail social. Many thanks to the 18 Pickleball enthusiasts who came out to participate. Special thanks to CALI Pickleball Captains Jay Paulino and Mitch Rowland. We are particularly grateful to CALI's 2024 Pickleball Sponsor, Judy Shea of JT Palmer and Associates!

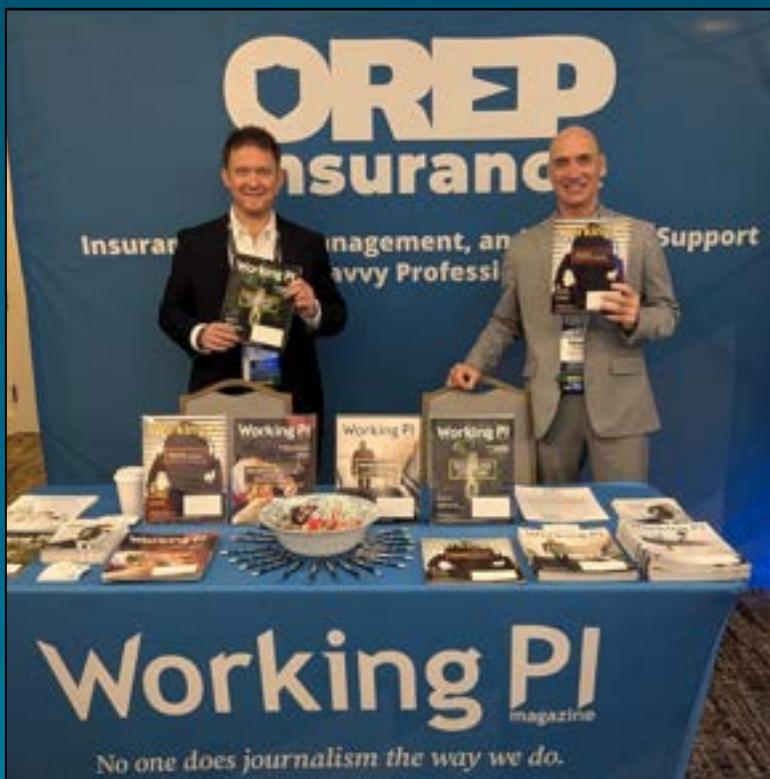


Pickleball courts at the DoubleTree Hotel Sonoma Wine Country

For the 2025 Conference Pickleball activity, we will be seeking Court Sponsors, and all proceeds will go to the CALI Scholarship Fund. The DoubleTree Hotel in the Sonoma Wine Country has newly surfaced courts that are great to play on. In 2025, there will be beginners' courts, as well as advanced player teams who would like to compete in a more formalized round-robin tournament.

We look forward to seeing you on the courts at the 2025 CALI Conference!

Photos from CALI's 55th Annual Conference in Palm Springs, October 17-19, 2024.





































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Using Subrosa to Combat Insurance Fraud



By Michael Julian, CPI, PPS, CSP
National Business Investigations, Inc.

In the context of surveillance, “sub rosa” (Latin for “under the rose”) refers to covert, confidential or secretive activities. It typically implies that surveillance is being conducted discreetly, with those being observed unaware that they are being monitored. This term is used in security, legal and investigative fields to describe operations carried out in secrecy to avoid detection and maintain confidentiality.

In the insurance world, fraud is staggeringly costly, with false claims amounting to billions annually. This has significant ripple effects across the entire industry, as the financial burden is often passed on to honest policyholders through increased premiums. Insurance companies have turned to sub rosa as a vital tool in the fight against fraudulent claims to mitigate these costs and protect their bottom line and clients' interests.

Understanding the Cost & Scope of Insurance Fraud

Insurance fraud affects multiple areas, from health and disability claims to vehicle, property and life insurance. Common forms of fraud include exaggerating the severity of an injury, staging car accidents, submitting false property loss claims or inflating medical bills. Studies estimate that around 10% of property and casualty claims in the U.S. may be fraudulent, costing the industry tens of billions annually. This financial loss isn't limited to insurance companies —customers pay higher premiums due to the increased cost of claims management, underscoring the urgent need to combat fraud.

The Crucial Role of Surveillance in Identifying & Combating Fraud

Insurance companies deploy various surveillance methods to gather evidence against suspected fraudulent claims. Surveillance, which often involves using video cameras, GPS tracking in some states and social media monitoring, is a powerful tool that helps uncover evidence that may disprove a claimant's statements. This process ensures that all claims are thoroughly investigated and fraudulent activities are brought to light, demonstrating the effectiveness of surveillance in combating fraud.

Video Surveillance: The Core Tool for Evidence Gathering

Video surveillance is often the most compelling evidence in insurance fraud investigations. Companies might hire private investigators, use stationary cameras or drones, or even request footage from public or nearby business cameras to monitor claimants. These tactics are beneficial in cases where a claimant is allegedly unable to perform certain physical activities due to injury or disability.

For instance, a claimant stating they have debilitating back pain and can't work may be captured on camera lifting heavy items, jogging or engaging in recreational sports. Such clear video proof of contradictory behavior often leads to swift denial of the claim and saves the company from unnecessary payouts.

This hard evidence, which can dramatically change the outcome of a claim investigation, reassures the audience about the effectiveness of surveillance in combating insurance fraud.

GPS Tracking: A Complementary Surveillance Tool

Though not legal in all states without consent, GPS tracking is another vital tool, allowing investigators to monitor a claimant's movements and build a more comprehensive picture of their day-to-day activities. In exaggerated injuries, a person claiming immobility or restricted movement might be tracked moving between gyms, shopping centers, or multiple medical facilities. For example, suppose a person reports being bedridden due to chronic pain but is frequently found at athletic venues or even driving long distances. In that case, GPS tracking provides strong evidence to support the investigation and denial of the claim.

GPS data also helps in cases where claimants attempt to double-dip by submitting multiple claims for the same injury at different insurance providers. Tracking movements to multiple medical facilities in one day or repeatedly attending unrelated doctors or clinics can reveal patterns of intentional fraud.

Social Media Monitoring: A New Frontier in Fraud Detection

Social media monitoring is increasingly becoming a tool for fraud detection. Investigators may find claimants' photos, videos, or updates that reveal discrepancies. For example, a claimant who posts pictures of an active vacation despite reporting severe limitations can inadvertently provide all the evidence an investigator needs. Posts from friends and family or event tags that indicate attendance at sports events or outdoor activities can also support claims denial.

Surveillance as a Deterrent

Beyond simply catching fraudsters, the presence of surveillance itself acts as a deterrent. The knowledge that insurance companies may monitor claims for accuracy discourages some individuals from attempting to exaggerate or fabricate their claims.

This proactive approach can prevent fraud before it occurs, reducing the need for extensive and costly investigations. The deterrent effect of potential surveillance is especially relevant in workers' compensation cases, where fraudulent disability claims are common.

Ethical and Legal Considerations in Surveillance

Insurance companies and private investigators conducting surveillance must follow strict legal and ethical guidelines. This includes obtaining the necessary permits or ensuring surveillance is permissible within legal boundaries to avoid privacy violations. Failure to adhere to these guidelines can invalidate evidence and lead to legal action against the insurance company and private investigator.

For instance, some states have laws requiring claimants to be notified about potential surveillance measures, and certain forms of surveillance, such as audio recording without consent, may be restricted. Companies must also avoid invading private spaces or using deceptive means to gather evidence. All collected information must be admissible in court, necessitating high standards of transparency and accuracy throughout the investigative process.

Conclusion

In the battle against insurance fraud, surveillance has proven to be an essential, multifaceted tool. Insurance companies can collect concrete evidence to refute false claims and reduce fraudulent payouts by using video footage, GPS tracking, and even monitoring social media. Surveillance not only assists in protecting insurance companies from financial losses but also works as a deterrent, discouraging potential fraudsters from attempting deception. However, these surveillance methods must be conducted legally and ethically to maintain the investigation's integrity and ensure justice. Surveillance is a valuable and effective means of combating and reducing the incidence of insurance fraud.

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Michael Morarity, Sr., Morarity & Associates

Robert Morlatt, Valence Investigations International

Kenneth Munson, Inpro Surveys

Ralph Nosek, Ralph A. Nosek

Michael O'Kelly, Crime Scene and Statement Analysis

Carl Oliver, Carl R. Oliver

A. Riley Parker, Parker & Associates Professional Investigations

Joanne Parrent, Parrent Smith Investigations

Emil Paul, Emil Paul Investigations

Anthony Perrin, Perrin Investigative Service

Mike Pirouzian, Observant Investigative Services

Allan Power, Allan M. Power

Alberto Rivas, Alberto P.I.

Eugene Salute, Pro Mark Investigative Services

Bill Savage

Stan Schwartz, Private Sector Investigations

C.W. Sellers, The Sellers Investigative Group

Ray Simon, Freese & Gianelli Claims Service

Roger Smith, Roger L. Smith Investigations

Raymond Smothers

Ronald Sweatt, Able Investigations

Ralph Swenson, Swenson Investigations

John Talaganis, John G. Talaganis

John Taneyhill, John I. Taneyhill & Associates

William Tanner, Tanner Investigations

Neal Trost, Freese and Gianelli Claim Service

Igor Tymofeyev

Robert Wallace, Western Intelligence

Dan Webb, Dan Webb Legal Investigator

Thomas Wilson, Point West Investigations

Arthur Winston, Silverado Investigations

Doug Winston, Aegis Investigative Services

Walter Zwonitzer, Zwonitzer Group



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Join the Association of Excellence!

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Become a Member of the Largest Private Investigator Association in the World!

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- CALI is the largest private investigator association in the world!
- CALI has the most active PI listserv in California, providing referrals for jobs in California, the United States, and globally, on a daily basis
- CALI is a national leader in legislative advocacy & governmental public relations
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- FREE Professional Development Webinars for Members
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- CALI members receive FREE registration to CALI's Legislative Day
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- CALI events offer educational and networking opportunities
- CALI members receive discounted rate for the ONLINE Private Investigator Exam Preparation Course
- Big 3 Program: CALI members could join FALI or TALI or both organizations, as out-of-state licensed members, for half of their regular dues
- AALPI & CALI Partnership Program: CALI members could join AALPI, as out-of-state licensed members, for half of their regular dues and vice versa

**California Association of
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THE BIG 3 MEMBERSHIP



CALI is proud to be part of the “Big 3” partnership, which started in 2013 when the presidents of CALI, FALI, and TALI came together to offer their members an incredible membership benefit. Every licensed member within each association may join the other two associations, as out-of-state members, for half of the regular dues. This benefit gave every Big 3 member access to a network of over 3,000 private investigators and agencies, increasing potential business or employment opportunities.

What will this partnership enable you to do, besides save money?

- **Increase Your Network** – Let’s face it, size matters when it comes to increasing your potential business or employment opportunities. You can network among a few or cast a wide net to gain valuable exposure to thousands.
- **Obtain New Clients** – Many of us have clients that need services in Florida and/or Texas from time to time. Now you have more resources to assist those clients locally.
- **Provide New Services** – Expanding your network can also mean expanding your services and exploring additional revenue streams.
- **Expand Your Footprint** – By cultivating relationships/partnerships with local investigators in these states you can focus on growing your business opportunities.
- **Listserv Access** – Gain access to the listserv of each association as a Big 3 member.

Visit www.cali-pi.org/Big3 to learn more about this member benefit!

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E: admin@fali.org

www.fali.org

Texas Association of Licensed Investigators (TALI)
5014 FM 1500
Paris, TX 75460
T: (877) 605-7055
E: admin@tali.org

www.tali.org

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FALI



2025

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October 10 - 13, 2025

IN MEMORIAM



John Edgar Lacher

October 1, 2024

John Edgar Lacher, a member of CALI's Redding-Chico District, passed away on October 1, 2024, after a long illness. John served as the Redding-Chico District Governor and often provided advice on issues related to training, legislation and leadership. A dedicated veteran, police officer, and private investigator, John led a life of service, loyalty, and compassion.

Before becoming a Private Investigator, John proudly served in the United States Army from 1967 to 1969 as a K9 handler in the 82nd Airborne, 34th Scout Dog Handler Platoon. Alongside his trusted dog, Duke, John completed multiple missions in Vietnam, often crediting Duke with saving his life on more than one occasion.

After his military service, John returned to civilian life and worked as a police officer in Boston, Massachusetts, before eventually returning to Maryland. In 2001, John moved to San Diego, California, where he met his beloved wife, Rita Lacher. Together, they began a new chapter, and John became a private investigator. His sharp intuition, dedication, and integrity quickly made him a respected figure in the investigative field.

In 2005, John and Rita relocated to Oroville, California, where John founded the J. Edgar Investigation Agency. The business flourished, and they later expanded into the world of canine training, opening Canine Training Solutions, a fitting continuation of John's lifelong bond with dogs.

John was laid to rest with military honors at the Northern California Veterans Cemetery in Igo, California. In lieu of flowers, his wife, Rita, had requested that those wishing to honor John's memory make donations to the K9s For Warriors Foundation, an organization close to his heart. Contributions can be made at www.k9sforwarriors.org.



Cheryl Henning

February 27, 1945 to October 9, 2024

Cheryl was a self employed private investigator for 30 years. She and her husband David lived in Sacramento, Calif., until David's passing last year.

Clayton Steacker

June 21, 1966 to October 30, 2024

