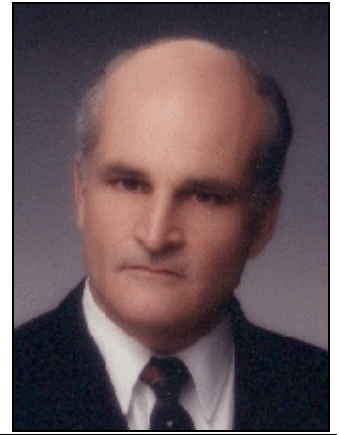


Newsletter Of **Joseph Culligan** **“Reunion P.I.”**

“Helping people find people”



Volume 1 Issue 6

January 2000

penned by **Joseph J. Culligan**

I had written last issue about divorce records and the value of looking at records without the help of a computer. Good old-fashioned searching hard copy files.

The county is the depository of so many records that can searched by hand. There are hundreds of different records that may assist you in finding someone or doing a background check. Of course many of my readers are seasoned investigators and may know of many of the sources I will mention.

Pet licenses are a record that I always ask for in an investigation. I always tell the true story when I give a speech about the woman that no one could find. She had run away from her family. She did not renew your drivers license, did not have any vehicles registered under her name, did not have any corporate affiliations, did not own any property, did not have any credit cards in her name, did not renew any of her memberships in the clubs and associations she had been involved in and, as you get the picture now, just did not want to be found.

Her reasons for leaving were good. Nothing new but good, very

good. She had to be found because her family, which were from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, needed her signature on the sale of the well-known family business. The deal could have been done without her participation but the foreign concern that was to be the principal buyer wanted her found so they could be assured there would be no litigation in the future contesting the acquisition.

When I interviewed the family I asked the routine questions. Remember, you must ask the obvious because big cases have been solved and resolved because we had asked a question that everyone assumed had been asked.

As I got towards the end of my basic list of questions I asked if the subject had any hobbies. The answer was no. Then I asked if the subject had a pet. The answer was yes. I was told that she owned a french poodle and she had paid about \$1,200.00 for the animal.

If the subject still owned the poodle I was sure I would be able to find her because I know that any woman that owns an expensive animal and one, I was told, that was dear to her would keep the pet registered.

I checked over 30 counties and found the subject. Dog licences are public record and they are, of course, listed by the owners name and not the animal. Every person who cares as much about their pet as the subject did would not only keep the dog licensed but would absolutely give the correct information such as home address and

telephone on the application so in the event the dog was missing she could be contacted.

It seems simple but just think about it. No one gives bad information on a license for a pet if they ever want the animal reunited with them in the event of the disappearance of the animal.

Free GATOR program

Very small download and worth my weight in gold!! I love this program! Here is what it does:

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Gator saves you time and hassle. Once you install Gator, you never have to type in the same information again and again on registration or order forms. You never have to remember a password, an account number, or a log-in ID. Gator does it all automatically! It also remembers where you've been if you've filled out a form on a page before. Get it and more details of other stuff it does at:

<http://www.gator.com/>

Nobody Asked, Nobody Cares

Napoleon Bonaparte was the first to implement odd and even numbers on different sides of the street.

from the files of Eddie Bear
<http://www.radioetc.com>

BOOKS BY JOSEPH CULLIGAN

- * You, Too, Can Find Anybody
- * When In Doubt, Check Him Out
- * Adoption Searches Made Easier
- * Manhunt: The Book
- * Requirements To Become a P.I. in 50 States and elsewhere

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Visit Joe's web page at: <http://www.josephculligan.com>

Finding Runaway Children

by Teresa Freeman & Bob Peterson



Due to the importance of this subject, it is being printed in its entirety in this issue, thus eliminating other articles. This information is useful to both the PI and the public alike.

Investigating juvenile runaways can be one of the most difficult investigations that a PI can perform. Children do not have credit, drivers licenses, and will not appear in most of the databases that computer-savvy PIs sometimes utilize to skip trace or to find missing adults. This type of investigation requires good old shoe leather and old-fashioned investigative skills. Often, the child is only a few miles away, but without a thorough investigation, might not be recovered for an extensive period of time or before harm comes to the child. This article summarizes some of the investigative techniques that we have utilized to find missing children, and some of the resources that are available to assist the investigator. Throughout the article, while we identify the child as a male, the usage of the male gender is for ease of reading only, and no specific gender is implied.

One of the major resources for finding missing children is the nonprofit National

Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), established in 1984 under a Congressional mandate. Since NCMEC was established, over 40,000 children have been returned to their families, and it receives approximately 650-700 calls per day. **1**

Once a child is noted missing, NCMEC orchestrates a coordinated program to locate the child, working with law enforcement, public, and private sources. NCMEC produces a missing child poster and with ADVO, NCMEC's national marketer, features a different child each week on direct mail flyers, distributing 79 million flyers per week. **2**

Fifty-one percent of NCMEC's leads come as a result of its hot line, 1-800-THE LOST, and its flyers. Overall, 93.4% of the missing children reported to NCMEC are recovered. **3** While that statistic sounds good, that still leaves 6.6% of missing children that aren't recovered.

The National Incident Studies of Missing, Abducted, Runaway, and Throwaway Children (NISMART) estimates that 454,000 children voluntarily run away each year **4** making this the most common category for missing children. In a review of 1988 missing persons cases in Missouri, 83.8% involved a juvenile under the age of 17.5 While 49% of the children in the NISMART study returned within 2 days, this still left 51% that remained missing after a two-day period. Past police practice, and still practice in some areas, was to take no investigative action on missing

persons (including juveniles) for a period of 24 hours. Yet this is a crucial time during the investigation, when a proper investigation can discover critical evidence to facilitate the return of the child quickly and safely, possibly preventing the child from becoming involved in criminal activity, become victimized, or physically or sexually abused. The National Child Search Assistance Act of 1990 now mandates the immediate entry of a missing juvenile into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), and law enforcement should begin an immediate investigation, but many jurisdictions still feel that "missing" is not a crime, it is not their job to find someone (including a juvenile) who will reappear within the next 48 hours anyway when they are short on staff. Often a "PR (Public Relations) Report" is produced with little action until the child has been missing for some time.

If the child is under 13 years of age, is mentally incapacitated, his zone of safety has been penetrated, is drug dependent (whether on legal or illegal drugs), is under a life threatening situation, in the company of

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adults who might harm him, there is a parental delay in reporting the absence (or not reporting it at all), the child's absence is inconsistent with normal behavior, or appears to be at risk for some reason, the child could be titled an "endangered runaway" by law enforcement, and this upgraded status requires law enforcement to take more strenuous efforts to locate the child. The PI, however, should treat all runaways as endangered. Runaway children often are naive about the dangers that they are exposed to on the streets, most children feel that they are invincible, and feel they are much too smart to succumb to the evils on the streets. Be aware also of the increasing international trafficking of women, young men, and children by organized crime. These young people can be sold at high prices to overseas markets for the sex trade. A short delay in the investigation can lead to these young people being shipped overseas before an official investigation has even started.

The first step we take in the recovery of the child is what we call the intelligence or information gathering phase. The child will sometimes forecast his disappearance, and may have indicated that he was leaving and where he was actually going. Looking back in retrospect, we may be able to find the answers. We also verify that the child is in fact missing, as sometimes, parents can forget that the child was supposed to be at someone's house for the night, or the child may have stopped at a friend's house. We check the answering machine, pagers, and cell phone messages to see if any messages were present indicating where the child might be. We are also prepared to play a role as a counselor, as the family is likely to be extremely distraught. These cases really affect the family, and also the PI, especially in the pocketbook, since these clients typically don't have the resources for your normal fees.

The steps that we take in this intelligence phase are:

--We ensure that we get a contract and any necessary releases, ensuring that we have an understanding (and have a release for) returning the child in restraints if that becomes necessary. We also obtain a retainer up front, as we do for any domestic situations.

--We thoroughly and separately interview the family, friends, classmates, and coworkers (if applicable) to determine what the child had said and what his actions have been in the past few days and weeks. We have found the standard friend's answer to be, "His parents were mean, and he probably left to get away

from them," so we must be able to get past this response and still develop good intelligence about the disappearance. We obtain photographs and a thorough description of the child to assist in our investigation and to utilize on flyers. The description we obtain includes at a minimum: name, nicknames, SSN, DOB, sex, age, appearance, hair color and style, eye color, glasses, contacts, any noticeable dental issues, height, weight, scars, complexion, birth marks, tattoos, pierced body parts, clothing, jewelry, and any other noticeable characteristics.

--We determine from each person interviewed what they think are the actual circumstances of the disappearance. What does the person being interviewed think happened to the child, why did he disappear, and where would he go? Remember that parents may not be completely truthful or may be totally ignorant about the life of the child. We find out who last saw the child, the mood the child was in, and where the child said he was going. We determine what clothing the child was wearing and if any additional clothing or other items had been taken with him. We ensure that we have full names, addresses, and phone numbers of all the persons interviewed for necessary follow-up, and continue to develop the names of all friends, relatives, and classmates. We determine the family dynamics and relationships for any clues, and ask about any court or custody orders. We also determine the daily habits and activities for the child. Where does he go, with whom, how does he get there?

--We then make an initial determination of the status of the case. Do we feel that this is a true runaway? Has the child runaway before and if so, where did he go previously? We determine if the child is in danger and if the investigation needs to be tailored to protect the child. If the child was female, was she pregnant? Was the child recently sexually abused? Is there a history of abuse in the family?

--We determine if the child had any special medical, dental, or mental problems, was on medication or using other drugs whether legal or illegal, or whether alcohol abuse was involved.

--We determine if the child was a member of a gang, and where the gang hangs out. Remember that many times parents have no idea if their child is involved with gangs. Even middle or upper class children can become involved with gangs. We may have to educate the parents by showing them various gang clothing, signs, or slang to obtain this additional information.

--We check the contents of the child's house thoroughly

for clues. We search the entire house, but very carefully check out his room and check any diaries, text books, notes, or notebooks. We look at posters, clothing, music, and decorations for clues. We look in pockets of clothing and coats, in all the drawers, trash cans, for secret hiding places, and the car. We thoroughly check out files on the computer (especially deleted files), and disks, and check all emails. We look for personal items to see if anything is missing from the room, house, or from school, that we would expect to see missing for a planned runaway situation.

--We review school records if possible, and talk to school officials and teachers, child protective agencies and law enforcement. These people may not tell us much about the juvenile, but may give some hints if there was an abusive situation, etc. One of the major problems that a private investigator could have is coordinating his investigation with local law enforcement. We have actually had an instance where we were informed by the local authorities to back off an investigation, under a thinly veiled threat of incarceration for interfering with their investigation, when we were actually close to recovery of the child. This type of reaction happened when we were actively sharing our intelligence with the local authorities. Our advice is to analyze the department that you are working with, and be careful when sharing your intelligence with the local authorities. Departments sometimes don't have a sense of humor when being upstaged by a PI. Yet, we have a paying client, and the importance of the child's recovery should come first over professional jealousies. While at the school, we check the contents of the child's locker and desk, if we can get permission to do so. Be aware that some school systems may require a search warrant, but explain that you are a PI, not local law enforcement and see if they will allow it.

The next phase of the investigation is the investigative phase. During this phase, we analyze the information obtained and take the necessary actions based upon that analysis. We will have developed a detailed evaluation of the family situation, determining relationships, if the child has recently run into disciplinary or attendance problems, recently changed his appearance, associated with new friends, been tired or depressed, or had other major behavioral changes. These could be indications of drug or alcohol usage, and the child might

go to his source where he can continue to obtain supplies of drugs or alcohol, or the child might be abused and heading for a safe environment.

Steps we take during the investigative phase are:

--We re-interview friends, informing them that they can be truthful and all information will remain confidential and will not get back to either their parents or the child's parents. We emphasize the dangers that the child can be in. NISMART states that 60% of the time runaways seek help from friends. 5 Friends often attempt to hide the runaway by having their friend stay a few days at their house and then move on to another house, creating a situation where their parents wouldn't question a brief stay. Therefore, friends' homes should be watched. We have even seen a detailed "Underground Railroad" system for moving runaway and "homeless" children around the area with cooperation of adults and friends who are "protecting" their friends from an "abusive" situation, even if it wasn't truly abusive.

--We contact the National Runaway Switchboard at 800-621-4000 to see if the child has left a message for the parents.

--We check the telephone company for all calls just before the child departed. This will normally require a subpoena from law enforcement, and we will hopefully get the information from the parents or from law enforcement.

--We distribute flyers and interview personnel at key locations, such as school, stores, malls, and teenage hang-outs, and especially concentrate on areas that the child loved to frequent. We promote the NCMEC hotline number of 1-800-843-5678 and a local number on the flyers.

--We contact out of town relatives to ensure that they are aware of the situation and see if they have any information.

--We visit local runaway shelters and leave flyers and inform the staff of the runaway, soliciting suggestions from them. We contact churches and local organizations that assist street, drug addicted, and abused children, and we utilize the directory of Runaway Houses which is available from the National Youth Alternatives Project, 1346 Connecticut Ave, Washington, DC 20036.

--We ensure that all local law enforcement agencies are aware of the runaway and have flyers. We have often found that even within departments, some precincts and officers were unaware of the runaway.

We seek assistance from the local law enforcement officers as to likely places to find the child.

--We check out all likely areas for prostitution and drug hang-outs. Runaways sometimes turn to prostitution to pick up money, and we have sometimes located runaways in prostitution zones. If the child is young, we sometimes will even obtain the cooperation of the prostitutes to help look for the child by emphasizing the child's age and the fact that he is on the street. We develop contacts in the areas where the child might go. We have even heard about an investigator that watches porno movies to help recover missing children!

--We coordinate a media campaign with the parents, utilizing the newspapers, radio, television, and the internet.

--We may want to consider utilizing a trap line or a calling card to determine where the child may be calling from, if the child is calling home and if we can get the card or number to the child. If law enforcement hasn't already done so, we ensure that the parents contact the telephone company to have call trace placed on the phone. With Bell South, for example, the parents push *57 to trace the call. This will trace all calls with the exception of unknown calls (calling card, certain cellular customers, and certain businesses, etc.) "Call Trace" information is only available to law enforcement, but they might share their information with us. Also, we ensure that the phone has an answering service or machine to record any calls made by the child.

--Of course, one area that we must check is the local morgues for unclaimed bodies, and local hospitals and doctor's offices. We also check jails, hospitals, and morgues outside of the local area in areas where the child may have traveled to.

Hopefully, the final stage of the investigation is the recovery phase. Utilizing the clues, or if the child is found, we can assist in bringing the child home. Once the child is returned, we need to determine the reason for the disappearance to see if the child is subject to runaway again. Children run away for many reasons, including drug or alcohol abuse, child abuse, immaturity, or sometimes, being lured away. We interview the child (preferably alone) to find out why he ran away, where he went, who helped him out, how did the child obtain food and money, and if the child feels that he will run away again, and if anything can be done for him now. Often, we find that the child finds that talking with a

real PI is "cool", and is very willing to talk with us. In fact, we have even gone through drug houses, just by informing the youths that we were PIs and were greeted by "Wow, can I have your card?" We ensure that the child is examined by a doctor for any signs of abuse. It is appropriate to inform local authorities if we suspect an abusive situation, and we will make sure the authorities are notified if abuse is suspected. Finally, we can't forget to end all the media and computer campaigns and inform all involved that the child was found.

This article briefly summarized our three phases for recovery of a runaway child and some of the techniques that we utilize for the recovery of a runaway child. This can be one of the most difficult and heart-wrenching investigations that a PI can recover, but when the child is recovered, it is one of the most rewarding types of investigations that a professional PI can perform. When you do obtain one of these cases, feel free to contact us for assistance, as it will be freely given. Good luck and God speed since a runaway child really needs your assistance.

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BOOK EXCERPTS

This excerpt is taken from "Manhunt: The Book"

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES

RECORDS ABOUT INDIANS

Within the National Archives, there are many records relating to Indians who maintained their tribal affiliation. The original records of the headquarters of the Bureau of Indian Affairs are in the National Archives in Washington, D.C. These records often contain information about specific tribal members. Original records created by the various field offices and Indian schools are among the holdings of the regional archives.

They include the following:

—Lists of Indian tribes include Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, and Creek. Each entry on these lists usually contains the name of the head of the family, the number of persons in the family by age and sex, a description of property owned before removal (including the location of real property).

—Annuity Payrolls, showing the name, age, and sex of each person who received payment.

—Annual census rolls. These records (available on microfilm) normally show for each person in a family the Indian or English name (or both names), age, sex, and relationship to the head of the family and sometimes to another enrolled Indian. The records occasionally include supplementary information, such as names of persons who died or were born during the year.

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Happy Campers

Dear Mr. Culligan,

I do not have a story dramatic enough for television. So this is a simple letter of thanks. Your book, You, Too, Can Find Anybody helped me locate in two weeks someone I had been trying to find for two years. Finding them saved me a bunch of time and money.

A couple of years ago, when interest rates were down, I refinanced my home which I had bought in 1975. The lawyer handling the transaction discovered that a second mortgage, given to me by the seller and paid off in 1978, was still on the books in the county court house. This would have to be cleared up by the person who gave me the loan. She had lived in Alabama at the time of my last contact, but was no longer there this many years later.

The lawyer said it would cost me \$1000 to \$2000 to get a private detective to find her or for the court procedures to declare the debt clear if she could not be found. The original loan was only \$2500, so I began to look for an alternative.

I called Books-a-Million in Alabama and they recommended your book. Since the only information I had was her name and her ex-husbands name, I was not at all sure this search would be successful.

I began my search on July 10th. Thanks to your clear and accurate information, I talked to the woman I was looking for on July 29th, in spite of the fact that she had a different last name and lived in a different city. She is sending the documentation I need to clear up the debt.

If you want to know the process I followed, read on. If not, skip to the next paragraph. I did have a little assistance from luck and from the fact that we southerners move around less than other people. In addition to the names, I thought they had been divorced shortly before she sold the house. Following your information, I checked this county in the hope the divorce was local. It was. In that record, I found they were also married in this county, so I looked up the marriage record. And there were both of their birthdates. On to the Department of Motor Vehicles. They had a recent address on him, but nothing on her under her former name. I could find no telephone listing for him, so I sent a letter explaining what I needed and asking if he could help me get in touch with her. I enclosed a self-addressed envelope in the hope it would encourage a response. In less than a week I got an answer with her new name, last known address and phone number. And there she was!!

I must admit that, even though you are the one that gave me the needed formula, I feel terribly clever solving this one without the lawyers. There has always been a frustrated private detective inside me, and the whole procedure was great fun. Let's see. Who can I look for next?

So that's the story. Not as dramatic as a long lost child, or parent, or love, but certainly an important find for me, my wallet, and my peace of mind.

Thanks again for this extremely helpful book. Without it I would have had to just pay the lawyers and the court to get the title clear. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Sincerely,
DM, Alabama

If you have a success story to tell as a result of information acquired from one of Joseph Culligan's books or his website and are willing to have it published in our "Happy Camper" section, we would love to hear it.

ADOPTION SEARCH AIDES

Joseph Culligan discovered this very helpful website for Adoption searches. There are extensive links, including tutorials on how to do your own searches. Check it out at: <http://home.inreach.com/diak3/adolink2.html>

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- Camilla Scott
- True Detectives
- Shirley
- Rolonda
- The Other Side
- Unsolved Mysteries
- Home And Family

TRUE CRIME!

A man and his girlfriend were robbing a convenience store. While the man was emptying the contents of the cash register into a knapsack, the girlfriend was talking to the clerk. She noticed a contest entry form on the counter and filled it out with her name, address, and phone number. Less than an hour later, the police used the contest entry form to arrest the pair at their home - with information they supplied.

VOYCABULARY. Enter a URL (no sites with frames allowed) or a selected piece of text at www.voycabulary.com and each word will be linked to a definition and thesaurus.

Useful Internet Connections

This free service allows you to send an email and have it translated to and from English, Spanish, French, German, Italian, or Portuguese.

EMAIL TRANSLATOR
<http://www.t-mail.com/>

Deadline Online.com provides a wonderful list of links for tracking down just about anyone under the sun.

Quick tip: They suggest you type in your own phone number to see how reliable a particular search engine might be.

Thanks to Kelly Fromm for the tip!

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