

ACBI News

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President's Message

It is "all quiet on the western front" now, but be assured that the ACBI officers, the board, and our past presidents are all busy with either improving the new ACBI web site or working on the March 2012 national conference. More information will be released as soon as it is available.

Topics for this issue are "CYA" and "PROFESSIONALISM". In theory, I love this word because we are all professionals, as evidenced by our membership in ACBI. Most of us have multiple years of experiences that cover every facet of the civilian and military investigative and intelligence world. We are all aware of the following two items, but a brief reminder for the "old folks" and advice to the "newbie" are the topics for today.

The first topic is the well-known "CYA". You are strongly urged to keep a daily diary with a few notes recording dates, times, places, names, and unusual items. For example: the source failed to show; a record was not released; the residence was in a gated/locked neighborhood; calls made to the field manager, etc. If in doubt about an item/lead, ask for confirmation in

writing from the case manager or field manager and KEEP THE MEMO or E-MAIL. It could save your career. Maintaining a daily diary takes only a few minutes, but trying to remember, dispute or re-construct an event or item several weeks, months or years later is a real headache. Remember that all of your official case notes will have been sent in long ago and may not be available to refresh your memory. My point is that it is better to have a written record or your own from years ago that you don't need, than to need it and not have it! Written evidence is 100% better than the "he said / she said" process. Anyone who has had brushes with internal investigations knows how quickly things can turn bad, especially if the agency's or company's reputation is at stake. Keeping a diary has served me well on several occasions. Enough said.

We are all professionals, right? How often have you received a lead where the name, address, phone number, e-mail, etc. are incorrect, disconnected, obsolete, etc.? How often have you completed an interview or review of records and taken two minutes extra to ask who else knows the subject and asking for names, contact information or getting a copy of the record? It takes another 2-3 minutes to put this in your notes and to send a case message to others working on the same case. Information that may never be needed but could be extremely useful if the case is incomplete and you're the one scratching for the information later. Be professional!

Along with this, I have heard it mentioned that if the case information is wrong, just write it off. The reason often given is that some contract companies only pay by the lead and there is no use spending extra time on a case without compensation. This is an item that contract companies have been made aware of. A few still don't get the point; however, this is not a sign of professionalism on our part. After serving 12 years in this business with multiple companies and contracts, with a few exceptions, I have found most companies, case controllers and managers to be very professional. Of course, there are times when it is proper to "write it off" (e.g. nothing there, request is illegal, subject moved, etc.) Remember that we do this BI work with the understanding that this is vital to "National Security." Being a professional, we owe it to the sponsoring U.S. agency to provide the most complete information that we can! One builds a reputation, good or bad on the small, daily and mundane things we do or say. Your word should be your bond and you should be able to take pride and confidence in your reputation. Help each other to become the most professional investigator he/she can be! That's not only good advice; it is ACBI's purpose as well. So, be safe out there and remember, "WE HAVE MET THE ENEMY AND THEY ARE US!" (Pogo)

Robert A Kuropkat, President ACBI

Vice President/Conference Chair Report

Plans continue for the 2012 ACBI Conference. Mark your calendars for Wednesday, March 28 through Friday, March 30, 2012. The venue once again is the National Conference Center (NCC) in Lansdowne, VA. Those who attended the past two conferences in 2008 and 2010 can attest to the scenic locale,



comfortable meeting spaces, networking with fellow investigators, and abundant buffet meals. Don't miss out on the opportunity to meet with representatives from the government agencies and the contractors you work for. As of press time, the following contracting companies and government agencies are on board to attend: CACI, MSM, ADC, Omnisec, CSC, Creative Services, FBI, ATF and OPM, with more to come. Hear what they have to say about the current climate of our industry. Find out who is hiring. Get your questions answered in person. Check the ACBI web site and future issues of the ACBI News for more information as it becomes available. See you there!

Connie Persico
ACBI Vice President / Conference Chair

Secretary/Treasurer's Report

We are hard at work developing the improvements to ACBI's new membership database. If all goes as planned, the next time ACBI members pay their annual dues, it will be done online.

Currently, the database that stores all of our contact information and controls the flow of information from the Board to the membership is over eight years old. Last year we had problems with it and had to shut down for two months while the programmer repaired it. These repairs kept the program limping along but required massive amounts of time on our part to keep it going.



If you will remember from the past, to renew your membership yearly, you were required to:

1. go on line to print a form from a pdf file
2. fill it out by hand with information we already had on file
3. mail it to the Secretary, with your renewal check

When the Secretary, Mike, received the renewal form and check he had to:

1. FedEx the check(s) to the Treasurer, Rick
2. Pull up your file from the database
3. Go over your renewal form line by line to update any changes in information
4. Notify the web site manager, Ken Guinn, of any changes in email addresses
5. Notify the Vice President, Connie Persico, of any ACBI pin orders

When the Treasurer, Rick, received the checks from the Secretary he had to:

1. Enter the amounts of each individual check in his database (Quickbooks)
2. Fill out a deposit slip
3. Hand stamp each check with our name and account number
4. Track our income for the IRS

These tasks were in addition to the usual responsibilities of the Secretary and Treasurer. In addition to the steps outlined above, new member's applications required:

1. The complete personal information data entry to the database
2. The generation of a welcome aboard letter with instructions for using the ACBI.net website and Yahoo Groups bulletin board that we use to communicate with one another
3. The creation of an ACBI website password
4. The creation of a Yahoo Groups password.

We're not finished yet. Every time somebody forgot their password to access our website, someone had to manually generate a new password or lookup the member's old one.

All of this activity can easily be handled with a properly designed database. Our old database was created when we had fewer than 100 members. We now have 500 members with over 100 new members joining every year.

The new database will handle most of the tasks above automatically. When it comes time for you to renew your membership dues on January 1, 2012 you will be invited, by email, to go to the ACBI website click on the "Renew Membership" icon. With your already established ACBI password you will access your personal information, have the opportunity to update it and be whisked over to PayPal to pay your dues using a credit or debit card.

In preparation for this event, please make sure we have your current email address. If not, email Mike Ruggiero with your updated email address at Secretary@acbi.net.

Spotlight on CBP and ICE background investigations:

Background: The Department of Homeland Security (DHS, formed in 2002) employs about 180,000 people in these seven agencies: 1) U.S. Coast Guard (USCG, formerly part of Department of Transportation); 2) Transportation Security Agency (TSA, a new federally-staffed agency that was briefly part of Department of Transportation); three agencies formed out of the former Customs Service (Treasury) and Immigration and Naturalization Service (Justice): 3) Customs and Border Protection (CBP); 4) Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE); and 5) Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS); 6) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA); and 7) U.S. Secret Service (USSS, formerly part of Treasury).



With the help of our ACBI membership, this issue will focus on two of these BI contracts -- CBP and ICE. Administering immigration is an especially challenging mission because there is an active "immigration community" in the US consisting of NGO's (non-governmental organizations, e.g. charities, churches), attorneys, immigration advocates, and "anchor" relatives, etc. Add to this the extremely volatile mix of politics (voting, changes in immigration laws and the enforcement of them), economic factors (jobs, taxes, services), and the ability to easily create forged ID documents, and you have a perfect recipe for the demoralization of employees that

work in these agencies. Watch the series "[Border Wars](#)" on National Geographic TV for an inside look at the challenges these law enforcement employees face.

Currently, there are six contractors for background investigation work at CBP and ICE. The CIS work is subcontracted only by Keypoint and USIS:

ADC, Ltd NM (ADC) <https://adcltdnm.com/> HQ in Albuquerque NM
Computer Sciences Corporation (CSC) <http://www.csc.com/> HQ in Chantilly VA
KeyPoint Government Solutions (KGS) <http://www.keypoint.us.com/> HQ in Loveland CO
MSM Security Services, LLC (MSM) <http://www.msmsecurity.com/> HQ in Greenbelt MD
Omniplex World Services (Omnisec) <http://www.omniplex.com/> HQ in Chantilly VA
US Investigation Service (USIS) <http://www.usis.com/> HQ in Falls Church VA

According to our contributing members, the advantages of working on the CBP/ICE contract:

1. The work is steady around the border areas and in large cities.
2. The work is important to the security of the United States.
3. Provides a chance to meet some very interesting individuals.
4. Templates provided for report writing are very good.
5. The BI work is more defined and preferable than OPM work.
6. Compensated for mileage and drive time (Note: Some contractors do not pay for this.)

The disadvantages of working on the CBP/ICE contract:

1. Work can be sporadic unless at a border area or in large cities.
2. There is no pre-screening of candidates who are clearly unqualified due to serious issues.
3. Employee interviews must be on site and approved through candidate's supervisor.
4. A candidate's union representative can attend interview (Weingarten rule).
5. CBP/ICE may not provide their office space for BI interviews.
6. Home interviews (due to lack of CBP/ICE venue) can make some candidates uncomfortable.
7. The background investigation personal interview (BIPI) form is "mind-numbing." (Note: This 32-page document was updated in September 2011.)

One ACBI member who has worked for six years on multiple CBP/ICE contracts said it is important for the investigator to know their limitations and when to say "no" to additional work. Another of ACBI's senior members, with several years of experience working on multiple CBP/ICE contracts, described what the work is like:

Cases are assigned either via e-mail notification or by phone call. All assignments are distributed via a company web site with the exception of one contractor that sent out a disk with the assignment templates on it for completion of the ROI (Report of Investigation). This disk was returned via FedEx. The remaining companies each have their own way of handling cases and their submission as well as compensation.

One contractor usually calls the CI (Contract Investigator) and ascertains if the CI can handle a

particular case(s). If so, he/she is directed to the company secure web site which is accessed by username and password which includes a code from a password key fob issued to the CI under contract. The field work is completed and the details entered into a template online. A voucher is prepared upon completion and submitted with the case. This contractor, as with most of the other companies, pays approximately \$32/hour plus the standard mileage rate. From time to time there are bonuses available for early submission. This contractor is one of the few, if not the only, that pay travel time as an hourly rate at \$32/hour instead of a mileage rate.

Another contractor has distanced itself from the procedures of the other companies by instituting a "source unit" for compensation. This began last year. When a case is offered it is assigned a certain number of Source Units in either a \$50 or \$75 increment. The Source Unit is an all-inclusive payment which includes the cost for the investigation, travel and mileage. If a local listed reference is offered to a CI it is usually offered at a \$50 source unit. It is the responsibility of the CI to determine if \$50 is adequate compensation given the location of the reference and time required to complete the task. TDY assignments are offered at either rate, however, if extensive travel and lodging are involved, the cost of these will be at the CI's own expense if he/she chooses the higher \$75 Source Unit rate. A case such as this may be offered at 4 Source Units at the \$75 rate. This would be the only compensation for the case. If the CI opted for the lower \$50 Source Unit rate, he/she would be compensated for expenses (i.e. lodging, airfare, etc.) The submission of case material, online, is similar to the other companies. Each task in their cases is paid separately so as a task is completed it can be submitted for payment without waiting until the entire case is finished.

Another contractor has its portal accessed through a secure web site. Cases available can be viewed by geographic area. Cases in a CI's area showing "available," can be selected by the CI and if approved, case materials will be available to CI for download and case preparation. This contractor works on a voucher system. The CI will bill for his/her time including ROI, mileage, incidental expenses such as parking, any costs for records, etc. This contractor has established an historical average for each type of investigation, and the voucher system may generate an error message if it is believed the CI has exceeded these historical averages. These averages are proprietary and not shared with the CI. However, if there were extenuating circumstances which resulted in a longer than normal time for completion of a particular task, a plausible explanation is all that is needed to satisfy the error message and allow submission of the voucher. Their web site is user- friendly once you understand it which is not hard to do.

The other difference between CBP and ICE cases is that CBP has mandated the use of template interview sheets. All companies have them posted somewhere with the "Standard Forms" on their web sites. Each form for a specific interview is the same since CBP has created them. A form for each interview must be completed and submitted via FedEx with the completed ROI even though the ROI is submitted electronically online. One contractor does not pay the voucher until these notes are received. ICE cases have no such requirement therefore the CI must maintain their own copies of whatever notes they take. The companies must now store those notes the CI submits for 1 year. The CI's requirement is that they be retained only 90 days. Other than this difference, the cases are worked the same. There are different credentials for CBP and ICE.

There is a smaller contract, CIS (Citizenship Immigration Services, www.uscis.gov, formerly part of INS) which handles lawful immigration. Only two companies hold this contract and this work is also separately credentialed. CIS work involves making unannounced site inspections to confirm that a visa application is valid and the immigrant who submitted it is real. These cases, according to one of the contractors, take about 1 hour for completion, travel, photos of the location and several brief interviews following a template form. One of the CIS contractors pays \$100 for a case of this type. (Editor: see OPM average investigation times below.)

The volume of available CIS work varies by geographic area. There is work all over the country but the amount of it varies greatly. Obviously, border states have more work with initial applications and periodic re-investigations. There are also TDY opportunities at times.

Results of the OPM Contract Survey

OPM Time Study:

The OPM background investigation contractors pay sub-contractors by the hour or by piecework. But how long does it actually take to complete the assigned work, and the unavoidable associated tasks that go with it?

Thanks to 24 member respondents that took the on-line survey in July 2011 (one employee investigator and 23 contract investigators), we now know approximate times it takes to complete some of the typical investigative tasks while working on the OPM contract -- the personal subject interview (PRSI), the educational source (EDUC), the law enforcement check (LAWE), the residential source (RESI), and the employment source (EMPL).



The below times (shown in hh:mm format) are averages only and reflect a non-scientific sample of the estimated actual times reported by the 24 respondents who had an average of 4 years of experience on the OPM contract. Your actual time will vary due to the number of issues the subjects have, the cooperation provided by interviewees, your efficiency, sheer luck, etc. Except for travel time, which is subject to how close the member must travel to the work location, the variation in time expended for these tasks did not vary significantly. Please note that the travel times are omitted from the table below:

OPM Task	PRSI	EDUC	LAWE	RESI	EMPL
Preparation:	0:59	0:28	0:21	0:37	0:40
Interviewing:	1:53	1:15	0:26	1:11	1:12
Report Writing:	1:56	1:12	0:33	1:01	1:06
Other Administrative:	1:02	0:47	0:23	0:31	0:35
Total (less Travel):	5:50	3:42	1:42	3:20	3:33

Travel time varied widely because of the distances Investigators typically drive. In addition, some respondents did not account for making round trips, or were apparently “beamed by transporter” directly from their car to the desk of the interviewee. Investigators should estimate their own travel times based on local traffic conditions, and be sure to **include all non-productive travel time** such as parking, walking, clearing security checkpoints, and waiting to meet interviewees, to ensure accurate estimates. Repeat trips are also necessary in some cases (especially residences) because people work during the weekday, shop/play on the weekends, will not answer the door to a stranger in the evening, or simply choose not to participate. These repeat trips may not be compensated, depending on the contractor.

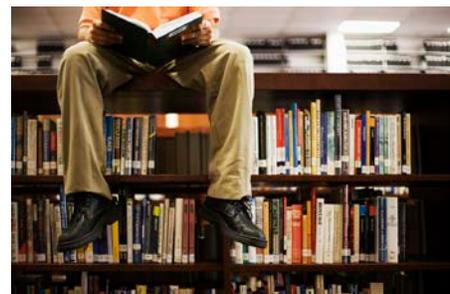
Uncompensated administrative time: In addition to the times averaged above and the variable travel times, most of the respondents reported additional uncompensated administrative time such as: attending regular meetings or teleconferences; reading e-mails, bulletins or newsletters; training for quality control, new procedures or security updates; procuring office supplies; maintaining records for tax purposes; and other shipping/receiving or unspecified administrative tasks. In total, these various administrative tasks averaged 119.6 hours per year, or a little less than 10 hours per month.

In summary, our past president said it before and it bears repeating: Treat your BI work like a business instead of a hobby, unless you are volunteering. This means you have revenues, expenses (direct labor = your time), overhead, taxes, etc. If you don't accurately account for your time, you will not know how well your business is doing. More importantly, you won't know what to negotiate for before you accept work, especially if you work in a TDY status. Don't be shy about asking a recruiter whether you will be compensated for your out-of-pocket expenses such as time spent on mandatory training, teleconferences, reading QA updates, driving, or other unavoidable travel-related expenses (lodging, airfare, car rental, per diem).

(Income Tax Correction: The IRS tax deduction for business use of your vehicle was \$0.510/mile only for the first six months of 2011. For July through December 2011, the new rate is \$0.555/mile. Hey IRS, will the Republic fall if we just use a round numbers?)

RECOMMENDED READING

ACBI members are encouraged to recommend books, articles, or studies dealing with espionage, investigations or the intelligence community that may be of interest to their fellow investigators. Send your recommendations to: editor@acbi.org with a brief review of why you enjoyed reading it. Below are some books found at libraries or on-line book retailers on the subject of espionage or military history.



Tiger Trap: America's Secret Spy War with China, by David Wise. "If the United States was a house, China would be the mortgage holder," says the author, in attempting to explain why the US does not take a hard line with Chinese espionage, which includes intellectual piracy. It seems that anything the U.S. makes can and will be copied by China. Although there are laws "on the books," the enforcement of them is selective unless it involves China's international standing. This book makes an interesting read about the challenges involving Chinese espionage practices, which use a combination of inadvertent disclosures, visiting scientists and students, and a large and growing loyal Chinese-born U.S. population to collect information. And it costs them practically nothing! Rule No. 1 in handling so-called spies is: don't "handle" (e.g. become intimate) the spies especially if you are married. Read the official subsequent [DOJ-OIG unclassified summary report](#).

Agent Zig Zag, by Ben MacIntyre. True story of Eddie Chapman, former safe-cracker and prisoner turned double-agent for the British in WWII. The only person decorated by both the English and German armies for service in WWII. Sometimes it takes a thief, nerves of steel, and luck to make a convincing double agent. Outstanding book about the motivation of spies.

German Boy: A Child in War, by Wolfgang W. E. Samuel. Moving autobiography written by a grateful German-born boy who narrowly avoids deadly encounters during WWII and its aftermath, and later emigrates to the U.S. with his mother and sister, becomes a pilot, and serves 30 years in the U.S. Air Force, retiring as a Colonel. Read this book to learn what real hardship in times of war is all about, or if you need to understand what America's humanitarian missions meant to Western Europe after WWII. Guaranteed to make you appreciate the simple things in life -- safety, food, water, clothing and shelter -- that Americans often take for granted.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

ACBI members are encouraged to recommend websites they believe have made them more efficient and productive investigators. Please send your recommendations to: editor@acbi.org with a brief description of how it can serve the ACBI membership.



Travel: It was suggested that ACBI provide information of value to those members that work in a TDY (temporary duty) status away from home. So, here are some websites related to travel:

www.sigalert.com provides a visual map of current local traffic conditions in dozens of U.S. cities (most metro areas are represented). The conditions are picked up in real time by sensors and cameras positioned along major highways. It is also possible to get this application for your mobile phone to avoid traffic problems.

Travel sites for making reservations: www.kayak.com provides a good overall search site for air fare, hotels, car rentals; www.orbitz another good overall travel site; www.bing.com Microsoft's search engine which includes travel; and www.hotels.com a hotel search site.

Independent reviews of hotels can be found at www.tripadvisor.com and www.yelp.com. Let the buyer beware; however, as some websites employ “paid reviewers” to generate traffic to their sites. As Homer Simpson said when he was locked into a Springfield University banquet for an alumni fundraiser, “Hey, I’m beginning to think this is all about money.”

www.fedrooms.com was established by GSA and made available to some BI contractors for OPM work (check with your contractor). But in the Editor’s humble opinion, their annually contracted prices could not match the agility of the marketplace. You can get better deals.

www.amtrak.com Amtrak provides regular daily trips for much of the U.S., including commuter service in some cities. You might be able to get some work done while you travel if you go to the “quiet (no cell phones) car”. Not recommended if you have a strict time-table and are traveling cross-country.

www.wmata.com is the site for the Washington DC metro area and covers rail and bus transportation and parking. If you travel by combined bus/rail, there are fare discounts and you might even get some work done if you can sit down. Use of metro rail is especially encouraged if you are going to work in the District. Get a Smart Trip stored value card (for \$5) for convenient travel on metro rail, bus and metro-owned park and ride lots. Fares are deducted from the card as you travel and value can be replenished with cash or credit card.

EZ Pass: If you work and drive in a TDY status in the Washington DC metro area, you are encouraged to get an EZ Pass transponder for your car. This transponder is fastened to the inside top of your car’s windshield and automatically deducts tolls as you drive over certain bridges or toll ways. It is an indispensable tool if working along the Dulles Tollway, where many of the federal contractors have offices. It is also recognized in several contiguous states.

Technology Reviews: It was also suggested that ACBI supply something helpful about technology. We will take that up in a future issue, but here are some technology review websites in the meantime to help you decide what to buy:

www.toptenreviews.com is a site dedicated to electronics; www.cnet.com is dedicated to computer technology; www.pcmag.com started out as a magazine and has provided technology reviews for decades; and www.consumerreports.org also has reviews of electronics (for a membership fee).

Of the above review sites, only Consumer Reports (CR) is considered unbiased because they don’t accept advertising. Some so-called reviews that you see on www.amazon.com might be “paid reviews” that lead cheers for their products or trash their competitors; or they may just be technology-challenged or angry customers that can type and have spare time. The problem with CR reviews is that their lab usually buys ONE product and tests it. But they also get input from their large subscriber database on brand reliability. This is useful for durable goods, not so much for technology products with their short life cycle. Again, let the buyer beware.

As information, just about any GPS from Garmin, Tom-Tom, Magellan, or Motorola will help to locate addresses, filling stations, ATM's, dining/lodging options, etc. Don't rely on battery power for more than a couple of hours of operation, though. Smart phones are beginning to feature GPS applications. If any ACBI member has a technology recommendation they would like to make, please contact the membership through the group e-mail or write to editor@acbi.net and we will include it in the next issue of ACBI News.

CONTACT THE EDITOR

Questions, comments, constructive criticism, and content recommended for publication after further research in the ACBI News is welcome. The ACBI News is published quarterly in January, April, July and October, for the benefit of the ACBI members. Write to the Editor at: editor@acbi.net



For the January 2012 issue we would like to have feedback from the ACBI membership on the best places to work in a temporary duty (AKA TDY or TAD) status. Please send in a short description of places you have worked, ease or difficulty in navigating the area, lodging and dining locations, level of cooperation, parking and security considerations, or anything else that would be helpful to know before the investigator agrees to work there. I'll start us off with Wright-Patterson AFB:

Wright-Patterson AFB, Fairborn OH (Dayton OH area) - Great place to work the OPM contract in SE Ohio near intersection of I-70 and I-75, with inexpensive lodging and dining nearby. Closest large airports are Dayton (DAY, about 20 miles), Columbus (CMH, about 70 miles) and Cincinnati (CVG, about 75 miles). The WPAFB security guard force is very polite and professional and will provide directions. The friendly Personal Security staff provides space for interviews, where you will meet other BI's performing the same work. WPAFB has good close-in parking and an outstanding free USAF Museum for off-duty diversion. Here is [a link for visitors](#) regarding obtaining entry to the base.