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## **One of the Best Retirement Jobs**

*Independent Background Investigators Retained by Various Federal Agencies*

*By ACBI Member Alan Stoddart (SSA DoC-OEE Ret.)*

Most U.S. government employees, military members, and government contractors do not know that their background investigations and security clearance investigations are not conducted by regular U.S. government employees, but mainly by contractors who are for the most part retirees from federal, state, and local law enforcement.

Prior to the 1990s, most background investigations were conducted by the U.S. Civil Service Commission, which became the Office of Personnel Management. Their Office of Field Investigations had several thousand General Investigators who conducted civilian investigations. Military and defense employee and contractor investigations were conducted by the various military intelligence agencies – Army Intelligence, Naval Investigative Service and Air Force – Office of Special Investigations (OSI). Many of the investigative agencies, like the FBI, did their own investigations, or contracted them out.

The first attempt at background investigation reform was in 1972, when the background investigation functions of Army Intelligence, (then) Naval Investigative Service, and Air Force OSI were transferred to the Defense Investigative Service (DIS), later renamed the Defense Security Service (DSS). While DSS Special Agents did a good job, their agency was always financially strapped, and DOD spent millions of dollars on case control systems that never worked. In 2004, DOD gave up the mission of conducting their own background investigations, and transferred 1,800 of their Special Agents to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

Meanwhile, back in 1996, conforming to then Vice President Al Gore's vision to privatize some government functions, OPM transferred their investigators from the Office of Field Investigations to USIS – US Investigation Services, Inc., and employee stock owned company. USIS has since been bought out and has gone through several owners. Thus, OPM, having gotten rid of its own investigators in 1996, inherited DSS's investigators in 2004, and was back in the background investigations business again.

Since 1996, when Vice President Al Gore privatized the BI function of OPM, he essentially opened up the door to the entire privatization of the BI function throughout the U.S. government.

At the present time, there is a patchwork system of government employees, and contractors – who are hired either directly by government agencies or through companies.

The investigators are mostly retired federal investigators, although some are reemployed retirees, and others are contract employees.

The reason that doing background investigations is one of the best retirement jobs is that you are an independent contractor. You don't have to report to an office, you make your own hours, and generally you can work as much or as little as you want. You can work for more than one agency or company if you want to earn more money.

ACBI – The Association of Certified Background Investigators was founded in 2002 to represent the interest of contract and other background investigators, much the same way that FEOA – The Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association was founded in 1977 to represent the interests of Federal Special Agents and later other Federal Law Enforcement personnel.

ACBI exists to develop and maintain liaison with contract companies and governmental agencies to provide its members with potential contract opportunities and to provide formal and informal training and education programs. ACBI also provides a means for investigators to share information to better perform their duties. ACBI also engages in activities relating to legislation regarding background investigations and security clearances and seeks to improve the working conditions of investigators.

ACBI's website: [www.acbi.net](http://www.acbi.net) gives a great deal of information for retirees who wish to consider a retirement job doing background investigations.

If you wish to contact me regarding background investigation work, go to the ACBI website: [www.acbi.net](http://www.acbi.net) , and under "Board Officers," go to Director #1, and email me.