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Surveillance and Surveillance Equipment**

# SOMETIMES THE BEST “MAN” FOR A SURVEILLANCE ISN'T A MAN!

Why a female investigator  
can be a big asset to your  
surveillance and case needs

BY SARA CAPELLI, L.P.I.

**F**emale “private eyes” have been around almost as long as the profession itself. Allan Pinkerton, who founded the first private detective agency in the United States, hired the country’s first female investigator in 1856. Kate Warne, who was that female, summed it up perfectly, “I could go and worm out secrets in many places to which it was impossible for male detectives to gain access.” Ironically, her invisibility, born of 19th-century sexism, was Kate Warne’s most powerful asset.

Female investigators are rising in numbers. Recent data reports that 33.6% of today’s professional investigators are women and 60.8% are male. The fact remains that being a licensed investigator is still a male-dominated field and it is this very fact that has proven to be an advantage for female investigators. Being underestimated actually makes it easier for female investigators to conduct surveillance. Someone who is a target of

an investigation or surveillance might stay on the lookout for a male investigator but may never suspect a woman. Prejudices of society at large lead to the misconception that detective work is a man’s job. This automatic assumption gives female investigators a more favorable position one might not consider and may be an asset to many investigations.

## LESS THREATENING

A subject is less likely to suspect a female investigator because women are not often perceived as a threat. One might think this would be a negative when in fact, just the opposite is true. During an investigation, it is the role of the investigator to produce factual evidence. In addition to surveillance, the investigator may need to interview people and “convince” them to tell us what they know. A female investigator can often come across as sensitive and more approachable and less threatening, putting people





at ease and getting them to open up and reveal much more information than they might to a man. This increases the probability of capturing the evidence needed to advance the case.

### **FLY UNDER THE RADAR**

Playing a role through pretext is often crucial in gathering information and in many surveillance roles. Women can simply play far more diversified parts than men. Female investigators take advantage of their feminine attributes and charms and depending on the nature of the assignment, women can blend into the natural environment and access more information right out in the open without arousing suspicion. Females have a greater advantage in changing their appearance, reducing the likelihood of being burned on a case. Simply put, it is easier to fly under the radar as a female investigator – no offense, guys!

I've had many long conversations with Jim Nanos as we are both driving to locations on jobs chatting about surveillance techniques. Jim had mentioned for example, if a male individual, alone, was walking through a particular neighborhood Jim was working a case on, he would be suspect or maybe even viewed as a threat as there were many small children in this particular area. Conversely, if Jim AND I (or any female investigator) were walking in the same neighborhood, we would probably be viewed as just a couple out for a nice walk. Add holding hands as we walk – and we're golden!

### **NURTURERS BY NATURE**

Society stereotypes women as nurturers. The best way to convince people to reveal facts and provide more details is have someone believe you are sympathetic to their situation. Remember, unlike when most were “on the job”, the majority of our interviewees are not required to speak to us. Utilizing skills as a nurturer, women can seem more approachable, which allows subjects to open up to them without suspecting they are gathering information on a case through what they may be revealing. Who would suspect that a female asking for directions is really performing a spot check?

### **ATTENTION TO DETAIL**

Research suggests women tend to absorb more information through their senses and are better at interpreting facial expressions and emotions. This insight can help them to read people with greater accuracy while focusing on the relevant facts of an investigation. Females are wired to pay more attention to details than men. As any investigator knows, it is the small details during an investigation that can make or break a case.

### **WOMEN'S INTUITION**

The power of observation is the #1 skill that an investigator must master. Women are believed to have a stronger intuition that is ideal for keen observation. Intuition relies on the ability to instantaneously evaluate both internal and external cues to make a rapid decision based on instinct. Oftentimes, women are more observant and cautious of their surroundings, giving them the upper hand during a case. Females have an innate ability to read a room and listen for cues when investigating human behavior. A woman's natural instinct allows her to recognize personal and social patterns that might not otherwise be visible to men. This instinct presents proof that female investigators are less likely to be detected on a case.

Now this isn't to say that men don't make great investigators too! However, thanks to today's stereotypes, a female investigator can often do her job without notice.

An unassuming female can provide an instant cover that her male counterpart might not otherwise have. Therefore, in many cases deploying a female investigator may just be the best man for the job! **PI**



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