



Criminal Research and Covid

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As we near the one year mark of remote working and the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, CI's criminal team has been reflecting on the landscape of criminal research over the last 12 months. At the start of the pandemic, courts slowly started to close down, and for a lot of us, it felt like there was no end in sight. No one knew when they were going to reopen or if and when we would hear back from a clerk or a judge. This definitely threw a wrench in our criminal investigations but it did not stop us completely! Luckily with our persistence and determination our criminal team kept on researching and did our very best to continue like the world was in a normal state.

However, there was still only so much we could do during these difficult times. We kept making an effort to try and get in touch with any court we needed information from. Whether we were leaving voicemails, sending faxes, or sending out emails, we tried any form of communication we could! We made sure we were reaching out to them even if they were closed so we could be ready when they opened again. It was a long couple of months until courts started to respond to us and even then, a majority of courts were working part time with 30% staff.

Thankfully, around the middle of the summer, courts started to very slowly reopen. Some of the time, it was just a clerk in the court once a week or judges only answering emails, but we finally started to hear back from courts! It was very exciting for our criminal team! We are so proud of our criminal investigators and their ability to adapt and adjust alongside with the courts and work together to get it done. As a team, we kept up with court hours and instructions along with good communication and maintaining good relationships with courts to get the information we needed. We continue to find new and quicker ways to receive the needed information while still doing thorough and accurate research. We have only gotten more innovative as the months have gone by!

Commercial Investigations was also able to utilize our custom search for New York State criminal records, Cursory Indicator New York (CI NY), during Covid-19 and in the wake of numerous court closures and delays in our home state. CI NY has always been a hugely beneficial inquiry for New York State criminal records but this pandemic really solidified just how necessary of an inquiry it is. With the help of CI NY, our fabulous team of investigators, and our willingness to adapt and be innovative, we were able to keep our operations running smoothly! So smoothly that most of our clients didn't even realize we were working remote for the majority of the year! Obviously we are not over this pandemic yet but we continue to thrive and persevere through any changes that come our way. However, we are very much looking forward to a post pandemic world!



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Due Diligence: You Can't Eat Your Cake, And Have It Too

Meet Due Diligence... Last Scene From Due

Now that everything between Duey and Prue was smoothed over and the wedding planning had begun, Duey was getting very anxious about hiring vendors for the big day. He knew he had to make sure everything was perfect for his darling Prue. He knew the only ones to help him accomplish that were expert investigators at Commercial Investigations!

It had been a very long week. Long month. Long year. Sue was setting up appointments for all their clients at Fancy Valley and the Four Seasons in her home office. A full year had passed since the immediate crisis of the pandemic sent them home, and working separately. Luckily for them the winter had been a harsh one, and one that required a lot of their snow removal services, so they were very busy, and the books looked good. Sue looked out of the window wondering how Duey and Prue were doing with the wedding plans. It was all Duey talked about, she wondered if they would be able to even have their planned dream wedding in the fall. Would people even be able to attend?

She sighed wistfully out of the window next to her desk. She had literally watched the earth sprout buds which grew into flowers, full leaves turn to foliage, then turn colors of golds, yellows and reds, which fell to the earth, and became covered in snow. She was starting to see buds again, and the daffodils were sprouting. How had the year flown by so quickly, but felt so long at the same time? Her thoughts sidled back to Duey and Prue.



Duey was on his fourth vendor of the day, explaining how to use Commercial Investigations LLC's: My Own Background. He and Prue had found this to be the most effective way to get background investigations completed on their wedding vendors without having to set up an account, or pay for the background investigations themselves. Though a lot of the vendors had insisted the cost be applied to their proposals. Duey was resigned to that fact, and was happy to pay if it meant they had individuals they really liked, and wanted to work with.

The vendor he was currently speaking with was a bakery. While they run background investigations on all their own employees, he wanted to run one on the owner.

The owner was being a little shifty about having a background investigation run on him. After about ten minutes of back and forth, Duey had had enough.

"Look Mr. Chefield, we can find another caterer who will abide by this, so if it comes down to it, that's what we will do." Duey exclaimed, completely exasperated.

"Fine, I will go through the background investigation!" Maxwell Chefield answered, sounding equally frustrated.

"Great! Send it over as soon as it's completed!"

Duey hung up the phone with a sinking feeling they would have to start looking for another bakery, which was unfortunate, as this one was one of Prue's favorite cake designers.

A few days later Duey received an email with an attachment. It was Maxwell Chefield's background investigation. Duey pounced on opening and reading it like a hungry tiger. He was three pages in, and noticed something rather odd. After reading so many background investigations he knew the order by heart. Where a Cyber Investigation should have been was three missing pages. What had CI found? He called Maxwell back, and asked if he could please send the whole background investigation. Maxwell, begrudgingly complied. Five minutes later Duey's inbox dinged, and he read what was on the missing pages. Apparently Maxwell Chefield hadn't wanted a background investigation completed because he had a Cyber Investigation hit, but also, it revealed a federal embezzlement charge! He had been embezzling funds at a previous bakery before he started his own. The cyber investigation picked up on it where the other criminal searches hadn't. Duey hadn't thought to include a Federal inquiry, he just assumed all criminal inquiries were related. Well that was going to crush Prue's hopes, it was officially time for a new caterer.

Will Prue and Duey be able to find the right caterer for their dream wedding?

Will Sue get to return to her normal office setting in the near future?

Where is Justin?

Find out in the next issue!

To Read Maxwell's Cyber Investigation™ Report, Visit:
tinyurl.com/axku8p84

Guardian's Travels: Guardian and The Matrix

Ri-i-i-ing. Ri-i-i-ing. "Commercial Investigations. This is Guardian."

"Hi Guardian, this is Marc from The Child Care Center. We're a new client. We received a background investigation from CI and I'd like to discuss the results with someone. There are some hits and discrepancies. With all of the legal requirements having to do with fair hiring practices, I'm at a loss as to what my responsibilities are. Is there any chance you can help me?"

"Indubitably, Marc! Are you familiar with our Decision Matrix tool?"

"Yes. But I'm not really sure where to begin. Is it possible to have a meeting somewhere? I've received my vaccinations, so I'm a bit more confident venturing out. Have you been vaccinated?"

"Marc, Marc, Marc. I'm an eagle. We can't get COVID. How about ice cream from Jimmy's at 3:00 today?"

"Thanks, Guardian. You're a lifesaver!"

Fast forward to 3:00. Guardian sits at a booth with a bowl of a delectable ice cream. In comes Marc, a little harried but none the worse.

"OK, Marc. I understand The Child Care Center hires teachers, nurses, drivers, and office personnel. On the Decision Matrix, we want to identify potential hires by report number to protect their identity and we can also capture the position or job title. Now, what position has the person applied for? What type of hit came up? How long ago was that? I empathize with you feeling overwhelmed by all the protections afforded to applicants by New York State's Article 23-A and all the other hiring regulations, but don't get too frazzled. If the individual in question is applying for a nursing position and has a conviction for abusing prescription drugs, that's pertinent. If that same individual has a few speeding tickets from three years ago, perhaps not so much. If it's someone who applied to be a driver, those speeding tickets may need to be taken more seriously, whereas petty theft might count for less. Hiring someone for an office job, where they have access to the finances? That same petty theft may be a red flag. But if the person applying for an office job has some violent offenses, not so much. People who work office jobs should be people persons. Right, Marc?"

"Of course, Guardian. I also practice meditation to maintain balance."

"You're a keeper, Marc. Finally, the teachers you hire. You might not want them to have any violent or sex offenses either, no? Not when they're dealing directly with vulnerable kids. But if they were found guilty of minor traffic misdemeanors, how pertinent is that to their job?"

"I understand what you're saying, but why keep it all in a spreadsheet like this? Why not just make the decision and go?"

"Lawyers, Marc. If you and your colleagues at The Child Care Center document everything, you can demonstrate your consistency in decision making. You'll want to talk to a lawyer, yourself, but we at Commercial Investigations strongly recommend you use the Decision Matrix. That's why Michelle Pyan developed the procedure. Now, one last item. Hey, manager! I got this Chocolate Mouse ice cream and there's no mouse in it."

"Excuse me, sir, that's Chocolate *Mousse* ice cream."



Spotlight: Cyber Investigations™

An applicant's online presence has become increasingly more important to employers over the last decade and even more so in the last year with social media being the easiest and safest way to communicate during the pandemic.

CI's Cyber Investigation™ is a customizable internet inquiry that can be tailored to your business needs to reveal imperative information regarding an individual's online life and digital footprint. You may still be wondering, why should I care what my employees post online? Well, there are multiple ways it can have an impact on your business.



A Cyber Investigation™ can uncover:

- How an applicant may or may not follow a company's IT protocol by providing a track record of responsible use of information systems including data protection.
- Involvement in illegal activity and/or groups with concerns that are adverse to a company's products and services.
- Offensive postings and activities by a subject that may reflect negatively on the employer and jeopardize its reputation.

A Cyber Investigation™ covers data from current and archived internet sites over a seven plus year period. Client's who utilize CI's Cyber Investigation, on average, receive 10% additional adverse information on their applicant's background investigations. Don't be left vulnerable, contact us to learn more about how Cyber Investigations can help protect your company!



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