

Craig Robertson: Welcome to Season Four of the Robertson and Easterling podcast. This is Craig Robertson.

Matt Easterling: And I'm Matt Easterling. We want to thank everyone who has listened to our podcast so far. If you haven't already subscribed, please do so on iTunes, Spotify, or your favorite podcast player. Craig and I are having lots of fun producing this show and we hope that you're enjoying it as much as we are. It's hard to believe we are already on season four.

Craig Robertson: That's right, Matt. We've really enjoyed sharing the life stories of some great people. And we have even more in store for you for season four. As you know, by now we are board certified family law specialists with one of the most successful boutique law firms in Mississippi as creative problem solvers, we take a holistic approach to the individual needs of our clients.

Matt Easterling: Joining us again. This season are licensed professional counselors, Eva and Roane Hunter from Lifeworks Counseling. We're excited to continue our partnership with Eva and Roane. They provide a unique perspective as we help hurting people with the healing process.

Craig Robertson: We're also excited to introduce two new sponsors for season four, Christy Tidwell and Kelly Englemann. Christy is a certified financial planner in the founder of new path planning Christy's own wall through divorce coupled with 20 years of experience. Perfect advocate for others on a similar path. And Kelly is the founder of Enhanced Wellness Living. Mississippi's leading functional medicine clinic, her team's food first approach to healing along with a variety of lifestyle and regenerative treatment options sets you on a journey to take control of your health and live life. Well, so now that we've told you what to expect this season, sit back, relax, take a deep breath. Everything's going to be. You found us. And what you're about to hear is going to help.

Eva Hunter: Hey, this is Eva hunter from Lifework counseling at LifeWorks. Our counselors seek to integrate healthy faith-based principles with sound clinical skills, whether you're struggling in a relationship or have feelings that hinder your ability to be all you are created to be. One of our trained counselors can help. We seek to partner with you as our client to find the freedom to live the life God intended for you. We offer our experience strength and hope to promote healthy relationships built on intimacy and trust. Life works, counseling the science and soul of connection.

Christy Tidwell: Divorce is the largest financial transaction in most people's lives. Unfortunately, the decisions surrounding divorce are having to be made when emotions are highest making choices about assets can feel intimidating, especially when you're not in the best frame of mind. Make sure you know how, what you do today will affect your financial future.

My name is Christy Tidwell and I'm with new path planning. I'll use my 20 years of financial planning experience to help educate and advise you during every stage of the divorce process, visit new path planning for more information.

Craig Robertson: Matt, I don't know if you have the same experience as me, but at cocktail parties, it's not uncommon when somebody finds out that I'm a divorce lawyer. First thing they say is, boy, I bet you've got some stories to tell.

Matt Easterling: Of course, everybody wants to know the dirty details. The kind of wow factor moments. And a lot of times that includes somebody getting busted for lack of a better word. One spouse suspects that the other one is doing something that they're not supposed to be doing and they want to know about how they caught 'em.

Craig Robertson: Well, and today we have an expert with us on getting busted and his name's Robert Saums. He's my friend and he is one of the principals at Security Support Services. Robert, thanks for being with us today.

Robert Saums: Appreciate the invitation, been looking forward to it.

Craig Robertson: Well, tell us a little bit about your company and how you guys got started.

Robert Saums: My father started the company in about 1987/1988. He had been in law enforcement and had worked in some private security here around town. He started the business there and through the years we have now grown it into two different companies. One is a security equipment provider. We do access control systems, camera systems, gates, physical security for industrial type sites and hospital sites. And then the side of the operation that I work on is the investigative firm where we do full-service investigations. We do everything from surveillance to background checks, to witness location, and process service. Just anything that individuals or law firms need to help them with a case they're working on.

Craig Robertson: Now talk about why someone would come to a private investigation firm when they're facing a legal situation?

Robert Saums: Well, a lot of times it's better to have a neutral person working on something. We can take the emotion out of the situation and just go get the facts. We can get through some of the emotional aspects that really don't mean anything to a case. So, there may be something that means something to a husband or spouse, but in the whole big picture of the case, it may not mean a lot. We can get past that and get down to the facts that matter, that can help them present a case and help their attorney present a case in the courtroom.

Matt Easterling: So, I'm assuming some of the most common reasons that people get in touch with you are to establish cheating, possibly for child custody or child support purposes, whether their ex-spouses may be moved on and entered into some type of cohabitation with another person. Is there anything else, any other reasons?

Robert Saums: Exactly. Those are the main reasons and then there's also times when maybe because of some child support, maybe one side says they're not working anymore and they all of a sudden want the child support. Package changed and then we go and put 'em under surveillance for that and go document where they're working and document that sort of thing. And maybe find that things aren't exactly as what they're trying to report to the courts, right.

Craig Robertson: Maybe getting paid in cash for different jobs, depending on the type of service or product that someone offers?

Robert Saums: Right. Exactly. Sometimes people will say they're doing one thing and maybe doing something totally different and it's always good to have the proof to say, you know what you're dealing with and not have to deal in conjecture.

Craig Robertson: Well, let's dig in and talk about your everyday domestic relations case. I'm envisioning that I've sat with a husband or wife, and there is some suspicion of infidelity, obviously. When I would pull an investigator in it's because we need more information, we need to know something else. So, talk about what happens with someone in that first phone call and take us through a typical domestic case involving suspicion of infidelity.

Robert Saums: The first thing I want to know is what is a spouse's normal pattern of behavior? Where do they work? What time do they get off work? Do they go work out every afternoon? Do they have a favorite place that they go to eat lunch yet? Every Monday? Do they have a group of people that they like to associate with on a regular basis? I need to know all those things.

Craig Robertson: You're trying to put together what a normal week in the life of a particular person looks like, so that you can see when there are variations from that?

Robert Saums: That, and it also helps us narrow down the scope of when we're working, we charge by the hour so if somebody gets off work at four 30, I don't need to be sitting at their office at two 30 telling you they're at work, but now if they get off early in the afternoons and they go to a gym, I need to be there when they leave. So I can go with 'em because the gym may not be where they're going. It may just be where they're telling you they're going.

Matt Easterling: How often do you utilize tracking devices or anything of that nature? When you are originally mapping out what their common everyday practices are?

Robert Saums: I like a tracking device. One, it shows you a pattern of what they do but the thing that I like to use a tracking device for is to get the pictures and to get what you need for the courthouse. You've got to be close enough to see what's happening, but far enough back so that they don't pay attention. And that sounds easy, but all of a sudden, if somebody hits highway 51, At four 30 in the afternoon, they hit highway 25 at five o'clock in the afternoon, they hit highway 463, 1 red light changes everything. I mean, whether or not you can, if they clear the intersection and the whole light system cycles, and you're stuck at the light while they're traveling on, that GPS device gives you a place that you can fall back to that you can stay with 'em and go with 'em that way and you don't have to stay so close that you put pressure on people. If people start seeing the same car behind them over and over and over, you've got to be smart.

Craig Robertson: To my knowledge. I've never been followed. At least to my knowledge, I've never been followed, but I've been told by clients that you get, you get a sense that something's off, that you just have a feeling about it when someone is watching you.

Robert Saums: Right. We do it very conservative. If we, you know, all my staff are trained to if you see somebody start watching their mirrors, if all of a sudden you see that turn into a parking lot that doesn't make sense, or they pull into a parking lot and pull right back out of the parking lot. We're just going to disappear. I mean, we're just going to leave. And just like you say, you don't know that you've ever been followed. If I'm doing my job, right I can catch somebody, and they never know I've been around until we get to the courthouse and display what we've got. It's just a matter, it's kind of a knack. It's just knowing when to push and when to back off and it just kind of comes with experience and it's just a matter of being in a position to get what you need, but not being so close that it becomes obvious what you're doing.

Craig Robertson: Well, it's got to be exciting though. I mean, you're on a mission to discover the truth. I mean, I can only imagine that if I'm in a car following somebody that I think is on their way to have extramarital, romantic hookup trust meeting. I mean, that's got to be exciting for the investigator to try to uncover the truth.

Robert Saums: It's definitely a rush. I mean, I compare it a lot to hunting. Well, it is hunting. You're absolutely hunting a person but now what we have to go back and be mindful of, and it's kind of the way we do things. The way we do it is a lot of times I'll be the contact person with our clients, and then I'll be the contact person with our investigators.

Craig Robertson: So, there's a dis almost a switchboard between the two.

Robert Saums: Exactly and the reason why that is, is because when our investigators get somebody and they get somebody good, there's a rush and a thrill. Well, you don't want to call a client whose whole world is just shattering in that moment, pumped up and excited to tell them you caught their spouse cheating.

Craig Robertson: Right.

Robert Saums: And so there takes a certain amount of compassion and kindness to share with them at that moment that it's going to be okay, we're going to be between us and your lawyers. We're going to get you through this. This is just the first step of getting through this.

Craig Robertson: That's a really good point and I'm glad that you brought it up. I could see it as you've talked about it. The investigator's excited because they've done their job well, they've uncovered what they were hired to uncover and so there is an excitement associated with that, but this is somebody's life. It's their spouse and it's her whole world that is going to be different from that day forward.

Robert Saums: And, especially if there's a case that's maybe been a little trickier, maybe the person you're watching is a little sneakier. Maybe they've done some things and they're really going way out of their way. People think they're so smart and they're not. I mean, we see people all the time. They'll go to Renaissance, or they'll go to Walmart, and they'll go somewhere like that and they'll hop out and they'll leave the car there and bam. They're gone. They hopped in the car with their boyfriend and girlfriend and just left the car right there. So, it looks like they're shopping and that's another reason why you have to be careful with GPS because the GPS

would just tell you that they're there shopping at Walmart when maybe it's just the cars there. And they're gone right

Craig Robertson: Now, who shops for four or five hours at a time?

Robert Saums: We actually had a lady many, many years ago. She was pretty slick. She showed up on one side of north park, walked through the mall and met her boyfriend on the other side. And they left and went and did their thing. And when she came back out, she grabbed one of the courtesy bags at the door by Dillard's and fluffed it out so that when she walked through the parking lot, she had these big bags in her hand. And we talked to our client and said, she's been shopping, and he said, man, I'm watching the credit card statement. I'm watching the bank statement. She is not buying a thing. And so, the next time she went to the mall, we walked through the mall with her and sure enough, there she was, she met the boyfriend on the other side. This same woman actually went to Baptist hospital, dropped off flowers at the nurse's station right inside the front door and walked straight through the building, came out the backside of the colon aids, met her boyfriend, was gone again.

Craig Robertson: Wow. Let's talk about using GPS tracking devices ethically and legally, because I think the average listener is thinking, wait a second, how are they tracking people?

Robert Saums: The big thing with the GPS device is unless y'all are aware of it, I'm not aware of one, there's no test case in Mississippi. And so, the courts have pretty well constructed, or at least it's been a general rule that they're legal as long as it's marital property. So, if it's a marital property, we have no qualms about putting a GPS on a vehicle.

Craig Robertson: Right. The idea is I can follow whatever it is that belongs to me. So if this car belongs to me, then I have the right to know where it is.

Matt Easterling: Do you physically put the tracker in or on a vehicle or do you have your client do it

Robert Saums: Both. We do it both ways. If I, if a client feels more comfortable doing it themselves, we'll guide 'em through and do it and the trackers have come so far in the past 10, 15 years, the technology, I mean, basically now they're all magnet mount. You can slap 'em on slap 'em off. We've popped 'em on, in broad daylight, in parking lots before, and people think they're being observant, but as long as you are not where they can see you. You're in and out in just a matter of seconds.

Matt Easterling: So, if somebody maybe suspects that they are being tracked, where do they need to look or do they come to you guys and ask you to, can you sweep my vehicle and find out if there's a tracker on here.

Robert Saums: You'd be surprised we do it all day. Every day. We do a physical sweep of the vehicle. We check all the places that we know we would put a tracker. We look for other things that could be used to track a cell phone with locator services. It is, I mean, that's a tracking device. Your 360 and your apple ID and things like that, all that is used as tracking devices.

We'll check that and then we also have some equipment that we can use. That checks for the radio signals that the tracker emits. We'll take the car, run it up and down the street a little bit and look for the frequencies that are being emitted. So all of a sudden we see a blip. We know, Hey, there's something here.

Craig Robertson: And there's also the possibility that audio recording devices are used within the vehicle to record what's being said inside of an automobile. Right?

Robert Saums: Absolutely. And that's a tricky thing, but I have seen some of our clients get the information they needed, especially now with the hands-free talking. So, a lot of times, if somebody has their phones sync to the car, you're going to hear that whole conversation because it's going to come through the car's audio speaker. Now, what you have to worry about there is you're also going to hear a lot of engine noise. You're going to hear them listening to the radio. You're going to hear any noise because the tracking unit or the audio unit can't differentiate the noise. It just hears noise and starts recording. So, sometimes there's a lot of information to be gathered. You just have to get kind of tedious at going through some hours' worth of stuff. That's maybe not valuable to get to. Five or 10 minutes. That is valuable.

Craig Robertson: Well, and let's go back to our initial phone call. You said one of the first things that you need to do is establish a pattern. We need to know when they go to work, when they get off work, when they go to the gym, if they've got a regular meeting that they attend, take us through the process from there.

Robert Saums: Yeah. From there, I typically want a picture and I want to know what vehicles they're driving. I want to know if they suspect somebody, is there somebody that's on their radar screen and I'll tell you just from happenstance or not happenstance, but just years of experience, if a woman has an idea that that's who her husband is seeing, she is probably much more accurate than a man. Women's intuition is much more, much stronger than a man's intuition and if a woman thinks it's happened and it's much more likely to be happening than if a man calls me and tells me, I want to know who it is, I, but I think there's somebody.

Craig Robertson: I think all of our female listeners will appreciate that you said that, but I agree though that there is just something about a woman's intuition, especially when it comes to maybe extracurricular activities of her husband.

Robert Saums: Absolutely. There's just that sixth sense they can pick it up and if they have a suspicion of somebody, there's usually a reason, they have a suspicion of somebody, whereas men, we tend to scatter sheets more and we tend to think everybody's into something and that's maybe not the case.

Craig Robertson: So, obviously if you have some hint or understanding of who the paramour might be that gives you another person you could potentially surveil or follow up on to see if the dots can get connected.

Robert Saums: And if we're having trouble with somebody, say somebody works on Lakeland drive, maybe you go to the paramour house or the suspected paramour house and wait for them

to get there because you know that getting through Lakeland drive and old Fannin and all late afternoon is going to be hairy. I mean, it's going to be a tricky thing to get 'em going to where they need to go so sometimes, there's more than one way to skin a cat. Sometimes you go to the bait and let 'em come to the bait.

Matt Easterling: A lot of these modern trackers mean correct me if I'm wrong, you can actually set up a geofence where, if you think Tom's having an affair with Mary, you can set up where it pings to your device, letting you know, Tom has come within a certain radius of Mary's house and now you can go there and catch 'em in that.

Robert Saums: It's really scary what some of these devices will do. I mean, you can even set it to where the geofence is a couple miles away and set a specific path and it'll let you know that that's where they're going. Now the tricky thing about that is with us, I've got enough investigators that we can cover multiple cases at the same time. We don't just do one case at a time. We're probably working on five to six different cases today and the tricky thing is when all of a sudden that geofence alert goes off and my client calls and tells me and says, Hey, they're at such and such address right now. Well, can I get somebody there right now? Can I shift everything right there? We're not the old Maytag man, that's just sitting there waiting for a call. And so, a lot of times, if we can have our druthers, we would rather get on 'em as they leave work and then use the tracking device as a means of helping to get 'em through traffic rather than sitting and waiting. Just like if we're sitting here at the offices here and somebody who has a tracking device tells us that it's on the other side of Brandon right now and there could be a 45 minute to an hour lead time getting there depending on traffic and they could be gone by the time you get there. So, there's a lot of ins and outs on how these things work.

Craig Robertson: Well, also a person who is suspicious that their spouse might be cheating, if they just listen, they might help themselves and the investigator as well, because you know, maybe there's a trip that's going to be planned in the next few days, or maybe, Hey, I'm going to go have drinks with my girlfriends after work on Thursday afternoon. Sometimes there are clues that are being left that in working in conjunction with your investigator, you can follow up on and find out if that is in fact what they're doing.

Robert Saums: Absolutely. And the other side of that equation is maybe there's a situation where we tell our client, hey, why don't you make it known that you're going out of town this weekend? Why don't you make it start talking up a girl's trip, start talking up a guy's trip and you're so excited to be going to get away from the guys and give that person the room to hang themselves.

Craig Robertson: Sure. They say, hey, I'm going to take the kids and go to my mom's house this weekend. I know things haven't been good between the two of us. So, you know, maybe it'll give you an opportunity to kind of relax and I'll take the kids and you can just have a quiet weekend.

Robert Saums: Going back to what we were saying earlier, hunting, you killed the biggest deer during the rut and if somebody's got somebody then Valentine's Day is one of the big days. If

you've got somebody that they're desperate to see, if you give 'em that opportunity to see 'em they're gonna get there pretty quick.

Craig Robertson: So we're here talking with Robert Saums from security support services, who is a veteran, a private investigator who works with a large firm with lots of resources available to them. Robert was just telling us about kind of your typical domestic relations situation. Robert said that it's important to, of course, you're gonna get all the biographical information and a photograph and the description of the vehicle and probably the license plate number, but you also wanna know a pattern, you know, when does a person go to work? When does a person go to the gym? Are there any meetings that they attend regularly? So Robert, we've established this pattern. Let's talk about when it's time to get on the chase, what does that look like?

Robert Saums: Once it's time to get on the chase, it's just a matter of us latching on and like I said earlier, we have to be close enough to see what's happening, but far enough back that nobody's paying attention to us and that can look different. Whether it's a hotel, whether they go back to somebody's house, whether they get to a friend's house, you'd be surprised how many people use these parking lot cutouts on the Natchez trace. I mean, that's been done for years. It's kind of shocking to think in 2022, some kids still act like high school, but it happens all the time meaning they're going to meet up in a little nook in a vehicle. In one sense, it gives 'em a place where they can pay attention to anybody that's around them because they're in a remote location and they think they're safe. And so, they, a lot of times in those situations, they can see you coming from a long way. So, you have to get really smart about how you're figuring out where to get and how to get them in and out of there.

Craig Robertson: So, a typical situation. Say a husband is suspicious that his wife is cheating. Maybe one of your investigators will go to a place of business around 11:30 before lunch and try to find out what's happening during the lunch hour. Give us some suspicious.

Robert Saums: Yeah, like lunchtime, anybody can go to lunch anywhere from about 11 to 2. So, you just go latch onto 'em and all of a sudden you may see that when they leave to go to lunch, they're just running errands. They're just running, picking up the cleaning, they're running, getting stuff for the kids. We may see where all of a sudden, they're stopping making errands and then you look up and they're in a neighborhood that you don't know why they're there and then all of a sudden they end up at a house. And so at that point we start relaying information between myself and the investigators and we're checking property records for the address. We're checking if there's vehicles there, who is there? And at that point we may contact our client and they may tell us, "Hey, that's her sister." or "Hey, that's the one."

Matt Easterling: and the more information that you guys have, obviously the better and the more open line of communication with your client, the better.

Robert Saums: Absolutely. I mean, communication is everything. If all of a sudden, we get somebody and they go to a family member's house, you know, a lot of times maybe there's time to call off the dogs for that point and come back to fight another day. Or it may be that, hey, her mama has never liked me. So, mama will condone whatever she's doing and maybe somebody

may be coming to pick her up there.” So that’s where communicating each case is different and just an open line of communication is always best.

Matt Easterling: Again, correct me if I'm wrong or if you found something else in your history. I feel like over the years, I've noticed not only do people have a schedule that they keep to their normal every day. They have schedules they keep to, with regards to their extracurricular activities, should we say with their paramour with that other individual. So even if you don't catch 'em the first time they go to their house, it may work out that it's their pattern. That every Tuesday at lunch, they go to ABC or wherever it is that they go.

Robert Saums: Yeah. One thing you always have to keep in mind is that if somebody has a paramour if that person's married too, what is their window of opportunity? So just like you're saying, it may be that Tuesday at lunch is both of their opportunities to be there. It may be that Wednesday night; they both say they're going to a prayer meeting somewhere and they're actually going and meeting. You know, at a hotel somewhere, it may mean that Saturday mornings are a window of opportunity for both of them to get out and see each other. And that's part of the other equation is when you figure out who the other person is, are they married? Are they single? If they're single, then there's a lot more room for them to do stuff. But if they're married, there's only going to be a finite amount of time that both of them have a hall pass.

Craig Robertson: Well, obviously if they're single, then you can suspect that the place they'll would be at the single person place typically. And like you said, if they're both married, then you're trying to match up calendars and match up opportunities that would have. Right?

Robert Saums: Correct. That goes back to communication. What can we glean? What can we find from you? And then also, you'd be amazed how much information people put on social media. Some people live their lives through Facebook and Instagram, and we can hop on there, especially if their sites aren't set to private and find out all kind of information that way.

Craig Robertson: Well, I'm glad that you brought that up because, you know, Matt, I think you'll agree, there's just really in the purview of a divorce case, social media can never help a person. It can only hurt a person. I tell our clients that, you know, during the process of a divorce, that's the time that if they were ever to take a break from social media, that would be the time to do it. Because what I'm hearing you say is that you guys can use social media to find out all sorts of things. I had a client one time tell me he laughed and said, Facebook is forever. You can think you've deleted something. You can think you've cleared it out and it's somewhere out there on the web. And if you search it, you can find it and we laughed. Before we came on the air, so to speak, I had a client one time that had his wife. He had everything we needed, had video, had audio, had an admission in the audio. And then we presented our stuff at the courthouse, and everything was going in his favor and as soon as we got off the stand, her attorney called somebody else to the stand and they admitted evidence of our client, you know, being overseas with his girlfriend, pictures from Facebook. It was so frustrating to know that we had gone to the links we had gone to, to get the information and then he kind of self-sabotaged himself.

Matt Easterling: So, we've gone through how somebody hires you, the information that you want to get on the front end. We've gone through the chase. I want to know what happens at the moment of truth. You're telling them you're chasing them and you're finally setting up for what looks like the moment of truth, where you're about to be able to prove what's happening, what's the relationship this person's in, what do you do?

Robert Saums: That is where you have to sit and get comfortable. That is where you have to find a spot where you can try to see front doors or try to see the end of the driveway, where the people are leaving and it's just a matter of waiting 'em out. Sometimes waiting 'em out means an hour, sometimes waiting 'em out means 17 hours. I know I've been on surveillance for over 24 hours where two people have gone in and they went in on a Friday night and it wasn't until they decided to go eat lunch the next Saturday morning that we got 'em back out of the house. We pride ourselves in being very thorough. So, we feel like you need to get 'em in and then get 'em out so that you can substantiate that amount of time that they were there together. And we just feel like it works better for our clients. We like to go that extra mile and get it. So, in that situation, you don't know if you're going to get that situation again. So, when you've got it there, you've got to make the most of it and maximize it.

Craig Robertson: Well, our friend Mike Byrd, God rest his soul, called it the money shot. That is the photograph, the video of the evidence that you're looking for. Our listeners will be reminded from some past episodes that in Mississippi to prove adultery, you don't have to catch somebody in the act, even though believe it or not, that does happen on rare occasions. You're looking for inclination and opportunity and what we're talking about with regard to, as Matt put it the moment of truth, or as our dear friend, Mike Bird put it the money shot that would be putting two people together behind closed doors for long enough to consummate an adulterous relationship and then inclination is more of infatuation. It could be flirtatious behavior. It could be a public display of affection. It could be words of affection in a text message or an email or a social media message So you're putting together the adulterous inclination with the opportunity to consummate that Adulterous inclination in Mississippi, it still matters. It matters for equator distribution with regard to the stability and harmony of a home. It matters for moral fitness. With regard to child custody, it matters for awards of alimony. So, Mississippi is still a fault based state, meaning that you have to have a reason to get a divorce, or you have to agree to get a divorce. But even at the point in time, which is probably in the not-too-distant future, we do allow divorce without consent in Mississippi adultery and working with private investigators. Like our friend, Robert at security support services is going to be valuable.

Matt Easterling: Okay. So we've gone through the surveillance and the reasons why people hire you. Can just anybody be a private investigator in the state of Mississippi, or do you have to have any special qualifications?

Robert Saums: That is a great question right there. Unfortunately, anybody can be a private investigator in Mississippi. All they got to do is go buy a business license and declare themselves an investigator. There's no licensing within the state of Mississippi. All of our surrounding states have licensing. I would personally love to see licensing because it sets a level of professionalism, it would set a standard that people have to follow. Unfortunately, there

are people that call themselves investigators that you run into that I'm sure y'all have probably seen in the courtroom from time to time that you wouldn't want to be in the room with those guys. I mean, you wouldn't trust those guys. They'll do some unscrupulous things, and they'll do some things that in the heat of the moment, an emotional client might say, Oh, yeah, that's great. We need to get this information. Well, it may be criminal and if we're doing it because of your instruction, we may all be sitting at the defendant's table, and I have no interest in doing that. We're going to do things above board. We're going to do things with class and we're going to do things in a way that we can all go home at the end of the day and know that we did a good job.

Matt Easterling: Well, you mentioned a situation where you might all be sitting at the defendant's table. I mean, it doesn't even have to go that far. You wouldn't even have to be prosecuted. Just the fact that you obtained information through some type of illegal means usually is going to make it inadmissible.

Robert Saums: Right. And so, if you're going to those links to get that information and it can't be used, it's a waste of time and effort. And not only that, it puts you guys in a bad spot because you may know something and you can't use it.

Craig Robertson: Well, help our listener. You guys are obviously one of the top professionals who are in this business in the Jackson Metro area. But somebody who might be listening to this outside of your reach, what should a person who is engaging a private investigator, look for? How do they know they're dealing with someone who's going to act with professionalism?

Robert Saums: You know, in this day and age, one of the big things I would say is, do they have a competent website with a list of references or a list of their credentials? I know with my staff, I'm the only one of the staff that has never worn a badge. Most of my investigators all through the years have all had some type of law enforcement background. They're all a member of associations, whether they're licensed, that should be posted, but do they appear to be. I mean, do they appear to be somebody that you feel like you can trust because this is going to be a financial investment. So, you want to make sure that you're getting a return on your investment.

Craig Robertson: Well, and obviously you want to follow the guidance of your attorney too, because this might be the one and only time you have to deal with whatever life circumstance you're faced with, but your attorney deals with that on a routine basis. And they're going to know the professionals who do high caliber work in that field.

Robert Saums: Absolutely. And, whether it's here in the Jackson area, whether it's throughout the state or through the Southeast, the south is still some really big, small towns. Everybody knows everybody. Everybody's going to know what's going on. And if you've got a poor reputation or if you've got poor references, that's going to follow you around. We always like to do something with that mindset of, I want to make sure that not only am I taking care of this client, but I want to ingrain myself with you guys firm so that we're taking care of your next client and the next client. And I think one of the biggest compliments we've ever had is when we have

people that we have been involved with on the other side, come to us afterwards and saying, y'all are working for me from now on, you guys are my guys from now on.

Craig Robertson: And so, what I'm hearing you say is it's like any other professional, you've got to look online. You've got to ask people you trust. You've got to do your homework before you engage the services of a private investigator, just like you would, before you engage the services of an attorney.

Robert Saums: Absolutely. Absolutely. There are good, good people doing it and, in both fields, and there's bad people doing it in both fields, and you know, it's up to you as the client to make sure you're dealing with good people.

Matt Easterling: I realize that anybody that says they want to be a private investigator, they can do it but a lot of times I have clients who maybe they don't want to spend the money and they're thinking they're going to have a friend or an uncle or a cousin do the surveillance. What would you tell that person? I mean, what's the reason to hire a professional? Private investigator versus an amateur?

Robert Saums: Well, the big thing is, as we talked about earlier, making sure the information that's gathered is admissible. You want to make sure that the information is presented in a way that it can stand on its own. And then also if you find yourself where you're having to testify in court, you need to be prepared for cross examine. If you're not, if you're not trained in cross examination, a good attorney that can flip you on your words can have your case thrown out real quick. Just by the way you answered the question because you didn't see where he was going, where he was trying to get you off your game or trying to find a problem with your video. Try to find a problem with your report and get it out that way. Everybody thinks they can do it. And everybody thinks it's really easy. And if you understand the end result, then it can be easy. It gets down to reducing the variables and getting to what matters. We also, as professionals, take the emotional aspect out of it. There's not, we don't have the desire to go confront the person in the wrong and go throw it in their face that I just got you. You're mine now, that sort of thing. We just disappear. We're just gone, and we let it be our client's attorney. They present the information to the other attorney when they see fit.

Craig Robertson: And I will say this most of the time when faced with the reality of okay, we were at the hotel on a Thursday afternoon at two o'clock and there's video evidence of someone walking out with someone they shouldn't be with a lot of times, people are gonna go ahead and admit to the affair and try to focus their attention on the rest of the issues in a case.

Robert Saums: And another aspect of that is also with us as professionals. If somebody is to see us, they're maybe not all the way sure. They may think they know, okay I just got busted, but I'm not totally sure. Whereas if they see uncle Joe over there, they immediately know what uncle Joe's there for and there's fixing to be a confrontation between the two, because both of 'em are going to get too hot heads and they want to go take care of things that way.

Matt Easterling: Right. Well, we mentioned earlier that sometimes people get the feeling that they're being watched. I've found that for the most part, the people that have the feeling they're being watched know that they're doing something they're not supposed to be doing. So they, you know, they're looking for something because they know I'm not supposed to be here in the first place.

Robert Saums: And I'm sure y'all have seen it too. Where the person that gets caught cheating always immediately accuses the other person of cheating too, the cheater always thinks he's getting cheated on and uses that as justification for what he's doing, how he's doing. It's called gaslighting.

Matt Easterling: Robert, we're coming towards the end of our time today and I want to just thank you again for being here, but we can't let you go without, hearing your one go-to story, any private investigator who's been doing this for as long as you have, has to have a couple doozies, can you give us one?

Robert Saums: We had a situation many years ago where the person we were watching had kind of figured out that he was, he had been under surveillance, and he was in that tricky spot of trying to keep his wife and his girlfriend happy and he was trying to play both sides against each other. He was telling his wife that he was fixing to break it off with her, the other woman, he was done with her. And then as soon as he would leave there, he would go see the other woman. And based on what we were seeing surveillance, they weren't really calling it off for anything. So, it kind of got real contentious between them because they all knew each other. And so, one day we were watching him and he had met his girlfriend in a fairly public place and we could tell by the way their interactions and the way they were talking that this was not a very good conversation and it was getting very animated and it was really getting kind of comical to be up the road and just imagining what was being said. And right before they left, he handed her a letter or handed her some type of piece of paper and so he tears off and leaves because he's got to go and she, the girlfriend, gets in her car and starts reading whatever it was that he gave her. And she got mad and as she was leaving where she was, she threw it out the window. My investigator went and got it and he found it on the piece of paper and sure enough, there was the breakup letter and we have laughed forever and every day about "Love, Gerald" because that is how he signed it. And it was just "love Gerald" and was right there and that got, got used in court on it.

[00:41:56] **Matt Easterling:** Oh, exhibit one. I'm sure.

Robert Saums: Exhibit one was, you know, he, I wish this would've worked out better. I mean, it was the admission, it was everything. And we had video, but love Gerald has been a running joke around our office for years.

Matt Easterling: So instead of dear John letters, now you have love Gerald

Robert Saums: Love, Gerald.

Craig Robertson: Well, Robert, thanks again for spending time with us, tell our listeners how they can get in touch with you guys at Security Support Services.

Robert Saums: Our website is securitysupportservices.com. And then you can also reach us by phone at (601) 922-5361. And then you can reach me by email at robert@securitysupportservices.com.

Craig Robertson: Thanks, again, Robert.

Robert Saums: Thank you.