

How a Private Investigator Can Help Build Your Personal Injury Case with Witness Statements

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Author: [Denise Rock](#)

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How Can a Private Investigator Help Build Your Personal Injury Case?

By: Denise Rock

While attorneys have many tools to build a winning case, a skilled investigator can be one of your firm's most valuable assets. Investigators are in the business of obtaining information and evidence. A skilled investigator can help you find people and information; assets, find witnesses, photographs crash scenes, testify in court, and help you settle or win your case. Investigators thrive on answering the seemingly unanswerable question and solving the problem no one else has yet to resolve.

Witness Statements - An investigator can also look for witnesses, someone who may live or work in the area and was there at the time of the crash and may have information or evidence as to what happened. Sometimes witnesses are identified poorly on the crash report or the information is incomplete. It's crucial to follow-up on witness statements as quickly as possible to get a fresh perspective and possible evidence. Also, it is a good idea to obtain the police transcription of the 911 call and speak with the 911 caller. Too often the 911 caller is the best and, or only witness. There have been too many cases where the individual drives away without the officer documenting the witness's contact information on the crash report. Many people have cell phones capable of recording video and audio and often videotape incidents and are willing to share the video if it may help someone.

When tracking down a witness time is not on your side. Speaking to a witness early in the investigation is key to preserving vital information. Very often witnesses forget the details critical to the case, or they unintentionally alter facts after talking to friends or family about the incident. If too much time elapses between the incident and the interview, you may find yourself spending time searching for a witness who has disappeared or relocated, or worse case scenario, passed away.

Also, when you interview a witness, always ask them who is their emergency contact, someone who will always know where they are. Too often witnesses move or change their cell phone numbers. Having the witness's emergency contact information enables you to have a method of tracking your important witness even after they have changed their number or address.

Taking a witness statement in a personal injury case is very different from a criminal case. Defense attorneys

typically will not permit a recorded statement while personal injury attorneys prefer it. Look for an investigator who is capable of asking in-depth questions in an informal, non-threatening manner that will likely determine the credibility of a witness and the complexity of the facts as well as someone who has experience in taking a plaintiff friendly statement.

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