

Hi, Mr. Ward. How did you land such an interesting-sounding job?

In college, I was recruited for an internship with a drug enforcement agency. I was given the choice of focusing on either law enforcement or investigations. I thought the investigation aspect sounded interesting, so I became a detective and worked my way up.

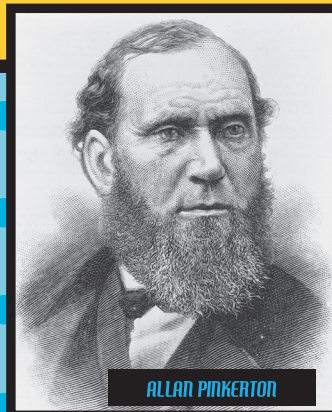
These days, I supervise all of Pinkerton's operations on the East Coast, as well as oversee the offices in Europe and Africa. Pinkerton currently operates in over 68 cities in 101 countries.

When did Pinkerton open its doors?

Pinkerton is actually the oldest investigation company in the world; it's the company that first coined the term "private investigator." Allan Pinkerton, who was a member of Chicago's police department, was our founder; he started the company 165 years ago.

During the Civil War, Pinkerton served as head of the Union Intelligence Service, which was the forerunner of the U.S Secret Service. The service discovered and then foiled an assassination attempt on Abraham Lincoln in 1861. Pinkerton specialized in protecting railroad shipments for several Midwestern railways. The first documented train robbery took place in 1866 and Pinkerton was in charge of catching and arresting the culprits.

He also came up with the idea of mug shots — taking photos of criminals in order to keep track of them.



PINKERTON

DETECTIVE AGENCY

BY ROCHEL BURSTYN

Whenever a crime has been committed, the police and detectives have to all work together to discover 'whodunit'. Detectives have a particularly interesting job — they have to try to work out what actually happened, even when several witnesses are telling different versions about what happened! Today we're heading to the offices of the oldest detective agency in the United States and meeting with Vice President Stephen Ward.



Can you tell us about some of your cases?

I'm bound by client privacy, so of course I can't tell you names or too many details.

In one case, a financial institution was intending to invest a significant amount of money in buying a company. When they asked us to look further into it, we discovered that the company had been lying about its worth and the financial institution would have lost a significant amount of money had it gone through with the sale and bought the company.

How do you interrogate a suspect?

Firstly, there's a difference between interrogating and interviewing. Interviewing is softer. It's actually an art form, taught in several certified schools around the country. A skilled detective is trained to look for certain things and it takes years to refine these skills.

There are a few aspects that we're looking at. It's important to know as much as possible about an event before we interview suspects so that we can pick up when there are holes in the story they are telling. We also need to gain their trust so they're willing to talk. Most interviews are done multiple times so we can catch if a person's lying.

But even with all a detective's skill and ability, an interview on its own doesn't guarantee that you'll get the right answers. There are rules and regulations about how long a person can be interviewed. Sometimes, people own up to something that they didn't really do. With all my experience, I often can just sense if a person is lying. The human factor is huge.

Do you ever rely on body language to tell you if a suspect is lying or not?

Body language is not always accurate. Sometimes, a person might have posture that looks guarded, for example, if his arms are crossed, and while this could mean that he's hiding something, it could also mean nothing. People are often scared and that can be interpreted as looking guilty. The science of understanding body language is not exact.

That's why I don't use it. I look at everything as a whole – was the suspect honest? What kind of feeling did I get from speaking to him? Additionally, there's always a second agent in the room and we compare our impressions.

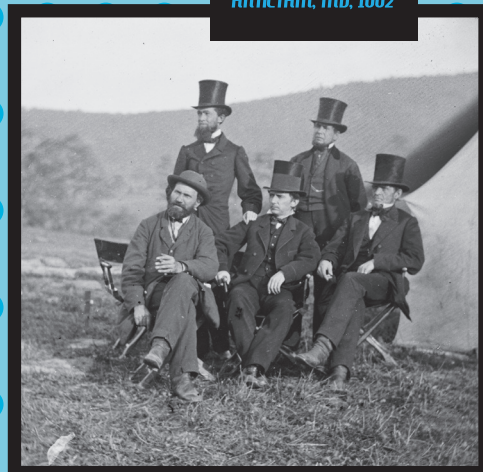
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Do you always see eye-to-eye with the second agent?

Sometimes we're both on the same page and sometimes we're several pages apart. Sometimes we're 100 percent on target and other times we miss the boat entirely. Every case is different.

ALLAN PINKERTON
AND SECRET SERVICE,
ANTIETAM, MD, 1862



Do you ever dust for fingerprints?

No. We have been asked to do that over the years, but we don't. Even in a case where law enforcement officers are involved, if fingerprint dusting is required, then an expert in obtaining, reading, understanding and matching fingerprints is brought in. Not everyone knows how to do that. We have specialists in every category that we use from time to time.



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PINKERTON
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What's your favorite part of your job?

Every day is different; as a result, it will never get boring.

I like puzzles and thinking out of the box. I enjoy challenges and find that every case is a puzzle. It is interesting to see that, sometimes, someone new with just a year or so of experience will have a refreshing perspective or a new angle to consider that someone with twenty or more years of experience hadn't considered. Being an investigator is a rewarding and enjoyable job, perfect for people who like to think and don't like the everyday humdrum of a typical job. ■

Did you ever have to go undercover?

Yes, many times. There were times that companies hired us because they were aware that something was not right or someone was doing something they weren't supposed to (like stealing) but they didn't know who or how. I've been "hired" and looked just like other regular employees, but actually my job was to spy on the workers and report to their higher-ups.

Sometimes trade secrets and intellectual property are involved. Someone might steal someone else's idea or product and want to sell it to the highest bidder. In such a case, we pose as the highest bidder before getting the local and federal law enforcements involved, and then we return the product to the real creator.

