

EMOTIONAL INFIDELITY: CHEATING WITHOUT THE SEX

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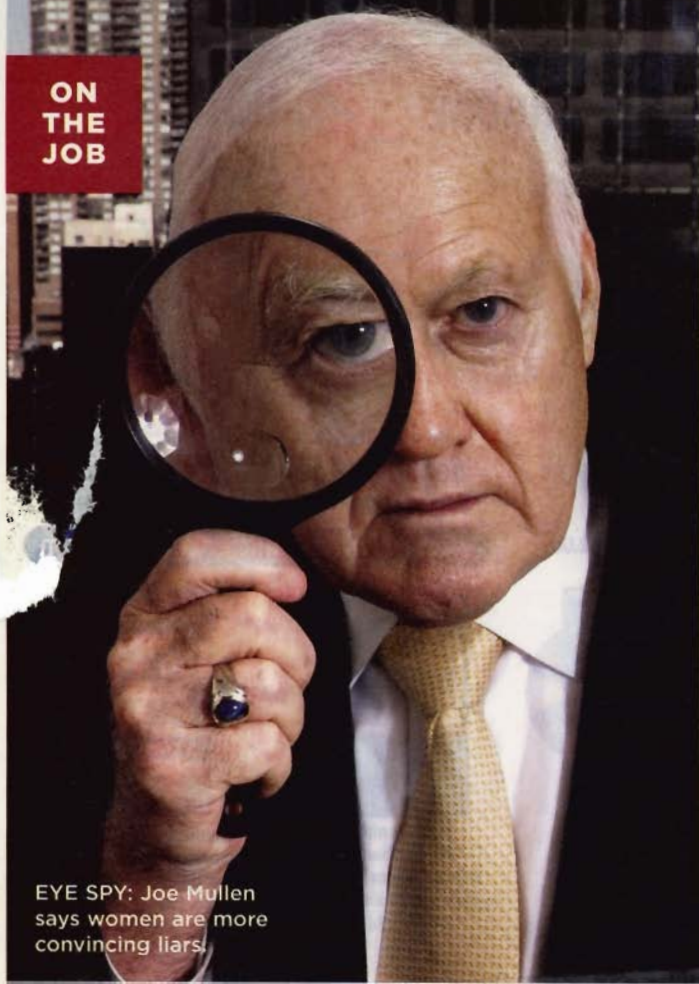
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EYE SPY: Joe Mullen says women are more convincing liars.

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THE PRIVATE EYE Background Check

BORN IN THE BRONX, Joe Mullen has spent the last 50 years uncovering the secrets and lies of New Yorkers. He has worked on cases that involved Hollywood legends, including Judy Garland and Johnny Carson. Donald Trump hired Mullen to tail Ivana Trump and Marla Maples during each of his divorces. Little wonder he charges \$300 per hour.

Mullen's father, a banker turned private investigator, introduced him to the gumshoe business when he was 17. Mullen, in turn, registered each of his five children under his P.I. license when they turned 18. His eight-person Manhattan firm keeps busy with matrimonial investigations, corporate asset searches and missing person cases.

What are the biggest misconceptions about what you do?

First of all, the business is not violent. The business is not breaking doors. If you did, you'd have no license.

How has the Internet changed your job?

I would say it increases the amount of work you have to do. It used to be you go to the courthouse [for records]. Now there are multiple databases. You have to ferret out what's good.

What does a typical surveillance entail?

Always two people, sometimes three at a time, because traffic is murder. You can't have just one person.

We bend down when a guy comes out [of his building]. We follow him. One guy on foot, another in a car. If he goes

PHOTO: DANIELLE GITKIN

FOLLOW YOUR INSTINCT. A WOMAN WHO SUSPECTS INFIDELITY IS USUALLY CORRECT.

in a restaurant, we wait five to six minutes, in case he's waiting for us. Go straight to the bathroom. Never look at him clear in the eye.

It's not glamorous at all. How would you like to wait seven hours and you lose him at a right turn at a red light? I once followed someone from upstate New York to Washington, DC. And I lost him. Then a garage door for a hotel opened up. There he was. But I have a hundred stories where I didn't find him again.

How many suspicious spouses are wrong about infidelity?

Not too many. Because you have something right in the middle of your stomach. You know. Plus, women's instincts are usually right.

A girl meets a guy in a bar—true story. She has a feeling in her stomach that this guy is sleazy. But she starts talking to him. Then she says something about her brother trying to get a job. He says tell your brother to call me, give me his bio. All of a sudden she's saying to herself, "He's not a bad guy." But that first instinct, she was right. This guy, within six months, had stolen the girl's credit card, took her for thousands of dollars and bit her on the face.

What's your view of human nature?

Men, they are very strange. They can be married to a woman for 15 years, have two or three kids and then get a new girlfriend. They lose weight, give up smoking. All of a sudden they don't want to have sex with their wives

because they think they are cheating on their girlfriend.

Some women feel bad. "It's a terrible thing I'm doing—I'm having my husband followed." Let me think about that: Your husband is cheating on you. Every dollar he spends on this girl, 50 cents is yours and you feel bad? We catch your husband like a lying dog and you feel bad? Women do that.

Are missing persons cases often resolved?

If a guy grabs his kids and runs, years ago they hired a private eye. But now the police go after him.

We find a lot of kids who are over 18. We find them and we call the mother and father to say she's living in Fort Lauderdale with a midget, has tattoos and her hair is purple.

Do you ever turn down a case?

Someone called from a magazine and said, "We want you to follow this ex-football player. He's married to this talk show host. We want you to set up surveillance and put a hidden camera in a hotel room." We don't do those types of things. First of all, it's against the law. I said no, I would never do that. It was Frank Gifford.

Do you carry a gun?

You fire a gun, you go to jail. We have guns. We don't use them. If you are going to meet someone in a criminal case, say on 11th Avenue, at eleven at night, you'd have to be a schmuck not to have one.

—Rosemarie Ward