

# His Eyes Are on The Lies

Gumshoe keeps busy working the cheat beat by Ron Dicker

Michael McKeever gets the goods when love goes bad. His one of New York City's private eyes who specialize in "matrimonial surveillance." That's Yellow Pages talk for spying on two-timers.

As always, business is booming.

A client's suspicions turn out to be right more than 90% of the time, he and colleagues estimate. But he doesn't take sides. He's simply doing a job.

"I don't care if she's the biggest slut in the world, or if he's the biggest jerk. I'm concerned with specifics: Where do I park so I won't get noticed, things like that."

McKeever's patter never flags as we barrel down the freeway at 80 mph on the tail of tonight's subject, a supposedly wayward wife. The client wants to know why his spouse ditched their year old marriage. He is willing to pay McKeever \$ 50 an hour to find out. McKeever already has the evidence. In earlier stakeouts of the wife's condo in a countrified Westchester suburb, he saw an out-of-towner spend the night. He saw the long kisses and longing looks. But the client wants more.

"It's empowering for the victim to get the goods on someone – and some like to continue that feeling," McKeever explains. He once reported eight extramarital trysts involving one partner before the betrayed wife had enough. She was duped by the ol' "Honey, I am going to the gym" routine.

## Life in the fast lane

The assignment he's chasing is now pushing 85 mph. McKeever, a 44-yearold cross between Donald and Kiefer Sutherland, with blond-gray beard and mustache, keeps his Mitsubishi Every car two autos back. He is puzzled by her hurry, but adds: "she tends to drive with a heavy foot."

She pulls off in Connecticut. He knows the back of her vehicle as if it were family. But she almost loses him inadvertently. He runs a few red lights to catch up.

She makes a sudden left into a two-story office complex. Sensing no need to follow her right in, he lets the light turn.

He cruises the parking lot once. Then he settles into a patch of asphalt across the road. Ten minutes later, she is off again. She pulls into a strip mall with a video store. Her hair is tied back. She is wearing sweats and tennis. McKeever knows this won't be a night of nooky.

On the road again. She darts left into a car wash. We wait her car doesn't emerge.

McKeever notices the car wash is closed.. He combs the parking lot behind the car wash but finds nothing He has lost her. "She likes to take short cuts," he sighs. The client calls on McKeever's cellular. McKeever tells him the truth. "a lot of guys will b.s., but that can get you into trouble."

McKeever assumes she'll be relaxing at home this evening – alone. We park on the street leading out of her town. Except for occasional drive-bys outside her window. We sit and wait for another four hours. The glamour of this gig has evaporated into the frigid, shrouded darkness.

Irwin Blye, a Queens private eye, knows the felling. “The job is two hours of excitement and 22 hours of non excitement. Sitting on surveillance is not the most thrilling thing.”

### **Detective story**

At least the void allows McKeever to discuss his life. Reserved when you meet him, the gabby Irishman in him quickly surfaces. He has three kids, age 3, 5, and 10. They live in a house in Mineola, L.I. McKeever says his wife “has a soap opera-ish interest in what I do. She’ll ask me, like, So they’ve been married a year, huh? ”

“The kids don’t watch TV, so they don’t tell their friends at school, “My daddy is so-and-so.” They think it’s more like being a cop. Adultery isn’t the easiest thing to explain.”

Growing up in Plainview, L.I., McKeever feasted on a heavy diet of police and spy-for-hire TV shows. He and his buddies took their cops-and-robbers play seriously: How many 10-year-olds on your block wear sports coats and shoulder holsters?

His father was on the force, but in the early ‘70s, “in an anti-war, anti-establishment environment, being a cop didn’t have a lot of panache,” McKeever recalls. So he went the P.I. route. He graduated from the State University at Albany with a criminology degree and served his required three-year apprenticeship with a licensed investigator. (As a protégé, he once shadowed Jackie O for a tabloid.)

Out of his lower Manhattan office, McKeever takes all kinds of cases – including trademark infringement, adopted children searching for their natural parents and , occasionally, murder. But 75% of his business is infidelity.

The majority of his clients are woman wanting to know the inevitable. As Alice Byrn. One of a growing number of private gumshoes in heels put it: “If you think it’s wrong, you’re probably right.”

McKeever is no Sam Spade. He doesn’t smoke. He doesn’t wear double-breasted suits, preferring sweaters and blue jeans. And he no longer carries a pistol. “Ironically. Having one makes you paranoid. I’ve just gotten used to not having it.” Even with a piece, he has had a gun pulled on him three times.

McKeever asserts that the best weapon is still legwork. His only concessions to the ‘90s are fast-speed film to shoot in partial darkness and a cell phone. “It really is a low-tech job.”

The rest is like the old days, he says. Then, as now, photographs are indisputable. Even if the clients don’t believe me, they’ll believe the pictures. “

He Carries binoculars, notepad, tape player and camera. Between them, they have seen and recorded everything: Cheaters who once hired him when they were the cheatees. A cuckold who discovered the other man was his nephew. An Asian woman who was convinced her hubby was lavishing gifts on a girlfriend, only to learn he was squandering their nest-egg in betting parlors.

Some case not even Quentin Tarantino could dream up:

:: A married man falls for a high-priced hooker in Atlantic City. He pays her not to hook and pays McKeever to see that she keeps her word.

“I never got her, but there were some seemingly unexplained absences,” he laughs.

:: A man loses 100 pounds. He begins to leave his still-corpulent wife at home. She hires McKeever to follow him. After many tries. The husband finally gets a date. They go to a

club. The wife calls Mckeever. McKeever is obligated to tell her where the husband is. The wife arrives and pounces on he newly svelte spouse, with the date and McKeever looking on. She breaks her husband's, glasses and bloodies his nose. All heft breaks loose. "I was curious to see what would happen," McKeever says. Delivering the bad news is never easy, but it's rarely unexpected. Reminds McKeever: "You don't hire a private eye for things you're not willing to hear."