

Case Study:

Solving Cold Cases with LexisNexis® Accurint® LE Plus



Overview

This is the story of Isadore “Izzy” Pacht’s homicide and how the main suspect was arrested 34 years later. This case was assigned to detectives of the 48th Precinct New York City Detective Squad by the Governors Office. Miriam and Harry Pacht, the victim’s children, had tried for 34 years to see that justice was done for their father. It wasn’t until a detective squad that had access to a powerful public records database was assigned to this case that it would be solved.

“Accurint® LE Plus is an application that makes difficult and time-consuming tasks easy and fast, and Accurint® is also a lead generator. If properly trained and frequently used, Accurint LE Plus can help to close cases faster, locate more individuals, effect more arrests, reduce crime and save lives.”

– Lt. Tom Joyce (ret.)
Cold Case Squad
48th Precinct, NYPD

Isadore Pacht was a concentration camp survivor who lost a daughter to the Nazis. He was able to relocate with his wife and finally settle in the United States. For approximately 20 years he operated a men’s clothing store in the Bronx, New York—a place that grew increasingly violent. That violence caught up with Izzy on December 18, 1971. That night just before closing, a worker at Pacht’s business allowed two males to enter the store under the premise that they were going to buy a pair of pants. While one male held the worker at bay in the front of the store, the shooter hustled Pacht to the back of the store while demanding money. After a struggle ensued, one shot rang out and Pacht was struck once in the chest with a small caliber round. He would later die at the hospital.

The Challenge

The investigation was stalled very early on by what seemed to be the worker’s reluctance to cooperate and the inability of the detectives to locate a sixteen-year-old female named witness. The witness was rumored to be the girlfriend of one of the perpetrators. She had relocated “down south” and was protected by her parents from ever speaking to the detectives. The case went cold. Over the years Pacht’s relatives would follow up with the 48th Precinct Detective Squad and the Bronx District Attorney’s Office. The case would be reviewed periodically, but with no new leads it ultimately would be placed back on the shelf to collect dust for a few more years.

Early in 2005, a call was placed from the Homicide Bureau Chief in the Bronx County District Attorney’s Office. Governor Pataki’s office was asking for the Pacht case to be reviewed. Apparently Harry Pacht, now an attorney with the New York City Corporation Counsel, ran his father’s case up the flagpole again. Detective Mark Tebbens and Detective Tom Joyce located the case and had it officially reassigned to the Cold Case Squad. Tebbens would be the lead investigator.

The Solution

Upon review of the case, there was good direction. Two suspects were named very early on, but unfortunately there was no one available who could identify them. The plan was to locate the witnesses and re-interview them, locate and resubmit any forensic evidence and, most importantly, identify and locate the witness from “down south.” Finally, given an opportunity, detectives would try to obtain a confession from the suspects.

For various reasons, none of the forensic evidence was available or useful. That was a significant setback. Additionally, relocation of the witnesses turned out at first glance to be much more difficult than it should have been. It seems the official reports by the detectives at that time all failed to properly identify the witnesses with a date of birth or a Social Security number. Their notepads were misplaced and not located in the homicide folder. How are you going to find someone 34 years later without those key identifiers? This is where LexisNexis® Accurint® LE Plus turned an apparently impossible task into something very basic and routine. By conducting name searches with some common sense parameters, three witnesses in the case were all immediately accounted for. One name had even been recorded incorrectly and Accurint LE Plus was able to identify the correct individual through use of phonetic differentiation, a powerful feature.

Finding the witness who had relocated south proved to be problematic. Detectives were not able to locate her immediately, but Accurint LE Plus was able to locate an associate, which led them to her. There was an anonymous letter located in the homicide folder that held the secret to finding the witness all these years later. It should be noted that the name of this witness was also recorded incorrectly in the original case note. The letter, dated 1973, indicated that she was with a family in Augusta, Georgia. To track down this lead without Accurint LE Plus would have meant calling the Augusta Police Department, which has its own workload and priorities, to assist.

Investigators could only hope when reaching out to another agency that the same sense of urgency would be acted on; however, depending on their workload, this is not always the case. After several searches with various individuals in Augusta, detectives had an associate on the phone telling them where the witness was. She actually called before detectives contacted her. Det. Tebbens traveled to Augusta and obtained a statement from her implicating her ex-boyfriend in Pacht’s homicide.

With the statement secure, the employee from the haberdasher shop needed to be re-interviewed to see if he knew more than he originally let on in 1971. He did make a positive identification of both suspects in six pack photo arrays in 2005. An arrest was authorized by the Bronx County District Attorney’s Office.

Prior to establishing probable cause to effect the arrests, computer checks of both internal legacy police department data and Accurint LE Plus were completed in the event an apprehension plan was to go into effect. Detectives had an address in Connecticut for one suspect. The other could not be located; on paper at least, he seemed to have dropped out of sight

Accurint LE Plus turned an apparently impossible task into something very basic and routine.

in 1985. However, detectives had so much confidence in Accurint LE Plus that they were convinced he had died somewhere without so much as a family member having knowledge of it and no claims to the Social Security Administration. This hunch ultimately was verified by combing missing persons files.

Locating the remaining suspect turned out to be relatively simple as well. Accurint LE Plus provided an address in Stamford, Connecticut, that was listed as a homeless shelter. When detectives arrived at the location, the suspect was standing right out front. Initially he denied being the individual the detectives were looking for, but it was when he was led to believe that a family member was in trouble (relative information obtained from Accurint LE Plus) he finally admitted being who he was. It was this same relative and associate information that Det. Tebbens used to obtain a confession implicating the suspect in the robbery/murder. The offender was arrested and incarcerated.

The Results

Accurint LE Plus was the public records tool that delivered for detectives in this case. It made locating the “hard-to-find” persons of interest—all of whom had very common names—quick and easy. The associate and relative linking helped immeasurably to locate the key witness and to identify and obtain a confession from one of the suspects. “Accurint LE Plus is an application that makes difficult and time-consuming tasks easy and fast, and Accurint LE Plus is also a lead generator. If properly trained and frequently used, Accurint LE Plus can help to close cases faster, locate more individuals, effect more arrests, reduce crime and save lives,” said Tom Joyce.

For more information:

Call 866.242.1440 or visit
lexisnexis.com/accurintleplus

About LexisNexis Risk Solutions

LexisNexis Risk Solutions (www.lexisnexis.com/risk) is a leader in providing essential information that helps customers across all industries and government predict, assess and manage risk. Combining cutting-edge technology, unique data and advanced scoring analytics, we provide products and services that address evolving client needs in the risk sector while upholding the highest standards of security and privacy. LexisNexis Risk Solutions is part of Reed Elsevier, a leading publisher and information provider that serves customers in more than 100 countries with more than 30,000 employees worldwide.

Our government solutions assist law enforcement and government agencies with deriving insight from complex data sets, improving operational efficiencies, making timely and informed decisions to enhance investigations, increasing program integrity, and discovering and recovering revenue.



The Accurint LE Plus services are not provided by “consumer reporting agencies,” as that term is defined in the Fair Credit Reporting Act (15 U.S.C. § 1681, et seq.) (“FCRA”) and do not constitute “consumer reports,” as that term is defined in the FCRA. Accordingly, the Accurint LE Plus service may not be used in whole or in part as a factor in determining eligibility for credit, insurance, employment or another purpose in connection with which a consumer report may be used under the FCRA. Due to the nature of the origin of public record information, the public records and commercially available data sources used in reports may contain errors. Source data is sometimes reported or entered inaccurately, processed poorly or incorrectly, and is generally not free from defect. This product or service aggregates and reports data, as provided by the public records and commercially available data sources, and is not the source of the data, nor is it a comprehensive compilation of the data. Before relying on any data, it should be independently verified. LexisNexis and the Knowledge Burst logo are registered trademarks of Reed Elsevier Properties Inc., used under license. Accurint is a registered trademark of LexisNexis Risk Data Management Inc. Other products and services may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. Copyright © 2011 LexisNexis. All rights reserved. NXR01104-2 0911

The associate and relative linking tool helped locate the key witness and identify and obtain a confession from one of the suspects.