

Consider Making the Commute

Editor's Note: In response to feedback from the article "There is Life After the Bureau: Career Advice for Former FBI Agents" (*the Grapevine*, March 2013), we will be publishing a regular column on second careers and career advice contributed by members. The following is the first such contribution. Please e-mail submissions or ideas to grapevine@socxfbi.org.

by Tom Wronski (1970-1994)

I enjoyed reading the article "There is Life After the Bureau" by Scott Moritz published in the March 2013 edition of *the Grapevine*. I retired from the Chicago Division in 1994 after 24 years and would like to talk about the idea of taking on a longer commute for your post-retirement work.

Taking the Long Road

I was assigned to the South Resident Agency of the Chicago Division and only traveled 15 minutes to the office. While there, a recently retired Agent called me to inquire if I was thinking of retirement and whether I would like to interview for a management position with a newly formed special investigations unit of a major commercial company headquartered northwest of Chicago — 50 miles from my home. I interviewed for the position, took the job and drove 100 miles a day. I never looked back and thoroughly enjoyed the job. I was responsible for hiring and firing, speaking before customer accounts, budgets, creating an investigative database and other functions I had never had the chance to experience in the Bureau.

I can relate to two of the statements: "I don't want to sell anything" and "I want my commute to be under an hour." While I worked for this company, current Agents would call from time to time in reference to my commute, hours, salary and benefits — including vacation time. The company was specifically NOT looking to hire individuals who wanted "just" a retirement job — the company wanted full-time additions to its staff, people who could produce results. Each one of us in the special investigations unit was expected to sell our abilities inside the claims department as well to corporate clients, so they understood that we were producing savings for them and taking some fraudulent claims to law enforcement for prosecution.

When considering retirement, you must decide whether you are looking for another full-time position or whether you are looking for a part time or hourly

position. That decision may be based on your economic circumstances, as well as age.

Other Employment Considerations

I know times have changed since the mid 1990s. Computer skills among Agents and other law enforcement personnel at that time were generally poor. I believe basic skills are much better today, but anyone thinking of retiring and looking for a position in private industry should brush up on computer skills. Take computer classes, if needed, to rapidly learn current technology. Believe it or not I know of recently retired Agents who still are reticent to go online. They suffer the consequences when asked to prepare an email, write an investigative report or seek online information. In a recent example, a former Assistant Special Agent in Charge lost a position because he was tasked with using a computer that he had never turned on during the normal course of business. Weeks of training only hastened his departure.

About your resume — When updating your resume for post-FBI employment, emphasize your education, administrative skills, organizational ability and, most importantly, investigative skills. Shooting a perfect score on the range isn't going to cut it.

I might suggest, too, that if a company hires you for your investigative skills, don't let the company know all of your investigative secrets — let the company be amazed by your ability to get information that other employees could never get. In addition, keep your old contacts and maintain contact with various law enforcement agencies when seeking prosecution in certain cases.

One more point — learn and understand the corporate culture of the company where you are seeking employment. Most companies and government agencies maintain strict policies concerning discrimination. You may want to share "war stories," but make sure those stories don't offend others.