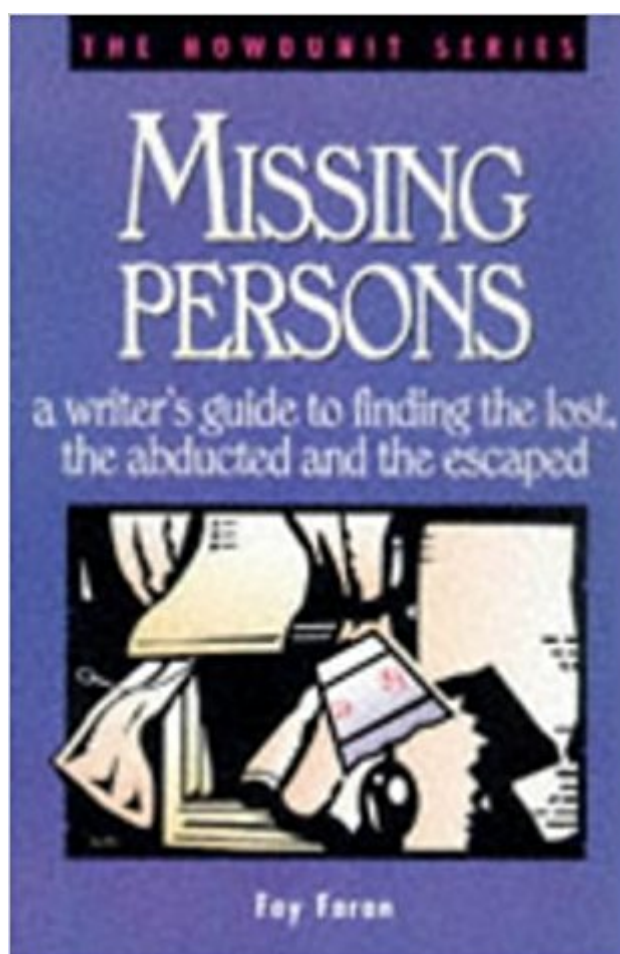


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Missing Persons: A Writer's Guide To Finding The Lost, The Abducted And The Escaped (Howdunit Writing)



Synopsis

With *Missing Persons* in hand you'll find the types that commonly become PIs - ex-cops, macho criminal wannabes, reporters; the easiest people to find (men, property owners and professionals) and the hardest (women, scoundrels and those with common names); profiles of the missing and profiles of those searching; how and why people hide; what can be gleaned from public record; secret and not-so-secret databases; and the lowdown on interviewing, surveillance and the benefits of a good scam. *Missing Persons* goes beyond the basic search, and details the process of looking for someone, typical clients and the reaction once the missing is found. There's more than a presentation of facts here. Faron backs up her clues with anecdotes from Rat Dog case files. As with any good whodunit, Faron's engaging style and true-life adventures will have you turning pages. In short, every gumshoe's search should begin here.

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Customer Reviews

Fay Faron first discovered her proclivity for detective work when the houseboat she'd just bought sank in Sausalito's Richardson Bay and it behooved her to track down the boat's elusive previous resident. She is the founder of the Rat Dog Dick Detective Agency (seriously!) in San Francisco, and a regular guest on Oprah!. She has written an informative, entertaining, nay, hilarious guide for anyone writing about detectives and missing persons (MPs). *Missing Persons* tells us who is most likely to become a private investigator (PI), who is likely to go missing (or merely misplaced), and who would want to find them (hint: "the working PI's motto often is 'The client is not always right and

often is not even sane.'"). We learn how and why people hide their whereabouts, and how to go about locating them. While 95 percent of a PI's work is done sitting at a desk, says Faron, "sooner or later your detective has to actually get off his duff and go out into the real world and burn up some calories." This is called "gumshoeing," and includes such scintillating activities as surveillance ("newspaper reading, coffee drinking and bladder rending") and dumpster-diving ("although I'd sooner admit to wearing Tan- In-A-Bottle to my high school reunion, I will concede there are lots of treasures to be found in day-to-day debris"). The appendices list PI licensing requirements by state and state laws regarding taping telephone conversations and such, so you don't make a fool of yourself. Faron works in fabulous, unbelievable examples from her 15 years in the business and lines such as this, about one MP who was discovered to be alive, not dead: "Dr. Mort had not, in fact, taken a dirt nap."

With *Missing Persons* in hand you'll find the types that commonly become PIs - ex-cops, macho criminal wannabes, reporters; the easiest people to find (men, property owners and professionals) and the hardest (women, scoundrels and those with common names); profiles of the missing and profiles of those searching; how and why people hide; what can be gleaned from public record; secret and not-so-secret databases; and the lowdown on interviewing, surveillance and the benefits of a good scam. *Missing Persons* goes beyond the basic search, and details the process of looking for someone, typical clients and the reaction once the missing is found. There's more than a presentation of facts here. Faron backs up her clues with anecdotes from Rat Dog case files. As with any good whodunit, Faron's engaging style and true-life adventures will have you turning pages. In short, every gumshoe's search should begin here.

This gives you a good idea both of what a private detective's work is like, and of how they go about tracing missing people. It probably won't come as a surprise that it is not as glamorous or dangerous or exciting as it looks on TV and the movies. Much of the work involves looking through records and cross-checking information. Sometimes the PI makes an occasional phone call to get some info (often under a false pretext), and sometimes they even ring a doorbell or two to confront someone's long-lost lover or relative. Many of their clients (and the people they are seeking) have serious problems. Most people-tracing cases, says Faron, involve a lonely soul remembering a long lost lover, perhaps someone who dumped them, and wanting to see what they are doing and if there is still a spark. The book was written in 1997 and could use an update. There is virtually no mention of the internet here, and I would wager that a lot of the searching PIs do today involves perusing

various online databases. There is nothing about this work that seems particularly oriented toward writers - this would be a good title for anyone curious about the subject, but who would be most likely to be curious other than someone who aspires to be the next Raymond Chandler? For instance, there is no reference here to any famous missing person case, either actual or fictional. It might have been interesting to see her thoughts on some of those. But give Faron credit for apparently telling it like it is, and also for fleshing out her book with some interesting stuff that is indirectly related to the subject. The section title "Profile of the Scoundrel" is a good one, and features information on con games, hustles, deadbeat clients and the like. The entire book is peppered with interesting anecdotes drawn from Faron's career, all told in her world-weary, wisecracking voice. And she is a good storyteller (even if there could have been a little more detail in some of her yarns) - she sticks to the facts, and includes a lot of seen-it-all wit. Overall, this is a good member of the Writers Digest Howdunit Series - I hope to read more of them. It certainly does illustrate that there is a world of difference between a well-crafted missing person mystery and the actual work of an investigator trying to trace someone.

Fun for basic research but way too out dated to use even for writing fiction without supplementation with other newer texts on the same topic- useless on its own.

A how-to book on tracking missing persons is a needed reference for crime writers, but in my opinion this one doesn't measure up. The author Fay Faron is so busy wisecracking about her own experiences as a private investigator that the substance for writers of how to write about missing persons cases is minimal. What is excellent about the book is the outline of subjects covered which seems full. Too bad that the author isn't serious about actually helping writers. It seems that writers' needs are subordinated to the author's need to be clever.

It is a very informative book that gives you all the tools you need to find a person of interest or a loved one, also a person you haven't seen in years. a list for all 50 states * official state departments you can call to ask questions.ect..good luck

Good book about how to find missing persons but it didn't really always explain exactly how to use the information when writing your mystery or detective novel.

Excelent for the beginner , loads of info and easy to read with plenty of refrence material great a

must have.

Only wish the author would stop trying to be clever all the time. People who think they are witty, (very often) are not. However, book contains info Private Eye writers can use.

This book covers the way in which professional detectives set about finding someone, and if your subject matter involves that situation in any way, I recommend it.

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