



The Dangers of Domestic Duplicity: How Due Diligence Backgrounds Can Protect High-Net Worth Families

Your home is a family or individual's most private and personal places, it is also where you are at your most vulnerable, yet surprisingly there is often a lack of due diligence background checks— even among high-net worth families —when hiring household staff from chauffeurs and pilots to housekeepers, tutors, nurses, caregivers and nannies, to cooks to even personal trainers. It pays to mitigate the risks of having the wrong people working in your private residence.

For many high net-worth and celebrity families, domestic help is a necessary thing. Their high profile status and financial wealth can easily make them a target for unethical workers. Due diligence backgrounds would go a long way to help safeguard them and their families from welcoming the enemy into their homes. Due diligence backgrounds are more extensive checks than routine backgrounds and yield more information about the household staff member to prevent many of the issues that happen in some unfortunate wealthy families such as embezzlement, theft, fraud and the pressuring of disadvantaged family members such as children, teens and elderly family who may be exposed and jewelry to the mal-intentions of people who would like to take advantage of their vulnerability. We have even seen cases where a mentally disabled person was being pressured to give extra cash to a caregiver that had been with the family for 2 years and had become a trusted companion, yet had ongoing financial issues that could easily have been discovered during a due diligence background.

The Hazards of Domestic Help

The recent terrifying incident involving reality-star, Kim Kardashian, being robbed of over \$10 million in jewelry at gunpoint in her hotel room in Paris shows how vulnerable public personalities can be. After her chauffeur's arrest, it was announced that it might have been "an inside job."

Michael Jackson's doctor, Conrad Murray, was convicted in the death of the famous, iconic pop star. It turns out that Dr. Murray was heavily in debt when he signed aboard in 2009 to serve as Michael Jackson's tour physician at a wage of \$150,000 a month. AEG Live did no legal or financial checks on Conrad Murray or any other independent contractor working on the "This Is It" shows. AEG Live General Counsel Shawn Trell went so far as to say that "he thought a background check would be appropriate for people working in financial roles, but not tour personnel who weren't employees of AEG," according to Billboard. If a mini-due diligence had been done, Dr. Conrad Murray's financial issues would have come to light and have been a red flag, and Michael Jackson might still be alive today.

In 2006, Lucyna Turyk-Wawrynowicz pleaded guilty in State Supreme Court to three counts—grand larceny, forgery and identity theft, for using a false Social Security number. A native of Poland, upon coming to the United States, she served as a nanny, a cook and a housekeeper for several "high-profile celebrity individuals." Her high profile victims include Robert De Niro's wife, Grace Hightower, from whom she stole a \$95,500 pair of diamond-drop earrings and Denise Menton, a Greenwich Village clothing boutique owner, whose name she forged for \$3,000 worth of lingerie and other goods from high end retailer Barneys New York.

Lucyna Turyk-Wawrynowicz had worked for years for a number of wealthy women, some famous, including Renée Rockefeller, Faith Popcorn, Candice Bergen, Renée Rockefeller, and Isabella Rossellini. Not all seemingly were victims of Lucyna Turyk-Wawrynowicz. Prosecutors said the housekeeper seemed motivated to steal by a mixture of "jealousy, anger and class consciousness, and saw herself as a kind of Robin Hood taking from the rich to feed the poor — that is, herself." According to Ms. Turyk-Wawrynowicz, "I didn't steal from Isabella Rossellini, because she treated me well. I only stole from people who didn't treat me with respect."

For whatever the motivation, such crimes are horrifying, a personal invasion of privacy in the home, and all too common. Many go unreported. A routine background check for domestic help in high-network homes is not enough. Conducting a mini due diligence background investigation can safeguard you and your family against possible crimes of fraud, theft, embezzlement, and even protect against possible physical harm,

especially if the person has a history of making threats, bullying or aggressive behaviors or criminal convictions.

Routine Background Checks – Do Not Safeguard High-Net worth Families Sufficiently

A routine “employee screening” background check typically consists of basic data searches. These searches are usually conducted by companies through one or multiple multi-jurisdictional data bases containing collections of data gathered from various entities. These checks are typically limited to a 5 component review of: criminal records, employment verifications, degree or education verification, social security validation, address verification and sometimes credit history.

While routine employment-type background checks are inexpensive to conduct and quick to turn around, there are several problems with using them as a singular investigative tool. These include: greatly varying quality and availability of data, missing criminal conviction records, no results being returned even though a record exists due to incorrect search criteria, data returned on people with same or similar names and mistaken for searched candidate, usually due to incorrect personal identifiers. Additionally, the use of statewide and national criminal databases as a standalone product may not be in compliance with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA/FACTA). Buyer beware: social security numbers do not typically appear in most criminal conviction records and cannot therefore provide assurance that you have the correct person’s criminal conviction history. You could be looking at a criminal record (or no criminal record) for a person with the same name, yet it is not the person you are hiring!

Due Diligence Backgrounds – A Better Safeguard for High-Net Worth Families

A mini due diligence background looks in greater depth at: criminal history, civil litigation issues, financial and legal issues, relationships with other companies and board advisory positions, reputation, misrepresented education and overstated work history, behavioral history and, in particular, undisclosed or adverse issues. Deep media and deep internet searches also reveal important hidden or undisclosed information that may be important to know about.

A high quality due diligence investigation can find information that would not be found in a simple background check, such as: IP theft, hidden aliases, interstate bankruptcy, litigious behavior, signs of malfeasance misconduct (with or without criminal conviction), social media negatives, signs of misconduct, significant numbers of names changes, murder, manslaughter, embezzlement, bribery and racketeering, financial pressures, money-laundering, con-artistry, and other behavioral issues to name just a few.

Protecting Yourself and Your Family

You and your family are your most important assets—irreplaceable. While everyone wants to trust those we surround ourselves with—friends, business partners, and co-workers, extra vigilance needs to be employed when you are bringing people into the most private part of your lives, your family and your home. Your proactively seeking mini due diligence background checks can save you from catching your new domestic hire with more than their hand in your cookie jar.

More information on mini due diligence background checks and how to safeguard you family can be found at [Infortal Worldwide](http://InfortalWorldwide.com).

