

The Private Eye

When a Chicago prostitute tried to blackmail a wealthy businessman in Tulsa, Okla., not long ago demanding \$100,000 in exchange for some embarrassing snapshots-the man hired local private detective Gary Glanz instead of paying the hush money.

It was a wise move. Mr. Glanz, a flamboyant ex-policeman with a reputation for quick results , had the client lure the blackmailing woman to Tulsa (he told her he wanted to discuss the deal) and, after she arrived, the detective spiked her drink. Then, during the night as she slept, Mr. Glanz duplicated her apartment key, flew to Chicago and destroyed the photographs. After 36 hours' work, the businessman's reputation was secure , and the private detective was \$3,500 richer.

So says Gary Glanz, and there's no reason to doubt him. In fact , according to Mr. Glanz and those who have observed him at work, such cases are routine-although his exploits sometimes strain the credulity of witnesses. "It's hard to believe he's for real ," says one policeman who has known him for years.

Indeed, Gary Glanz seems to have stepped out of the pages of a detective novel. At the age of 34 he spends his days and nights solving crimes , foiling extortionists and outwitting thieves-efforts for which he says he grossed days and nights solving crimes, foiling extortionists and outwitting thieves-efforts for which he says he grossed more than \$100,000 in 1972. "He's a fantastic guy," says Dennis Morris , a Tulsa police detective, discussing a recent case in which Mr. Glanz helped apprehend a team of safecrackers. "Without Gary's help, there's no way the case could have been solved completely. We would have been bogged down in red tape."

Besides being "fantastic," it should be noted that Mr. Glanz is highly unusual in the world of private detectives. For despite the image of the private eye as a sardonic, albeit romantic, tough who thwarts armies of evildoers with one arm while embracing a beautiful woman with the other, the work of the nation's estimated 8,100 private investigators is for the most part humdrum, isn't especially lucrative and has long been known for attracting a goodly number of bunglers.

According to the most recent study of the subject, a 1971 Rand Corp. survey commissioned by the Department of Justice, the typical full-time private investigator earns \$6,000 to \$9,000 a year, and his job mainly consists of "credit, insurance and pre-employment background checks on individuals; plainclothes undercover work to detect employee dishonesty and pilferage, or customer anti-shoplifting work in retail stores and other businesses; and insurance investigations." In fact, the study says, "the relative volume of criminal and marital investigations is small and on the decline."

But it is the Gary Glanzes of the world who most excite the public's imagination. And a look at Mr. Glanz's work-half of which he estimates, involves crime-illustrates that factual counterparts of fictional creations do, if only occasionally, exist and sometimes cause the world of make-believe to pale by comparison.

Take the case of Casa Bonita. The safe at Casa Bonita, a Mexican restaurant in Tulsa, was burglarized, and the owners discovered that \$15,000 in cash was missing. Although the police were called when the crime was discovered, the restaurateurs also hired Mr. Glanz because they were uninsured against burglary. His assignment: Get back the cash.

The fact that cash is almost never recovered after a burglary (crooks usually spend it immediately) was no deterrent for Mr. Glanz. Acting on a tip, he flew to St. Petersburg, Fla., and located two suspects. Then he telephoned the Tulsa police, who wired an arrest warrant to the police in St. Petersburg. After the arrest, Mr. Glanz flew back to Oklahoma with the suspects and obtained tape-recorded confessions en route.

But the money was still missing. During the following week, Mr. Glanz persuaded a third suspect, who had refused to cooperate with the police, to tell him where the cash was hidden. (It had been buried in Florida.) Then, at his own expense, he flew this suspect (accompanied by Police Detective Morris) to Florida, where the money was unearthed-just in time. "

Grub worms had already been chewing on the money," Mr. Glanz explains. "In another two weeks, they would have had it all eaten up." Thus ended the Casa Bonita caper, with everyone happy except the crime's perpetrators (they pleaded guilty) and Gary Glanz richer by \$3,300-half of which went for expenses-for six days work.

Despite the monetary rewards of the job, Mr. Glanz operates out of a small, unelaborate frame house in South Tulsa, and his appearance gives not a hint of his occupation or its plush compensations. Tall and somewhat boyish looking, he has an innocent look that is enhanced by a Southwestern draw and a fondness for Cokes, chewing gum and casual clothes. Casual or otherwise, he looks more like a minor-league baseball star than an unorthodox private investigator whose trademarks are initiative, imagination and guts.

Initiative? Well, on one occasion, he recovered \$221,000 in cash simply by following a suspected thief to Mexico and frightening the man into believing that the Mexican authorities would probably kill him for the loot if it wasn't returned.

Imagination? When a wealthy South westerner was sued for several million dollars, the man's attorney hired Mr. Glanz to investigate the plaintiff's background and to help the case in any other way possible. Using an assumed name, Mr. Glanz moved in next door to the plaintiff, struck up a friendship and gradually persuaded his unsuspecting neighbor to dismiss the lawsuit.

Guts? Mr. Glanz tells of the time he dangled himself on a rope from the top of a Tulsa skyscraper in order to photograph a bedroom scene through a window 24 stories above the street.

Mr. Glanz first began performing such stunts several years ago as a member of the Tulsa Police Department's vice squad. Born in Houston and raised in the hamlet of Anthony on the Texas-New Mexico border, he says that as a child he dreamed of becoming a police officer; he joined the Tulsa force just after turning 21, the minimum age under city ordinances.

"I'd be a cop today if it weren't for the politics, the restrictions and the low pay," he says.

Many acquaintances - some of whom describe Mr. Glanz as "part con man" - say that he still thinks of himself as some sort of private policeman, and they illustrate their point by remarking that he never takes a criminal case for the defense. In any case, he left the police force in 1967, rejoined it briefly a year later, and then quit for good. And since that time he has exercised his investigative instincts on a free-lance basis - occasionally bending the rules, he says, when legitimate means would be ineffectual.

"You have to deliver in this business," Mr. Glanz says. "They're paying us hundreds, sometimes thousands of dollars for answers. We can't tell them there are no

answers." Which means, he says, that he regularly taps telephones , plants hidden listening devices and commits burglaries. He concedes that his private detective's license isn't a permit to indulge in such illegal activities-Tulsa requires such a license , though Oklahoma doesn't-but he explains that "you have to consider who's benefiting from what you're doing." He adds: " And I always try to make sure I'm on the right side."

Certainly sometimes the benefits for Mr. Glanz's clients are enormous. In his most celebrated case , he was hired by the widow of a murdered Oklahoma rancher , E. C. Mullendore III , to reconstruct the events of Mr. Mullendore 's final days ; such efforts were necessary to establish that the rancher, who was deeply in debt had neither committed suicide nor arranged to have himself killed in order that his heirs might collect insurance money. The result: Mrs. Mullendore received an \$8 million settlement-believed to be the largest single death claim awarded in the history of the insurance business.

But most of the time his cases are more mundane although his modus operandi is always direct. For example when one company wanted to know how well a competitor was doing , Mr. Glanz simply bribed one of the latter's secretaries to supply him with copies of sales reports and other financial records. For another plagued by frequent labor grievances, he bugged the lunchroom so that management, he says, can react to employee gripes before they reach the boiling point.

In yet another example of his direct approach , Mr. Glanz slipped into the offices of another Tulsa private detective Ed Bradford, and made copies of Mr. Bradford's files on a particular case. Mr. Bradford, who subsequently learned of Mr. Glanz's visit, says, "I'd probably do the same thing to him if I ever needed to. But I do wish he hadn't gotten my files out of order."

Other competitors aren't quite so lenient in their views of Mr. Glanz and his work. Some fellow detectives, in fact, view Mr. Glanz as a daredevil who takes unnecessary risks. And even Mr. Glanz himself concedes that his tactics could well cause his career to be short lived.

"The difference between me and the Watergate guys is that I haven't been caught," he says. "If I am ever convicted of wiretapping, bugging or burglary, that'll be it. I can never testify in court again. My reputation and business will be ruined. So, naturally, I'm very very careful." (That he seems to be. Thus far, law-enforcement officials says they have never received a complaint about Mr. Glanz's methods.)

Whatever his tactics, Gary Glanz's customers are apparently satisfied in most cases. In civil cases, his reputation for uncovering crucial evidence is such that attorneys who believe their cases are weak have been

known to hire him just to appear in court carrying some important-looking papers or an empty movie-film can. "It will usually scare the other side into a settlement," one lawyer explains. And Roger Graham, vice president in charge of claims for Mid-Continent Casualty Co., A Tulsa based insurance firm says, "You can always count on Gary to go all out for a client-without going too far. Often he comes up with unusual solutions."

Unusual solutions, in fact, seem to be a distinguishing characteristic of Glanz cases. And none was more so than the time, early in his free-lance career, when he was hired by a woman to find out whether her boyfriend was faithful. After shadowing the man for a few days, Mr. Glanz discovered him in the act of loading suitcases into a car-accompanied by another woman. Using the telephone in his car, Mr. Glanz called his client and confirmed her suspicions. As he recalls it, the conversation went something like this:

"He's leaving town right now with a girlfriend."

"Well, stop him," the woman demanded."

"I can't. He hasn't broken any laws. And besides you're not even married to him."

"Dammit! I hired you. Now you stop him."

With the client screaming at him over the car telephone, Mr. Glanz overtook the couple on the freeway and signaled for them to pull over. The car stopped. The man jumped out and ran back to Mr. Glanz's car.

"What's wrong?" he asked.

"Nothing," Mr. Glanz said, handing the man the car telephone. "You've just got a phone call."

When he isn't on the road or out "fighting crime" (as he terms his occupation) Mr. Glanz likes to spend time flying his Cessna 172 airplane, coaching his son's Little League baseball team or chatting with numerous contacts (he calls them "snitches").

"An investigator is only as good as his informants," he says. "You can never have too many friends in this business. Everybody knows something about somebody."

In addition to tips and rumors, Mr. Glanz's informants provide him with credit reports, arrest records, copies of telegrams, records of long-distance telephone calls and other normally confidential information. Sometimes bribery is necessary, other times only a favor. And in certain cases, Mr. Glanz says, only practical psychology is required. "You just find their weakness," he explains. "Everybody's got a little bell to ring-sex, religion, their children. You figure out how to ring that bell, and you've got that person where you want him. If my client has enough money, I can find out almost anything."

He does, to be sure, have certain aids in his work. Out of his \$100,000-plus gross receipts, he pays another detective Don Manes, whose specialty is photography. He also has a secretary. And then there is his equipment, chief among which is a sleek,

black Thunderbird whose accouterments include: (1) interchangeable license plates, (2) a hidden compartment containing a .38-caliber snub-nose revolver and a police-call receiver, (3) a microphone concealed in the dashboard that is wired to a tape recorder in the trunk, and (4) a two-way radio equipped with a scrambling device to discourage would be eavesdroppers.

The trunk of Mr. Glanz's car also holds an assortment of tape recorders disguised as briefcases and several cameras with an array of telephoto lenses. In addition, he has an estimated \$8,000 invested in bugs and wiretapping devices, and \$15,000 to \$20,000 invested in a surveillance truck that carries, among other equipment, a motorcycle. (When he's following a suspect in the truck through heavy traffic and the going gets rough, Mr. Glanz simply parks the truck and takes off after his man on the 'cycle.)

Unlike the fictional counterparts, who are often ambushed while sneaking around dark alleys, Mr. Glanz has never been forced to defend himself from physical assault--although he is well prepared to do so. He usually carries one automatic pistol in the waistband of his slacks and sometimes tucks another in a shoulder holster. And in the trunk of his car, he sometimes carries a semiautomatic rifle.

"This business isn't like being a cop," Mr. Glanz says. "You usually don't come up against the unexpected if you do the job right. But ... life's too short to sit there and take a whipping." He adds that normally "you don't have to strong-arm anybody in this business. That's what makes it a challenge. You're conning the con men and outsmarting the smart guys."

This isn't to say that he always wins. There was the time, for example, when a man hired him to gather evidence of his wife's suspected indiscretions with a boy friend. Mr. Glanz planted a bugging device in the client's bedroom, but it went dead one night when the boy friend visited the wife. Undaunted, Mr. Glanz waited until the lights went out and then, lugging a load of photographic equipment, sneaked into the house to gather incriminating evidence.

Quietly, in stocking feet, he went through the living room toward the bedroom. But then he began to feel uneasy and looked around. There in the living room sat the couple, fully clothed and watching him wide-eyed. "What in the hell is going on?" the boy friend demanded. "I'm taking pictures," Mr. Glanz said, backing swiftly toward the door, "for Better Homes & Gardens."

-Richard A. Shaffer