

Beating Heart or Cheating Heart by David Almeida

With Valentine's Day just around the corner you'd be surprised at the number of people that, instead of buying chocolates, are working with a private investigator to evaluate exactly how true that true love is.

Do you suspect that your Valentine is possibly planning on buying more than one card this year?

Here's a short list of things that may indicate your significant other is playing the field:

Has his or her schedule suddenly changed? We are not talking about a shift change at work or a few hours of overtime. No, what we're discussing here is a blatant change in their schedule. Large time holes that they can't or won't explain.

This is the number one indication that something is awry. I would venture to say that, nine times out of 10, when a client lays out this scenario for me it results in a partner that is cheating.

Another thing to watch for are expenditures. MONEY. Does he or she suddenly have less of it? More of it? Either can be a giant red flag. If you've been dating or married for any length of time and your partner's spending habits or accessibility to money has suddenly shifted, there might be a reason.

In your own backyard?

Also watch your own backyard. Your best friend, your neighbor, the new lady or gentleman living across the street. If your partner is spending an inordinate amount of time there, perhaps some questions are in order.

Weekend trips or outings with his or her friends that are not common should also be viewed as a signal flare. If you're asking questions about their whereabouts and not getting a straight answer, there is possibly a reason why.

Now this is not to say that all people who have secrets are cheating. Not all secrets are bad.

A little anecdote for you. Several years ago, very near Valentine's Day, I was asked to do an investigation for a woman who suspected that her husband was cheating.

This woman had good reason to believe that he might be unfaithful. Her husband was disappearing every Sunday morning and not returning until very late in the evening. This was very unusual and had never happened during the 15 years they'd been married. Her husband refused to discuss it with her and did not even attempt to make up a small excuse.

He simply refused to discuss it at all.

So, of course, our client assumed that there was another woman.

I won't go into all the details out of respect for the clients privacy. To keep a long story short, the bottom line was that this gentleman actually was not a cheater.

This man was in love with his wife. Very much so, in fact.

Every Sunday this man would sneak off to work on a second job so that he could buy a special gift for the woman that he loved on Valentine's Day. He was saving every penny to get just the right item. That's how much he loved his wife.

Just because you see a red flag, do not assume that your mate has gone astray. Contact us and we can relieve your suspicions one way or another.

However, if the red flags are there, do pay attention and, if in doubt, be sure and contact your professional. As a licensed private investigator, I can tell you that in my experience some of the most violent encounters are between lovers in the heat of the moment.

Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to trail, track, follow, etc. your partner. More times than not, this can ruin the relationship, but it can also result in a situation that could end badly - for you or your significant other, or both.

We are highly trained in covert surveillance, tracking, photographic or video evidence and can assist you should you believe that your better half has found a new hobby.

David Almeida has been a licensed private investigator since 1993. With a B.S. degree in criminal justice, he has served as a criminal defense investigator for the Commonwealth of

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