Anti Surveillance – Part One

This article deals with the aspects of Anti Surveillance, an often-misunderstood practice that is frequently confused with Counter Surveillance. Either way, Anti Surveillance and Counter Surveillance are two different types of surveillance detection.

Firstly let us define the difference between the two disciplines.

• **Anti-Surveillance**

Anti-Surveillance is the actions or manoeuvres that a person carries out in order to

- Confirm that he is under surveillance and by whom
- and then possibly take appropriate action

Anti-surveillance manoeuvres will be the actions of a person (a target of surveillance or yourself) who suspects that he is being followed in order to expose the team and confirm that he is being followed, by drawing the team into a position where they can be identified.

• **Counter Surveillance**

Counter Surveillance is defined as the actions that a third party (person or team) carries out in order to:

- Identify any presence of a surveillance team
- Identify the makeup of the surveillance team to gather intelligence about them.

In a nutshell, anti surveillance is what we would do ourselves in order to detect if surveillance is present, and counter surveillance is when we bring in someone else to detect it for us.
ANTI-SURVEILLANCE MEASURES

As we have defined, anti-surveillance is described as the actions or manoeuvres that a person carries out in order to get a reaction, and therefore confirm that he is under surveillance and then to possibly evade and lose the surveillance team.

A surveillance operator will always be conscious of having multiple sightings with the target or acting unnaturally in their presence, otherwise he risks being compromised. Therefore in anti surveillance we want to turn that on its head and attempt to create multiple sightings and look out for unnatural behaviour in those around us and expose them as surveillance.

Who carries out Anti Surveillance?

Many people think that anti surveillance something that a target of surveillance carries out when he thinks he is being followed. Although technically correct, it is also a discipline that a professional security operator would carry out in order to identify if he was subjected to surveillance. For example, we run training courses all over the world and often carry unusual technical equipment in our flight bags, which may attract the attention of the authorities in some countries. Therefore, after arrival at our hotel, we may carry out some anti surveillance measures as we familiarise with the area. After an hour or so I may go for a walk around the town or city and carry out subtle anti surveillance drills (as described below).

I may also plan the route that I will walk the following morning to the training venue to include ‘surveillance hazards’ or choke points. Without becoming paranoid, a simple and effective anti surveillance routine can be put into your day to day activity without thinking about it.

To keep things simple, I have listed certain ‘drills’ that a person would carry out themselves in order to detect surveillance.

Anti-surveillance measures can be carried out **Covertly** or **Overtly**, on foot, by vehicle, public transport and also combined. Covertly, where you carry out very subtle drills in order to identify their presence without them realising the fact. Or overtly where you let them know that you are looking, waving at possible surveillance or carrying out quick U turns in the street.

**On Foot**

Being followed on foot, would mean that the followers would be reasonably close to you, also on foot, so the risk of them being noticed is much greater so this can be used to an advantage. A person being followed could carry out the following anti-surveillance measures in order to create multiple sightings or unnatural behaviour.

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Therefore a number of drills have to be carried out to identify surveillance. Just looking behind you does not identify surveillance – it identifies those who are behind you. However, if you see those same people later on, especially in a different place and you have seen them at least three times then alarm bells should start ringing.

**Anti Surveillance Drills (Drilling)**

- Frequently look directly behind you. Now this can be overt or covert; overt if it is obvious that you are looking back which will spook the surveillance team, or you can be quite covert about it. Covertly, I would cross the road but listen and wait for a stream of traffic to pass first. This gives me the opportunity to look back several times without it being obvious to what I am doing. To be even more covert, I would cross the road at a pelican crossing but pretend to have pressed the button when I haven’t. This now gives me a reason to stand at the side of the road and look back and forth several times and for quite a while because the green man isn’t going to change in a hurry.

- Drop a piece of paper and see whether it is picked up and examined. A surveillance team will be wary of this but if you provide some juicy bait such as an ATM receipt (or pretend it is), they will attempt to recover it.

- Enter a telephone box and use it to observe your surroundings from. When you leave, keep a close eye on it in the event a surveillance operator is ‘clearing’ the box for any information.

- Enter a shop, large store or mall. Politey hold the door open for those behind you giving a chance to look back or use the doors reflections.

- Frequently turn about and change direction, though this quite overt. If you change direction, have a reason for doing so, hopefully this will create multiple sightings of the same person if they are not carrying out regular ‘handovers’.

- Walk into areas where there is little pedestrian activity such as a quiet housing estate or multi storey car park.
• Use large department stores with many exits and levels and suddenly stop upon entering to look at the information board. Look out for unnatural behaviour as someone follows you in and then suddenly realizes that you are right there in front of them. Then use the escalators to your advantage.

• Challenge anyone suspected of following you. Ask them for directions or the time, and note their reaction, if you notice a professional style watch (G Shock etc) this should also add to your suspicions.

• Walk through narrow walkways. If the team are not familiar with the area they will most likely send someone down there.

• A new favourite is to scan the area for Bluetooth devices with your mobile phone. On a recent training exercise when I was the target, I got on a train and scanned the area noting who was in the vicinity as certain names/phones came up. Later on I did the same whilst in an art gallery and identified the same name. The same name was also present on the rail platform on my return journey an hour later thus effectively creating 'multiple sightings'.

In addition to force multiple sightings within a surveillance, we must also combine it with looking out for unnatural behaviour such as:

• Peeping around corners, over stands and through doors or windows
• Mirroring - you cross the road, they cross the road
• Fixated on the target, staring at you and not noticing what is going on around them
• Being Isolated and standing out without any cover
• Talking to themselves on the radio
• Having a vacant expression whilst they try to hear radio transmissions or continually touch their earpiece
• Fidgeting or acting in a shifty manner
• Deliberately avoiding eye contact or reacting when face to face

An unprofessional team is easily spotted and very easily caught out because they act unnaturally and they do not carry out the correct procedures which prevent multiple sightings.

An experienced surveillance team is more likely to carry out tactics to ensure that they are not spotted, and if they suspect that they are being drawn into a compromise, they are more likely to 'lift off' from the surveillance and let the target run rather than continue and confirm
suspicions.

In Part Two, we shall look at anti surveillance measures carried out when mobile in a vehicle or on public transport. We shall also look at the various times that a target or person carries out certain anti surveillance drills and what can be done about it.