Anti Surveillance – Part Two

In part two of this article on anti surveillance 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 will conduct anti surveillance measures or drills in order to detect surveillance.

Remember that Anti Surveillance is defined as the actions that a person would take or do, in order to detect if surveillance is present. The person is aiming to draw the surveillance in by generating two things; multiple sightings and unnatural behaviour.

As with our foot anti surveillance drills, when mobile in a vehicle, these drills can also be covert and subtle or overt where it obvious to the followers what you are doing. Again, a number of drills have to be carried out in order to identify surveillance. Just looking behind you does not identify surveillance – it identifies those who are behind you. A larger team is more difficult to detect whilst someone on their own conducting surveillance would be a fairly simple affair.

Anti surveillance can also be planned or unplanned. Planned, you may have recced an anti surveillance route whilst working abroad or even in your home area. This may be a route that you take on occasions which comprises of a number of choke points or places that subtle drills can be carried out such as; changing direction, having a reason to stop, changing lanes in traffic etc.

If it is unplanned, it is something that you would do ‘off the cuff’ when you get spooked or suspect that surveillance is present and just have to use your surroundings to carry out covert drills.
Anti Surveillance Drills (Drilling)

- Whenever you first set off, note if anyone pulls out immediately behind you, this is amateurish and very unprofessional (which tells you the level of sophistication of the surveillance team). Make note of the vehicle behind you as you encounter the first or second junction/turning after departure.

- As you depart, continue on your original direction for a short distance and then make a turn to see if that same car is still present. If it is, it may be a coincidence so you now have to create a third drill in order to confirm or deny that it is surveillance.

- Stop suddenly. If this is done quickly at the side of the road it would appear to be a very overt drill and obvious to what you were doing. If you were to indicate, park up in a space outside a shop and then enter, you are giving the impression of having a natural reason for stopping.

However, you are noting the vehicle that overshoots and drives past you (unless he suddenly pulls in somewhere behind you). You are looking for specific signs; the driver looking at you, he may me talking to himself, there may be a small antenna on the back of the vehicle, he may look back as he passes. Once passed, he may turn off at the next side road and an amateur is likely to do this quite aggressively as he rushes to 're-plot'.

Don’t forget to also keep an eye on what is going on to your rear. You may note others vehicles peeling of the main road or manoeuvring to park up.

- As you depart, continue on your original direction for a distance and then do a ‘U’ turn taking you back past the spot you have just left, looking at the other vehicles as they pass you to observe the body language of the oncoming drivers. Ensure that you travel some distance first otherwise you will not ‘break the box’ and will not draw the surveillance.

- Drive around a roundabout several times to throw watchers into chaos. This is a very aggressive drill and will immediately alert the team to your drilling.
• Jump a red light to see if you are followed across, again this is a very unsophisticated drill. At a junction or crossroads, indicate to turn but then move off in a different direction. If the cars behind you cancel their indicators and follow, you will have some indication of possible surveillance.

• Frequently alter your speed by slowing down then speeding up, note if following cars overtake you or keep to the same speed and mirror your actions. This can be an oblivious drill but if you use slow moving traffic on a dual carriageway to deliberately slow you down you can be more subtle about it.

• Stopping immediately after taking a left hand turn may cause two of the cars to overshoot but again this is quite deliberate. To give a reason for stopping, pretend to look at a map or be on a mobile phone.

• If held in traffic, closely examine the car and person behind you, look for signs of talking into a radio or watch for the driver that ‘creeps up’ behind you.

• Drive on a motorway changing speed frequently from high to slow. Come off at an exit and then rejoin the carriageway.

• Pretend to break down on a motorway to see if anyone stops behind you. They shouldn’t but an amateur would. A more professional team will continue to the next junction and wait there.

• Drive into more rural areas using narrow lanes whilst observing the vehicles behind you. Driving at a slow pace is really difficult for the surveillance team.

• There are other drills such as lane hopping (suddenly changing lanes), driving into dead ends, which will likely force a surveillance operator on foot.

• You may also want to make a direct challenge someone you suspect as surveillance. ‘Hey, Numb Nuts, I can see that you weren’t trained by ISS were you?’ or ‘Are you following me you bastard?’ can really put off a surveillance. The guy will now have to pull off from the team and it is likely that as a consequence, the whole team would also have to lift off. If you really want to put them off, take a photograph!
If challenged indirectly, ‘Excuse me, can you tell me the time’ (or ask for directions), this will spook the operator and get him concerned, he will want to get out of the way afterwards. His response and body language should tell you a lot and if you ask him the time, you may get a glance at his G Shock watch, compass or a covert earpiece.

If a target drives around a roundabout twice, he may not be drilling (he missed his exit). If he then suddenly hops from one lane to another, he still might not be drilling (he is trying to find his way) but if he carried out a third manoeuvre alarms bells should start ringing to the fact that he has now carried out three drills which is more than a coincidence.

A sophisticated person will carry out the drills over a period of time or distance, making them difficult to detect, whereas an unprofessional will do them one after another and are easily identified.

Be aware of the lost driver. If a target starts to carry out these odd drills in his home town there is a chance that he is drilling as he should know his way about. Whereas if he were miles away in an unfamiliar area, those manoeuvres would possibly indicate that he is lost so be careful.

**When will a person carry out drilling?**

So when will a person carry out anti surveillance manoeuvres or drilling? They can't keep it up 24/7 otherwise they will never get anything done or never have a life. Remember that a security professional (on the good side) will carry out a form of drilling just as much as a target of surveillance (on the bad side) would. Especially a close protection officer after picking up his Principle.

Drilling will occur at various times and remember it can be planned or unplanned. A person will drill:-

- **When the Target first appears**

When the person first appears out in the open. For instance, he leaves the house looking up and down the street for anything suspicious, gets into his car and drives away looking for anyone else moving off at the same time or pulling out behind him (unprofessional surveillance). After which, he may circle the block or carry out any of the drills mentioned above. A professional surveillance team should pick up on this activity the first or second time he is watched and so would widen their surveillance ‘box’ or cordon on any subsequent surveillance. A professional security operator or close protection officer would continue to drill for some distance from the home address so that the surveillance team (if there is one) break the ‘box’ and are into the follow and thus more easier to identify.
• **Prior to any activity**

A criminal may carry out some form of drilling prior to carrying out any activity. We recently followed a delivery driver for a major builders merchants who was suspected of stealing materials. He would leave the yard in the morning but just prior to an illegal delivery, he would park up for 5 minutes then circle the block to make sure that he was not being observed before he dropped off the goods.

A close protection officer may also carry out some subtle drilling just prior to delivering his Principle at his destination.

• **After illegal activity**

As in the case of the delivery driver, after he had unloaded two pallets of paving slabs he drove off from the site, circled the block and suddenly stopped again looking for possible surveillance. Savvy criminals will do this drilling after an illegal activity just as much as prior to it. A criminal may be happy that he is not under surveillance prior to the act but he may have picked up a surveillance at the activity site.

An intelligence officer will also carry out anti surveillance prior to and after a meeting if he does not have counter surveillance deployed.

• **When returning to his haven**

Prior to returning to home, office or wherever, a person may also carry out some form of drilling in the event they have picked up surveillance. Drivers of security vehicles or those that work in banks should do this as part of their daily routine on their way home.

• **When the Target suspects surveillance**

It is likely that criminals will drill at the times mentioned above. However, depending on their awareness level, they will also start to drill when they have been spooked or when they suspect surveillance is present. This will occur if they notice ‘unnatural behaviour’ or have ‘multiple sightings’ of the same person / car. Keep it in mind that there are other people in the world than just the surveillance team. It may be a case that the Target has been spooked by someone totally unconnected with the surveillance.
Don’t lift off!

As we have just mentioned, a target will drill just prior to an activity so therefore a surveillance team should detect the drilling at an early stage, this drilling is what we call a ‘switch on’. Basically, you have to ‘switch on’ because something is about to happen. Inexperienced investigators do not realise this, they notice drilling, thinking that they will be spotted and so ‘lift off’ when they should really be doing the opposite. Switch on, because shit is about to happen and they need to keep control but with caution.

In the case of the delivery driver, the drilling was identified and we just hung back a little and didn’t go into hard because it told us he was about to do something. This primed the team for having their cameras ready and prepared them for getting out on foot for a walk past. In addition, we now expected the target to drill when he left the site and so we gave him a wide berth on his departure and loosely bounced him away from the site.

*About a year ago we subcontracted a surveillance job to an investigator who came back with a negative report and no evidence of the Targets activities. I was told, ‘he was starting to drill, so we let him run and so dropped the surveillance’. In this case it was the wrong answer.*

What to do if you find yourself being followed

Now then, you have carried out a number of drills and you confirm or strongly suspect that you are actually under surveillance so what are you going to do, what are your options?

• Stay calm and do not panic. You have to decide, do you want to identify the followers and the make up of the surveillance team or just evade them. A number of things can be done:-

• You can try to out race them but this would immediately alert the team who are most likely to let you run. You will not achieve much and possibly cause an accident in the process.

• Inform someone, your team, the police or a friend who may be able to help you. If you are really concerned, inform the police that you are being followed and pass the surveillance vehicle details to them with an excuse that you are carrying a large amount of cash and are in fear of being robbed!
• Keep driving until you are in a safe area or a police station but do not go to your destination. That may have been the aim of the surveillance and you have just given it to them on a plate.

• Make a note of the descriptions of any vehicles including registration or those driving. Use the pneumonic SCRIM to help you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shape</th>
<th>(hatch, saloon, estate)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colour</td>
<td>(dark green)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>(X168 OUG)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifying Marks</td>
<td>(light clusters, alloys, stickers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make &amp; Model</td>
<td>(Vauxhall, Astra)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Think twice before you stop and confront them, they could be dangerous.

• You could continue but deviate from your route and drive into a rural area in order to identify more of the team but this should be treated with caution.

• You could continue and lead the followers into a trap by telephoning for help. This once happened to a colleague who ended up on his own and tried to continue with the surveillance when his back up was detached. He was spotted and the target entered a multi-story car park where two of his heavies were waiting with iron bars.

• You could arrange for counter surveillance in its simplest form, in order to identify the surveillance team and possibly learn how sophisticated they are.

A few years ago, a colleague received a telephone call from his girlfriend who said that she was being followed. Alex told her to drive to a nearby retail park and enter the ikea store where she could spend a lot of time. This gave Alex time to make his way over there. Upon arrival he identified where his girlfriend was parked and then took a look around, he soon identified the guy who had the trigger on the car and took a number of photographs of him. Alex then rang her and told her to go back to her car and drive a short distance to the other side of the retail park and enter another store, which she did. Alex then managed to identify a second operator who reacted when she moved off. When she parked, Alex managed to photograph the second guy who was taking pictures of his girlfriend.

It turns out that his girlfriend was followed by private investigators on the instructions of her former husband. The private investigators were later identified and both husband and the detective agency received copies of the pictures that Alex had taken. Result!
A target or person may leave his home totally unaware but remember the two most important things that will get a surveillance noticed; multiple sightings and unusual behaviour.

The first time you notice someone, you are none the wiser. The second time could just be coincidence but the third time is a positive identification so any anti surveillance has to be a combination of at least three drills.

Conclusion

An unprofessional team is very easily spotted and therefore caught out. An experienced surveillance team is more likely to carry out tactics to ensure that they are not spotted. If they suspect that they are being drawn into a series of drills, they are more likely to keep their distance and not be drawn in.

It is better to let the target run rather than suffer a compromise, a target left to run can be picked up another day. One that has noticed you, will be on his guard for a very long time.

Don’t forget trackers.

The use of tracking devices are important when conducting surveillance on very aware targets or targets who carry out drilling as a matter of routine. A target can go around a roundabout as many times as he wishes or jump from one lane to another, but it doesn’t matter because the surveillance team can back off and let the tracking system do the work it was designed to. But details about that are in another article....

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