

TARGET HARDENING FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT PART 2 • WHAT IS TRUE SECURITY • SHOT TIMER • PROTECTIVE SURVEILLANCE • OMAD

Journal for Law Enforcement, Intelligence & Special Operations Professionals

# The Counter Terrorist

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2016

VOLUME 9 • NUMBER 5

THREE COUNTER  
INSURGENCY LESSONS



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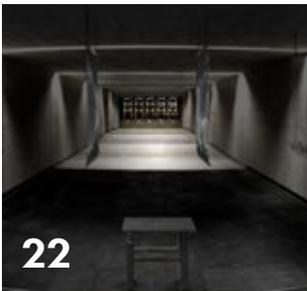
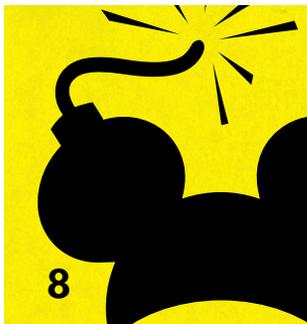
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**Cover Photo:** Afghan Local Police members man a blocking position during a village clearing operation by coalition forces and Afghan Commandos near Belambai village in Panjwai district.  
*Photo by: Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Ernesto Hernandez Fonte*



# PROTECTIVE SURVEILLANCE

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**by Orlando Wilson**

Protective Surveillance (PS) is a subject that is not taught in a lot of close protection/bodyguard schools. PS, in simple terms, provides the client with covert and undercover protection.

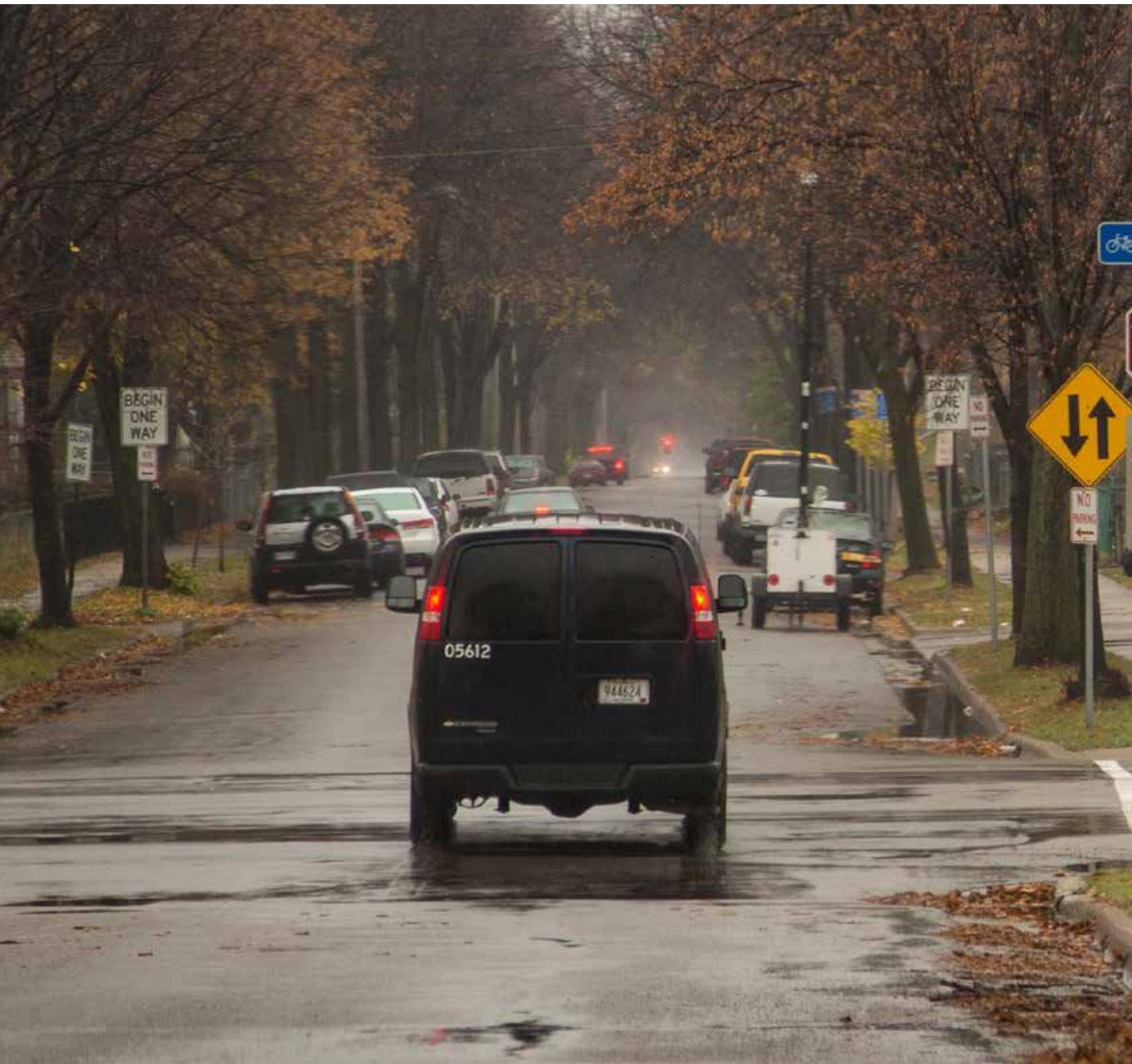
**F**or example, we can use PS if the client does not wish others to know that he is under protection or to protect others without unduly alerting and alarming them to a possible threat.

Many supposed professionals in the close protection business don't understand that high profile or low profile visible protection can have negative effects for the client. In the 90s in Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union, bodyguards would

be targeted by criminals providing security services who wanted to take the bodyguard's clients; if the client had just had his protector beaten up in front of him, it was in his immediate interest to hire those than had done the beating, right? Visible security personnel can also alert criminals that the client is of some importance, has goods worth stealing, or would be worth kidnapping. As to those reading this thinking the close protection world is all about being a tough guy, I

will tell you you're very wrong. It's about being alert, crafty, and cautious.

Also, think about it from a business point of view. If you were going do business with someone and when you went to meet them they had a bodyguard or two, what would you think? Personally, I would be thinking about why they needed security, what problems they have, and whether those problems going to affect my business dealings with them and possibly put



*Unmarked Protective Surveillance Vehicle in North America. Photo by: Tony Webster*

me under threat. Or do they have the security because they don't trust or want to intimidate me? These things need to be taken into consideration when

initially putting together options for a client's security program.

There have been times in areas of high organized crime when we have

supplied PS personnel who were completely disconnected from the clients, providing the clients with a high level of protection but completely untraceable. Communications between the PS team and the clients (for itinerary changes, etc.) went through a third-party phone outside of the area of operations. The clients knew the PS team was there, as we informed them daily of details of their activities for reassurance. For those who the clients were meeting and doing business with, there were no signs they were not trusted. Even if they monitored the client's communications, nothing would show they had a security team with them.

We have provided protection to numerous clients in sensitive professions without their business associates knowing there were any protection personnel present. One way to do this is to use visual/audio surveillance to monitor the client and place the protection team in an adjoining room or in a close-by vehicle. There are many situations where a client cannot have or does not want a bodyguard within arm's reach. This is the real world, where the Hollywood techniques do not work and resources of the Secret Service do not exist.

When PS is used in conjunction with regular close protection/bodyguard details, it provides an extra cordon of security. If your client is staying in a hotel or a residence, you could put the building under PS. The PS team would covertly watch the hotel/residence for anyone who is acting suspiciously or watching the hotel. In nearly all assassinations and attacks, the attackers have had their victim under surveillance at some point. It would be the job of the PS to detect any surveillance that would be placed on the client. They would also be dominating any potential surveillance locations by occupying or observing them.

All personnel used for the PS team would have to be surveillance/counter surveillance trained in addition to being close protection trained. The PS team should be thought of as your early warning system. If it is identified that your client is under surveillance, you must up the level of security procedures immediately. This could mean using extra security personnel or getting out of the country that you are in. In addition to upping the client's security, you must take action in identifying the people who have your client under surveillance. The PS can undertake this by putting the opposition's surveillance under surveillance.

All PS must be performed covertly. The team must blend in with their environment and not look like BGs. The team members must regularly carry out their counter surveillance drills: if the PS members are identified by terrorist/criminal surveillance, they will be the first to be killed in the event of an attack on the client. All security team members need to understand that in the event of an attack on the client by semi-professional attackers, they would be the first to be targeted. The terrorists/criminals will want to remove the threats to them before they kill or kidnap your client. Also, the threat does not end when your shift ends: organized criminals actively target security personnel and their families. Would you actively protect a client if you knew that if you prevented an attack your family would be killed? As the narcos say, you can take their silver or their lead!

The PS team should regularly make use of stills, cameras, and video to survey the people and vehicles that are seen close to the client and in potential surveillance locations. The PS team should study the pictures for any people or vehicles that regularly appear. These people and vehicles could have gone undetected

In nearly all assassinations and attacks, the attackers have had their victim under surveillance at some point.

while the PS team was on the ground. For example, if the client went to a restaurant, the PS team would video everyone entering and leaving the restaurant while the client was there and just after the client left. They would do the same at the client's next location, the next day, etc. If they spot the same people or vehicles at venues while reviewing the videos, it's possible the client is under surveillance. The whole security team would then be made aware of these potential threats and if spotted again they could be put under surveillance by the PS team members.

For the application of protective surveillance by security forces, covert soft target protection tasking was common in Northern Ireland for the British security forces during The Troubles. British security force teams would set up covert Observation Posts (OP) on the houses of off-duty military and police personnel living in rural areas or under specific threats. The OP teams tasking were to log and report any activity around the houses, such as who visited, what cars drove past, etc. If the same car was spotted driving past the house more times than normal, then the owner and occupants would need to be identified. Also, there were cases where British security forces teams ambushed and killed Irish terrorists while on covert soft target protection tasking.

Protective surveillance should be employed where resources and manpower are available; on high-risk protection details it is essential. Protective surveillance provides you with an early warning of potential threats and if necessary a surprise counter to any attacks upon your team or client. ●

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Since leaving the British army in 1993, Mr. Wilson has worked in South and West Africa, Western and Eastern Europe, U.S., Middle East, Latin America and Caribbean and co-ordinate projects in many other countries. His experience has ranged from providing close protection / bodyguard services for Middle Eastern Royal families and varied corporate clients, kidnap and ransom services, corporate intelligence, para-military training for private individuals and tactical police units and government agencies.*

Contact info:

Risks Incorporated

International Defense Strategies LLC

E-mail: [contact@risks-incorporated.com](mailto:contact@risks-incorporated.com)

Risks Incorporated: [www.risks-incorporated.com](http://www.risks-incorporated.com)

Orlando's Blog: [www.cornishprivateer.com](http://www.cornishprivateer.com)

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