

The **Circuit**

ISSUE
57

For Security And Protection Specialists

JOURNALIST SAFETY

In Hostile Environments

PRECIOUS PRINCIPALS

Challenges of
Protecting Children

TACTICAL FORMATIONS

Body Cover &
Professional Distance





By: Orlando Wilson

WHERE YOU STAND MATTERS

FORMATIONS, BODY COVER, & PROFESSIONAL DISTANCE

The nuances of where and how you take a stand as a close protection specialist matters. It will differentiate the truly consummate professional CPO from a mediocre or average one. So let's dig in!

1. Formations

The key words to remember when escorting a client on foot are flexibility and adaptability. You must be flexible enough to constantly adapt your formations to the environment you are working in, the threat level, and the manpower available. Whatever formation you are using will only be as good as the people you are using in your team. You must

select your team carefully. Vet all potential members of your team before you employ them, even if you have known them for a while. Many people can talk the business, but when they get on operations, they are useless. When time allows, conduct rehearsals of all your team drills so in the event of an emergency, everyone knows what to do and what everyone else is doing. ➤

There are numerous schools of thought on what formations are best. There are advantages and disadvantages to all formations. You must decide which is best for your situation and what you are comfortable working with. When escorting someone, say a celebrity, through crowds, it may be necessary to use a tight formation to surround the client with a wall of BGs. If you don't have the personnel to do this, you will have to consider using an alternative entrance/exit to the venue, such as the back door or an obscure fire escape.

Personally, I prefer the use of loose rather than tight formations when escorting a client. Many people use the US law enforcement statistics on shooting incidents as a base from which to develop their tactics. These statistics are a valuable source of information, but if you look outside the US, you will see that criminal and terrorist tactics have been changing over the past years. The primary weapon is the IED. If you do not detect the IED, the formation will not matter at all!

Since the end of the cold war, there has been an abundance of ex-military weaponry on the black market, along with unemployed former military personnel who are willing to use them or train others

to use them. In more and more criminal and terrorist incidents, we see the use of assault weapons, light anti-tank weapons, multiple shooters and military tactics being used. Wherever you are operating, it pays to get to know as much as possible about your opposition and keep up on other tactics being used around the world. If you learn the sequence that your opposition will use to attack you, you will be in a better position to predict their moves. The best way to learn how to defend is to learn how to attack.

2. Body Cover

The use of body cover is another debated topic as far as close protection contact drills are concerned. Now, this is where the real-word and Hollywood movies collide on a major scale. The close protection industry attracts those who want a serious professional career and lots of others, especially those who wish to reinforce their masculinity and dream of being heroes.

I have heard too many people state they would take a bullet for their clients. They claim it's their duty. Personally, I would say these people need a mental evaluation and pose a safety risk. For government personnel, such as those protecting the Russian, UK or US Presidents, this may be



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an understandable sentiment since they are not only protecting a person but whole national interests. If they are wounded in the line of duty, they will be cared for medically and financially. And if they are killed, their families will be compensated and looked after.

However, this is in stark contrast to what happens in the commercial world, where if you get hurt, and you're lucky, you might have insurance so that if you can't work, you can hopefully claim some benefits. If you are seriously injured in an overseas location, your employer will hopefully have a repatriation plan. If not, you will front the cost yourself.

If you are killed, and the story happens to make the media, you will most probably be labelled a desperado. The armchair experts will be lining up to assess and analyze where you took a misstep to lead to your demise. In the event you are seriously killed or injured on the job, then hopefully, the client/cause you were providing body cover for was worthwhile, and you aren't willing to die for \$25 an hour!

3. Professional Distance

To provide body cover, you have to be close to the client. However, unlike the movies, a lot of real- ➤



life clients don't want you next to them. This is where you need to understand professional distance.

Professional distance is the distance you are to be away from the client at any given time. Consider this: would you want someone to be within arm's length of you all the time? Always listening to your conversations and phone calls or being in your personal space? This would not only be annoying but also a breach of anyone's privacy and personal security. In reality, most clients want you in sight but out of

earshot, especially if they are with their family, lovers, or talking with business partners.

Professional distance is something that can be arranged with a client to assess what is comfortable with them. Or with some experience and common sense, you can work it out for yourself. If all you have ever been taught is to stand next to a client in ridged postures, then your skillset is severely lacking!

Another expectation that always seems to be argued by the tacticoool entertainment crowd is that the

clients must always have BG in front of them while being escorted. This depends on several factors such as the environment, available manpower, and the client's plans. It is far more tactically advantageous for small teams to make maximum use of their personnel to dominate the area by using protective surveillance than to rely on ineffective use of body cover.

Another obvious consideration that is forgotten is that bullets penetrate. In response, some will say then you need to wear a plate carrier and higher levels of armour. Fine. But how practical is it to walk around a shopping mall, golf course, chilling in a coffee shop or restaurant while wearing it? Chances are you won't be allowed entry to these venues, and the local security and police will rightfully want to know what you're up to.

People also seem to forget that even if they are wearing plate carriers with armour that will stop a high-velocity round that their vital organs may be covered, but the rest of their bodies are not. Arms, legs and heads are exposed. A shot to the head will kill you; shots to the arms and legs can immediately disable you, which means you can't defend yourself or escape; and if an artery is severed, you can bleed outright.

So as with all considerations, body cover is more for tacticoool entertainment and bar talk than reality. There are far simpler and relevant tactics and techniques that can be employed to ensure the client's and your safety.

Assassination Scenario - #1

An extremist terrorist group decides to assassinate one of its opponents. First, they have to plan when and where to attack the target and assess his security procedures. After several weeks of surveillance, they have discovered that every Tuesday from 14:00 to 16:00, the target visits his sick mother in the hospital. The target has four BGs, and they always use a four-person box formation. Now the assassins must be selected. The terrorists decide that as well as killing their opponent, they will make the assassination a publicity stunt. The terrorists fund and run a terrorist training school. They take two of the best students to have the honor of serving their cause and assassinating their rival. The chosen assassins are two girls in their early teens. The girls receive several hours of training in the use of the AK-47. They are taught to shoot controlled bursts from a range of 10 meters into four house doors placed side by side. The four doors represent the area that the BGs and the target take up. After ➤

several hours of training, the girls can confidently put 30 rounds into the doors in a few seconds. The girls also receive some training in the use of cover, what will and will not stop a bullet. And at the end of their few hours of training, they are shown how to throw a hand grenade.

On the day of the assassination, the girls are shown pictures of the target and his BGs and briefed on their mission. One of the girls is selected to fire first; the other will count to five before opening fire. The girls are dressed in their best clothes and carry their AKs in shopping bags. They are each also given a grenade to be used after they have emptied their AKs. They are taken to the hospital and shown where the best fire positions will be and left to wait for the target to emerge from the hospital. As the target is leaving the hospital at 16:10 with his BGs in their usual box formation, a young girl appears at the 10 o'clock position and starts to fire an AK-47 at them. The BGs not hit with the initial bursts of fire react by pulling their client to the ground and drawing their weapons. By this time, the second girl at the BGs 2 o'clock has appeared and started to fire at the stationary bodies on the floor. In a matter of 8 seconds, 60 7.62 rounds have been fired at the target and his BGs. In

many cases, the rounds have gone straight through one BG and into the client and the other BGs. One of the BGs manages to shoot and kill one of the girls before he passes out from blood loss. The second girl dies when she pulls the pin on her grenade, and it explodes instantaneously.

Immediately the news of the attack is broadcast in the media. The world is outraged at the deaths of the two girls. The terrorist group claims that the girls were part of their youth movement, and they were acting on their own initiative. The girls believed their cause was worth the sacrifice. The girls are declared heroes by the terrorists.

There would be several reasons for using the girls to carry out the assassination. Firstly, young girls are not usually suspected of being part of a terrorist organization and can move freely. Secondly, there is the moral issue of whether the BGs will shoot a young girl. A lot of adults would at least hesitate before opening fire if they opened fire at all. The reason behind the grenade would be to kill the assassin to prevent them from being captured and informing the authorities where they were trained, by whom, and who put them up to the attack. Also, two ➤



dead girls make good headlines in the media.

Assassination Scenario - #2

We will go straight to where the team are about to leave the hospital. The difference this time is that they are using a different formation. They send an advance man ahead of the formation by a minute or so. The client has two BGs with him in a loose formation, and a fourth BG is within shouting distance behind the client and his BGs watching their backs. As the advance man leaves the hotel, he notices the two girls hanging around but thinks nothing of it. As the client and his BGs leave the hospital, the first girl opens fire on them. The client and the No 1 BG are wounded. The No 2 grabs the client and gets him out of the kill zone. The advance security man alerted by the gunfire turns around and engages to kill the first girl. The BG at the rear of the formation has moved to a flank and is covering the No 2 BG who is moving with the

client. The second girl fires a burst from her AK and is engaged and killed by the advance security and rear BG.

A lot of people stress the importance of body cover. This is all well and good in some situations. Any shooter will tell you that it is harder to hit a moving target than a stationary one. If the opposition uses high-velocity weapons, the bullets will go straight through you and into the client anyway. Loose formations give you defense in-depth and extend your arcs of fire. They also provide the BGs with a better chance of surviving a contact.

In the end, formations, escorts and contact drills are not something that cannot be taught from a book or watching videos. They are a practical skill that needs to be practiced and applied. You must be flexible and adapt your tactics and procedures to the environment you are working in.

Orlando Wilson has worked in the security industry internationally for over 25 years. He has become accustomed to the types of complications that can occur, when dealing with international law enforcement agencies, organized criminal and Mafia groups. He is the chief consultant for Risks Inc. and based in Miami but spends much of his time traveling and providing a wide range of kidnapping prevention and tactical training services to private and government clients.

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