

SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

POTENTIAL SECURITY BREACH IN YOUR POCKET?

How to Spot a Fake App On Your Smartphone

By Jason Hanson

Former CIA Officer

Since the beginning of the pandemic, developers began creating apps to track the spread of the virus. But that also brought a surge of malicious apps. These fake apps were designed to steal personal information and money. When victims enter their personal information into these apps, the thieves often resell the information on the dark web.

App stores like Apple and Google do try to crack down on these fake apps. Last year, the Google Play Store blocked over 25,000 fake apps. And in just one year, there was more than 3.6 million fake app installs from Apple's App Store. Fake apps can even be advertised



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on social media such as Instagram and Facebook, which makes it even easier for people to download and become victims.

In many cases, the fake apps impersonate federal and state health officials. Some fake apps try to sell vaccines and COVID test kits. Most of these apps are advertised as free. Yet, as soon as users install them, they will receive notifications to enter their credit card information.

For Apple users who have fallen victim to this scam, they will usually

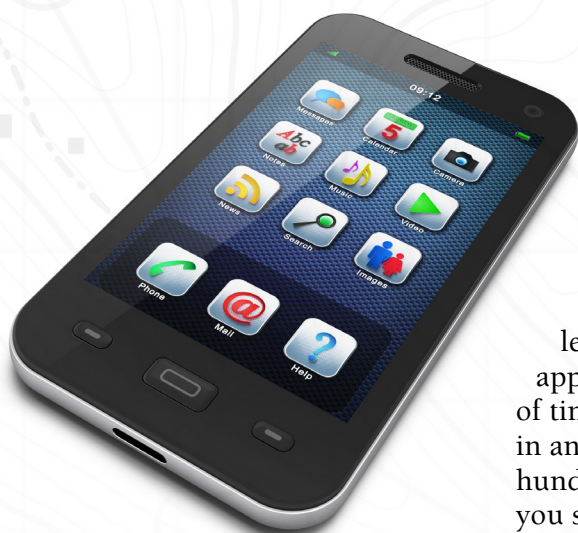
get the first month free. Then they are charged a monthly subscription even though they didn't know about it. Plus, they aren't receiving any sort of test kit in the first place.

"Last year, the Google Play Store blocked over 25,000 fake apps."

The bottom line is fake apps are everywhere from COVID tests to IRS scams to signing up to get stimulus checks.

Considering this, here are a few things to look for if you think the app you are looking at could be a fake.

First, research the app developer: Most app creators have developed



more than one app. If they create apps for a living, they have typically worked on several of them. Do an internet search for the app developer to see what else they have done. Some fake apps will use the same name as the real developer but change a letter or two, so read it carefully.

Second, check the reviews. If an app has a low rating, with lots of complaints, you should clearly avoid it altogether. But you should also be leery of positive reviews. If the app has a few hundred positive reviews, that's not enough to know it's real. If an app is popular, it should have tens of thousands of positive reviews.

Third, watch for spelling and grammar errors. A lot of scammers operate from foreign countries. Oftentimes, English is their second language. It is easy for scammers to make a spelling mistake since they are working quickly to fool

their victims. A reputable app developer will not have spelling or grammar errors.

Fourth, look at the number of downloads. These days, the majority of people have a smartphone or tablet. In other words, popular apps get downloaded millions of times. If you are interested in an app, and it only has a few hundred or thousand downloads, you should think twice. If the app appears to be from a reputable company but only has a few thousand downloads it is most likely a counterfeit app.

Finally, review permissions. When you download a new app it will ask you to access certain things such as your photos or contacts. But, if you download a flashlight app and it asks to access your contact list, this should be a red flag.

Any app you download should only need access to the specific areas that it uses. You can also review the access for each app in the settings of your phone. This way you can make sure the app doesn't have access it doesn't need.

The bottom line is, next time you download an app take a few minutes to review it. Make sure you aren't giving your personal information to a fake application. It might seem like a pain to do this, but it's time well spent if you stop a hacker from selling all your personal information or attempting to drain your bank account.

"Do an internet search for the app developer to see what else they have done."

Black Hills Honey Badger

The Black Hills ammunition company created a new round called the Honey Badger that produces a wound pattern similar to expanding bullets. But, it doesn't actually expand like a hollow point. Instead, the round is designed with terminal performance in mind.

The ammo looks like a flat-nose, full metal jacket round. But, the rounds have three or four deep cuts around the circumference. The cuts extend to the bullet nose where they meet to create a sharp-edged star. When the bullet hits the target, the cuts are rotating to force body tissue outward as it penetrates.

By moving the fluid in the body, the bullet increases the size of the hole it creates. During testing, the ammo exceeded the FBI's minimum penetration depth of 12 inches. The damage caused by the bullet was like that of hollow-point rounds.

Based on the testing, this bullet appears to be very effective. Penetration shouldn't be an issue. Unlike the hollow-point design, there is no hole in the bullet to get clogged and slow down penetration.

Black Hills Honey Badger Ammo is available in .380 ACP, 38 special, 9mm, .44 Mag, .40 S&W, and .45 ACP. If you are looking for a new defensive round, you may wish to check out the Black Hills Honey Badger.

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A LEGACY OF PREPARATION

Why I've Carried This Survival Tool Since Childhood

By EJ Snyder

Former Army Ranger and Extreme Survivalist

From the day my grandfather gave me my first pocketknife, knives have been a big part of my life. In the military, I carried many knives on my person and gear for all different reasons. As a paratrooper, I carried a Jump Master knife taped high on my shoulder, strap upside down. It was close and ready in case one of my jumpers got hung up and needed to be cut free for safety (I had to do this several times in my career and my knife never failed me).

I carried a small folding knife in my pocket for everyday use and a Leatherman on my belt as a handy tool to work on a vehicle or fix gear when it broke. In addition to those,

I had a Bowie knife on my gear belt for self-defense and field tasks, a machete on my pack for clearing a trail and a knife in my boot just in case.

Having a knife when you need it can be the difference between living and dying. I have lived by that mantra and it has served me well. Here are all the places I carry my knives today and why:

Vehicle: A rescue folding knife is above the visor in my truck. It has a good blade and a glass breaker and seatbelt cutter in case there is an accident and I need to get myself or someone else free of a vehicle. I also keep a larger folding knife in the storage well of my door. It's out of view, but close by if needed for self-defense.

Home or Bug Out Site: I have knives strategically placed all over the house. Most are folding knives, but there are a few fixed blades too. I use duct tape to hide knives in key places in case I need to free myself from being taken hostage or defend against an intruder. I tape them up under end tables, on top of hutches, cabinets, or entertainment stands, behind TVs and computers, inside kitchen cabinet doors, in the toilet bowl tank, etc. I also have knives stashed in the basement, attic, garage and storage sheds as well.

Person: I always carry a good folding knife in my pocket and another hidden on my person. In the wild, I carry my trusty self-designed SXB fixed-blade that is made by TOPS Knives. It's good for both survival and field tasks, as



well as self-defense and it's saved my bacon on more than one occasion. I also carry a neck knife or a similar knife carried somewhere near my chest area for quick access — either hung on a cord around my neck or attached to my gear.

"I had a Bowie knife on my gear belt for self-defense."

Bag/Pack: Regardless of whether it's a day pack or larger bug out pack, I always carry a good 18-inch machete to clear

my path, the brush around camp, and to defend myself at a distance. It's placed so that I can easily draw it even with the pack on my back.

I also carry a good lightweight field axe for wood chopping and building (not technically a knife but many folks use axes and tomahawks in place of knives). Lastly, I carry a backup blade to my primary knife and axe in case one or both is lost, stolen, or broken.

As you can see, there are many places to carry your knives or to strategically place them for when you need them most. That is all up to you, your needs, skill set, and the situations you may be faced with. But, in any case, always ensure you're prepared, because having a knife close at hand may mean the difference between life and death for you or your loved ones.



SAVINT **YOUR MONTHLY** **SAVINGS INTELLIGENCE**

This month, you can get a complimentary book from men who are in the Hall of Fame of Self-Defense Experts. The book is called, *The Big Bloody Book of Violence* and it shows you what you must know to stop and defeat a dangerous attack.

I have this book on my own bookshelf and you can grab your copy at

www.CombativesMastery.com.

FAILING FORWARD WITH YOUR PREPARATIONS

How I Survived "Uri"

By Forest Hamilton
Universal Coin & Bullion

Last month, "Winter Storm Uri" blew in where I live in Texas. It affected millions of people and I was one of them. Here's the story of what happened to my family as I was writing this out in real time: Just 12 hours ago, we had to boil the brown water that was barely trickling out of our faucets in order to use it because of harmful bacteria. But I wasn't worried because 24 hours ago we had zero water coming out of our faucets (for the third day in a row) and not much hope it would be turned back on anytime soon.

36 hours ago, we were in our living room, huddled around our fireplace in sleeping bags and my wife was nervously glancing at me - again - to make sure I was still confident we were going to be ok. I nodded and smiled. I wasn't worried at all.

48 hours ago, it was seven degrees outside and the roads were covered in nearly half an inch of ice after the freezing rain had frozen in place. And for those who have never driven on sheets of literal ice, four-wheel drive and snow tires are useless.

72 hours ago, I woke up to silence. No ceiling fans, no TVs, no cars, nothing. And it was dark. Like can't see your hand in front of your face dark. As I came to, I realized the power was out again and it was very cold in the house. I grabbed my phone and went out the back door to find an inch of snow covering the ground.

I smiled because I knew how excited my kids were going to be in a few hours when I woke them up to go play in it. You see, my kids have only seen snow in Texas two other times and both of those times the snow melted within hours.



But based on the weather report, it wasn't going to get above 15 degrees for the next couple of days, so I wasn't worried about it melting this time. And while thousands of other people were waking up scared, I was waking up confident because I was prepared.

The fact is, in the days leading up to the Texas winter storm I made sure that I had stocked up on lots of bottled water, weeks of survival food, gas cans filled to the brim, all the firewood I could burn, flashlights with fresh batteries, a good generator, tons of ammo, a stash of cash, plenty of survival gold and silver and several warm blankets.

I would love to tell you that my vast intelligence is the reason I was so prepared. That's not it. Just ask my wife. I would love to tell you that my superior organizational skills are the reason I was so prepared. That's not it. Just ask my kids.

The fact is, the reason I was so prepared is simple. Experience. I have now lived through three "100-year storms" in Texas in the last several years, along with dozens of hurricanes in the past 15 years. And I have spent entirely too many hours

worried for the safety of my family due to my lack of preparation and action in the past.

Please don't wait to prepare yourself and your family for the physical and financial storms that we are sure to face in the near and distant future. It's not too late to stock up on the important things in your pantry and in your portfolio.

If you can't afford to do it all at once, then do it a little at a time - but start now. If you can afford to do it all at once, then don't wait until the shelves are bare and you are standing there in the aisle staring at the emptiness, wishing you had taken action sooner. I know this feeling all too well, because I have stood there staring, wishing I had taken action sooner. I was worried then, but not anymore.

[Publisher's Note: For questions about buying gold and silver coins you can contact Forest Hamilton directly at foresthilton@universalcoin.com or call 800-822-4653. Please know, if you purchase any coins from Forest, we don't receive any compensation from him. We simply know he's one of the good guys in the business that can be trusted.]

SIMPLE OPERATIVE SKILLS THAT MAKE YOU LOOK CLAIRVOYANT

How My "Toss Wallet" Helped Me Escape During An Operation

By Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,
DIA, NSA*

I was overseas, tasked with casing the area in advance of an operation. A known narco-terrorist was operating in the region. So, plans were made for an extraordinary rendition operation to capture and return this guy to the U.S., where he had already been convicted in absentia.

I was not on the "snatch and grab" team. Instead, my job was to move about in the area and determine if there were any local suspicions. Specifically, my mission was to watch for changes of any kind that could indicate the locals knew something was afoot.

We knew there were so many leaks in virtually every one of our previous attempts, that this time we needed to get ahead of any leaks by observing the local area, its population, routines, customs, and individual demeanors in advance.

Any changes in the environment

between the moment I arrived and the time the operation was being actively planned with locals could mean we had another leak. In addition, if we looped-in the local authorities at this stage we risked a probable leak to the target well in advance of the actual operations and we wanted to prevent another operational failure.

The truth is, guys like us don't do "failure" very well — we are too driven to over-perform because many of us, including me, have something to prove to ourselves. We will deny that, even under polygraph, but there is something deep inside of us, you might even call it a "maladjustment," that drives us to over-perform.

For me, I have a compulsion for this kind of work because it's the only thing I can do well. I am not cut out to be a doctor, lawyer, stock trader, mayor, employee or much of anything else.

My self-worth comes from being able to solve problems. Not just any problems, but the niche of problems that requires ingenuity, courage and just enough stupidity to jump into. But on this mission I wasn't assigned to break into any place or steal government secrets or anything sexy like that.

I was measuring and monitoring the local population, looking for any discernible changes and I accomplished this by walking the streets and chatting with people. I continued doing this for two weeks before the U.S. Government brought the plan to the target coun-

try's leadership who then instructed their local authorities to "fully cooperate."

But don't be fooled, they weren't cooperating out of any love of law and order or allegiance to their oath. We buy the assistance and "full cooperation" of foreign governments, militaries, local militias and police with hundreds of millions of dollars in foreign aid.

**"I was not on the
'snatch and grab' team."**

They may hate us and want to protect the cartels, but just like with our own Ameri-

can politicians, "cash beats constancy, and income beats integrity," every time.

I had already been down there six or seven days and had gone back to one of my favorite watering holes to chat and enjoy some horchata. As I was leaving the quaint little cantina, going around the side of the building, three men approached me.

These men didn't want to chat. They wanted my money. And while I acted confused, startled and a little bit scared, I was not. I had trained just this scenario many times. So, I "reluctantly" tossed them my entire wallet and I ran the opposite way as soon as they bent over to retrieve their treasure.

But I had merely thrown them my "toss wallet," which is nothing more than a disposable wallet with all of the appearances of a real, daily-use wallet. It had about \$60 cash inside, along with real-looking credit cards, insurance cards, etc. It did not contain any of my identities, addresses or any other true or alias identifying information.



I was not there to rid the streets of petty criminals. I was there to support the capture, prosecution and lifetime imprisonment of a violent, narco-terrorist. Operatives carry toss wallets for these exact situations.

There's no reason to get into a fight and risk killing someone over faux leather and \$60.00. This is why I believe everyone should carry a toss wallet. But if \$60.00 seems like too much money to give away versus kill someone over, put just \$5.00 cash in your "toss wallet."

After my escape, I needed to calculate this incident into my final assessment of discernible changes in the local people, behaviors, language, and all other things going on in the environment. Were these three thugs just looking to rob a non-local? Or trying to find out if I was part of some impending events they had heard rumor of? Worse, were they cartel lackeys sent to rough me up, interrogate me, scare me off or get proof of my true identity?

The truth is, I had no way of

knowing for sure. All I could do was consider the event in the context of the overall atmosphere in the village. There had been no perceptible changes in anyone's behavior, small talk, personal security, or business operations. It just did not 'feel' like anyone was expecting something big to happen soon. That remained consistent right up until the day before the planned operation execution.

The evening before the operation, I sent an encrypted covert message to the American leader of the task force. The message stated: "Zero Societal Changes, GTG" (Good To Go). Less than eight hours later, at 02:20 local, the thundering sound of helicopters and heavy armor converged on a famous residence perched high atop a hill overlooking the nearly destitute village.

Of course, we do have the ability to employ "whisper" technology on all of our assault vehicles, but we also rely on the adage of "speed,

surprise and violence of action."

What that means is that we can sneak up on the enemy until we are at the door, then the choppers, vehicles, and assault teams break their way in while shouting and making as much confusion and distraction as possible.

"Of course, we do have the ability to employ 'whisper' technology."

Ground forces use flash-bangs, flares, and discriminant, not-to-harm gunfire. Choppers blare

instructions in Spanish and play loud recordings of men screaming in agony, gunshots, explosions, and crashing sounds of destruction. Sensory overload at 02:20am local. Coupled with overwhelming force, coordinated assaults from all flanks and sheer annihilation, it causes even the most hardened security forces to drop to their knees in surrender. Mission accomplished.

To this day, I use my training, skills and experience to discern when things around me, or in my world, are about to suffer abrupt, destabilizing changes. You may feel it happening around you right now. Do not let the news propaganda dissuade you from acting on your instincts. Listen closely to the words they use and then listen closely for the things they are not saying. No one yells "nothing to see here" except when there is something to see.

Pay close attention to how the mainstream media shifts position or modulates its reporting on certain topics. Watch closely for the changes in the environment that foretell impending disaster. Be wise and prudent. Know what's coming before it arrives at your door. Watch for the signs of the times and the changes of the seasons and be prepared.



DON'T NEGLECT THIS VITAL PIECE OF YOUR HEALTH

How to Keep Sane in An Increasingly "Insane" World

By Dr. Omar Hamada
Special Operations Physician

This month, I'd like to give you a few tips for maintaining your sanity in a world that's going increasingly more "insane" every day. First, allow me to say that many in our nation believe life should be easy, smooth, and without drama. I must say, we have been spoiled for a few decades. But the longer we live, the more we see that life is hard. It throws uppercuts when we least expect it.

That said, I believe there are three areas that we must pay attention to when stress mounts if we are going to not just survive, but instead thrive in this life. The first area we must pay attention to is our heart. Not so much the physical beating organ in our chests, but our emotions and motivations. We do this through meditation and prayer, an intentional focus on daily gratitude and developing deep, intimate, mutually collaborative relationships (as opposed to perpetually self-sacrificial, co-dependent relationships that bleed us dry).

There have been two landmark studies over the past 60 years that demonstrate that the single most important factor in whether or not you have a successful and happy life is relationships. The Grant Project out of Harvard and the 7-Up Series (that followed up on people every 7 years) both demonstrated that it isn't education, financial security, health, cars, boats, travel, or anything else that builds resilience and happiness — It is relationships.

Second, we must pay attention to our body and assure we get proper sleep, nutrition, hydration and exercise. As we've discussed before,



the foundation is sleep. Without good sleep habits, our bodies, minds and hearts will break. Exercise and nutrition need not be anything fancy. Exercise that matters in longevity is less about short bursts of high intensity and more about being frequently active — walking, taking the stairs, gardening, and generally avoiding a sedentary lifestyle.

Likewise, nutrition isn't complicated either, though some try to make it so. Simply eat a well-balanced diet that includes healthy fats, sufficient proteins and a small amount of complex carbohydrates. Watch the calories and frequency of eating. Snack on fruit and nuts. Ice cream and pizza are okay every once in a while.

Finally, care for your mind through frequent stimulation. Of course, downtime is necessary for creativity, innovation, dreaming, and meditation. But you also should

stimulate your mind daily with reading, puzzles, card games, friendly conversation, memorization and the pursuit of peace.

Even engaging with children keep us younger. Volunteer, care for and mentor the younger. Lord knows, they need the help. Maybe even take a page from our children and grandchildren with regards to video games that improve coordination and reflexes.

Also, think and meditate on those things that are true, those things that are lovely, beautiful, honorable, right, pure, admirable, excellent, praiseworthy, and block out all the screeching noise from the world around you that seeks to destroy your peace. When we prioritize and care for our inner world, nothing in our outer world can rattle us. It's never too late and we're never too old to start.

HOW TO TURN THE TABLES ON AN ATTACKER

Destroying Anyone Foolish Enough To "Bear Hug" You

By Matt Numrich

Head Instructor Of Spy Black Belt

In my self-defense classes, I teach different techniques from what I call "set positions." These are common positions or scenarios that someone could use to attack you. One example of a set position is the "bear hug."

When we think about defending this, we have to think about how we're actually attacked. To simplify things, there are front and rear attacks, along with having our arms free or pinned to our body. This creates four different situations we could encounter and we'll use four defense strategies to overcome them.

The good news is, the first move you make to defend yourself against all four of these bear hug attacks is exactly the same. You drop your weight by squatting down and lowering center of gravity. This helps you protect yourself, makes you harder to pick up, and actually loosens whatever hold they have on you.

Now, the first bear hug we'll discuss is a rear attack with your arms free. I'm starting with this one because it is the easiest defense. So, immediately drop your weight. From there, we simply throw a barrage of rear elbows into our opponents' stomach, ribs, groin and head. Don't stop with one elbow. Throw your elbows back into your attacker until they let go.

The next bear hug scenario is a rear attack with your arms pinned to your side. Again, your first response is to drop your weight. From there, you'll use a simple "low-high-low" attack sequence. This "low-high-low" allows you to escape because it stuns your attacker with pain from multiple strikes along the entirety of his body and puts him on the defensive.



To start the sequence, use a foot stomp for the low attack. Follow up with a rear head butt as the high attack. Finish off the sequence with a low groin slap. When you do the low groin slap, shift your rear end to one side to open up access for the groin slap. Then use an open hand or closed fist to slap hard into his groin.

The next scenario to defend is a front bear hug with your arms free (this is assuming we simply can't strike the attacker with numerous punches for whatever reason). As always, quickly drop your weight. Next, use one hand for an eye rake. Use the other hand to grab the attacker's chin and wrench their neck around, which should cause their grip to break, and will likely spin them to the ground - because "where the head goes, the body follows."

Finally, you may have to deal with a front bear hug with both arms pinned to your sides. In this position, you can't attack the face or head. But don't worry, you can quickly and easily defeat this. The

first thing to do is - you guessed it - drop your weight. Only this time, you want to bend your legs and drop your rear end down as far as you can.

Next, using the heels of your palms on both sides of their hip bones, you want to push off their hips so you have an "open lane" to throw numerous knee strikes to their groin. It won't take long for them to release the bear hug when you're repeatedly kneeling them in the crotch.

So, there you have it, four of the most common bear hug positions, along with four brutal ways to escape and put your attacker on the defensive. Practice these movements until you have them down. You may even want to mix them up with a partner or even close your eyes to create a "surprise attack" effect and decrease your reaction time. Have your partner use a different bear hug attack each time so you can confidently get out of any of these attacks with no advance warning.