

SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

THE SPY WHO TAUGHT ME TO READ A ROOM

The KGB Loved This

By Jason Hanson

Former CIA Officer

I had the privilege of being trained by some of the most experienced officers in the Agency. One of them, who I'll call Billy, had spent the better part of two decades running assets in very difficult places. The man had been followed, surveilled, nearly arrested, and had talked his way out of situations that would have made most people's hair turn white overnight. Billy was quiet, unremarkable looking, and absolutely deadly in his tradecraft.

One afternoon during a training session when I was still brand new, Billy said to me, "Jason, if you can't assess a room in well less than 10 seconds, you're already behind the threat." Billy wasn't just talking about spotting exits or watching



doors. He was talking about something far more specific known as baseline detection.

Here's what it really means: As you know, every environment has a natural rhythm. A coffee shop has a certain noise level, a certain flow of movement, a certain emotional temperature. A hotel lobby has its own rhythm. A parking garage has its own. When something is wrong, such as when a threat is present, that rhythm breaks. And your subconscious will catch that break before your conscious mind processes what happened.

Billy also taught me to flip that around. Instead of simply trying to blend in, I also needed to learn to detect who wasn't blending in, and oftentimes, who was trying too hard to blend in that they stood out.

The KGB understood this better than

many other intelligence agencies in the world. A KGB man doing surveillance on a Moscow street corner didn't stand stiffly. He slouched. He smoked. He fit the rhythm of the street. The moment he didn't, a trained operative would spot him.

Here's how you actually do this: First, start with the 10 second or less baseline scan. When you walk into any new environment, stop for a moment. Don't make it obvious, just pause naturally and ask yourself three questions. What is the noise level? What is the movement pattern? What is the emotional temperature? Noise level means is it loud, quiet, or somewhere in between. Movement pattern means are people moving quickly, slowly, randomly, or in predictable flows. Emotional temperature means does the room feel relaxed, tense, excited, or boring. You're not looking for anything specific yet. You're just establishing

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the baseline. This takes just seconds once you practice it.

Now look for what breaks it. One person standing completely still when everyone else is moving. One person whose eyes aren't going to the same place everyone else's eyes are going. In a restaurant where something loud just happened like a glass breaking or kids screaming, etc., everyone's head turns toward it naturally. Everyone except the person who already knew it was coming. Or the person who is too carefully not looking. These moments are "tells," and once you start seeing them, you cannot unsee them.

Early on, Billy also taught me something about parking lots that I still use today. Before you get out of your car, sit for 10 seconds. Don't look at your phone. Just watch the lot. You are looking for a vehicle that is occupied but not moving. In a normal parking lot, occupied vehicles are either pulling in, pulling out, or someone is playing on their phone. A vehicle that has been sitting, engine possibly running, with someone inside who is watching foot traffic (and not on their

phone), breaks the baseline of the parking lot. That gets your attention. That changes your route.

The reason most people never develop this skill is because they only try to use it when they feel threatened. That's too late. When I was a young lad, Billy told me to practice baseline scanning everywhere, all the time, including grocery stores, airports, churches, basketball games, etc. Make it a habit when nothing is wrong and it becomes automatic when something is.

"You are looking for a vehicle that is occupied but not moving."

Quick story: One of the most successful Soviet spies ever to operate

on American soil was eventually caught partly because a young boy noticed something broke the baseline of ordinary life. A coin felt wrong. It felt different. That instinct was completely untrained and natural for the boy, and it eventually helped to bring down an intelligence network. The bottom line is, your instincts are powerful. Take 10-15 seconds now and then to hone them in and develop them better.

Electronic Distraction Device

The NexTorch ND30B Civilian Electronic Distraction Device is a compact, handheld self-defense tool designed to disrupt and disorient a potential threat in seconds. Basically, this device delivers a powerful combination of intense light and loud sound to overwhelm an attacker's senses.

The goal is to create confusion, hesitation, and a brief window for you to move away and get to safety or to take down the threat, whatever makes sense.

With a single click, the ND30B emits a high-intensity strobe combined with a sharp auditory burst. This sensory overload can impair vision, disrupt focus, and make it difficult for a criminal to continue advancing.

Because it does not rely on physical force, it's a practical option for a wide range of people including those who prefer alternatives to traditional weapons. (Even though I believe you should always have a gun for home defense.) But if you love gear like I do and want to add more options to your home defense arsenal, this might be something worth checking out.

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YOUR "BACKSTAGE PASS" TO PRECIOUS METAL PROFITS

While Stocks Swing Wildly, Lock In Stable Gains

By **Forest Hamilton**
Universal Coin & Bullion

I'm going to pull back the curtain and share what we discuss internally: How we evaluate markets, adjust strategy, and what we're seeing now that hasn't fully shown up in headlines yet. Because in markets like this, the edge comes from what's just beginning to emerge.

The Iran conflict has added fuel to an already unstable global environment. Energy markets are reacting. Currencies are under pressure. Central banks are walking a tight-rope between inflation and economic slowdown. Investors are searching for safety but also reacting emotionally to rapid price swings.

That creates the whipsaws we've seen: gold surging to \$5,600 an ounce, plunging into the low \$4,000, then bouncing back to nearly \$5,000. Silver surging to nearly \$120 an ounce, then falling to the \$60 range before topping \$80 again. Violent 1-2% stock swings based on each day's new development.

Volatility at this level is not random. It's the market trying to reprice risk in real time. When that happens, different assets behave very differently, even within the same category.

At my gold firm, back in 2019 we launched what we call our 20/20 Program, which was designed to identify select certified gold coins positioned to deliver strong performance independent of short-term gold price movements.

Since its inception, the 20/20 program has exceeded even our expectations. The coins have grown over 120% with some showing gains of over 200%. But from 2020 to 2022, gold didn't behave the way many expected. It fell from around \$2,000 an

ounce to \$1,600. For most investors, that would suggest negative returns. But the certified gold coins averaged over 20% per year in growth while gold was falling over 10% per year.

That's not luck. That's the result of understanding how different segments of the gold market respond under pressure. But what's happened more recently may be even more telling. In a volatile environment (outlined above), these certified coins didn't go down a single penny. Not one. That kind of performance isn't just about growth. It's about stability in chaos.

These types of certified coins are stable because they're influenced by more than just the spot price of gold. They're driven by scarcity (how many minted and still exist), circles of demand (investors, collectors, and Gold IRAs), wealth migration into tangible assets (more wealth moving to safe-havens like gold and silver), and timing cycles that don't always align with bullion.

In periods of extreme volatility (like now) these factors can create a powerful disconnect from traditional price movements. And that creates opportunity. Most investors think the next phase of this market is simple: "Gold goes higher... so I make money." But history and recent performance suggest something more nuanced. The next act isn't just about whether gold rises. It's about which forms of gold outperform.

What you see on financial news is only part of the story. Behind the scenes, experienced investors and firms are adjusting positions, re-



evaluating supply constraints, and identifying the next tier of opportunity.

And that's exactly what I'm doing. Not reacting to what just happened but positioning for what's coming next. And if current conditions are any indication, gold's next act may reward those who look beyond the obvious. Because sometimes the most important moves in a market are the ones happening behind the curtain.

I foresee gold over \$7,000 an ounce and silver back over \$100 an ounce. Meaning, if all you did was invest in those two metals, I believe you would do just fine in the long term. But, to protect yourself from some of the wild, reactive swings that we are seeing, you may wish to do some research and consider some certified gold coins because I believe those will do even better than "regular gold" in the long run.

[Publisher's Note: For questions about buying gold and silver coins you can contact Forest Hamilton directly at foresthilton@universalcoin.com or call 409-926-7001. 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.]

BUILDING A GREEN BERET 72-HOUR PACK

What I Carried When In Uniform And Today

By **Brian M. Morris**

*Master Sergeant (Retired),
U.S. Army Special Forces*

I spent a good portion of my life carrying a rucksack for a living, and if there's one lesson that stuck with me, it's this: you're only as prepared as what you can carry on your back. As a retired Green Beret, I keep a small bag ready to go. Not because I expect trouble, but because I've seen firsthand how fast things can fall apart when you're not prepared.

We used to call it a 72-hour pack. The name was a standard. Everything inside that bag had a purpose, and together, it gave you the ability to survive for three days in whatever environment you were operating in.

That timeframe wasn't random. Seventy-two hours is often the window where you're either getting resupplied, rescued, or you've figured out your next move. That mindset works as well in civilian life as it did in Special Forces.

In training, we'd take a guy, strip him down to the clothes on his back and his 72-hour pack, and drop him into an environment—sometimes deep woods, sometimes in the middle of a city. From there, he had to move along a preplanned corridor, hit timed checkpoints, and stay off the radar. No asking for help. No intentional contact with anyone. Just him, his gear, and his ability to think.

That kind of training quickly exposes the truth: if you packed wrong, you suffered. If you packed smart, you moved efficiently, stayed fed, hydrated, and focused. The key is balance. You can't carry everything, so carry what matters.

Food and water procurement always come first. In my bag, that meant a compact water filtration system,

purification tablets as a backup, and at least one durable container. Food was lightweight and calorie dense. Nothing fancy, just enough to keep the engine running.

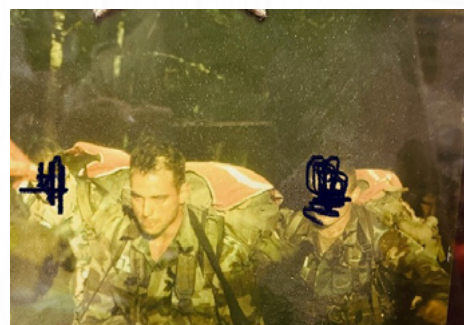
Shelter building was next. A poncho, some cordage, and a little know-how will keep you out of the elements. I've built shelters in jungles, mountains, and urban rubble using less than what most people carry to the gym.

For security we carried non-lethal options. Things like pepper spray and tools that could serve multiple purposes. We deliberately avoided firearms during those training exercises. That decision came after a hard lesson when a local law enforcement officer mistook one of our guys for a threat, and it cost him his life. That's something you don't forget. After that, we trained to survive and evade without escalating situations unnecessarily. Nowadays, I keep several full magazines for my EDC/CCW pistol.

Communications and signaling gear can be key to staying alive. A signal mirror, whistle, or a small radio can give you options. Redundancy matters. Batteries die. Electronics fail. You always need a backup plan. Cell phones can be an all-in-one communications plan, but they don't work without power. A small battery pack, maybe a solar charger if the environment supports it. But you don't rely on it. Treat it as a force multiplier, not a crutch.

First aid is not about carrying a full trauma kit you don't know how to use. It's about having the essentials and knowing exactly how to apply them under stress. Tourniquet, bandages, basic meds (pain relief, anti-inflammatory, allergic reactions). Keep it simple and effective.

Land navigation and orienteering are skills that weigh little but pay off



big. Map, compass, and the knowledge to use them. GPS is great, until it isn't. I've seen too many people become completely lost the moment a screen goes blank.

Fire building ties everything together. Warmth, water purification, signaling, morale, etc., it all starts with fire. Don't rely on one method. Carry multiple ways to make a fire.

Those 72-hour exercises taught me the importance of a solid PACE plan: Primary, Alternate, Contingency, Emergency. You need layers of planning and problem solving. If your primary fails, you shift. That's the difference between preparation and hope.

These days, my bag is smaller than what I carried while in uniform, but the philosophy hasn't changed. It's about respecting reality. Emergencies don't send invitations. When they show up, you need to be packed and ready. Prepare now. Build a system that works. Test it when you can to ensure that if you ever need it, you know you can trust your life to it.

THE BEST LAID PLANS ARE WORTHLESS WITHOUT THIS

It Makes You Do Stupid Things

By Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,
DIA, NSA*

Besides Max and me (the clandestine operators), we had analysts, targeters, geopolitical strategists, SMEs (Subject Matter Experts), and senior CIA leadership around the final planning table.

The framework was laid out by a special planning team in the DO (Directorate of Operations). The preliminary Ops Planning Team had worked closely to ensure our backstories and legends supporting our deep cover were legitimized by all the tools of the trade.

One way we bolster our legend (alias background) is by using officers who rented apartments and cars, sent letters and emails, made purchases, and created a bona fide trail supporting our claims about who we were, where we came from, and why we were there. These precursor activities substantiate our Operational Cover. Anyone who investigated would find our story matches our past activities, travel, work history, addresses, car rentals, vacations, etc.

The Cover Shop operates around the clock and around the world to build us virtually impenetrable cover stories. They save lives and protect America in ways most Americans will never know or understand.

Max and I had our legends, and all of our legal and operational documents to sustain our Operational Cover.

Our mission protocol required us to ingress the area via common carrier travel. We arrived in the target town via local bus from the nearby larger metropolis. This quaint little area was known for its mines that



produced precious metals, some exotic gemstones, and several other valuable commodities. Among their multiple streams of income, they were also highly successful at illicit arms trafficking, human trafficking, cocaine, cyberfraud, and financial crimes.

Long before the Ukraine war, this part of Europe was deeply corrupt and hid much of its illicit activities behind the veil of mining and exporting Slovak Opals, Czech Podsedice (Bohemian garnets), Emeralds, and Bulgarian gold.

Evil men combined their networks of sourcing and moving precious gemstones and metals with their wicked schemes to traffic children, illicit arms, and narcotics. A few at the top kept the enterprise thriving. They enjoyed the protection of military and government officials. Someone needed to get in there, discover the routes, methods, sources, destinations, names, addresses, dates, vehicles, and exactly what was moving from where to where.

Satellites and phone taps were not

penetrative enough. We needed to get boots in there and eyes and ears pressed against windows and walls. Max and I followed the plan with precision. We were given timetables and routes by the targeting team. We had studied photographs and spent days learning the voices of our targets.

Neither of us knew the language, but you don't have to understand the words to recognize the voice, and you don't have to know names to recognize their photos. We spent a few weeks compiling all of the data to create a "traffic analysis" chart. These rudimentary charts depict who gives orders to whom, when the orders are issued, who does what, etc. It's like one of those big wall-hanging organizational charts that include names, phone numbers, addresses, job titles, family info, and their place in the food chain.

To collect this intelligence, we had to use minimal and maximum intrusions. Minimal activities include observing, photographing, recording, and other activities from outside the facilities. Even if "outside" means



placing devices against the exterior walls or windows, tapping power lines to measure power usage rates and times, water flow volumes, and digging through trash cans.

Maximum intrusion means we have to gain surreptitious entry, place bugging devices and trackers, take samples, and inspect the most secure areas we can access without triggering alarms, tripping alert devices, or leaving indications of our presence.

It took us several weeks, all the while pretending to develop a business network to purchase and export legal items through questionable commercial channels. Our plan worked. We achieved our collection tasking and finally had a clear, well-documented understanding of who, what, when, where, and how.

The next phase of the plan required us to conduct a certain activity to distract everyone and give us a chance to perform a special operational activity. For this to succeed as a clandestine operation, we had to hunker down in a hideaway set up in advance by a local source on the ground.

We were looking forward to those three days of rest and recovery because the special operations activity that would consume us for a straight 48 hours prior to our self-sequestering, would put mental, emotional, and physical strain on us near our breaking point.

We arrived at the hide site safe and sound, and exhausted, thirsty, and famished. We got inside, checked the

interior, established a security perimeter, and sat down. Max said, "I am starved. Let's see what grub they left us." Panic ensued when we couldn't find a morsel of food or a drop of water in the place, and three days before we could step outside. No rescue, relief, or hope of a miracle. Just sit there and try to not die.

Anyone who has been hungry and thirsty to the point of body cramps knows you will try everything in your power to satisfy your vital need for food and water. And we were about to trade our safety and risk the entire operation on a night trip to find sustenance. We used our best evasion and avoidance skills to move out through the area. We found some low-level provisions behind a shop that sold leather goods. It was like the proprietor had grabbed these items from the local market, set them down, and forgotten to bring them in.

We got some water from a stream and brought it back to the hide with our newly acquired groceries. After boiling the water and cooking some of the items, we had our first nourishment in almost 55 hours.

We started to feel a bit bad about it as this might have been all the guy had, but we justified it like this: If he was part of the syndicate trafficking girls, women, drugs, or other illicit activities, then to heck with him. And if he were an innocent, then what we were doing would make him, his family, and his neighborhood safer and help rid them of the criminals that lived and worked among them.

I wrote in our after-action report that no plan was a good plan unless it included provisioning of food, water, and emergency medical. Overlooking food or water is a fatal flaw. We are not talking about intermittent fasting for religious observances or health considerations. Going without meaningful calorie intake while doing heavy physical activities means exposing yourself to injury and physical and mental enervation.

We didn't have some of the amazing shelf-stable and temperature-stable food options that are now available. We relied on MREs (Meals Ready to Eat).

So, there's no reason to do anything crazy because you let yourself get way too hungry. Keep survival food in your vehicle, backpack, bug out location, and anywhere else you may need it. Don't wait, start building your stockpile today.



SAVINT

YOUR MONTHLY SAVINGS INTELLIGENCE

The Texas Cowboy Knife is finally back, but I was only able to get about 40 of them. So, I'm giving first dibs to readers like you. If you haven't seen this Cowboy Knife yet, it's handcrafted by two fellows in Texas. Check out www.TexasCowboyKnife.com. (It's definitely one of my favorite fixed blade knives and it comes with 2 free sheaths.

LANDMARK STUDY PROVES THIS WILL IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

How To Avoid Major Diseases

By Dr. Omar Hamada
Special Operations Physician

The European Heart Journal just released a pivotal study involving just over 472,000 men and women with a mean age of just over 56 years to assess incidence of eight chronic diseases. Of the participants, 96,408 wore biometrics with accelerometers, while the remainder self-reported.

The diseases considered included heart disease, atrial fibrillation, type 2 diabetes, immune-mediated inflammatory diseases, fatty liver disease, chronic respiratory disease, chronic kidney disease, dementia, and all-cause mortality.

The primary goal of this study was to examine the link between vigorous physical activity as a percentage of total physical activity, and the incidence of chronic disease.

The results were jaw-dropping. The reduction in chronic disease between those who engaged in regular vigorous physical activity and those who did not, was a remarkable 29% to 61% depending on the chronic disease considered.

Various levels of vigorous activity were considered: 0%, 02%, 2-4%, and >4%. The inflection point came at a total time of 4% of total activity with both increases in intensity as well as increases in volume of exercise contributing, though intensity contributed significantly more.

Independent of total time of physical activity, intensity of exercise had a much stronger inverse relationship with chronic disease. In other words, the more vigorous physical activity one engages in, the lower the inci-

dence of those eight chronic diseases listed above. In fact, for some diseases like inflammatory-mediated ones, intensity of exercise is practically all that matters.

We've long recommended 150-300 minutes of moderate physical activity per week (4 METS) - say Heart Rate Zone 2

or 3, for optimum health. However, now we're seeing that using 4% of that to engage in vigorous activity at 8 METS or more (Heart Rate Zone 4 and 5) results in incredible benefits far above what we thought.

Even modest amounts of vigorous activity, say 15 to 20 minutes per week, significantly lowers all-cause mortality as well as incidence of chronic disease.

Those who engage in regular vigorous physical activity for as little as 4% of total physical activity time, see reductions in chronic disease as follows. A 63% reduction in dementia risk, a 60% reduction in type 2 diabetes risk, a 48% reduction in fatty liver disease, a 46% reduction in premature death, a 44% reduction in chronic respiratory diseases, a 41% reduction in chronic kidney disease, a 39% reduction in immune-mediated inflammatory disease, a 31% reduction in cardiovascular disease, and a 29% reduction in atrial fibrillation.

Vigorous physical activity triggers mechanisms in the body and within our cells that lower-intensity activity simply cannot. Vigorous physical activity remodels muscles, bones, blood vessels, the lungs, the brain, and the heart itself.

It makes blood vessels more flexible and reduces plaques. It teaches the body to more efficiently utilize oxygen to create energy in

the mitochondria - we measure this with what we call the VO2 Max (a good VO2 Max, though age dependent, is over 40). It also teaches the

body to more efficiently metabolize lactic acid - the byproduct of energy production, and the "burn" in our muscles as we exercise.

Vigorous physical activity also reduces systemic inflammation and can help with dermatologic disorders like psoriasis, as well as bony disorders like arthritis of various types. It keeps brain cells healthy, improves circulation, and reduces the risk of dementia.

Though current guidelines focus on time spent in physical activity, we now see more clearly that the type and composition of physical activity matters. Yes, there are other influential factors to consider, like sleep, nutrition, smoking, alcohol intake, caloric intake, macros, sleep apnea, BMI, hypertension, hypercholesterolemia, etc., but in the arena of physical activity, it's clear that intensity not only matters, but is vital for all sorts of risk reduction.

This is a strong reminder that exercise is in fact medicine. Replace your pills with great whole food nutrition, and regular vigorous exercise to live longer and healthier!

"Vigorous physical activity triggers mechanisms in the body."

HOW TO “FLIP THE SCRIPT” ON PREDATORS

6 Strategies To Keep Safe From Robbers

By Matt Numrich

Head Instructor Of Spy Black Belt

As we get older, we tend to slow down a bit, which can make us noticeable to criminals with bad intentions. That’s because criminals look for what they perceive to be easier targets (people who are alone, distracted, predictable, etc.).

But there are several proactive steps seniors can take to reduce their chances of being targeted. So, here are six practical strategies to help you stay safe while at home or out and about.

Whether you’re running errands, going on a walk, or heading out to dinner, there’s strength in numbers. People who are alone are more likely to attract the attention of a predator looking for an easy opportunity. Going out with friends, a spouse, or even a neighbor makes you less approachable to criminals and also gives you immediate support if anything seems off. Just having one person with you can make a big difference in how you’re perceived by potential threats.

Carrying a self-defense item whether it’s pepper spray, a personal alarm, a tactical pen, a knife, a gun, etc., is only helpful if you’re comfortable using it. It’s not just about having a tool; it’s about knowing how to react in a stressful situation. The idea is to level the playing field.

Seniors may not have the same strength or speed we once did, but a well-chosen tool combined with training can be a real gamechanger in a moment of danger. So, make sure that whatever tool you choose to use, you spend a bit of time practicing with it and getting familiar with it.

Awareness is a powerful defense. When you’re aware of what’s going



on around you, you’re more likely to notice when something feels off. This doesn’t mean living in fear, instead, it’s making a habit of staying observant. Avoid walking around with your head down, buried in a phone. Take note of who’s nearby, what vehicles are parked around you, and where exits are in public spaces.

It’s easy to get comfortable in familiar places, but that’s often when people miss subtle signs of danger. Most people enjoy having a routine. But doing the same thing at the same time every day, like walking the dog at 7 a.m. or visiting the same grocery store every Thursday, can create a pattern that someone who’s paying attention could exploit.

By varying your schedule, even just slightly, you become harder to predict. Your unpredictability adds a layer of difficulty for anyone watching your habits and trying to figure out the best time to strike.

Good home security doesn’t have to be high-tech or expensive. Start with the basics: keep doors and windows locked at all times, even when you’re home. Many people assume they’re safe during the day or while running quick errands, but those are often the moments criminals take advantage of.

An alarm system, whether professionally installed or DIY, adds another layer of protection. Cameras, especially motion-detecting ones, can act as both a deterrent and an early warning system. They can alert you to activity around your home and provide evidence if anything ever happens.

Dogs are not just loyal companions, they’re also great natural alarms. You don’t need a large or intimidating breed to add to your safety. Small dogs with a loud bark are just as effective in drawing attention and making intruders think twice. Most burglars don’t want to deal with the unpredictable noise or alert a dog might cause. Even when you’re not home, barking from behind a door can discourage someone from trying to break in. It’s one more way to make your home a less appealing target.

As you can see, staying safe doesn’t have to mean living in fear. By making a few smart adjustments to daily habits and home security, you can be more confident and better protected, wherever you are. I made a quick video for you about these six strategies to help you see them in action. You can watch the video at this link:

www.fearlessstreetfighter.com/seniors-safety/