

# SPY + SURVIVAL BRIEFING

LIFESAVING STRATEGIES FROM FORMER CIA AND SPECIAL OPERATIONS PERSONNEL

## 3 WAYS TO HIDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER FROM ANYONE

### A Daring Book Heist Gone Wrong

By Jason Hanson

*Former CIA Officer*

One morning, four men carried out a daring heist. The group planned to steal \$5.7 million worth of books from the library at Transylvania University in Kentucky in hopes of selling the rare books for millions of dollars. The multimillion-dollar book collection included John James Audubon's "Birds of America."

During a tour of the library, the four men had learned a similar set of books had sold for \$12 million. This is when they decided to steal the books. The four college-aged guys viewed the heist as a way to rebel against the wealthy lifestyle. They believed the money from the books would give them the ability to do whatever they wanted. They said it



was their escape, their way out. The men spent about a year meticulously planning out the heist.

The men drew maps of the library. They counted how many people entered and exited the library and at what times. They checked every door in the library and knew exactly where they led.

They knew the heist would be pointless if they didn't have a way to sell the rare books. So, they spent time researching rare books, auction houses, and Swiss Bank accounts. They even contacted black-market book buyers in New York City and Amsterdam. By the time of the theft, they had buyers for all the books they planned to steal.

But the books would need to be appraised by an auction house. So, the group created a fake e-mail account and reached out to top auction hous-

es. The men created disguises to make them look like a group of old men. But, almost a year of planning didn't stop everything from falling apart.

The day the men carried out the heist, they went into the library and used a small stun gun on the librarian. As two of the men carried the books down an emergency stairwell, they ran into another librarian. This was not something they had planned for. The men dropped some of the books and ran out of the building with fewer books than they had hoped to steal.

The group still needed to get the books appraised, so they made an appointment with Christie's auction house in New York City. They hoped the appraisal wouldn't draw any attention. But they were wrong. The men had contacted the auction house using their fake e-mail address. But, at the meeting with the auction house, one of the thieves

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gave the folks at the auction house his real phone number.

They had spent almost a year planning their crime and, in the end, what undid the entire thing was a simple phone number. Police tracked the phone number to one of the men. Eventually, all four of them were arrested by the FBI and police recovered the stolen books. They each pled guilty to multiple crimes including robbery, theft of cultural heritage, and transporting stolen goods and were sentenced to 87-month prison terms. All because of a phone number.

Now, while these men were carrying out a crime, there are plenty of legal circumstances where you might want to hide your phone number. For a simple example, maybe you are calling a car dealership to inquire about a car, but you don't want them calling you back hundreds of times, so you don't call from your real phone number.

So, here are a few ways to block your phone number when privacy is important.

#### **Talk to your cell phone carrier:**

Perhaps you want to block your cell phone number every time you make a call. Maybe you are a private person and don't want to share your cell phone number. You can contact your wireless carrier and tell them you want your number to be private. Explain that you want to block all outgoing calls from showing your phone number.

With most carriers, you can use \*82 to temporarily unblock your number, so you can unblock it if you wanted to call someone and reveal your number. If you always want

your phone number to be blocked, the easiest way to do this is to contact your carrier directly.

**Use a burner application:** If you don't want to hassle with your carrier, another option is using a burner app. There are hundreds of apps that can do this. One good one is called Burner. It allows you to call and text from a burner number and it's available for both iOS and Android. Burner costs \$4.99 a month for one phone number. Another option is the Google Voice app. It lets you choose a new phone number to make voice calls and texts. All it requires is a Google account. There are no monthly fees with Google Voice, but it does use your existing phone minutes and data. But the number that shows will be your Google Voice number and not your real number.

#### **Block your number on your device:**

If you don't want to contact your wireless carrier and don't want to use an app, you can block your number on a specific device. For example, if you have an iPhone or Android, you can go into the settings of the phone and block your number. If you do this, your number will appear private for every call that you make. The thing about changing the setting on your phone is that you can turn it on and off as much as you like. You don't have to call your wireless provider or deal with an application.

With scams on the rise and people always trying to get your personal information, if no one has your phone number, it will be less likely to fall into the hands of a scammer. Use these tips to keep your number private, if it makes sense for you.

## **KelTec KS7 Bullpup Shotgun**

KelTec is known for making unique guns and one of their newer products is the KelTec KS7 bullpup shotgun. A bullpup design shotgun is much shorter overall, but doesn't sacrifice barrel length.

The shotgun has a single tube design that can hold seven, 12-gauge rounds. It's 26.25 inches long and has an 18.5 inch barrel.

The shotgun comes with a fiber-optic triangle sight and M-LOK slots to add lasers or lights. It also has a large push-button safety, ambidextrous pump release, and the pump has a hand stop to help keep you safe. Another great feature is the visible round-counting holes. This means you can know exactly what your ammo count is with just a quick glance.

The KS7 should have no problem with standard 2.75 or 3-inch shells. But, I would avoid any type of mini-shells with this bullpup. It could have issues cycling.

The KS7 design is light and easy to maneuver, which makes it simple to move from one target to another. The action ejects downwards, which is nice for both left and right-handed shooters. Overall, it's user-friendly, so if you have ever thought about getting a bullpup shotgun this would be a great choice. The KS7 sells for about \$600 new.

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# SPECIAL FORCES MANEUVER FOR SURVIVING DEADLY CONFRONTATIONS

## When In Doubt, Run?

By Matt Numrich  
*Head Instructor of Spy Black Belt*

When I speak to groups of women at my self-defense academy, they get the answer to one very important question correct, while many guys don't. The question is: "What is the goal of self-defense?" Simple enough, right? But some guys puff out their chests and say things like, "To beat the crap out of the other guy."

But look at what women say. They answer, "to run, escape or survive," and those are the right answers. The goal is definitely to "run, escape and survive," and even if you have to use the techniques you've been training with you still need to leave the attacker at some point and do it quickly.

Now, I was taught most of my firearms skills by one of the most decorated and experienced Special Forces soldiers this country has ever known. To me, he is still one of the "bravest" men I have ever met. Many of the stories he tells don't include massive firefights where he is standing in a pile of grenade pins, fighting off dozens of enemies.

Instead, many stories actually include him saying something like, "So, we came upon the target, engaged, and after taking heavy fire we didn't anticipate, we executed our escape plan." Or he would say something to the tune of, "Our mission was over, but we had to make a decision whether to stay and take on the last remaining adversaries, but because we didn't



have a solid plan in place, we ran."

One time, his group was surprised by only three men, when he had almost 12 guys, but he said his group quickly made the decision to turn tail and run because they didn't have the superior fighting position.

**"Some guys puff out their chests and say things like, 'To beat the crap out of the other guy.'"**

My point is, if one of the bravest men I've known, who has tons of experiences in true warfare, can turn and run to escape and survive, why can't I?

My mentor's group was always better trained and equipped, but even that doesn't ensure that something can't go wrong. Many times "turning tail and running" is the best combative choice.

Therefore, remind yourself of this simple rule: The goal of self-defense is to escape and survive. Where possible, your best bet is to flee. If you get attacked, throw a quick low line kick to the opponent's groin. You could stay and follow up with more knee strikes than you can count, leaving him in a bloody mess, or you can use that shot of pain to quickly escape.

If a verbal fight breaks out between you and someone else, sometimes the best option is to not engage and simply leave the situation. Whether you escape and "live to fight another day" before, during or after a fight is an option you need to have and train on.

# LESSONS FROM NEARLY BEING BLOWN OUT OF THE SKY

## Knowing When To “Go”

By Michael D.

*Former Clandestine Officer, CIA,  
DIA, NSA*

It was bad and quickly getting much worse. Our #3 Operator called out, “Flash! Flash! Flash! We have two Soviet-piloted MiG 21’s vectoring to intercept our platform. Distance, a little over 100 nautical miles and closing to within missile range with orders to shoot us down.” Our #3 op was our tactical threat Operator. His single mission was to focus on airborne threats, anywhere in the airspace, that could become a threat to our mission aircraft.

I was accustomed to hearing him call out warnings about enemy fighters being launched or heading in our direction. His announcements usually included language like, “500 nautical miles out, churning and burning. They’ll burn through their fuel long before they get within air-to-air missile range.” The #1 Op or Airborne Mission Supervisor (AMS), or myself, the #2 Op on these missions, would respond something along the lines of, “Copy. Advise of any change in threat to mission aircraft. Maintain target tracking and provide updates.” Then we would turn our attention back to the business of collecting intelligence on our specific targets.

But this was the first time any of us had heard our #3 Op report enemy aircraft approaching so closely without our prior awareness. An enemy interceptor fighter, if it had target lock-on that close to the mission aircraft, meant we could be shot down in a matter of minutes. Almost simultaneously, our Electronic Warfare Officer (EWO) called out, “Flash! Flash! Flash! We are being painted with MiG 21 target acquisition radar — and enemy weapons radar is hot! Engaging electronic countermeasures.”



The front-end crew, entirely isolated from all of the specialized intelligence equipment and operations in the main cabin of the spy plane, acknowledged the immediate threat and announced evasive maneuvers. These three activities were a bit like a countdown. 3... Enemy aircraft in-bound with orders to kill, 2... Enemy aircraft weapons radar HOT, 1... Evasive maneuvers. We knew that it was go time.

Have you ever agreed to perform a specific action and agreed to a 3-2-1 countdown? If so, you know the famous dilemma. Do you go on 1? Or is it 3, 2, 1, then go?

Training and team cohesion keeps those small, deadly miscues and mistakes from happening. Knowing when to go can mean the difference between success and failure, between life and death. When the stakes are at their highest, you don’t get a do-over.

When the pilot announced, “Evasive maneuvers,” I instinctively reached up over my head and to the right, nine inches. I activated the emergency transmitter that was pre-programmed to send all of our operational data to all ground stations, airborne, and sea platforms within our pre-designated alert area.

I also sequentially selected two switches (which were protected by red covers) and then rotated a lever to “All Channels - Open Air.” Doing this meant that as I made my announcement into the microphone on my helmet’s audio system, it would broadcast my message in the clear (unencrypted) on all military and civilian channels over VHF and UHF (including both Guard frequencies). Additionally, it would bounce that same emergency call off of the operational military satellite dedicated to airborne combat and covert intelligence platforms operating around the world.

My call was not, “Mayday, Mayday,” because that is only for aircraft in danger of crashing immediately. We flew covert reconnaissance missions with flight plans that are never filed and on flight paths that do not exist. My call was to warn the military and intelligence world that an act of war, executed by a hostile nation, was in process. An American covert reconnaissance mission was under active attack by enemy forces directed to destroy their target.

My call was a special distress cover term known only to, yet by every, special intelligence operative in all branches and even non-uniformed operators. Radio, Sat-com, and



Morse operators all have that special cover term on their EAM (Emergency Action Message) cards. And 99% of them have no idea what it means, other than to immediately alert the highest-level command authority.

We train and practice for this, but it was the first time I ever had to actually do it. Imagine, out of nowhere, hearing someone counting down 3... 2... 1... and just jumping without asking any questions and without a moment of hesitation or doubt and without even giving consideration to "What if?"

While I was doing my job, the EWO was jamming the targeting radar, the #3 Op was reporting every minor change in the fighter's trajectory and our #6 Op was interfering with the voice and telemetry signals that the MiG pilots were exchanging with their ground control intercept stations. The pilot was executing extremely radical maneuvers that stressed the airframe to the point we could hear it groaning, bending, and popping, and sounds

like rushing waters thundered through the cabin.

Our dive was so steep and the turns so sharp, that it was hard to get a hold of anything to get stabilized before our inertia and momentum threw us in a new direction.

Which of the tactical responses worked or how many of them were effective? I do not know for sure and I don't think any of us on that mission ever will. Only the pilots of those two MiGs know what happened that caused them to break-off and return to their base without firing a missile.

What I do know for sure is that if we had not all trained and practiced exactly what to do and exactly when to do it, those fighters might have had just enough time to do their jobs. Everything was done in the length of time it takes to draw your next and possibly last, breath.

On our flight back to the airbase, no one was talking much. It felt slow and somber in the plane. Each of us could sense how close that mission was to being our last. We all spent time reflecting as we headed home. That was when all of the "What ifs?" flooded our minds.

Most people usually face these kinds of instant life and death decisions as individuals. For example, a person sees the car in the other lane drifting and has to calculate how much time and room they have to avoid that car while not hitting someone or something else.

Those kinds of reactions, however, are a thousand times slower when someone has to coordinate their reactions and responses with others. It often requires debate, and almost always requires discussion, before they can get everyone to act in harmony to avoid a catastrophe. Obviously, that takes a lot longer than everyone taking instant action as a result of training and practice.

That's why we train and practice until it's a matter of muscle memory, even an involuntary response. We train so we know instantly when to "go" and what to do.

My big concern today is that we are now experiencing global phenomena and radical, localized events that will require us to have already planned, trained, and practiced (as families, friends, or groups) to take immediate action.

We have to be ready with a synchronized response, without waiting for extensive provocation before we take our pre-planned, but unusual and necessary actions. It will require us to expect to witness or experience certain recognizable events that are indications of existential threats and be ready to respond immediately.

Those precursors may be your only warning that there is an enemy locked on to you and about to destroy you and your family if you do not take evasive maneuvers immediately. This could mean getting out of town, and into the hills and mountains or whatever your survival and self-defense plan is. Remember, it only takes a few moments of delay, hesitation, or indecision for an adversary to complete his mission and deny you of yours.

So, you need to know the precursors you're looking for. And know the response you're going to make to them. Then get everyone in your family or group on the same page. Everyone must know what to do and when it needs done and you must drill and practice together so that no time is wasted and there is no hesitation about implementing the plan. You and your loved ones must know when to "go."



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# PROTECTING THE COUNTRY FROM ALL THREATS — FOREIGN OR DOMESTIC

## The Hand of Vengeance for a Grieving Nation

By Dr. Omar Hamada  
*Special Operations Physician*

I've been thinking about what I wanted to write to you about this month since last month's anniversary of 9-11. The fact is, today, it's more vital than ever to remember what binds us as Americans.

On September 11th, my ringing phone awakened me from a dead sleep. It was my secretary. "Dr. Hamada, you need to get up and turn the TV on right now." "Why?" I asked. "I can't describe it, you just need to see it," she responded.

I lumbered out of bed, shuffled into the den, and turned the TV on. I sat there glued to the television for the rest of the day. A little before 8 a.m. CST, a plane had flown into the World Trade Center. Then at 8:03 a.m. CST, the whole world watched in stunned helplessness as another plane approached the second tower, took aim, and flew directly into it, disappearing in a huge fireball. I stared in disbelief, as tears of sadness and rage silently streamed

down my face. Pacing as I watched the replays over and over, I mumbled to myself, "We are at war."

I had friends and family in New York. That's where I came to Christ as a young child. It's where I laid on what my parents and doctors thought might be my death bed at Winthrop Hospital in Mineola, Long Island, NY. I later returned to New York as a teen for both undergrad and opera training. The city was my second home.

A year prior, I took a leave of absence from my U.S. Army Special Forces unit to go back and complete an OB/GYN residency at the University of Tennessee in Memphis. Officially, I was on Inactive Reserve. At approximately 0930 CST, I called our battalion HHD S1 in Huntsville, Alabama, and told them to do whatever it took to reactivate me immediately because I would not be left behind as our nation responded to these horrific attacks.

Within an hour, our 20th Special Forces Group Surgeon called me and asked if I was sure I wanted to be reactivated. He said, "So far, you're one of the only ones who wants to go." I told him we were attacked and he'd better make sure I was on the list to be reactivated.

At approximately 1500 CST, he called me back and told me that our unit had just received a warning order from U.S. Special Forces

Command at Fort Bragg in preparation for an Operations Order from the Pentagon. Game on.

Within days, we had sent CIA personnel into Afghanistan to gather intelligence and lay the groundwork for a larger invasion. Our turn in the box came in July 2002. We pre-mobilized at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

Our last week there, I took my men into NYC, rented a large room at the Marriott Marquis in Times Square, and spent time in the city preparing ourselves for what was to come.

The next day, we walked down to Ground Zero. We stood there in silence and disbelief for what must've been 2 hours with tears streaming down our cheeks. Steeling our hearts. Hardening our resolve. Preparing our minds to mete out justice. We ended our stay with an iconic group picture by the famous steel cross rising out of the rubble.

After we left Ground Zero, we must've walked blocks before anyone said anything. I stopped at the subway, bought a dozen NYC Subway tokens, and gave one to each man to place on his dog tags. The tokens hung close to our hearts as a constant reminder of why we were doing what we were about to do.

Soon thereafter, we kissed our families goodbye, and flew into harm's way as the hand of vengeance of a grieving nation. I will never forget. What has happened recently has led some of us to feel it was all for naught, but we still fight to protect the land of the free and the home of the brave — whether overseas or here at home.





# SURVIVAL LESSONS FROM ARMY RANGER WAR GAMES

## 3 Survival Shelters That Could Save Your Life

By EJ Snyder

*Former Army Ranger and Extreme Survivalist*

I remember being a young soldier out on a war games training mission during the winter months and myself and two soldiers wound up separated from our gear. We were miles away from where it was, with no chance of seeing it any time soon, and all we had were the clothes on our backs. As night fell, the temperatures plummeted fast. We were left to fend for ourselves.

Thankfully, we were able to snatch some large leaf-size trash bags and fill them with pine needles and leaves to use as makeshift sleeping bags. The cold, coupled with the

wind picking up, meant we had only one option — especially since we couldn't have a fire, as this was army war games training and a fire would lead the enemy to find us.

The option was to quickly build a debris shelter and the three of us climbed in with our makeshift sleeping bags, using only body heat to warm us after we closed the door.

It was about 32 degrees that night, but we were good to go.

The shelter worked like a charm and literally saved our butts. So now, I'm going to share with you how to construct shelters that could save your

life if (heaven forbid) you ever get trapped in the woods and need them.

The first shelter is called a Debris Hut. To make it, simply heap up a big mound of debris from the forest

floor. Then excavate a pocket that is large enough to crawl into. After getting inside, partially block the doorway to minimize air circulation. If it isn't cramped and

dirty, you've made the air space too big for your body to heat it sufficiently. This quick shelter can be easily made and save your hide.

The next shelter is a little more complex, but not much. It's an A-Frame shelter. The pitched roof of the A-frame shelter offers more protection against the wind than a simple lean-to would and can still be heated by fire at the entrance. One drawback is that the occupant can't lie down parallel to the fire for even warmth, so you may be able to heat your head, or your feet, but not both at the same time.

Here's how to make an A-Frame shelter: Lift one end of a log and either lash it or wedge it into the crotch of a tree. Tilt poles on either side to form an A-frame roof. Now you simply strengthen and thatch the roof to make a solid shelter. In other words, toss debris on it whether it's bark, pine needles, leaves, etc.

The final shelter is a more enclosed shelter, which will take more time to build than the Debris Hut or A-Frame shelter, but your efforts will be doubly rewarded. The shelter is called a Wickiup. It's a forerunner of the tepee and remains the quintessential primitive shelter. It's

**"As night fell, the temperatures plummeted fast. We were left to fend for ourselves."**





sturdy enough to blunt prevailing winds, weatherproof, and quickly built for nomadic hunters, but comfortable enough to serve as a long-term home. It can be partially or fully enclosed and vented to permit an inside fire.

To build a Wickiup, tilt three poles together in tripod form and bind them together near the top. If you can find one or more poles with a Y at one end, tilt the others against the crotch, eliminating the need for cordage. Next, tilt other poles against the wedges formed by the tripod in a circular form and thatch a covering over the poles, leaving a front opening and a vent at the top for smoke. Then cover the shelter with debris and you're all set.

Aside from making these shelters, here's how to make a "shingle" roof and thatch weatherproofing. Every time I go into the wilderness with a plan to only use a survival shelter to go lighter on gear, a quality roof or thatch is critical. In all my times on the Discovery Channel's "Naked and Afraid", a good roof is what kept me in the game. In fact, the

last A-Frame Shelter I built using Saw Palmettos as roofing not only kept me dry but also warm in the freezing swamp temperatures.

Here's how to make a roof and thatch. First, shingles can be made from bark. Birch bark is one of the best natural materials for shingle making. Use it if it's available. When you're building a bark wall, make sure the bottom of each shingle layer overlaps the top of the row below it. Keep rows in place with poles and insulate over the top with moss or snow. The walls can be pitched at less than a 45-degree angle.

Moss is another one of the best natural materials for roof making, if you can find it, as it is sometimes scarce because it only grows well in certain regions. It's a great insulator and bedding, but whisks away water and does have some water retention. This makes it a good back up source of drinkable water because moss has natural filtering to it too.

Palms are also good materials for roof making if you find yourself in a swamp or a jungle where they grow. Palms make great waterproofing and seal well as they dry. You have to watch them and replace them after several days though because when they dry, they tend

to shrink and wither. But, once you have a base layer down and add two or three more, you'll never want to use another type of material again.

**"On the Discovery Channel's 'Naked and Afraid', a good roof is what kept me in the game."**

Next is thatching. Weatherproof materials should be stacked onto the framework, then bound with cordage or held in position by more poles. Wall angle depends upon the thatching, the more porous the materials the steeper the walls.

For bough thatching, overlay the framework with a mat of evergreen boughs, oriented tips down with the undersides of the needles facing out. For the best protection, compress the thatching with poles and pack over with snow. Pine and spruce boughs offer meager water resistance and are better reserved for the steeper walls of shelters like wickiups. You can also thatch with grass, which you would do in a similar manner.

As you can see, these shelters are not hard to construct. With this little bit of "know how," you should be able to quickly and easily make all three. A good shelter will protect you and your loved ones from the elements, keep you warm and dry, and help you feel safer, which can allow you to get a good night's sleep.

Mastering even just one of these great shelters will go a long way to helping you stay prepared since you never know when you'll need this skill to save your life.

