

The Way of the Shadow

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So, you've decided. You've decided to cross the barrier that separates the light from the dark. You've decided to plunge yourself into a world of high risks and high rewards. You've chosen on your own accord to break the rules of your society for perhaps little more than an adrenaline rush. You've chosen to enter the shadows...

I congratulate you on conquering one of the hardest obstacles man has ever known - the fear of authority. Your liberation, however, is one of short celebration, because the obstacle course has just begun. The way of the shadow is a harsh one. Failure can mean the loss of your possessions, the loss of your freedom, even the loss of your life.

You must have your reasons to step into the darkness, and I will not try to stop you, for I too enter the night regularly now. It is human nature to explore and conquer the unknown; there should be neither shame nor fear of it. Perhaps you wish to gain wealth by theft, knowledge by recon, or even the death of an enemy. Maybe you are being paid to kill or gather intelligence, maybe you simply wish to experience the thrill of the unknown.

This guide has been written to get you where you need, regardless of your reasons. The procedures described in this text have been created to guide you safely through the night and guide you back out. It is a compilation of my personal experiences, other operatives' experiences, written knowledge, written operative experiences and even some experimental methods you may have an interest in. You'll need as much information as you can if you wish to go into the darkest depths of the shadows.

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The Law - Disclaimer

First and foremost, trespassing and breaking and entering are serious criminal offenses. By performing any of the activities described in this guide, you will be responsible for any and all consequences. Remember that you will have willingly broken the law, this guide certainly did not force you to do anything, nor have I. As such I, Psychlonic, cannot be held responsible should the long arm of the law tap you on the shoulder. This guide is meant to be used in a scholarly manner, because we must all remember that knowing how to trespass, break, and enter is not a crime, but trespassing as well as breaking and entering is.

As far as copying this thing is concerned, I really couldn't care less what you do with it. If you think you can print out a copy and sell it to some idiot, power to you. No credit to me due. Hell, you can rearrange the entire thing and put your name on it if you want. Throw it on a compilation CD perhaps and sell it online. Why not? I sure as hell don't give a rat's ass, I won't lift a finger. I'd help you do it, in fact, if I weren't so lazy. As a text with my name on it, it is automatically copyright to myself, though I expect greed will prevail.

Hey, admit it, my disclaimer wasn't long and boring like all the others now, was it?

The Rules

There are certain rules which must be observed on all operations. These are fundamental to any operation, and the breaking of these rules may well end your existence in the shadows.

Rule 10 - Hope for the Best, Prepare for the Worst

Never assume you will be able to execute your plans to the mark. Expect something to go wrong, and make a general plan to follow in the event that it does. Its Murphy's Law - what can go wrong will go wrong.

Plan the hell out of your operations. You should have maybe three ways to approach your goal initially, and three times as many for getting the hell out.

Rule 9 - Assume You Will Be Sighted

No matter how well you plan, no matter how much gear you have, there are always variables in an operation that cannot be helped. For example, a couple could be taking a walk at night and accidentally stumble into you, or perhaps they are sitting somewhere and may see you. Alternatively, what if there is a camera that you don't know about? Always wear your mask/disguise, and always have a way out available.

Rule 8 - Do Not EVER Panic

In the shadows, cool heads will always prevail. If something does not go your way, don't get overly frustrated. You will be unable to think and react properly. Just relax for a second, and think over the alternatives. Similarly, if somebody suspects you are in the area, do not panic and run away as fast as possible. It is usually better to simply take cover and chill out for awhile. Running should be your last resort. Remember, stealth is your asset in the shadows, not speed.

Rule 7 - Remain Careful at All Times

Even the best operative can be foiled by an unknown variable, as described in Rule 9. Approach every area with caution, no matter how many times you've been through it before. Also, don't underestimate the ability of ANY creature when out in the field. There's no telling whom you can outrun, whom you can overpower, and whom you can trick. Also, keep the obvious in mind, such as wearing gloves and remaining unidentifiable.

Rule 6 - Keep the Party Small

If possible, try to operate alone. The reasons for this are manifold. A group is easier to see, easier to hear, easier to catch. When operating as a group, you operate as one. Your trails will be larger, your image bigger, and you need to take more time crossing obstacles. What's more, you can only travel as fast as the slowest person in the group can. Furthermore, more people means more mouths to open, so if you travel with a group, know that you can trust your life with them and nothing less. You can try to defeat these problems by splitting up, but then you can never know for sure what everyone else is doing, even if you have radios.

Rule 5 - What Happens in the Shadows, Stays in the Shadows

Don't talk about your operations. This seems obvious enough, but you'd be surprised at how many people break this rule. Hell, don't even hint at your operations. Store your loot away from your living area, keep your gear where no one can find it, and have excuses ready in case you or someone in your group is injured during the operation. Stuff your pride and find something less incriminating to brag about, because nobody is going to care about your exploits in jail. Feel free to read about your deeds in the papers, but don't cut or mark anything. Also, have a good alibi. You want others to "know" you are at home the entire time.

Rule 4 - Do Everything the Hard Way

We all know the saying about the wise men who do everything the easy way while the dumb do it the hard. This is a load of bullshit. The easy way is usually the obvious way, the suspected way. If you can, take difficult, misleading routes to your targets, forget the clear path. Try to ignore the front door and go for the back. Doing things the hard way will not only make potential investigations difficult, but it will probably bypass many security precautions as well. Be unconventional!

Rule 3 - If in Doubt, Quit

This probably goes against everything you've learned, but in the shadows, this is crucial. Rule 7 says to remain careful, not unconfident. Confidence helps out a lot during operations. At first you will worry a lot. You may see things that aren't there or hear imaginary voices. Listen to them anyways. There's no sense in doing something if you don't think you can do it. Remember, there is a lot at stake. Your confidence will build as you do smaller operations. From there you can work your way up the ladder. If you go into a situation too afraid, it will effect your ability to make sound decisions and operate at your best.

Rule 2 - Operate Balls to the Walls

Very important. Do not half-ass anything during the operation. When you climb a fence, climb it swift, silent, and keep your profile low. Every fence, even if it is out of range of anyone. When you enter a house,

get in and out as fast as humanly possible while remaining undetected and accomplishing your mission. You can rest later. When it's show time, it's fucking go time. Act like you are being graded for your performance. Not only will this sharpen your skills better, but also it will boost your confidence and will help eliminate the human error aspect. You'll know that at least if you got caught, there are no "I should have"s involved.

Rule 1 - Survive

This rule has many meanings, and to me it is the golden rule in the shadows. Survive. When in the shadows, you must do everything to ensure that you stay alive, and stay undetained. If somebody chases you, haul ass and fight only as a last resort. If you *must* fight, fight with everything you've got. Take every precaution to ensure that you are not caught or killed in the field, because failure to do so may very well lead to your end. In short, Rule 1 encompasses every rule before it.

The Objective - Finding an Operation

Obviously you need to have a goal in mind before you can do anything. You have to decide what you want to do. First you need to outline exactly what kind of operation you are going to undertake. Remember SSSS, snoop, spy, steal, and sabotage. Nearly every operation will be one of the four in one form or another. Sabotage may include "sabotaging" a person, and stealing could be "stealing" a person away from somewhere. Think objectively.

Snooping is for the curious, the person who wants to know what's around the bend or on the other side of a tall fence. Curiosity is a very natural thing - embrace it!

Spying, in a sense, is merely specific snooping. Maybe you are spying on a single person, or maybe an entire group for one reason or another. Unlike snooping however, you have more control. There are less gambles but don't think for a second that the stakes aren't higher. Invasion of privacy can land you into some serious trouble.

Stealing seems so simple to some people. These people have either never been caught or haven't experienced a decent punishment for their wrong doings. When done with the proper precautions and preparations however, stealing is less risky but the high reward is still there.

Finally, sabotage is the act of disabling and/or destroying something... or someone. Destroying the target is almost always the easiest part. It's evasion that's critical, and if the target is well guarded, simply getting within range can be a daunting task.

Whatever the task at hand is, staying unnoticed can be just as important as completing the mission. Remember that you are always outnumbered and few, if any, are on your side during an operation.

You also need to take into consideration what exactly you want, if you want an item, and find the best place to get it. For example, why steal a rifle from a highly secured store when you could get it from some drunk in the trailer park easier?

Job Hunting

There are numerous ways to get an objective, and the way to get one is by what I like to call job hunting. Searching is comically simple, here are several ways of doing so:

Classified Ads

Look around the newspapers for something you want. When you do, look for an address. If one isn't listed, the number probably will be. Simply look up the phone number either in a phonebook or on the internet to find the address and you're ready to go. This will take some time to do, but eventually you'll come up with it.

Internet Auctions

Some internet auctions and stores have private sellers who list their information. You may find either an address or a phone number. If you only get the number, simply check it up like above and you are ready to make a plan.

Real Estate Ads

Real estate ads almost invariably list addresses to houses and property for sale. This is an invaluable tool as it gives you ideas for practice runs, theft, temporary stash areas, and anonymous mailing locations. Best of all, they usually come with floor plans as well, so you can get to know the house well. If the house is nice,

keep tabs on it. When somebody fairly wealthy moves in, you'll have the floor plans to their house!

Newspapers

The bold may wish to check up on lawsuits for various things. You may get contracted if you are lucky. The skilled may also be able to get on a recon job for blackmail. Better yet, work for yourself and get the blackmail information if you think there might be some.

Don't try simply asking around. You might get lucky and overhear something, but don't suggest interest in any potential targets. Look around and you'll find something that's worth your while in the shadows. Consider non-traditional ideas as well. For example, do people pick mushrooms in your area? If they camp out in the woods and pick mushrooms, camp near them and steal the mushrooms at night. They can be sold for a good price. Be creative.

The Plan - How to Plan, What to Plan For

Before you can step outside and breathe the night air, you first need a plan. The operation may consist of anything from simple nighttime training to an assassination, but you still need a good plan. Several plans, in fact. Plan the hell out of everything as best as you can without confusing yourself or other party members if applicable. Having multiple plans enables you to quickly react during high stress situations without having to whip up an idea on the fly.

In making a plan, try to do so as mentally as possible. If you must print anything out or write something down, be sure and burn the evidence after you and whoever else is in the party has studied it enough. Make sure that nobody besides those directly involved know about your plan. This is for everyone's good. Remember Rule 5 as well.

First of all, we need to decide what kind of plan you are going to create. That is to say, you need to figure out what attribute you are going to use to complete your mission. There are three common attributes used in a plan, your personal plan may consist of one or more of the following:

Stealth

Stealth means being able to get into an area without being seen and leaving as little evidence as possible. It relies on using specialized gear, your surroundings, and the locations of other people to your advantage. This should always be the method chosen when possible, as it allows you much more time to prepare and act during your operation. Without stealth, you can be easily compromised, forcing you to abort a mission early.

Speed

A plan relying on speed relies on being able to accomplish your objectives and exit the area before anyone can do anything about it. Speed is useful when it is simply inefficient to use stealth or strength, but it has many drawbacks. For example, a person cannot gather a decent amount of loot unless they know exact locations. Remaining unidentified is critical when using speed to your advantage.

Strength

Plans depending on strength are generally the most expensive and the most violent ones. Brute force is used to destroy any impediments to your goal. Such examples are cutting through a door, blasting a safe, or shooting a combatant. Since there is a good chance of being identified during such a plan, precautions must be taken to conceal your identity. If you have the resources available and aren't afraid of using this kind of tactic, it may be best as you can use all the tools you need to complete your mission.

Once you have decided which attribute fits your objective best, you then need to come up with your plans. These plans you'll need to make are as follows.

Main Plan

The plan that is almost guaranteed to change in the shadows, this is the one you try to follow best to complete your operation. While creating your main plan, you will need to go over some elementary points:

- Area from which you are departing from.
- Method of leaving current area.

- Time at which you are leaving.
- Time at which you are coming back.
- Route taken to operation objective.
- Method of area entry.
- Time taken inside of area.
- Method of area exit.
- Route taken back to area of departure.
- Method of entering departure area.

So, a plan may look as follows on reflection:

- 10:00PM - Departed from Base of Operations - Needed to Return by 11:00PM - Exited via Window
- 10:12PM - Reached Way Point Alpha
- 10:19PM - Reached Way Point Bravo - Mission Objective Sighted
- 10:22PM - Reached Mission Objective - Accessed via Window in Rear - 2 Minute Time Limit
- 10:23PM - Mission Completed - Departed Area via Same Window in Rear, 1 Minute Ahead of Schedule
- 10:30PM - Reached Way Point Bravo
- 10:37PM - Reached Way Point Alpha - Base of Operations Sighted
- 10:40PM - Reached Base of Operations - Entered Via Window

All Objectives Completed

Simple training operations may go as smoothly as this sample one, but should anything else, consider yourself lucky. Keep in mind any roads, rivers, swamps, hill, or other natural obstacles you can use as well. Remember Rule 4, Do Everything the Hard Way. If you have the boots to do it, try going through a swampy area. If there is a hill near your objective, try to get on it if you can so you can observe the area good before moving out. Also mind the houses, roads, and party areas that you need to go past. Time is also important. Even if it becomes dark at around six o'clock in your area, people will still be awake and active. If you depart at around midnight however, you will notice that most people are asleep, and the police and security guards are less acute. When making your plans, you should also pay attention to the conditions that night. Is it rainy? Foggy? Bright moonlight or none? What is the temperature out there? These things will all play factors in where you go, when you go, and what you bring along with you.

Auxiliary Plans

Optional, but recommended. You'll probably need a good back-up plan incase something unexpected happens. This can be anything from a large gathering of people in an area, a vehicle collision, a fire, anything. Rule 10 applies here. It should go without saying that these are the same as your main plan as far as procedure layouts are concerned, but you should try to keep that same procedure as close to the original as possible. That makes the plans easier to remember.

Escape Plans

These are NOT optional. Sooner or later, you will be compromised, or be in danger of being compromised, and you will need to exit the area as soon as possible. Try to make as many as you can without confusing yourself. Analyze areas that you are most prone to being spotted first, then work your way to the less hazardous areas.

So how do you get around to making all these plans? You need intelligence of course. If you really need to be clandestine and need photos of specific area, you may need to run an entire operation just to get the information you need. Don't skimp on the details, every little thing counts.

When looking for intel for an operation, look out for the following:

Road Maps

These give a clear view of all the roads in the area. This is important as a car spotting you with it's

headlights is not good. These can be found everywhere, including gas stations, Yahoo! Maps, etc.

Topographic Maps

These let you know where all the hills and draws are. Both are important during evasion and recon alike - hills are tiring to cross, but give a good view of areas, and draws offer great cover all around, but are easier to seal off. You might be able to pick one up at a few state offices, or check one online at www.terraserver.com.

Aerial Photographs

These are superb for viewing housing locations, trees, roads, rivers, ditches, just about anything. You get a bird's eye view of the place. Rural area photos are usually grayscale, but are still adequate. These can also be found at www.terraserver.com. Very useful in planning routes.

Blueprints

These tell you every single nook and cranny of a building, but are hard to get these days. You may try to use a telephone to get one from an appropriate service, but only do so if the reward is worth it. Remember to fake all names and addresses.

Fire Exit Map

Easier to get than blueprints, but almost always require a person to enter the target building. From there, a map can be liberated, remembered, or captured by a camera. While these are not as precise as blueprints, they still offer enough to let you formulate a good plan.

Floor Plan

Look for these in newspapers, magazines, and online. Anyone trying to sell a house may have one of these around. Sometimes the plans are attached to signs outside the house, in which case they can probably be picked up at a real estate office as well. Sometimes the house for sale is still occupied by someone, which is good, although just the same sometimes it is empty. These are of the same value as fire exit maps, but are not only useful for routes, but for selecting operations as well! Simply look around for a suitable target and create a plan around it. The vacant houses also make great practice runs as they rarely have decent security.

HUMINT

Human intelligence. You may be able to get information out of someone or get him or her to release documents to you. This may be because you know the person well or because you can trick a stranger. Mind you that if you ask for these documents and they know who you are, you will be suspect number one in the event of anything more than stealthy breaking and entering. That said, try to remain anonymous.

Photographs

Even simple pictures of the objective can be useful. They may show doorways, windows, cabinets, or a valuable item's location.

Et Cetera

There's no telling what you'll find. You may even get lucky and run into a note giving away important information about something.

By using good common sense and observing The Rules, you should be able to formulate an effective plan and be able to execute it with success. Be sure when making your plan to evaluate your own strengths and weakness. For example, if you cannot swim, don't be stupid and try to swim behind a house on a lake.

The Gear - What to Bring on Operations and When to Bring It

In the shadows, having the right gear can mean the difference between success and failure. You won't need a lot of gear for operations, but the gear you do have must be specially selected to suit your needs each and every time. Try to carry as little as possible to complete your operation, keeping mobility in mind.

Clothing

When entering the shadows, you must cover yourself from head to toe. This is because your skin does

not match the night, and/or because it allows anyone that sees you to know just a couple more facts about you. Try to avoid baggy clothing, as it makes more noise, and is easier to snag on obstacles. Every clothing type has its advantages and disadvantages. I will try to cover each type suitable for operations as best as I can.

Dark Solids

Can be anything from jeans and a sweater to BDUs. The former works suitably if it's all you've got, but you should try to upgrade to BDUs as soon as possible as they are generally more durable and have more pockets to store equipment and loot in. As far as actual colors are concerned, dark blue is the best overall as blue is hardest for the eye to pick up, plus is just light enough to match the night. Black works good, and dark greens, reds, browns, purples, and grays can be used in a pinch as well. Avoid anything with yellows or whites in it, including said colors as well as pink, orange, etc. Something to think about; black is generally superior to blue when laying down, since if a light comes near you, it'll probably pass over. If the light hits blue however, that's a good reason to investigate.

Solids work best in an urban environment where the operative is surrounded by large shadows and solid shapes. Also, if you are hit by a light and are standing, you are as good as caught. If you are lying down however, you are decently hid.

White Solid

Only for use in heavy snow when everything else is solid white. Can be an actual suit or a pair of light, light khakis and white sweater. If you use this, make sure you lay in the snow when something approaches, as you are easy to spot when standing, even in snow at night.

Camouflage - Woodland

Useful when the time is right, woodland camo BDUs work excellent in green leafy surroundings, including areas with grass, leafy trees, bushes, and green weeds. Since they are BDUs, they hold cargo well.

Woodland camo works good in other areas such as coniferous forests as well, just be careful to stay out of places with no green, including roads, walkways, dirt piles, rock mounds, and don't sit against walls for too long. As a bonus, woodland is superior to solids in that it not only makes it harder to identify you as human, but you blend into greenery better should a light be shined on you.

Camouflage - Desert

Not good for much, as the pattern is light, but as the name implies it would work decent in an actual desert. Try to go for something else instead.

Camouflage - Jungle Tigerstripe

This camo is sort of a mixed bag. As the name implies, it is in fact good in jungles and thick wooded areas, but as soon as you step out into an open area you stick out like a sore thumb. This means you must stick to heavy woods, tall grass, and bushes. At nighttime, these are good hiding places as it is, so you may as well go with dark solids. What saves it is that a person in this camo is very hard to identify as a human.

Furthermore, when in your appropriate terrain, you have little worry should a light hit you.

Camouflage - Urban

Garbage. It isn't good in urban settings because of all the white, and the pattern doesn't match up with anything you'll find in a building, unless of course you happen to find a black and white plant. It doesn't work in snow well either, unless you stay around dense brush, in which case a solid white pattern would work just as well.

Camouflage - Subdued Urban

It works decent in dark urban settings, where the light blues seem to really break up your outline. If a light hits you, the camo offers no quarter as you'll be easy to identify as a human. Probably best to just go with a solid, where you have more places you can go.

Ghuille Suit

Limited uses. While it's true that it offers you the absolute best cover in a given environment, the ghuille suit makes it hard for you to access equipment, as well as cross fences. Try crossing barbed wire in one and see for yourself. If you want to recon, and there are no fences in your path however, give it a try. Otherwise the suit becomes a nightmare.

3D Camouflage

Treat it like a blend of a ghuille suit with conventional camouflage. Unfortunately, it still has many of the shortcomings as a ghuille suit, including the snagging problems and gear accessibility. Limited uses.

Masks

I list masks here because there is a significant variety out there, each of which need a mention or two. An operative should always wear a mask as it conceals his features, and helps him blend with the shadows better.

Ski Mask

Fairly generic, these are good for cold weather as they are warm, yet have good breathing holes. Usually only come in solid colors, and may or may not cover anything above the nose. If not, you'll need a cap of some sort as well. In warmer weather however, be advised that they can become very irritable.

Eye Cut Mask - No Mouth

The masks that cover the entire head, save the eyes. It may have one big eyehole (balaclava) or two eyeholes. The former exposes more flesh, but the latter makes glancing difficult, both of which are crucial when light is hitting you. It's a compromise you'll have to decide on. Can come in any color or pattern, though black seems to go with any set-up besides snow. The heavy, cold weather ones are useful in their season, but the cheap cotton ones are desirable as they are easier to breath through, cooler in summer, and can fold up into a stocking cap when it is safe to expose your face (i.e. in a field) so that you can cool off.

Eye Cut Mask - Mouth Hole

The mouth hole very useful in the summer as it allows you to breathe easier. Also, not having a hole here can make your throat scratchy, causing you to cough when it's least convenient. The tradeoff of course is that you expose more to light. Not too big of a problem though. Acceptable for cold weather as well.

Handkerchief Mask

The outlaw classic - a simply hanky turned into a mask. It's cheap and has multiple uses. The only major downside is that you need to wear them in conjunction with a hat.

Cloth Mask

Cloth wrapped around you so that it covers your head as well as masks your face. This is actually pretty comfortable, and when created correctly, will stay firm to your head yet allow you to breath well.

Hats

Depending on the mask you wear, you may or may not need a hat on your head. Hats are important because they hide your hair and your skin tones. Once again there is a variety, with each hat having advantages and disadvantages.

Beanie

A simple stocking cap, comes in most colors and patterns. Ideal with a ski mask, and can even be worn over an eye cut mask if your head gets too cold.

Bandana

Same advantages as a beanie, except not as warm, making it the hat of choice for warmer nights.

Baseball Cap

Fairly warm, and the bill has two good uses. One is when wearing the hat normal, it allows you to peer from underneath the bill, protecting your eyes from light and cameras. The second is gained by wearing it backwards. In this manner, the neck is covered if you are wearing a low-neck shirt and a handkerchief mask. The downside is that unless it is firmly fit, it can blow off a little too easily. Comes in all colors and patterns

Boonie Hat

Basically a baseball cap with both bill advantages, and boonie hats usually have a neck cord so that if it

blows off, you can simply put the hat back on. All colors and patterns.

Footwear

Like all types of clothing, there is a variety of footwear available. You need footwear for obvious reasons, unless you plan on getting busted from your "footprints", and believe me, they'd check if you got caught.

High Top Boots

This variety of boot offers the most protection and support for the ankles, but they are also the most cumbersome to walk and run in. No real sense in using them unless you are expecting your shins to take a beating from something. They are also squeakier than other varieties.

Medium Top Boots

The common type of boot, this is the kind you see worn by most armed forces. They come with a variety of sole patterns and materials. Your ideal pair would be offer good traction, be silent, waterproof - with priorities in that order. These still offer good mobility with the support you'd expect from a boot.

High Top Tennis Shoes

Your common high top shoe. Sacrifices a little support for speed, as these are usually lighter than a boot. Outdoor varieties offer good traction and are waterproof as well, while remaining silence. A worthy choice when paired against medium top boots.

Low Top Tennis Shoes

Sacrifice even more support for more speed. You can run the fastest in these things, they are usually silence, and they offer fair traction. Unfortunately, water means getting your feet wet - waterproof or not - and you can count on dirt and rocks getting in there if you don't stay strictly in urban terrain.

Tabi Boots

These are essentially socks with a split toe sole. As such they are silent, lightweight, and some types are waterproof neoprene. The bad is that they can tear on some fences, offer almost no support, and you can stub your toes pretty badly. Finally, don't let anything land on your toes either...

Socks

Why include socks? Because they are important for more than just lining shoes and boots. Worn alone, they are silent and light, although they offer no support. They can also be worn over boots to muffle the sound slightly and destroy the sole pattern. Unfortunately, this sacrifices traction. You may wish to wear footwear that is easy to slip out of, and only wear socks across loud surfaces such as a hardwood floor.

There are many features of boots and shoes to choose from as well, some of which may interest you. Felt soled shoes, for example, are extremely silent, yet they lose traction on solid surfaces. There are also accessories, such as boot spikes that can make climbing certain trees easier, at the expense of leaving evidence aplenty. You'll have to decide what is appropriate to use, and when.

Gloves

Gloves are probably the most essential piece of gear you'll ever own. They keep your hands warm in the cold, blend your hands in with the surroundings, and eliminate fingerprints. You may also need them to get a better grip on things such as metal ladders and rooftops. These are not an option on any operation. Here is a list of common materials used in their making:

Latex

Common medical gloves, these have several advantages. They are lightweight, allow you maintain dexterity, and offer decent grip. The downside is that they are cold in winter and they tear VERY easily, especially considering that they'll make your hands sweat like hell. Also, they are hard to come by in anything other than white, which sticks out like a sore thumb. If you are going to use them, wear cotton ones over the top until you need dexterity. I should also add that these need to be a certain thickness, lest your prints transfer right through onto solid surfaces anyways.

Cotton

Cool, breathable, yet decently warm in the cold. The problems are that they are bulky and soft in a manner that makes minute tasks difficult, offer little grip, and tear easily on barbed wire. Still, an alright choice. There is a variety out there that has rubberized grips, eliminating the traction problem on metal surfaces.

Leather

Very tough, and offer a decent grip on things, yet they make it nearly impossible to perform certain tasks such as unlocking doors or windows. Also, if the gloves don't fit you perfectly, you seem to lose even more dexterity. Finally, they leave a print on things which can be traced back to them. Not a problem so long as the gloves are never tested. If you decide you use leather gloves, choose a pair without a liner, as it makes them easier to use during the operation.

Kevlar

Tough, light, breathable, and having a good grip, Kevlar is hard to beat. They still give you fair manual dexterity, yet they are hard to tear. They can still snag on sharp objects, but they won't tear open. Highly recommended.

Once you've picked the best clothing for your mission, it's time to move on to your tools. It is best to place most of these on a belt, either one that holds up your pants, or a pistol belt, so that you have fast access to them and they won't get lost or fall out like they would in your pockets. Here's a list of tools and equipment you may need on operations, what they are good for, and their varieties if applicable.

Load Bearing Equipment

If you are carrying any equipment, obviously you need a place to put it. Here are the common varieties, and when they are best utilized:

Pockets

Simple pockets which may be found on your pants or shirt. These carry smaller equipment, and some smaller loot. Make sure the items inside do not bounce all over the place as this can make moving awkward. Also, any pockets you put items into must either button or zip shut, or else you may lose what is inside.

Belt

A good belt which holds your pants up is great for carrying multitools, field knives, and other equipment. It has an advantage over pistol belts in the fact that they are more secured to you, causing less bouncing when jumping and climbing. Finally, if you are hurting for a weapon, a belt with a decently heavy buckle can be used as a flail.

Pistol Belt

Wide belt which lays outside of your clothing. Superior over belts in that they can hold more equipment, is easier to access, and can be quickly removed in times of need (like entering a small window). The only drawback is that they can bounce around sometimes, causing minor mobility problems, but is generally nothing that will upset you.

Backpack

A good, dark backpack is invaluable on a lot of operations as it can carry larger equipment and loot. You'll probably be using one often. A small, school bag is usually fine for most purposes. If you are after a big catch, like an entire computer set, a large rucksack is better. Keep mobility issues in mind however.

Belt Pouch

If you need to carry smaller gear only, you may opt to use a pouch instead of a backpack. Good examples are magazine pouches, grenade pouches, and fanny packs.

Load Bearing Vest (LBV)

These combine the best of a pistol belt, regular belt, and belt pouches. Lots of compartments for storing items, secured to you, and can be removed relatively fast when you need to get into a narrow area.

Knives

Knives are an essential tool on operations. They are useful for cutting cords, sharpening sticks, prying light objects, defense, and many other tasks. Stay away from stainless steel if possible, opting for carbon steel instead. Also, it is important that the entire knife is a dark color to eliminate drawing attention to yourself. If there are shiny snaps, then cover them with tape or paint. Finally, a sheathed knife should never rattle, so try to get either a leather or nylon sheath for operations.

Field Knife - Drop Point

A standard on rural operations, you'll find yourself using this kind of knife often. Good for prying open windows, chipping away at wooden frames (to access bypass doorknobs), cutting strings, and are perfect for making improvised equipment in the field. Also good for defending from attackers. The blade should be about five inches, give or take an inch. Be weary of longer blades, as they will make noise when they slap against your leg while running and jumping.

Field Knife - Tanto

Tantos are overshadowed by drop point blades on all subjects except for piercing. The only thing these are better at than a drop point is stabbing. Get a drop point design instead.

Pocket Knife - Swiss Army

Has many gadgets that might come in handy sooner or later, but a lot of the stuff is mostly useless in the shadows. Try to get a multitool instead, but if you cannot then this is a good choice to settle on.

Pocket Knife - Multitool

Absolutely essential. Pliers, wire cutters, screwdrivers, and small blades all in one. The downside is that everything is small, which means little reach and no prying ability. Still, comes in handy more than any other knife I've ever owned. Great for opening cabinets, RVs, trailers, and other places. If you can, try to get one with covered handles, as they are more comfortable.

Pocket Knife - Drop Point

Any generic pocket knife actually. They come in handy for small cutting tasks and puncturing some materials. Can also double as a screwdriver in a pinch.

Butterfly Knife

Useless. Does nothing a field knife can't do, and a field knife does it better.

Throwing Knife

Useless as a weapon, almost as useless as a tool. Keep this crap at home where it belongs.

Short Sword/Machete

Purely for use as a weapon. You may opt to take one if traveling in wooded areas, or where you may be attacked if caught. If possible, try to use the sword's backside for knocking a person out instead of killing them. Don't forget Rule 8.

Flashlights

Flashlights are another essential for operations. Even if you have night vision equipment, a flashlight is still smaller, cheaper, and more reliable. Remember to buy one with a dark coating, and try to get a red lens when possible, as red preserves your natural night vision, which you need.

Penlight

Small flashlight that runs on a "AAA" battery or less. Fits anywhere and gives just enough light to be useful. Great to put in a BDU pocket.

Mini Light

Flashlights of the "Minimag" or similar variety that operate on "AA" batteries. One of the best available for use during operations.

Crook Neck Flashlight

Military style lights with the clips on them. Small enough to store like a mini light, but the neck and clip allow this to attach to your shirt giving you two free hands. Good asset to have on ops where both hands are

needed.

Head Lamps

A small LED lamp with red and white LEDs yet another good choice. Hands free operation, and a cover keeps the mirroring from betraying you with shine. The problem is that it doesn't direct as well, and you cannot control the light output well by putting your hand in front of it.

Maglite

Big "C" and "D" cell flashlights. These things are too big and heavy to carry on your belt. What's more, they put out much more light than is practical. They make a better club than anything else. An expensive one at that.

Optics

In recon, nothing is more essential than having the right optics on you. It can range from a simple pair of mini binoculars to a set of Generation IV night vision goggles, having something that helps you see better is always a good thing. Be sure that the glare from the lenses cannot be seen when light is shone on them.

Mini Binoculars

These are great for carrying around when you aren't really expecting the need to scope something out, but might need to anyways. Never assume, may as well take a pair along. They don't weigh much, and fit inside a pouch which will fit on your belt.

Binoculars

Your average sized pair of binoculars. Perfect for recon when you need to get a good view of your objective yet remain mobile. Don't take these along for general purposes however, as they bounce around and tend to get in the way when entering windows and such. They could always go inside of a backpack though.

Astronomer Binoculars

Basically a twin set of spotting scopes. Not bad for static recon, or even mobile recon if you can steady the binoculars on something. You might be better off with a scope though.

Scope

A rifle scope. With these you can get up close to something, yet the scope is easy to carry. If you need to steady it, just prop it on some rocks or dirt.

Spotting Scope

A higher-powered scope, it will get very close in on a target. The problem is that the field of view isn't very large, so you may need to bring a pair of binoculars along as well. Only good for static recon operations. You can try to save weight and bulk by ditching the tripod if you think you'll be able to improvise on the site.

Night Vision Monocular

Good for stationary viewing, but not while walking. Some models zoom in a good distance, making them good for peering further into the dark.

Night Vision Goggles

Made for traveling, these simply attach to your head and you walk around with them on. The big problem with this is the weight of the unit. Your head may begin to feel like it's going to fall off after a few hours of wearing it. Also, if a light is suddenly shined into the unit, it could destroy it, as well as your vision. Speaking of which, using this as well as the monocular sacrifices all of your natural night vision. I personally don't recommend a pair of these at all.

Tools

Tools in this context refers to the tools we all think of when we think of the word, such as wrenches, screwdrivers, and hammers. Tools are essential on some operations as they allow you to do what your standard equipment will not. Most tools will have to fit inside of a pack. Any that are exposed, such as a

large pair of bolt cutters, must be darkened entirely to defeat glare. Also, most tools listed can also be used as a weapon in a pinch, should such an occasion arise.

Screwdrivers

A large, flathead screwdriver should always be with you. Be sure it is one that can withstand rigorous prying. It is lighter than a crowbar, and almost as effective. Phillips head screwdrivers aren't used as much, but still are needed occasionally. Bring one only when you know you'll need it. One good idea may be to bring one with multiple heads so it had many purposes. While it won't pry, it'll do what it's meant for a lot better. If you think you'll need better prying power, bring a pry bar instead.

Socket Wrenches

Needed to unscrew bolts quickly. Again, bring only when you know you'll need one. True story: I've seen first hand, an operative unscrew an entire metal sheet panel from a garage with one of these just to get inside. Not recommended, but it should bring up some ideas in your mind.

Hacksaw

Big, but lightweight. Can saw through materials but is also pretty loud on most. If there is no alternative for completing your mission, bring one along.

Hammer

Heavy, but good for hammering of course, and prying as well. Still, it's obsolete in the shadows because of screwdrivers and rocks.

Bolt Cutters

Perfect for chewing away metal. Works well on padlocks, hasps, sheet metal, and bolts of course. The only downside is that a good pair is bulky and heavy, but the ability to get through most obstacles outweighs that. Bring only when you know you'll need it. A pair that is about two feet long is optimal. Also replaces the need for wire cutters when you have them.

Drill

The absolute best device for getting past fixed locks, and is decent for padlocks as well. Bring one that's cordless, of course. Don't bother with hand turned ones. They may be silent, but they are hard as hell to use. Make sure your drill is quiet as possible, and also that your battery is fresh off the charger. Like all big tools, bring it only if you think you'll need it.

Wire Cutters

Not necessary if you have a multitool or bolt cutters. Still, they have more cutting power than a multitool and may be handy. Bring only when you think it's necessary.

Weapons

If you think you are going to need a self-defense weapon, then by all means bring one along. There are many different types of weapons that will suit your needs and capabilities. Just make sure you know how to use them, lest they be used against you. Don't forget that you may encounter dangerous animals. Your mission may also require the use of a weapon. Be advised that carrying a weapon with you makes you more dangerous, think of the police. If you aren't careful, you may be shot. Also, don't be stupid and use a weapon everyone knows you own. Consider if the risks are worth it before taking a weapon.

Knife

Covered in the knives section, a knife actually makes a poor weapon. You'd be better off hurling rocks or finding a large stick, but if worse turns to worst, you can use one of your knives in a pinch. Should you have to, try to use the element of surprise as your asset - don't let them see the knife until it's too late!

Sword

Also covered in the knives section. Don't bother with a large claymore or katana. Instead use something small, mobile, and practical so you can take it where you need. Good for melee, but a risky choice, as your opponent may have a gun. It also has limited uses as a tool, unless you need to travel through thick brush. In such a case, it makes a good machete.

Mace

Pepper spray is great to take along at all times. Spray any attackers with it then escape. It's small, light, and effective, so there's really no reason to not take some along.

Stun gun

Good for incapacitating people, but you have to get up close to use it. Mace would seem to be the better choice. Nevertheless, a stun gun will guarantee they fall.

Sap

A high quality sap can rearrange someone's face in the hands of even a novice user. Effective, but it's still a melee weapon.

Firearm

The most effective weapon, yet the riskiest to use. It can also lead to a firefight with the police. Whether you carry a pistol for defense or a rifle for a specific mission, there are various problems. The first is that both expend shells, each of which must be collected or they will be used as evidence against you. The second is the noise. Unless you are using a silenced .22, your weapon will make a considerable amount of noise. Finally, the bullet itself can be traced to the gun if they suspect you. Carry only if you know you'll need its power.

Miscellaneous

Other devices that may prove useful on operations but don't fall into other categories. While their functions and usefulness vary universal precautions that must be taken are these: they should be dark, have no shine, not too big, and should not rattle when moving.

Wristwatch

Another staple on operations, you need to be able to keep track of time. Try to get a digital watch that has a light and a stopwatch. This way you can always see the time, record your time during the operation, and use the light for seeing in pitch black if needed. Also, a rubber shell and band is desirable as it is waterproof and stays firmly attached to the wrist. Color usually isn't important, since the watch will probably be covered by your gloves anyways, just don't bring something big and shiny.

2-Way Radio

Needed for party communications. Remember to talk in code, because you never know who's listening in. Wear a headphone so the voices aren't too loud. If possible, try to get one that encodes its messages, that way listening in becomes a chore. You can also get a headset which includes a speaker and microphone, but be sure it is off a kind that does not activate VOX mode by heavy breathing.

Police Scanner

If you can get one that is somewhat small and light, by all means get it! Know thy enemy. By knowing they're on the way, you can avoid a confrontation with the police. Remember to wear headphones with this as well.

Camera

Recon devise, useful for taking picture. Destroy all pictures taken with it. If you use a digital, use one that uses discs, and destroy the disc when you're finished with it. Cameras should only be taken for recon missions.

Tape

Always handy. Can be used to mask glare, repair equipment, make improvised equipment, or even re-camo equipment. If you carry a backpack, it may be worth your while to toss a roll in. Tape can also be used to block sensors if metallic in nature.

Lock Picking Set

Obviously needed for lock picking. Can be homemade or bought set, just make sure it's durable.

Grappling Hook

These aren't as useful as you probably hoped. In fact, there's almost never a time when a rope wouldn't fill the same spot. What's more, most hooks are cheaply built these days, so be weary when buying one. There are rarely useful, but if it's what you absolutely need though, detaching the hook after descending can be a problem. In such a case, one way to defeat this is to toss the rope over something that will hold you up when held by both ends. From there, you can place your feet in the hook, and lower yourself down using the other side of the rope. A grappling hook can also be used as a flail if needed.

Rope

The only accessory you'll need for climbing. A rope has other uses as well, such as crossing fast rivers with a party, and towing large objects. You can descend better by making a loop on one end and using the same technique as a grappling hook. This prevents the need to untie the rope from the top.

Pellet Gun

Good for eliminating lights and cameras, and is relatively quiet and lightweight. Special purpose item, not just a tool to bring every night. You may also be interested in the H-PAP experiment below.

Slingshot

Also good for eliminating lights and cameras. Quieter and lighter than a pellet gun, but is less accurate. Can also create distractions from further away. If you have a good one, go ahead and carry it.

Spray Paint

Covered cameras, lights, and sensors. Get black paint. Can also be used to darken gear in a pinch. Wrap it in some sort of cloth to keep it from making too much noise in your pack.

Graphite Dust

Useful for picking up fingerprints on control panels. Can be bought, or made by gathering mechanical pencil lead, placing inside a durable ziplock bag, and crushing with a pair of pliers.

Smoke Bombs

Almost useless. They wouldn't conceal you as anyone can cross the smoke, and from far away they would just give away your location. Then there's the issue of evidence. Don't bother. We all know how stupid the police are these days, they could consider it an explosive weapon which, in a worst case scenario, could end up with them firing on you.

Canteen

For long distance operations, you may consider taking a canteen along. Keeping hydrated is important, for various reason. Make sure your canteen is no more than one quart is size, as any bigger becomes too bulky and heavy. Also, if you have a cup, leaving it at base will drop weight.

Compass

If you think you'll need to run into the woods, bring a compass. It's easy to get turned around in the woods at night, remember that the stars and city lights may go out of view entirely. Keep track of the direction you enter, so that you'll always know where town is.

Survival Kit

Remember Rule 10, anything can happen. It is generally a good idea to take an altoid tin and put in basic things such as an alcohol swab, razor blade, fishing line, fishing hook, medical tape, matches, and any other small items you may need. Make sure it doesn't rattle, if it does, stuff toilet paper in it to stop the noise. Place it in a pocket when you're finished. You'll probably forget all about it... until you need it!

Notepad w/Pen

A small one will do. These are good for recon and writing down any other important information you run across. Remember to burn incriminating pages ASAP when finished with them.

When you have all of your gear selected, jump up and down a few times to see if anything makes noise. If so, try to hamper it as much as possible. If no solution is available, consider substituting equipment. Also make sure you are still mobile, losing as little flexibility as possible. Keep the load as light as possible, bringing only the essentials. Remember that you can always improvise in the shadows if you need to.

Gear Suggestions

After looking at all the stuff, are you unsure of what is appropriate and what isn't for your specific operations? If so, I've created a few "templates" that can be followed. They are created from what I personally take and what operatives I know in person take. You can substitute items if you don't have what is listed, or have a personal preference in something else.

Training - Enter Abandoned House or House Under Construction

Abandoned and unfinished housing provides valuable operation experience, and requires minimal gear to accomplish. Rarely are major security elements in place.

Clothing: Black (BDU optimal) solids if in town, Woodland if on outskirts of town.

Mask: Anything in black

Hat: Anything in black, or none depending on mask worn

Footwear: Anything dark and with a sole will work fine

Gloves: Black cotton will work fine

Knives: (Optional) Field Knife

Flashlights: Penlight or Mini Light

Optics: (Optional) Mini Binoculars

Tools: Large Flathead Screwdriver

Weapons: None

Misc: Survival Kit - Wristwatch - Backpack

This set-up allows you to pry open any windows and doors. You will also be able to see well inside the house, as well as outside if you brought binoculars. The survival kit may come in handy, and you probably won't even notice it's around. A backpack may come in handy if you find something you like, and a watch will keep track of time.

Recon - Obtain Combination to Building Door

Recon missions such can be simple or hard depending on what surround the building.

Clothing: Woodland BDU

Mask: Black Eye Cut Mask

Hat: None

Footwear: Black Medium Boots

Gloves: Black Cotton Gloves

Knives: (Optional) Field Knife

Flashlights: None

Optics: Spotting Scope, Astronomy Binoculars, or Best Binoculars you can get

Tools: Multitool

Weapons: None

Misc: Notepad w/pen - Survival Kit - Watch - Backpack

This set up is meant to set you in bushes, trees, or tall grass as you wait for someone to enter a combination. Remember to be out fairly early so people will still enter the building. You'll need high powered optics to not only get a good view, but do so while keeping out of range of people and any potential outdoor cameras. The notepad is for recording the combination or pattern if combo is not obtained. The backpack in this case is for storing your optical gear.

Theft - Enter RV and Liberate Audio and Video Equipment

RVs are mobile treasure chests if you strike at the right time of year. What's more, they usually lack complicated security, and even if they do, they can be severed easily. The bathroom vent trick is almost always an option.

Clothing: Black or Woodland BDU, depending on setting

Mask: Black Eye Cut

Hat: None
Footwear: Black Medium Boots
Gloves: Dark Kevlar, or cotton if unavailable

Knives: (Optional) Field Knife
Flashlights: Penlight
Optics: None
Tools: Multitool - Large Screw Driver - Lock Pick Set
Weapons: Any (Optional)
Misc: Watch - Backpack - Survival Kit

With these three tools, you'll have multiple means of entry. You will also be able to liberate stereos, VCRs, DVD players, TVs, etc. The backpack in this case is meant to carry the loot.

Theft - Enter Shed and Liberate Equipment

Sheds may have very valuable equipment stored away by someone, and they usually lack decent security. For this reason, they require only basic gear.

Clothing: Black BDUs
Mask: Black Eye Cut
Hat: None
Footwear: Black Medium Boots
Gloves: Black Kevlar

Knives: Field Knife
Flashlights: Mini Light
Optics: None
Tools: Multitool - Bolt Cutters
Weapons: Any (Optional)
Misc: Watch - Backpack - Survival Kit

Once again the backpack serves to carry liberated equipment. The bolt cutters are to cut any padlocks that would impede you.

You should get the basic idea. Field knife, multitool, mini light, backpack, survival kit, large screwdriver and a watch are your bare bones equipment. With these you can accomplish quite a bit. In fact, they are what I personally carry with me on just about every operation, along with any specialized gear I may need.

If you cannot get the gear you need, perhaps you should consider running a simple operation to get yourself equipped. The best place to do this is at a ranch. Even the best of ranches usually pass security up, leaving them wide open. The only thing to worry about is dogs barking. It is true that a crazy rancher may try to shoot you with a rifle (and they probably won't miss if they sight you), but as long as you don't act stupid they shouldn't pose too much of a threat. Ranches can offer you tools, maps, guns, and other gear you'll need.

The Enemy - Who You May Run Into and What to Expect

As an operative, it is important to remember that you are not alone in the shadows. You will inevitably run into other people, and every one of them offers their own unique problem. Here are the assorted types of people you will find, what problems they present, and what you can do to avoid trouble.

Bacon

"Bacon" comes in two flavors - city and state. The city bacon is more of a concern as there is usually more of it in any given area. When dealing with the bacon, there are numerous things to keep in mind.

The first thing is that their sirens attract all kinds of attention. Anyone awake nearby may decide to look around to see what is going on and possibly give some tips to the police. The second is that they have spotlights. This can eliminate just about every hiding tactic not involving solid cover, and can reach out a

ways. Don't bother trying to outrun them, dodge them. The third, and most serious threat, is they always have back-up. They can use this back-up to have other units cut you off, K9 units hunt you, or even have a chopper follow you if they see you as a serious threat. The key to defeating their network is to act quickly and efficiently before they can react. This is a major reason for all of your escape plans you made. The fourth threat is that they generally have superior equipment. This gives them a technological edge over you.

Since evasive maneuvers are covered elsewhere in the book, let's concentrate on avoiding the bacon in the first place. First of all, any vehicles you see prowling around small areas late at night are subject to suspicion. Assume any vehicles you see fitting this profile wreak of bacon, unless you personally learn otherwise. When stationary, remember that the police will probably have their lights off. Even if they are required to keep them on in your area, assume the worst. Because of this, scan every alley and driveway carefully before, during, and after entering their vicinities.

If they suspect something may be wrong in an area, but aren't sure, they may decide to use their spotlight. In this case, you must get out of the line of sight. Anything solid will cover you, including tall grasses. Do not try to run away however, because if the spotlight hits a running person, the bacon will surely report to the entire hog and pursue.

If you trip an alarm, bacon is also the first thing you will "smell". Almost invariably, this smell will come from the front of a given area, eventually drifting to the rear. Hence, if you "smell" bacon, move away from the front of the area and escape quickly.

One thing you have working to your advantage is that the majority of the time, the bacon is exposed to lights, making dark areas good hiding places. Use some common sense and adhere to Rule 7 at all times, and the bacon shouldn't become a problem.

Guards

Guards are hired hands who either patrol an area or survey a specific location. They may or may not be armed, but they will always be trouble if they spot you. Assuming the worst is especially important with these. They are generally not as observant as a police officer as they rarely see any action, and thus tend to slack off on the job. Operative at your best around these guys, and there should be no problem.

If you spot a guard patrolling an area, keep track of his movements and keep a note of when he comes by. Also take note of what items he is carrying, especially a weapon or radio. Keep in mind that even if you see no weapon, that doesn't mean it's not hidden. If you see a radio, and have your own 2-way, you may get lucky and be able to pick up on the talking.

Stationary guards are often found sitting around doing something of their own, and glancing at monitors now and then. While seemingly harmless, you must consider two things. The first is that the times he looks at the monitors is random, he could look at any given moment. The second is that if you cause enough motion on screen, he may pick you up with his peripheral vision, sound an alarm, and/or confront you personally. Remember, when dressed in full gear that you aren't approached like a normal pedestrian, you are approached as though you are a combatant. If he decides to chase and you suspect he's going to tackle you and mace/stun gun you, get cheap! Throw some powder or soil at his face and leg it in the opposite direction, or push him to the ground and run past him if you've blinded him.

Also keep in mind that guards are not tied directly to police, but they can get a hold of them quicker than your normal civilian. This means that if you confront a guard, you can expect the boys in blue to arrive shortly thereafter.

Civilian

Anyone who isn't actively looking for intruders could be considered a civilian. While they usually aren't found walking the streets at night, they are often inside of their homes, doing something like watching TV. The good news is that you can use this to your advantage since their windows will act as mirrors. The bad news is that these are usually the paranoid ones who will call the police and/or grab a weapon to fight you. If you may eye contact with anyone, and you have a good reason to suspect that they have seen you, abort your mission immediately, take evasive action, and make your way discreetly to base.

If a civilian attempts to confront you, run, even if you know you can defeat them in a fight. You can try to throw something at their face to blind them, and then run if you can do so without risking yourself in the process.

As civilians are tuned in to their surroundings, they are a constant threat. Even asleep, a noise may wake them up in a panic.

Party Animals

At night, there are always parties. People running around, getting drunk, having fun. The problems are

that they sometimes stumble outside to puke, piss, sleep on the lawn, etc. Don't interact with them. You may think it's fun and games walking up to a drunkard and making them think you're a ninja, but what happens if they go inside and describe you to a sober person? They might take a look outside, or they may laugh, but Murphy's Law may bite you in the ass if you assume nothing of it. Remember Rule 10 and remain out of sight.

Alternatively, parties may present a good target of opportunity. You may find a lot of unlocked vehicles parked outside, which may harvest more than you can carry. You may also get lucky and find some booze for celebrating later, or use as a trade item if you aren't into that sort of thing.

Gangs

Should you begin to operate where a group of people hang out, intentionally or unintentionally, then you most certainly should learn how to deal with them. Don't bother trying to interact with them, I highly doubt they'll be up for talking to you. If they notice you, they may mistake your intentions and try to attack you. In this case, run and hide where they cannot find you, fast! Try not to bother them, because you don't want to waste the time involved. If they are in an area you need passage through, either wait them out or go around them. Female operatives - you have some obvious problems that guys don't around certain groups of people.

Alternatively, you could consider this a possible target of opportunity. You may be able to skim some good information off of them or watch them stash something. Just make sure you don't go after the stash until you are certain they have left the area. Unlikely, but possible.

Operatives

If you run in the shadows often enough, you may happen upon another night operative running around. First and foremost, you can evaluate yourself using him or her. If the operative cannot see you, you are doing a good job. Similarly, since you can see the operative, try to figure out why you were able to, and add his or her mistake to your list of don'ts.

Now, once the shock of seeing someone else running around has subsided, you may be tempted to contact them. This is a huge no-no. You might think "Hey cool, someone else like me", and try to hit them up for a discussion on ops. Consider though; you have no idea who they are, and what they will do. Even if you do know them, they may not recognize you. They may decide to attack you, make a huge racket to get you busted, turn you in, whatever. Furthermore, you are taking jobs away that he or she wants, and the same applies visa-versa.

If you run into someone, the first thing you should do is remain still and observe. If the operative does something stupid like puts himself into a position that is slow to get out of, hurl a rock into a window near it and get his ass busted! Remember, he's messing around where you don't want him, and he's likely to get caught. Take advantage.

If the operative has seen you and will not run from the scene, a fight is possible. If he doesn't have a firearm or other powerful ranged weapon, a great way to break the ice might be to, once more, send a rock through a nearby window. That will make him run for sure, and you should follow suit.

For the operative feeling bold, a devious plan may be to track him around and wait for him to try to enter somewhere. When he does, hide as close to the entrance as possible, and mug him as soon as he comes out so you can take all of his goods. If you want to really be a pain in the ass, you could take a chance and drag him in front of a window, break it, cause a commotion, and haul ass. As long as he wasn't obviously mugged, it will look like he broke in and tried to leave by jumping out of a window, but he somehow got knocked out. Either way, the cops aren't going to care. If they think he had a partner turn against him, your info can't come out anyhow.

The Travel - How to Move During Operations

You've finally gotten all the gear you need. Confident in your clothing and your equipment, you jump into the shadows. How do you actually get to your objective though? You can't expect to simply walk up to it. You need to learn the procedures for getting up close, unseen, and getting away without being caught.

Fences

Fences present a major problem to operatives in the shadows. They are often loud to cross, can snag equipment, and potentially harm you. They can also provide a few advantages however. Here are a few common types of fencing you will encounter, how to cross them, and what advantages they have.

Barbed Wire Fence

Perhaps the most annoying of all the fence types, barbed wire grabs onto clothes and gets it caught up. Any torn cloth left behind counts as evidence. They can also cut you open if you're really careless, leaving behind evidence. They are also loud in most places, squeaking and sagging when you try to climb across them. They are mostly found in rural settings.

The first method of crossing, and most obvious, is climbing. The first thing you need to look for is a rock jack. These are firmly secured to the ground, to the fence, and are quiet and easy to cross. If you cannot find one, you should next look for a wooden post secured into the ground and to the fence. These don't make a lot of noise either, and are simple to cross. If you still cannot find one, you then have to look for a steel post. Crossing here is loud, but secured. Should you find only loose wire crossable, you may be able to "step" over the wire by bending it down and crossing. If not, find another way to cross. If all else fails, toss something over the fence to block the barbs and flip over it. When climbing, take as much time as you can so that you don't snag your pants.

The second method of crossing is to crawl underneath of it. You may be able to bend the wires and crawl, or you may need to snip some wire. Snip the wire that holds the barbed wire to a steel pole so that the barbed wire is easier to bend around. Be careful that you don't stand so that a tight wire will whip across you. You could also try digging a hole and crawling under.

The third method is to simply jump over it. Find a suitable spot and just dive over it. Make sure you know you can pull it off though, no sense in racking yourself on barbed wire...

The fourth and final method is to just cut it. Only do so if you absolutely must cross the fence and no other method is open.

As far as advantages go, if you can cross these with swiftness, they are invaluable in warding off pursuers. Rock jacks can be laid behind to avoid people passing by from seeing you. Also, if you lay parallel against the fence on the ground, you're much less likely to be seen by passing vehicles.

Chicken Wire Fence

Chicken wire; the stuff with the rectangular or hexagonal holes in it, too small to put your feet into. This makes climbing difficult, and the fencing is usually loud to boot. Thankfully, you can't get snagged.

First method of crossing is to climb. This can be tough if the fence is taller than you since you can't hook your feet onto anything. The only way is to find a good pole and cross there. Don't grab the top and pull yourself up unless you know it's safe, as you may create a ton of noise.

The second method of cross is to crawl under it. Since you can't flex chicken wire that well, you'll probably need to snip some wire or dig a hole. Don't be as worried about snipping since doing so doesn't bring the whole section down like barbed wire.

The third method is to just cut a section through the fence and bypass. Least recommended, for obvious reasons.

Chicken wire offers the same advantages barbed wire does, except that they rarely have rock jacks.

Wooden Plank Fence

Wooden fences, while easy to bypass, are still troublesome. This is because it is hard to know what is on the other side. If you have to, do a pull-up on the fence and barely peek over before crossing the fence.

The first method of crossing is, once again, climbing. These are dead simple, just pull yourself up, swing your legs around, and land on the other side. If you need to be quiet, you can lean your body against the fence top and slowly roll over the other side. Just don't rack yourself. You can climb over anywhere thanks to the durability.

The second method of crossing is to go under the fence. You'll have to dig, since you can't bend wood. This is time consuming, consider whether or not it is worth it.

Wooden fences are also good to hide behind and recon from. You can also lay parallel on the ground next to them to make yourself harder to see to people who pass by.

Cyclone Fence

Cyclone, or chain link fencing, is extremely annoying to cross, because it is noisy as hell. Even further precautions must be taken when crossing a fence topped with barbed wire. What's more, there is nowhere to place your feet.

Method one of crossing is climbing. You must try to find a pole you can put all your weight on while you cross. If you cannot find a pole that lets you do this, then you'll have to cross right next to a pole. If you have more people around, have them hold the horizontal bar so it doesn't sag and squeak. You'll make a

little noise, but not terribly bad. If the fence is taller than you are, then you'll have to pull yourself up the fence first, then toss yourself over. If the fence is extremely high, and you must climb, then you'll need to climb the wire using your hands. Also, if it is topped by barbed wire, you can either block the barbs with cloth, or cut the wire.

The second method is to crawl under it. Snip an/or dig. Be mindful that cyclone fences bend easily.

The third method is to jump the fence. Only applies if the fence is short enough to jump effectively.

The fourth method is a simple chop job - just cut through the fence.

Same advantages as a chicken wire fence.

Electric Fence

These are simple to bypass. Method one is to simply drop metal on the wire that touches the post, shorting the electricity out. Method two is to find a way to shut the fence off. The switch should be easy to find. No real advantages here, unless you can find a way to use the wiring as a weapon and it's really needed as such.

Brick Fence

Brick fences are the best to have around. They make no noise whatsoever, and are simple to climb. You'll find these around schools and other public places.

Method one of crossing in to climb. Just pull yourself up and roll over it. If it's too high to jump and grab, you can get a running step off of the fence and reach up to the top.

Method two is to dig under the fence, like you would a wooden fence. Note that this will take up a lot of time, especially since there is probably a concrete base.

Same advantages as a wooden fence. You may also be able to get out of the line of sight by laying flat on top of the fence in a pinch.

Picket Fence

Easy to bypass, but offer little in the way of cover.

First crossing method is to climb over it.

Second crossing method is to dig under it and crawl.

Third method is to jump over it. Careful over pointy boards which may grab you.

Picket fences can also be broken through with ease sometimes, but there usually isn't a good reason too, if at all. To use them for hiding, lay flat against the ground next to them, parallel.

Assorted Objects and Terrain

There is virtually nothing you can find during an operation that can't be turned to your advantage in some way, no matter how little.

Trees

Trees won't generally be something that's in your way, but they can assist you in various ways. For example, a tree could offer a better way to cross a fence, recon an area, or get access to a rooftop. What a tree does not offer though, is an escape route. Never climb a tree as an attempt to escape pursuit. Climbing trees is usually simple. Just grab the first solid limb and start climbing up it. If you need to jump higher, try running at the tree and jumping off of it at waist height as you would a brick fence. You may also use a rope, then use it for descent. The general rule is that if you can climb the tree with nothing, then you can simply jump down from it. Hang from the bottom limb then drop to the ground, using a break fall if necessary.

Trees are good for hiding if you are not being pursued. You can climb up above, where people are unlikely to look, or you can hug the opposite side of the trunk. Also, sitting with your back to the trunk is perfect for long term hiding. Don't use during pursuit however, as you may get trapped.

Ditches

Ditches are perfect for eliminating your profile. For recon, lay in them on your side. When hiding, lay face down. If the ditch is deep enough, you may be able to sit in it and keep a low enough profile. You may also be able to lay prone perpendicular to it and still have a low profile yet good view.

Dumpsters

Dumpsters are great to hide in and behind. You can also hide in the shadows created where they meet walls.

Poles

Treat them like tree trunks.

Snow

Snow presents numerous problems as well as advantages. For one, it is easy to bury yourself in it to hide. You can also throw it to draw attention elsewhere, and snow makes it easier to see on nights with no moon. On the other hand, snow leaves tracks everywhere which anyone can see, is often loud to cross, and slows you down. It is best to avoid snow altogether, even when there are small patches on the ground. A unique use for snow, when most has melted, is the snow plowed off of roads. They provide good cover prior to crossing the road.

Tall Grass

While tall grass may seem elementary, don't discount it. In this context, tall grass refers to any grass or weeds which are around two feet high. It's common just about everywhere, and has saved my ass personally on numerous occasions. If a car is coming, jump into some tall grass. If a person is walking towards you, crawl behind some. If there is a spotlight shining towards you, get behind tall grass. Tall grass is very useful.

Boulders

Boulders make great cover, because they are big, dark, and uniform in shape. You can either hide behind them, hug them on the ground, or even lay on top of them sometimes to avoid being seen.

Slopes

Even a little slope can help conceal you from a direction. Just lay near the top so you can barely see. If someone is looking around, you'll be very hard to spot.

Irrigation Pipes

Pipes that connect to each other that are used to water fields. Probably used at your local football fields. These offer some profile reduction by lying next to them, parallel.

Rivers and Streams

Water can offer some refuge. Instead of hiding in the water, use the noise created to cover up your own noises.

Hedges

Hide yourself near them by jumping behind them or laying on the ground next to them.

Street Light

A nightmare in urban operations, these light up all main areas of town. There is no way to just shut them off short of destroying the town's power grid or destroying the light bulb. If you decide to destroy the bulb, a pellet gun is the only reasonable choice. Some lights are protected with a thick guard to stop this, so a high powered air rifle may be necessary. You can also hide on the side opposite of the light to hide decently well.

Buildings

Sometimes an entire building is in your way, or perhaps getting onto the roof is the best way into another house, or maybe you need to get roof access. Regardless, there are good ways and bad ways to climb onto a building.

First lets deal with one story houses. Generally, were dealing with trailers and maybe some smaller houses. Sometimes you can jump up, grab the roof, then climb onto the top. This usually isn't a possibility though, as the overhang makes it too difficult. Several things to look for: trees, oil tanks, gas tanks, vehicles parked nearby, window sills, anything that will get you close. If all else fails, you may be able to find and use a ladder. Ropes are an option if you have one.

Second story houses and buildings are a bit tougher. If you can find a one-story section, start there. If not, you'll have to find something to climb. Look for the same things as a one-story section, then look for any gutters, pipes, or ladders attached to the building.

Anything larger and you'll have to hope for either an attached ladder, something to hook a rope to, or

something else you could climb.

Hiding near a house is simple, you can hide near gas tanks, on or under porches, sit by the corner of a porch, behind grass, where ever.

Larger buildings must be climbed via pipe, wiring, a rope, etc. These cannot just be jumped off of obviously, so you need to make sure you always have a way back down.

Vehicles

Vehicles are easy to get around of course, but they are good for hiding behind, under, against, or in. Remember that most dome lights turn on should the door be unlocked. You can also utilize the noise created by them to cover up your own noise. Also, you want to make sure you don't do anything stupid, like hide from someone while exposing yourself to someone else. If you can't hide from everyone, don't bother.

People

That's right, even people can help your cause. If they are playing music or talking loud, it will not only cover up your noises, but will distract them away from anything else. You may also find some targets of opportunity. The reason they are hazards should be fairly obvious.

Hiding in Nothing

The shadows won't always offer you a place to run and hide. While the things listed above are universal, what if you find yourself in a football field, or a large open pasture a good distance away from any ditches? You need to hide right where you are. Do not take off for cover unless sighted. Rule 8 applies here.

The best thing to do most of the time, is to just lay on the ground, face down, head towards anyone approaching. You can look if you'd like by peering through the cracks in your hands. Otherwise, be mindful of the glare from your eyes. This has worked wonders for me.

You may also choose to imitate something close by, but not good for cover such as a tree, a cow, or a large rock. To turn into a tree, just hold your arms out crookedly, lean your head against a shoulder, and keep your legs together. To turn into an animal, get on your hands and knees and sit still. To turn into a rock, drop to your knees and hug your legs. Remember that you aren't trying to look as much like the object you are mimicing as you are trying to not look human. You would be surprised how well this works in the right situation.

Hiding in Light

Hiding in light means being in the right position in relevance to a source of light so that you can see others well, but they cannot see you. A good example is a person holding a spotlight into another person's face. The guy with the spotlight can see just fine, but the other one cannot see past the light. By doing so, the first person is actually using the light to hide. As an operative, the chance to hide behind light won't come often, and there are usually better alternatives. Sometimes however, you won't have a choice.

To hide in the light, you must hide in the shadows next to it. For example, if you stand between two windows that are lit brightly, a person outside would have a tough time seeing you from about 35 yards. Any closer and he may begin to see a human figure.

You can use this if confronted too, by shining your flashlight in the person's face. They won't be able to get a good look at you. You'll have a good chance to knock them down and escape, or just try to out run them. Don't try to depend on this as your main idea though, doing so only when all other options have been exhausted, as this is a last resort tactic.

In dealing with bright lights that go in several directions, place yourself between the light and anyone nearby. That makes the light hit your back, creating only a hard to see silhouette instead of lighting your front up making you easy to identify. The same thing applies with the moon - put yourself between it and anyone nearby. Be careful, however, that you do not cast shadows past corners, which may betray you.

Another way that light works to your advantage is when there is glass. When a person is inside of their house and they have the lights on, looking outside of their windows becomes very difficult. Unless they are pressed up against the glass, they will have a difficult time seeing past ten yards, if at all, as the glass and darkness outside work together to form a mirror.

Learning how to use light to your advantage is difficult, but it is an essential skill. When you learn to use it, you will become more confident and skilled at choosing hiding places.

Hiding in Darkness

When solid cover is not immediately available, and you cannot use light to your advantage, you must

hide in darkness. Use the shadows and corners around you to conceal your outline.

Hide in areas behind where light is cast, or around them. Such areas are corners, underneath picnic tables, beside trees, and behind lamp posts. These shadows usually conceal you just enough to hide you if you remain still. The science behind the practice here is that it is harder to look into a dark place when you are in a light place and have been used to the lights for a long time.

If someone has been in the darkness for awhile, you can "create" darkness for them by attracting their attention to a bright source of light by tossing rocks. This will ruin their night vision, enabling you to use the shadows once again.

Hiding in a Room

If you are inside of a building, are in danger of being caught, and have no escape immediately available, you must hide somewhere. This is a very dangerous situation to be in, having many variables, so you must hide in the places least likely to be looked upon.

Cabinets

If you can cram into a ground level cabinet, you may do so. If somebody is getting up, they may look in top cabinets to get a cup. If someone is coming home late from something, they may also look in top cabinets for the same thing. The bottom ones, especially the one under the sink, are the least likely to be disturbed.

Showers

A common hiding place in the movies is the shower. If you hide in a tub with a curtain, hide behind the curtain and remain still and silent. You may move the curtain slightly, but try to make it look as much as it did when you entered. If the shower is a dark tinted shower, you have little to worry about, just stand inside, maybe crouched a little. If the shower is distorted clear glass, there are problems. You have to lay down and try to conform to the wall so that nothing appears to be inside.

Of course, none of this matters if someone decides to take a shower. You alone must decide whether the shower is a safe place. If you somehow know the person takes their showers before bed, do not hide here.

Beds

Another common hiding place is underneath of a bed. The problem here is that if someone is already in bed, or is going to bed, you must be assured that they are sound asleep before you can exit. You also cannot disturb the bed, because doing so may wake anyone in it up. Risky, so only do so if you know it's safe. Also, if you are spotted underneath of a bed, good luck trying to escape.

Desks

The leg room underneath of office desks can also make decent hiding places. If you hide here, make sure it appears as though nothing is underneath from in front of it. Don't worry about the back, because if you are seen here, there isn't anything you can do to hide anyways.

Doors

You may also choose to hide beside doors. Do so in a manner that makes the door cover you when opened. Your best bet is to sit down, and hope the person does not look there when they come through the door. If they do spot you, which is probable, at least you can toss them aside while they are surprised and make a quick escape.

Upstairs

If the house has two stories, hiding upstairs is a safe precaution. That is because most utilities are downstairs. Try to find an extra room that isn't used much, and enter.

Closet

Another classic, you may wish to hide in a closet, using the clothing to hide you. While you can hide easily enough, the problem here is that many closets are loud upon opening, making an exit difficult without alerting anyone.

When hiding in a room, make sure you do not trap yourself, having a way out, and make sure you can conceal your identity if you are sighted. Looking upon the hiding places above, it should be obvious that getting trapped in a room and having to hide is a situation you should do your best to avoid.

Hiding in the Background

Even if the opposition has good lighting and a good view, you can still fool them by making yourself as small as possible. You do this by being far away. Even if a police officer has his spotlight on you at 100 yards, if you are curled up into a ball he may very well pass right over you. Similarly, if you are in dense grass and the light is spotted at you, he will only see the grass, not you, because you become part of the background. Becoming the background is important sometimes, and ties in with hiding in nothing.

How to Travel

Different land and objects dictate a different way to travel. Here is a guide for when to use each kind of traveling, and how to do it.

Upright Walk

Walk upright when you have low risk of being seen, such as in fields, near your house, or inside a building when the area has been secured.

Bent Knee Walk

Walk with your knees bent to keep a low profile. Walk on your toes to distort your foot print, and walk silently. This may seem like overkill, but there's no good reason not to. Remember Rules 2 and 4. When crossing gravel and other loud terrain, slowly place your feet forward, on the ground, then lean forward, placing your weight onto that leg. This will help muffle the sound a little.

Jog

Rarely needed, only use when you are in safe areas and need to gain a little extra time on your watch. You may also opt to jog if you are crossing an area of high traffic, such as a main road.

Sprint

Only sprint when you are being chased or are in danger of being seen by a vehicle. Otherwise, the noise and the movement will draw all sorts of attention to you.

Crawl - Hands and Knees

Crawl on your hands and knees when you need to keep a low profile, yet retain decent speed. Be aware that doing this will often leave marks on soft ground

Crawl - Elbows and Legs

Gives you a lower profile, but slows you down. To do this, lay down in the prone position, and push yourself forward using your elbows and your feet.

Crawl - Prone

Lowest and slowest. Lay flat on the ground and slowly inch forward using your legs and forearms. Necessary only when traveling under objects or behind grass.

Bent Ankle Walk

When crossing snow, you need to try to fool any potential investigators as much as possible. To do so, one idea is to bend your feet inwards and walk on the outsides of your ankles. Doing so leaves only lines in the snow as opposed to actual prints. Also good for loose dirt. Remember that a footprint draws attention, but a few lines will not, so try not to create a trail while doing this.

No matter how you walk, you should always try to follow some basic rules, such as what type of ground you walk on. Try to stay on grass, asphalt, and other ground that is quiet. Silence is of the highest importance, with softness coming next. Soft ground retains prints. Stay out of gravel, snow, and loose dirt whenever possible. Also keep an eye out for twigs, dry leaves, and dog shit. Annoying, for obvious reasons.

The Entry - How to Get into an Area

The moment of truth has arrived. You have reached the place you are supposed to gain access to. More than likely, it is a house, a trailer, or an RV. There are numerous methods of getting inside. You'll have to decide what things you have access to.

Doors

Doors are the obvious method of entry, and thus you should use them as a last resort. Remember Rule 4! If you absolutely have to though, doors are almost a guaranteed way of gaining access to an area. When entering a door, keep door alarms in mind, as well as the noise caused by certain doors. Squeaky hinges could be silenced by oil, or if you wish to keep your load out smaller, you could always try muffling the noise with cloth.

Open the Door

Before you try anything, try to just open the door as is. Many times, doors will be unlocked by careless people, or maybe they just think nobody is bold enough to enter the building. There's no point in ended up like those people on America's Dumbest Criminals.

Picking the Lock

If you have the skill to do so, you may pick any locks that impede you. As there are numerous guides on how to do so, there is no use in me trying to teach you. It is quiet, and so long as you don't make loud noises, you should have as much time as you need to open the lock. Do this if you have the skills and equipment needed.

Push the Bolt In

A lot of frames you'll encounter are cheap wood, so you can chip away just enough with a flathead screwdriver (remember what I said about them in "The Gear"?). From there it is simply a matter of sliding the screwdriver in and pushing the bolt towards the knob, thus allowing the knob to turn and open the door. An alternative method is available if you can somehow get a shoelace on either side of the bolt and work the lace down to where the knob will turn. Isn't as reliable as the screwdriver method but it's on the table.

Pry the Door Open

Another use for your screwdriver. Place it between the door and the frame, then pry the door open. Pry from the bottom, and keep shimming the door further and further open with whatever you can. Eventually the door will open, producing a loud pop. It's loud, but doesn't do too much actual damage to the door or frame. Crowbars, pry bars, and shovels are superior to a screwdriver, obviously. You can also get more prying power out of a screwdriver by sliding a pipe over the existing handle to extend it.

Drill the Lock

Guaranteed method of bypassing locks. Drill just above the opening so that you destroy all of the pins. After the final pin is destroyed, you can open the door.

Ram the Door Open

If the door swings in, you can always try ramming it. This will also produce a loud noise, and is harder to do sometimes than prying. Ram in the center of the door with your shoulder, as it produces more force than kicking. This relies on having a weak frame, lock, or door. Careful with cheap doors however, as you may go right through it, creating a huge racket along with clearly seen evidence. If you know for sure that the frame is weak, you can also try kicking the doorknob.

Unlock the Door from Inside

In order to do this, you'll need to create a hole in the door. If there is a window, break it and unlock the door. Mind you that this is also a loud method, and not only that, it causes damage and evidence. Use only when all options are spent.

Unlock the Door from Outside

If you can get a hold of a key, by all means use it. Look under door mats, by mail boxes, on sills, under pots, anywhere one might be hidden. If the keys are to a large building, duplicate it as soon as possible as they may change the locks. With vehicles, try searching around wheel wells, bumpers, and pick-up beds for magnetic key holders.

Unhinge the Door

If the door swings outside, you may be able to remove the pin hinges and move the door entirely. Place a screwdriver between the pin and hinge, hammer upwards, and remove. Work slow and carefully so as to

not create too much noise. You may wish to replace the door later, but do so only if the time warrants it. A pry bar or crowbar can also get the job done, obviously.

Unscrew the Door

Some doors which lead into cheap trailers, cabinets, etc, are held in place by hinges which can be unscrewed from the wall from the outside... I don't know why either but I've seen it. Don't count on it, but be grateful if this good fortune comes to you.

Fold the Door

If you are really getting desperate while trying to open up an RV for some strange reason, it may please you to know that the doors are usually simple wood and fiberglass sheets. As such, they can be bent rather easily. Fold the bottom half upwards, and crawl in using the gap you make. You can grab the bottom after prying it out a little using any prying tool before bending. This creates awful noise and evidence, but if you are in the middle of nowhere, it may work.

Cut the Lock/Hasp

If the door is locked up by a padlock, you then have the option of cutting the lock. You can do this with either a hacksaw or a bolt cutter will work. A bolt cutter is faster and makes less racket, but a saw is lighter. If you are using a bolt cutter, you can dampen the noise by wrapping a cloth (wet if possible) around the head before cutting the lock. Also, if there is a hasp you can attack with the cutters, attack it instead as they are almost always easier to cut than the actual lock. Same applies with a hacksaw.

Finding Combos

Not all doors are held shut by a pin and tumbler style lock. Some use combo panels that force you to enter the correct numbers before opening the door. First of all, forget opening it up and connecting wires together, it doesn't work that way. These days the panels are computer controlled, so the right combo is necessary. The best way to do this is by using graphite dust on the panel. Just put a pile in the palm of your hand. Then blow the powder onto the panel. The dust will then stick to any fingerprints showing you the last buttons pressed. There is a slim chance the numbers will be off, but it can happen. In any case, start punching in the possible combos until it unlocks, it shouldn't take long. Also, be sure to clean up the dust when you are finished.

The alternative is to monitor the panel somehow, using powerful optics and positioning yourself so that you can view the panel well. You'll probably have better luck on the right side of the panel since most people are right handed, and you'll be able to get a clearer view. You may even be able to do this in the daytime by sitting in a car with binoculars. Make sure cameras or pedestrians can't see what you are doing though.

When you open the door, remember to get inside and shut it immediately. An open door in the middle of the night is suspicious and may cause a person to call the police if seen. Also, remember to keep it unlocked until you leave, should you need to hurry back through it. If the lock is undamaged, lock the door again on your way out. Remember to leave everything as you found it whenever possible.

Windows

The great thing about windows is that they seem to take lower priority than doors. Shock sensors may exist and should be watched for, but generally windows are forgotten in the line of security. For most homes anyhow. As such, they should be your first place to try accessing the building. If there is a screen in the way, you can probably pop it out entirely with a screwdriver, or simply tear it out.

Open the Window

Again, try this before anything. Try to just open the window, it may very well be open, especially in summer.

Pry the Window Open

Take a screwdriver and try popping the cheap lock. It will make some noise, but it usually works. You can fix the lock inside if you are undetected and want to remain so.

Unscrew the Window

Many windows on RVs, trailers, and even some cheaper homes have the screws on the outside so that you

could simply unscrew the window from the wall and remove it. It takes a little time, but makes no noise, and can always be set back into place if time allows.

Break the Window

If all else fails, put a damn rock through the glass. Works every time, but is loud and leaves evidence. You can make this method quieter by taping a corner of the glass and tapping it a hammering tool (butt of your field knife works great) then slowly pushing the glass. If you plan on simply shattering the glass, aim for the center where the window is weakest.

Cut the Window

Using a glass cutter, you can cut through the glass. This makes a nasty scratching sound though, so only use it when noise isn't an issue. Suction cups will allow you to remove the cut section of glass easier and quieter, but take up more room.

Miscellaneous Entry

Sometimes the best method of entry isn't always the obvious one. These places are not only unexpected, they usually have little if any security precautions.

Vents

These are your next options. Vents may be tunnels that are big enough to enter, or they may be removable. The latter is almost always an option on RVs. Climb on top, unscrew the vent lid, and you'll be able to drop into it's bathroom. There is generally a metal slide in your way that needs to be removed first. It can be cut, or carefully detached.

Ceiling Entry

You may be able to find removable slats, which can be removed. Then you can climb up into them and get onto the other side of walls. A rare find, but effective.

Floor Entry

Some buildings have hatches that allow you to go underneath of the houses for maintenance. From here you may be able to saw a hole in the floor to gain access. Only reasonable if the reward is worth it. Be mindful that underneath the building there may be dangerous animals. Slightly experimental.

Wall Entry

This method is admittedly bizarre. The idea is to open up a wall then just go through it. One method may involve removal of metal sheets as described in "The Gear". The Animal Liberation Front is also known to drill holes in mortar outside of cinder bricks to loosen them, then remove large portions of cinderblock walls.

Slow, somewhat noisy, but doable. Experimental method, do it at your own risk. I should add that the idea seems more feasible than you'd think, because mortar is drilled like butter most of the time, so drilling all of the holes wouldn't take too long (two minutes per brick would seem reasonable). Even a hand-cranked drill will work good in this case.

Drawers

Once in the building, may need to get inside of a file cabinet. The locks on these are generally easy to pick. In fact, there is a 50/50 chance that you can do so with your screwdriver. If all else fails, you can pry the thing open with it instead.

Security Measures

Only the foolish would assume a building has no security measures. You may decide to run a recon operation on a building for the sole purpose of identifying it's security measures. If the systems are unidentified, the general rule is that the better the building, the better the security. Here are common security installations you will run across on operations, what their dangers are, and how to defeat them.

Stickers

These are great. Building owners often display their security systems proudly on their windows to ward off any would-be burglars. This actually benefits you, because now you know what you are up against. Always look for these when reconning a potential target. You can then look up that security company online and

look at their product features! By doing so, you'll find the weaknesses of specific systems, which will allow you to slip in unnoticed. Be aware that sometimes places falsely display these just to scare people off. There may be no security, but don't forget Rules 10, 9, and 7.

Passive Infrared Sensor

PIR Sensor for short, these are the sensors that detect body heat. They are fairly common, and connect to the main security panel. If you walk past them, they will notice you. The trick here is to either blind the sensor, fool the sensor, or quiet the sensor. Keep in mind that most sensors have a ninety degree view. The first thing to try is to blind the sensor. This can be done by sliding along the wall it is on, then either spraying it with metallic paint, foam, or placing metal taping on it. If you do so, you should try to get any of them as thick as possible on the sensor. You can also grab a nearby fire extinguisher and spray it down if possible. You can also place tin foil around the sensor if you can't find paint, tape, foam, or whatever. Remember that metal blocks the sensor.

The second option is to fool the sensor. This is rather tricky. First of all, forget trying to walk slowly, it doesn't work. The only way to do this is to wrap yourself in a fire blanket. Those make noise and shine, but can trick the sensor, although it is pretty impractical. Alternatively, you could just get without of sensor range if possible.

The final option is to cut the wires to the thing. This prevents the sensor from sending a signal. You'll have to slink along the wall to get close. This may seem to be the obvious choice, but don't get your hopes up. Many security systems will automatically sound an alarm if it's sensors are cut. As a general rule, if the system looks new, don't tamper with it.

The average range for a sensor is about thirty feet, some extend farther. A safe distance would probably be forty feet.

PIR Lighting

A common outdoor nuisance is PIR lighting. These are the lights that turn on if you move around in front of them thanks to a PIR sensor, and will draw attention to you during operations. There are two targets for defeating a PIR light - the sensor and the light bulbs. Unlike a security sensor however, these can usually be severed from their power source without sounding an alarm. Be aware that, while rare, some double as an alarm sensor.

What makes these even easier than a security sensor however, is that they can be defeated by rendering the lights useless. There are several ways to do this.

The first is to physically bust the light bulbs. You can do this at range with a pellet gun or a rock, but a pellet gun is recommended. That's because if you miss with a rock, it will sound like a bell hitting the light housing. You can also ride the wall to it and bust the bulbs. This is best done by holding your field knife in front of the sensor and tapping the bulbs with something. Be sure you *tap* as I said, because if you are using an all metal tool, then you run the risk of electrocuting yourself.

The second is to unscrew the light bulbs. This is convenient, as you can come back and screw them back in later, leaving no evidence. To do so, act like you are going to tap with bulbs with something. Instead, once your knife blade is blocking the sensor, unscrew the bulbs.

The third is to block the light with something. This can be thick cloth, or you can spray the bulbs black. This won't totally eliminate light output, but it should lower it enough as to create less of an attraction.

Shock Sensors

These are the nasty little things that are placed on windows, as well as cars. When the sensor is bumped hard enough, it sends out the alarm. Like all sensors, there is a chance that when cut from the panel, the alarm will automatically be sent. Mind you they can also be installed onto doors.

Since there is no way to "blind" a shock sensor, the only thing you can do is avoid setting it off. Treat it like highly volatile explosives, one little bump could blow the operation. As long as you do not bump anything, these will not go off. You can touch the area right next to them and slowly lean into the sensor with no consequence. If you must go through a window with one of these in it, do not open, pry, bump, or break the window. Your best bet in such a situation would be a glass cutter, if the noise isn't a problem. If possible, just avoid these.

Laser/Photoelectric Sensors

A little more exotic, these aren't found in many places due to their price tag. Still, where they are found they are difficult to mess with. Basically, if you break the laser beam, you trigger an alarm. As far as I know, there is no way to safely disable this alarm, you can only avoid them. The lasers are invisible, so

you'll need help finding them. If you suspect a laser sensor is in the area, use something to create a mist such as an inhaler. The laser will become visible as the light refracts from the water.

Pressure Pads

These are sensors that activate when enough weight is put onto them. These aren't too common, but are still used for some buildings. They are commonly found under floor mats and carpeting surrounding doorways, maybe even windows in some higher security buildings. The best thing to do if you have good reason to think there is a pressure pad around, is to avoid stepping in these areas. You can also pry around with your field knife as though searching for mines, but the process would prove slow and difficult, not to mention leave evidence. Do so only if the reward is worth it. Just remember not to jab the actual sensor.

Control Panel

The heart of every security system, this is the electronic box that connects to its sensors. When a sensor sends it a signal, the panel turns on the alarm and almost always sends a signal to the local security company, who in turn contact the police.

This panel can be defeated in two ways. The first, more crude method is to simply smash the panel. So long as there is no remote panel, this will disable the system completely. Just smash the thing a few times with your knife handle. If there is a remote panel, the alarm will still be active.

The second is a little more difficult, but leaves less evidence. Bring graphite dust with you, put a pile into your hand, and blow into the panel. The graphite will be stuck to any recent fingerprints, giving you the numbers used. From there you should be able to punch in the combo in less than a minute with the given numbers. Just make sure the alarm doesn't threaten to sound if you get the wrong combo a certain number of times.

Remote Panel

A secondary control panel, found in some newer security systems. This keeps the alarm system active even if the main control panel has been destroyed. Defeated the same way as the main control panel.

Phone Line

Relevant to security because the signal to the security company is sent via phone line. Some more sophisticated systems actually use cellular signals, but these are usually found in more expensive establishments. This line may be cut, thus blocking the signal, but doing so may alert the security company, depending on the alarm system. Trying to take over the line by making a phone call will not work on modern systems.

Concerning cellular signals, if you know the system is cellular based, why not try to block the signal with a "magic bag"? It's an untested idea, but may work. Don't forget Rule 3 though.

Electricity

Also relevant, because electricity is what runs the security systems. You may try to flip the circuit breaker if you have access or cut the power line with an insulated cutting tool, but be warned in doing so that it may alert the security company, or the control panel may simply have a battery back up. Useful if there are cameras but no alarms, but not much else.

Video Cameras

These come in many varieties, including the common black and white, color, and infrared. They can also transmit wirelessly, or by hardwire. These can be defeated in several ways, but mind you that they should only be tampered with if the camera is not actively watched by a guard, instead being recorded onto tape, and you know it is not a CCTV camera.

The first method of defeating a camera is to destroy the lens. This can be done by either shooting it with a pellet gun, or smashing it up close. If you want to remain entirely off camera, be sure to destroy the lens out of sight or sneak up from behind it. If the camera is one that rotates left and right, just rush it when it turns. Some cameras also have IR sensors (CCTV) which, when they see you, will draw the camera to you and/or sound an alarm. In this case, you must sneak up to the camera from out of view, and only destroy if you *know* it is not attached to an alarm system.

The second method of defeating a camera is to blind the lens. This is rather simple. You can hit it with paint, foam, fire extinguisher, tape it, cover it with a garbage bag, force it into looking at the wall, whatever. Again, if you wish to remain off camera totally, sneak up from out of view and do this. Also, forget paintball guns. Garbage bags may be optimal as you can remove them later if you wish, eliminating

evidence.

Another way of blinding a camera is through the use of a laser pointer. Yes, this actually works. Some cameras, however, can filter out the effect somewhat, making you visible again. The best possible set-up would be a stand that can hold and aim three lasers - one green, one blue, and one red. If you wish to use lasers, imitate this set up as closely as possible.

The third method is to cut the power/video feed. Again, sneak up from out of view, then simply cut the wire. When doing so, keep in mind that this may activate the alarm if it is integrated.

What's important to remember about cameras is that they aren't any good if they cannot identify you. You may wish to put on a disguise inside of a building and when around cameras. Remember what you see on TV - cameras not only capture your face, but your skin color, your shoulder width (gender), height, size, hair, and how you walk. Change these up as best as possible, and the camera is of no concern. Besides, if you take something, it's not like defeating the camera will cover it up, they will know anyways.

Camera Domes

These are a little more tricky than single cameras. Again, they come in a variety of styles, and may or may not be actively watched, but even the black and white models are trickier than a single IR camera. Camera domes can be seen in large stores and buildings on the ceilings as large, dark domes. Inside of each dome lays three or four cameras, getting a 3D view of it's surroundings. In short, you are up against multiple cameras, with a layer of protection.

Defeating these would be hard. For one, you cannot sneak up to them. They are also too tall to be able to smash or spray with paint. There are still a few methods open to you however.

Method one is to destroy the cameras. If you can see through the dome, you can target the lens of each camera and shoot them out with a pellet gun. You may also be able to shatter the dome or blow pieces off of it by using a pellet gun, then blind all the cameras. This method would be tough, and is not recommended. The good news is that since they are so hard to reach, there is a small chance of having a tamper alarm.

The second method is to cover the entire dome. You can do this by using long reaching foams, or by using a fire extinguisher.

If possible, instead try to find the tapes and destroy them, or just alter your appearance as much as possible.

Monitors/VCRs

These are where the cameras report to. You might be able to trace cameras back to the room that these are in if the cameras are hardwired. Rest assured, where there are cameras, there is something recording what they view.

When you find the tapes these are being recorded on, you can either steal them, destroy them, or try to mess with the content using a powerful magnet if one is around.

If the monitors are being watched by a guard, there is not much you can do short of drawing the guard out of the room.

Driveway Sensors

People place these at the head of driveways and walkways to detect people when they pass through the sensors. They either come in a pair, or just a single sensor. Single sensors are simple motion detectors, while the ones in pairs will indicate a photoelectric system. Stay completely away if you only see one sensor, as these things will go off if so much as a weed blows in front of them. Photoelectric sensors will only sound an alarm of course if you break the beam.

These are almost always mounted on poles, which a person passes by to go somewhere. They are rarely hidden. Remember Rule 10 though, you never know. If you see one or two suspicious poles with the driveway leading between them, avoid the driveway and cross a fence elsewhere.

Door Sensors

These are the annoying of the annoying. That's because there is really nothing that can be done about them. If the door is opened and this device is turned on inside, the alarm goes off. It doesn't matter how or who opens the door, the alarm will sound. If you know or think one of these might be attached, then avoid the door completely until the control panel has been defeated. Rule 4 also comes into play here.

Security Guard

The human element of security. It may or may not be armed with a weapon, so be alert. The old tricks such as tossing rocks to distract him can still work. Just don't be obvious about it, like tossing rocks into a metal

roof, or the guard will probably know somebody is throwing rocks.

What makes guards difficult yet easy at the same time is that they are all different, and they all have human habits. Guards in small stations, for example, probably sit around playing and munching on snacks until somebody approaches in a dead obvious manner.

The best strategy to defeat a guard is to observe what he is doing for a few minutes, and slip past him.

Avoid passing by on rounded minutes such as X:00, X:15, X:30, and X:45 as these are likely times for him to get up and move around.

Dogs

Man's best friend is man's worst enemy in the shadows. You usually don't have to worry about being attacked, but the noise they make is incredible. The first and obvious thing you should try to do is be silent to avoid them. If that doesn't work, you can try to pacify them. Drop to a knee and try to call it to you, make friends with it. If it still sits there and barks, you can try to pacify it with a stick or meat if some is around. If that still does not work, try to scare it off somehow, or say "No!" firmly. If all else fails, you have three options: kill, silence, or leave.

I won't describe how to kill it, since it should not only never need to be done, but it should be obvious how to do. To silence it, nail it with a stun gun, slam it to the ground and tape its mouth shut, kick it hard in the jaw, whatever. Be advised that all of these are easier said than done, and most methods will cause the dog to yipe, which is more alarming than its bark. The third option, leave, should be done if the reward is not worth dealing with the dog.

Should the dog attack, you must quickly take something and wrap it around your less-used arm. Hold the arm out so the dog bites it, then either strike it in the face with something, a stun gun, or ram your knife into its gut and let the dog slide down the knife. I've personally never had to do this, but it seems to be the taught method. If the dog is a small one and attacking, just give it a good kick.

There are other variables to consider. Perhaps the dog barks at everything to the point that the owner doesn't mind it anymore. In this case, you should sit back and observe what happens. If nothing becomes of the barking, just ignore it and proceed as planned.

A good resource online includes police suggestions to citizens. PDFs can readily be found on the web that describe recommended places for security measures, what to use, and when to use them. Studying up on these will give you an edge over not just common home security, but you'll be able to stray out of the common criminal profile, confusing potential investigations.

When you finally get into the area you need, be sure you have a way out that's fast and close by. Unlock all doors, disable all security features, and make you are haven't been spotted. This gives you a comfort zone, which reduces stress inside the operation area. That way you don't get overexcited and forget important details during your operation.

The Exit - How to Leave the Scene of the Crime

Mission accomplished, it's time to haul ass. You need to get out of the objective area, and get back to base. Alternatively, you may have been compromised and need to scramble (Rule 9). Hopefully you listened to me and made all of your escape routes. This phase of the operation is just as critical as the rest. Just because you've left the operation area doesn't mean you're safe yet. Again, Rule 9 comes into play here. You may have been seen during entry, or you may have tripped a security system unwittingly. Either way, a search for a suspect may be taking place right now and you need to get the hell out of the night.

If you were not compromised on your way in, then your entry route is a viable route back to base. If you were, try to choose the fastest escape route available to you and take it if possible. If blocked, try the next fastest one, and work your way down until you can get out. Remember not to leave tracks leading to your base. Keep a cool head and work your way back to base, and get some sleep. You can try leaving false tracks leading in the wrong direction though, and proceed to base from there.

If you opted to wear regular clothing under your operation gear, you may choose to be bold and get back to your base using an inconspicuous approach. Remember that you could be associated with the crime still if seen. It's your choice. Personally I would rather stick to the shadows.

Another thing you should keep in mind are people watching you constantly. They may or may not call the police, instead trying to get you further into trouble. If you suspect this is the case, act normal, don't run in a panic. You want to make them think they are still in control. Pretend to check around a corner or whatever it takes to get out of sight, yet make them think you'll return. As soon as you have done so, haul

ass!

When returning to base, the important thing to remember is that the operation is barely half over. You might be excited and want to get back as soon as possible, but fight the urge. Remain calm and alert, stay hidden, and take as much time as you need getting back to base.

The Escape - How to Avoid Getting Caught When Compromised

You fucked up, and now the boys in blue are on your ass! What do you do? First of all, you relax. Review Rules 8, 4, 2, and 1 - they all come into action here. First of all, you need to relax and analyze the situation. Are they using spotlights? If they are, then get out of their view. Don't try to get out of their reach, you won't be able to.

Are they sitting in their squad cars? If so, haul ass before it's too late, and make sure you do so where they can't see and track you. If they are coming after you on foot, it already is too late and you need to run *now!* If you know you can, outrun them until they quit the chase. This will only work in rural settings, as they can cut you off on roads. Remember to use your stealth. A good idea would be to run around corner, hide behind a lamp post, sneak back to the other side of the corner, and then run back from where you were. Do not, however, go to the point you were seen. There may be another officer there looking for dropped items. Another no-no is heading towards base. They may be able to cut you off, or track you there even if you get away. Give the police a run around.

Is there a K9 unit closing in? If so, it's time to run. Remember that there are two types of dogs - trackers and attack dogs. If they are leashed, you only need to outrun the owner, not the actual dog. Take off at a good run. If you can, run around in a normally populated area, like a parking lot, to throw the dog's senses off. Alternatively, in rural settings you can take to the fields and run around in overlapping patterns, confusing the dog. Remember that the chase is a game to the dog, and by making a game harder, you make it want to quit. Toss impediments in your path if it is close enough, anything that will make the dog want to stop. If worse comes to worst, you may have to decide if you are willing to kill the K9 unit. The decision will be based directly on your operation rewards.

Once you have broken loose from the police, stick to draws and areas that provide lots of cover. You can also go into the woods, but be sure you know where you are going. If you have a compass, you may need to use it. Also, you could try going as far as possible into the woods and camping somewhere for the night. Wherever you go, make sure you can hide in a moment's notice.

What happens if you are inside of a building and are compromised? There are a few things you can do to evade the police and save yourself some time. The very first thing you should do is to lock the most likely doors leading to your location. This will keep the enemy at bay and give you more time to make your escape. Another thing you can use to keep doors shut is to use wedges to block them. If you have a screwdriver and some screws, you can also wedge screws between the door and the frame, making the door harder to kick in. You may also try placing a wedge beneath the door, then screwing the wedge into the floor. Good luck kicking through that!

The second thing to try is moving objects, such as desks and drawers, in front of doors, making them harder to break down. Remember to not spend too much time doing this, as chances are more police are on their way. Also, do not barricade yourself inside of the building unless you are using extreme force as it is a surefire way to get caught. If all police units are on their way inside the building, you may also try to hide where they cannot see you for sure near the entered door, then rush outside at the first chance you get.

The important thing to remember is that you need to get outside as soon as possible. Inside the building, there are limited places to go, and the police will search them swiftly.

The Alibi - Fabricating Your Freedom

So, you've finally gotten out of the night and back into base. The operation is over, right? Wrong. If an investigator catches you off guard, what then? If you were smart, you'd have an alibi ready to go. Rule 1 should always be considered when making an alibi.

The first major point in making an alibi is that you should *never* rely on other people to uphold it. In other words, don't say something like "I'm going on an operation tonight, if anyone asks where I was tonight, I was here playing videogames with you". This isn't necessarily because they aren't trustworthy, but they could get the story mixed up from yours, no matter how well rehearsed.

That brings us to the second point: fool anyone not directly involved into thinking you were at a certain place. Remember, what happens in the shadows, stays in the shadows. If you still live with your parents, then exit the house via a method they don't know about, such as a window. Make them think you are at

home, asleep, and you have a bulletproof alibi. Try to avoid saying something like "I'm going to a friend's house" because while you may have said that, nobody knows if you held your word.

Be clever. Go camping somewhere, with a bunch of operations equipment. As soon as you get somewhere, stash your camping stuff and throw on your ops gear. Then trek a couple miles somewhere and operate. Once done, return to camp, set up camp, and do just that for the remainder of your stay. If anyone asks, you were camping and it's obvious you were.

Let's say circumstances force you to rely on someone else. This is a rare situation, but one which should be addressed. For example, you come back into your house, and whoever was there knows that you left and snuck out the window. Lie, lie, lie. Tell them that you snuck out to go to a party. You'll get in a little trouble, but it beats the trouble you'd be in for doing operations. The same thing could be applied if you stayed out all night because of the police, you could say you spent the night at the party. Refuse to say where it was at. The reason is manifold - you could get a friend busted (never acceptable), and if certain people are called to make confirmations, the truth will emerge. Besides, it's either going to sound suspicious or a little too lame if you "rat" your friends out so easily. If you do not have a good lie, stretch the truth or leave out important details instead.

Before you even take one step outside, you need to decide what your alibis are going to be, because if you don't, you may lose a lot of freedoms. You need to make sure you can "prove" it, and that it doesn't come at the expense of valuable resources.

The Party - Forming and Regulating a Crew

No matter how good you become in the shadows, you still only have two arms, two legs, and cannot be in two places at once. Certain operations will require the presence of other operatives to complete your objective. This section will attempt to describe as accurately as possible how you should go about finding these people, and what jobs to assign them. Keep in mind that some of the previous rules and techniques you have learned may be exempt here, as they are simply impossible when your aren't solo.

When operating in a group, try not to bring the number of people in the actual operations area above four. You may have lookouts near police parking areas, home, where ever, but keep the number of mobile units no higher than four. If you want to risk more people, you might as well wear white and hammer on an airhorn.

Unit Assignments

Here are essential jobs that need to be assigned to people when operating in a group. Obviously, you fill all positions when operating solo, save perhaps overlord.

Squad Commander

Every unit needs a leader, without one it will fall apart in a high stress situation. You, the reader, will be the leader in all likelihood. Be aware that as squad commander, you will have an enormous responsibility. You must find a crew that is not only trustworthy, but skilled enough to be of assistance. You'll have to ensure them that the operation is worth their time as well.

When you have your unit assembled, you'll then need to assign each person his job. Make sure your skills are fairly interchangeable, should something happen to one of your members. Make sure everyone has appropriate gear and attire. If someone refused to operate like you want them to, cut them. There's no good reason why you should be compromised just because somebody wanted to wear white shoes or whatever in the shadows. Also, make sure you've laid down a good plan that everyone understands and agrees with. While in the field, it is best to lead your crew from the front. "Do as I do" should be your motto here, not "Do as I say". This instills trust and respect with your team, and will ensure you people if you ever need a party again. Be mindful that you also need to look out for the well being of everyone. Should someone fall behind, you should decide if you are going to leave them or circle back and link back up somehow. This decision will probably be based on who the person is, what the risks and rewards are, and the outcome will determine the morale of your crew as a whole.

In summary, the squad commander is *the* boss. Should you choose to undertake this position, a lot will ride on your performance in the field. The risks are more, but so are the personal rewards.

Equipment to Bring:

- Standard Solo Equipment
- Two-Way Radio (to contact Overlord, Scout, and other units if they have radios)

Point Man

While travelling to and from the mission area, you need someone up front keeping his senses open for people, moving vehicles, targets of opportunity, etc. This should be the position that your squad commander undertakes, as they are probably the best for the job.

Equipment to Bring:

- Standard Solo Equipment
- Mini-Binoculars (Optional)
- GPS Unit (Optional)

Scout

As you approach your objective, you'll probably realize that the entire team can't just wander up to the place without someone making sure it's safe to do so first. That someone is your scout.

Unit scouts undertake the responsibility of sweeping the area for security measures, and gaining access to any locked up areas. The squad commander can fill this position if he or she so wishes. Remember to keep the load small, because the scout needs more mobility than anyone else in the group.

Equipment to Bring:

- Standard Solo Equipment
- Specialized B&E Tools (Optional)
- Two-Way Radio (to contact Squad Commander)

Overlord

If you acquire and carry a good, compact, high quality computer filled with all of the information you needed for an operation, you probably would. But, that's highly doubtful, so the next best thing to use is an overlord. Basically, the job of the overlord is to know everything about the operation, including the crew's position, the security locations, police locations, everything.

The overlord is to be located where they have a good view of the operational area, yet are well out of trouble if possible. They keep in constant contact with the squad commander, notifying him of any changes in his area, and giving him help and advise when needed. Thus, the overlord needs to be someone smart, responsible, and doesn't mind if they miss out on all the action. They also need to be calm, because if they bolt off at the first sign of trouble, he or she could very well leave the rest of the unit in serious trouble.

Equipment to Bring:

- Best Camouflage Possible
- High Powered Binoculars (night vision is optimal)
- Two-Way Radio
- Police Scanner
- Maps
- Objective Information

Pack Horse

A job anyone can undertake. The pack horse's job is to simply carry cargo discretely back to base or to a caching area.

Equipment to Bring:

- Standard Solo Equipment
- Large Rucksack

These are the basic jobs necessary in a well organized operation. You may wish to omit the overlord if you think the unit can fare well without one. Remember to keep your scout light so he can do his job efficiently.

Unit Movement

There are also moving issues that need addressed, since you'll need to move around in a totally different matter.

Travelling

When walking through fields, yards, etc. you need to know how to avoid looking like an elephant. To do so, you'll need to travel in a single file line, with your point man up front. If you can, try to step in each other's footprints, giving the illusion of only one person should somebody find the tracks later. Stay low, and keep to shadowy areas to try to keep your profile to a minimum.

Crossing Fences

When in a group, you have some big advantages and disadvantages when crossing fences. You can use people to brace fences or pull apart wires to make it easier for others to pass, then they do the same for you. This makes bypassing fences a much easier and quieter task than when solo. However, you are also forced to stay near fences longer, giving you more time to be seen. Speed is of big importance here.

Crossing Roads

If you need to cross a road, or any place with a decent amount of traffic, the do so one person at a time. Send your scout out first. If something goes sour, he can break away quickest. If he has a radio like he should, the squad commander and overlord can help work out a rendezvous point for everyone. If the scout deems the other side safe to be on, he should wave over another person, and he another, until everyone is across. If everyone were to cross at the safe time, it would create a big scene. I doubt anyone is going to think a midnight marathon is going on.

Climbing

If it is mandatory that everyone climbs a tree or building, do so in a similar fashion as you would crossing a road. If you have an overlord, see if you can get the status around the building so nobody can see you when you are climbing. Have everyone behind cover while each person is climbing. Once a person is where they need to be, make sure they are out of sight as soon as they wave the next person up. You may wish to have either the best or second best person waiting until last to climb.

Unit Hiding

As a team, you'll have less places to hide than you did when you operated solo. Hiding in light is nearly impossible, and tall grass isn't as good when it's stashing more than one or two people. Still, if done correctly, you should still be able to adequately hide the entire unit from people passing by, or even a small scale search.

Hiding in Terrain

When utilizing terrain, you must make sure there are large enough objects to hide everyone, or enough scatter objects to do so. Good ideas are ditches, large bushes, brush, large patches of dark grass, river banks, parking lots (with cars), anywhere that can hide everyone. The exception is if the place looks too obvious. If there is a search for your team, the police will probably think the same thing and look there first.

Hiding in Shadows

This isn't nearly as easy as when you are solo. You must have people sit in dark corners, and never together, unless you have something breaking up your appearance.

Hiding in Nothing

The best method is still to simply lay down, face down if you are in a field or any large, flat surface. If you want to break up your outline by appearing to be something else, try having everyone stand together and appear to be anything besides humans. This won't work against an active search, but will be good enough to fool anyone that isn't expecting you.

Remember to be careful, more than ever, and more quiet than ever, because while speed was never your asset before, it certainly is less so now. You may wish to equip everyone with radios incase you need to

split up. If you have an overlord, he can help link everyone back up. Remember to assign codes to waypoints, you don't want to find the bacon waiting for you at your rendezvous points.

The Don'ts - Dumb and the Useless

There are some things you simply do not do in the shadows. Doing these things will probably get you caught, injured, killed, or at the very least compromised. This is mostly common sense, though many are common errors made.

Don't take newbies on tours!

People who don't know what they are doing will get you caught. Don't count on being able to stash them while you do all of the work.

Don't eat during operations!

Eat before hand. Eating in the shadows will alert animals (including K9 units) to your location. It's also time consuming and can leave evidence without you knowing it. *The* exception is on long distance operations and you have to bug out in the woods over night.

Don't be fancy for no reason!

Forget that roof jumping crap you see on TV. It's possible in some cases, but it's also very loud and very tiring.

Don't hide in the trees!

If they catch you, where are you going to go? If they have K9 out for you, you are fucked.

Don't scatter your equipment!

Should you be compromised, you must be able to leave immediately - not put all of your gear back on and finally leave. If you take off and leave something, consider it evidence.

Don't use real names over radios!

Stupid, stupid, stupid! Anyone listening will have names connected to a crime, which will probably be enough for them to find out the rest of the info they need.

Don't assume!

Assuming will make you careless and get you caught. If there's anything good to assume, it's the worst.

Don't talk pointlessly!

Unless you absolutely need to, keep your mouth shut. If you are up close with a party member, whisper. When using a radio, talk as quietly as possible and do it where the least amount of noise is generated. Noises can be attributed to something besides you, but a human voice cannot.

Don't keep evidence!

No clipping newspaper articles, no keeping keep-sakes. These will be used against you if found. Sure, your exploits may be impressive, but you must keep them to yourself. Remember Rule 5!

Don't use acid on locks!

You may think it's a clever idea, but what happens if the vial breaks during travel? That's right.

Don't bring throwing blades!

Shuriken of any kind are useless on operations. They make crappy weapons, even worse distractions as they leave evidence. A simple rock is superior.

Don't carry ID!

This should be obvious. This way if you choose to turn into Mr. Inconspicuous at the last minute, you can deny everything more effectively.

Don't bring paintball or airsoft weaponry!

These are toys and will do little more than get you busted, or dead. You may be able to scare off a few people, but they may decide to shoot back with a real gun! Also, they are poor for blinding sensors and cameras. Leave them at home for games or training. Then there's the issue of leaving evidence.

Don't get into a car chase!

These almost always end in failure. The record speaks for itself.

Don't be predictable!

If you fall into the same routine on every operation, sooner or later someone is going to find out and wait for you the next time.

Don't bring along music!

You may think listening to the Mission Impossible theme seems like fun during an operation, but no matter how quiet you get the music, it will still effect your ability to hear everything else. You need to be able to hear your best. Besides, if you are listening to the music, then you aren't focused on your operation, and if you are too focused to listen, then the music is pointless. Leave the walkman at home.

Don't jump through windows!

If you need to make an emergency exit through a window, toss a chair or anything heavy through first, then jump. If you jump through a whole window, you may end up injuring yourself severely. It's not a risk worth taking, it should never have to happen. The shadows aren't like in the movies, where windows are made of soft sugar or laquer.

Don't leave trails!

Stay out of snow, soft dirt, mud, or anything that will hold a footprint for a long time. Doing so gives the police more clues to your identity, routes taken, and could even lead them to your doorstep.

Don't get distracted!

On long distance operations, the mind tends to wander off and think about other things as you are walking to and from the operations area. Force yourself to stay focused, you can think all you want later at base.

Don't take your mask off outside!

Unless you are deep in the woods or in a field to or from the actual populace of somewhere, keep your mask on! You never know when somebody is going to see you. Keep Rule 9 in mind at all times.

Don't fake animal noises!

If someone thinks they hear something, and investigate your location, don't try to act like an animal. What happens if you fuck up? Even an expert can get a dry throat and mess it up, so just stay silent and watch what happens. What's more, the person may decide to shoot at the noise for one reason or another.

Don't write messages!

I know you might think that writing clever little messages on walls is funny and bragging material, but doing so gives away evidence, and benefits you in no way. If you do, at least write something misleading, like "Thanks Nigger - The KKK" so it can work for you, not against you.

Don't get greedy!

This is important, countless operatives have been busted because they wanted just a little more. If you don't have the time to do something, don't push it. Don't forget Rule 3!

Don't be stupid!

Use common sense on your operations, adhere to the rules, don't do the "don'ts, and you should do just fine.

The Crafting - How to Make Expedient Equipment in the Shadows

You can't always have the right tool when you need it (Rule 10), but you can improvise! This section describes how to make some basic improvised tools and weaponry when out in the field.

Knife

A knife can be improvised out of even the most basic things. A tin can, for example, can be taken into the woods and converted into one. Flatten it over several times with a couple of large rocks, then grind an edge using a rough rock. This is possible since the metal is soft enough to do so with. Good for cutting purposes. If you have the skill, you can also make knives out of bones and rocks.

Spear

You may need a spear to fend off animals sometime during an operation. This is where your knives come into play. Simply take a sturdy tree branch, mop handle, or any stout wooden stick and simply sharpen an edge. Made in about a minute, dead obvious, yet everyone seems to overlook it. Beats fighting with your knife by a long shot.

Stove

Operations go sour and now you need to camp in the woods? Get a large tin can and a smaller soda can. Put the soda can inside the tin can. Instant stove. You can liberate some oil from an oil tank outside of any house that uses an oil stove relatively easy. Seems silly, but it may save your ass some day. Will probably only come into play on a long distance operation.

Climbing Cane

No rope? No problem. Find a stout stick like one you'd get for a spear, and cut it off so that part of the main trunk comes off with it, forming a hook. You can now attach the hook to various things and climb the pole to hoist yourself up! This can also double as a crutch if you sprain or break anything in a fall.

Lock Picks

There are various guides on the shapes and procedures for actual crafting, so I'll just suggest a few good materials: bolts, screws, nails, screwdrivers, and allen wrenches. Find a file and you are set to go.

Flashlight

Desperate for light? Try putting pitch into a can, then light it. Place another can on the outside with varying holes to control light output. Be weary of smoke. You can also create a dim light by rubbing quartz together. Get creative: catch fireflies and use a black cloth if you really need to, anything goes. If your watch has a light on it, you may also use that.

Black Poncho

Need some black or rain cover? Make head and arm holes in a black trash bag and wear it as a poncho. Slightly noisy, a little shiny, but better than nothing. You may also try just cutting eye holes and vent holes and disguising yourself as trash laying around. Perfect for hiding near a dumpster, unless an angry person comes by and kicks the "trash".

Pry Bar

Need a good pry bar on the spot? Search around for a shovel, they make awesome pry bars. If one's in the area, you'll find it fits easy in the bottom corners of doors, and the long handle gives superb leverage. A branch cut from a tree might work as well.

The Experiments - Untested/Barely Tested Ideas to Use on Operations

These are ideas gleaned from different sources, and have been experimented with to an extent, but have not been used enough to warrant listing them in the main sections of this guide. You'll need to decide if any of these procedures are of interest to you, and if so, you should spend the time needed to refine them.

Defeating Electromagnetic Locks

Many stores and certain public buildings install these locks. They are also common in hotels and college dormitories. You'll notice how they can be locked on the outside, but when inside you can simply push them open. This is because your hands touching the door inside drains the charge into the ground, so if you were to wear rubber gloves or boots, it probably wouldn't work.

Knowing this fact, you must exploit it by draining the charge from the outside. How? There are two known ways of doing so (besides the key). The first method is to get a flat piece of copper and bend it into an arch. Then it's simply a matter of sliding the copper through the crack between the door and the frame, touching

the handle inside, then opening the door.

Many doors and frames do not have this large crack though, and that is where the experimenting comes in. A feasible idea would be to simply mix a conductive electrolyte of water and salt. Make sure this mixture is heated when making, so the salt is dissolved as best as possible. Load this into a squirt gun. Now, when you approach your EM locked door, spray the hell out of the cracks, trying to get the electrolyte on the handle and getting it to connect with something that will drain the charge.

Bicycles

Bicycles may be a boon for long distance operations. They allow you to travel farther, faster, and use less energy. You may wish to visit the junkyard and pick up some parts specifically for this cheaply. The optimal bike for operations would be flat black with dark blue splotches, no reflectors, no shine at all. It would be a mountain bike with enough gears to go up hills easily, yet haul ass when needed. It would have a cart in the front or back for carrying large items as well.

If you decide to take a bike, there are a few things you must remember. The first is that bicycle tracks are much easier to follow than human tracks. The second is that in darker areas, you must ride slow as you cannot see very far ahead of you. Finally, a bicycle cannot duck for cover - you'll have to stash it often.

Sleds

Roll up sleds might be something to consider for special operations. They are lightweight and can fit inside of a backpack readily. When needed, simply unroll and use. These may work well going down hills or snow, loose dirt, clay, and sand when escaping pursuit. You might also try bringing along a heavy duty plastic bag instead, and place your lower body inside and start sledding.

H-PAP

High-Powered Air Pistol. The idea behind this project was to get the best of a pistol and a rifle as far as pellet guns are concerned. This is essentially a sawed off rifle, but of a certain kind that has benefits. The core of the H-PAP is a cheap, pump action pellet rifle of which you'd find at super stores. One of at least 700 FPS power is desirable. These can be had for little money, are reliable, powerful, and one of the quietest.

Once you have your gun, you need to saw the stock into a pistol grip and the barrel off where it connects to the pump housing. For those that don't understand, cut where the barrel comes through the metal ring near the front of the barrel, on the front side.

This, essentially, is your H-PAP. You may wish to spray the entire thing black to make it less noticeable. It is light, accurate, and easy to carry around. You can also wrap several layers of tape around the barrel and pump tube right in front of the receiver so that the pump is silenced by it when closing. The pump grip itself makes a great monopod for aiming at longer distances.

Upon personal testing, it was found that it was easy to actually use, but carrying around could be a problem. Either a custom sling, case, or holster would need to be fashioned, else the H-PAP has to be set aside when climbing fences and such.

The Drills - Before the Master Plan...

Now that you won't be running around without a clue, it would be wise to invest some time practicing the techniques you've learned, as well as try out a few new ideas you may have. Also, you may have some special mission in mind, but you aren't sure if you can handle it yet. If Rule 3 is in your way, it's training time.

You know how to make a plan, how to pick your gear, get to the mission objective undetected, and get out before anything can be done about it. Remember that before you actually get yourself into a major operation, you need to start small, so make up a training procedure. Work on anything you feel needs sharpening. I've listed several training "drills" which you may wish to perform before an actual operation in conjunction with any existing techniques you want to try out. Don't worry, you'll probably have more fun with them than you would think merely reading them over.

Field Navigation and Stealth Development

This is where you should first begin training, as there is little risk of being detected, and you will learn the fundamentals of hiding and movement in areas similar, like parks and yards.

Find a good field close to town, and walk to the edge of it. Notice you can see most of the field well,

even on a cloudy new moon thanks to the city lights. Walk around. If the weather is cold, you may find the grass is crunchy and loud. If not, you find it is soft and quiet. If the ground is crunchy, try walking with your knees bent, seeing if you can walk quieter.

While doing this, look around for some tall grass or bushes. Walk quietly near them. Notice how they can and cannot hide you effectively. Try to find a ditch or so in the area as well. You may find it fit for basic hiding if nothing else is nearby.

After doing this for a while, you'll find that crunchy grass can be moved acceptably quiet across if you are careful enough. You'll also be confident that if someone comes near, you will be able to hide from them. This is important, you must develop this confidence so you don't run wildly for cover, making yourself easier to see. You should also come to understand that while you can see everything around you fairly easily, others cannot. You may also find yourself in this field later, being used as a retreat area, and unit waypoint. When you are finished and are tired of doing nothing, feel free to do something else, maybe even another drill.

Basic Climbing and Decending

For recon and entry, the ability to climb onto an object and get back down is very useful. This is not something you can just read about, you must go out and practice. You can do this drill in the daytime, with a friend perhaps, and drill again in the night on your own.

The first thing you should find is a tree. Find the lowest branch and grab it. If you find your arms are too weak to pull yourself up efficiently, you should start doing push-ups whenever possible. You'll need the strength if you hope to be able to use a rope. In the meantime, use only climbing methods relying on leg strength. As you climb, look for a point that covers you best, and lay against a branch. Look around, how well can you see? If you are on a recon operation, you will have to find a place that hides you well, but also allows you to see.

Now you need to get back down. You can either jump or climb back down. If you wish to jump, remember that jumping down to distances past ten feet puts you at risky of injury. Should the jump be high, do a break fall or somersault as soon as you hit the ground. The best way to do this is to grab the lowest branch, hang from it, and let yourself fall. Should you choose to climb down, the way you went up is usually the best. Keep in mind that unless you have a rope, it can be hard to grip anything with your feet.

You should now be familiar with climbing trees, so the second important thing you need to learn to climb is a building. Buildings are harder in some respects, yet easier in others. They are harder in the fact that they don't always offer a clear method of climbing, such as found while climbing a tree. On the other hand, Buildings have large, flat surfaces, allowing you more freedom of movement. They also have things set next to them and can have climbing areas such as drain pipes.

First, you need a building to climb. Your house will make a good starting point. Before anything, observe the roof. What material is it made of? What angle is the roof? The easiest roof to navigate is a flat one with rough shingles, and among the hardest are glass or metal roofs with high degree angles. Remember that even if you can get onto the roof, you have to be able to stay on, and be able to get back to the ground without hurting yourself.

Now to actually get onto the roof. Look for anything that will get you higher off of the ground. Look for trees, fuel tanks, ladders, buckets, etc. Obviously if you find a ladder, climbing will be no trouble, so long as nobody will suspect something is wrong if they see it against the building. Also, look for some other method of climbing, such as drain pipes or something to attach a rope onto.

You now need to make a decision; which method to use. Whenever possible, try to pull yourself onto the roof by grabbing something, and pulling yourself above. You may have trouble doing this if the house has a steep roof. Alternatively, if you can grab something under the roof well enough, you can try standing with you back to the wall, jumping up and grabbing it, then swinging your body so that you end up lying on the roof. This requires a decent amount of strength to do however.

If you cannot pull yourself up, you can then try to look for a pole of any kind to climb. These can sometimes be a pain in the ass if they are really close to the wall, but you should still be able to climb them conventionally. You may wish to straddle whatever you find with your entire leg from the knee down to get extra traction while holding on.

Finally, when all else fails, it's time to use a rope, with or without a grappling hook. If you have a hook attached, you must make sure you attach it to either a soft surface, like wood, or you cause it to catch on a ledge. This is risky as it can come loose, so either hook it to wood, or detach the hook. With just the rope, tie the rope around on one end into a small hole and run the other end of the rope through, creating a makeshift lasso. Then it is simply a matter of roping any outcropped object and tightening the rope. Once the

rope is firmly attached to something, you can climb. You may wish to tie knots in the rope to make climbing easier.

When you are ready to leave, you need to get back down somehow. If you know for sure you can slide, by all means do so. Remember not to jump in the air, increasing distance, and roll onto a shoulder as soon as you hit the ground, do *not* somersault as you may cause head or neck injury. If the distance isn't too great, you can also grab the edge of the roof, hand from it, and simply fall to the ground. In this case, the fall will only be around four feet. Another method of decent is to toss the rope around an object so that both ends fall to the ground, and either stand on the hook if applicable, or place your foot in the lasso loop. Then, simply lower yourself to the ground using the other end of the rope.

There are better texts available for learning how to climb, and if you feel unsure about these drills, perhaps it would be wise to study them prior to practice. Once you are comfortable with climbing and decent however, you will find yourself in more control of your operations as you will be able to access many buildings easier, hide and rest safer, and get a better view of operational areas.

Entry and Exit Technique Development

If you plan on entering an number of buildings, vehicles, or getting into any inclosed area in general, you are going to run into locks and alarms eventually. Knowing how to get past the most basic of these is fundamental to any operative in the shadows.

Perhaps the best way to develop your skill is right at your own house. Gather the equipment you'll want, as well as the keys in case you fail at entering. Lock the place up knowing that a burglar is about to hit. If you have any loud animals, perhaps you may place one inside. If it makes loud noises, you've failed. Lock all doors, windows, and make sure vents and other methods of entering are secured. Turn on a few lights if doing this at night, and turn on any PIR lighting systems regardless. Don't practice against alarm systems in your own house though, as you may either destory it costing money, or fail, bringing the police to your own house.

Now, pick a few random items in your house and try to get as many as possible. First, practice defeating the PIR lighting outside without actually destroying your own equipment. From there, break into your own house. Pretend any alarm systems are actually on, don't half ass this! Try to enter however possible without causing damage or making a lot of noise. Time yourself as well.

Setting up this drill is entirely up to you. Make it challenging, if you make it simple you are only wasting valuable time. Try picking different locks, taking out screens, unscrewing certain things, whatever it takes to get inside without causing destruction.

This drill is great as the fact that you are working with your own house creates incentive to not damage anything. This causes less evidence when you are actually in the shadows. Upon completing the drill, you will find less situations which leave you baffled when out on an actual operation.

Obstacle Bypassing

During an operation, there is little chance that you can complete your objective without getting past some fence, a road, a few houses, or any other impediment. Something will eventually be in your way, and knowing how to get around it is crucial.

Since they are the most common, the first obstacle you should learn to overcome is the fence. Find a variety, and practice several of the methods described in "The Travel". Learn to get past them silently and swiftly. You should also take the time to see how they can be used to your advantage. Most varieties of wired fencing usually have tall grass near them, making them viable hiding areas. You should also note how they can be layed against in an emergency.

This is a simple drill, but you should repeat it as often as necessary to become familiar with the different types of fences, and the problems associated with bypassing certain ones. Once you have done so, you will think less of them as obstacles, and more as objects that can, in the right situation, be used for you.

This covers the basics. By mastering these basic maneuvers, you will be able to get to your target, get in, out, and retreat with fair success. Remember to keep your first operations simple, and you'll gain tremendous confidence in your abilities.

The Stories - Real Life Operations You Can Learn From

Here are the "hypothetical" accounts of several operations undertaken by me and operatives I know. All accounts are ironically realistic, and have different lessons to be learned. They are mixed up randomly, and all names have been removed to make them anonymous. All of them are first person, but be advised that "I" doesn't necessarily refer to me, the author, it may be a friend's story. I'm breaking Rule 5 here so hopefully you can learn a thing or two. Notice how they do not have major pay offs, but there are still procedures to be learned.

Operation: [X] Storm I

Gear Used:

- 1 - Dual AA Cell Flashlight
- 1 - 50,000 Volt Stun Gun
- 1 - American Camper Multitool
- 1 - Swiss Army Knife Clone
- 1 - Old Timer Pocket Knife
- 1 - USMC Fighting Knife
- 1 - Pair Black BDU Pants
- 1 - Pair Danner Leather Boots
- 1 - Black Cotton Long-Sleeve Shirt
- 1 - Dark Blue Collar
- 1 - Black Mask
- 1 - Pair Olive Drab Cotton Gloves
- 1 - Pair Long Cotton Socks
- 1 - Backpack
- 1 - Pistol Belt

I began the operation at approximately 22:30, jumping from the roof of my house. From there I walked around the fence, up the driveway, and to the driveway across the highway. Once I reached there, I walked away from the road until I was sure I could camouflage myself when a car drove past on the road.

Once I was a comfortable distance away from the highway, I began traveling south towards the [X]'s outdoor roping area. After passing there I made my way to the first road which led to the first cluster of [X] owned buildings. The entire time I kept hearing noises. Paranoid, my machete was drawn the entire time.

The house lights were off, and I had seen a vehicle leave this cluster on my way to the first road, so I thought about checking the place out, but pressed on towards my first target, the [X] hangar. I walked until the hangar was between me and the main [X] section, and flanked it. After checking to make sure no traffic was coming, I quietly slipped into the door, which was unlocked.

Upon entering, I had to take a leak, so I placed my machete near the entrance and pissed in a corner. After that, I placed my red lens in front of my flashlight, turned it on, and assessed my surroundings. Instead of an aircraft, there were three horse drawn carriages, each finely build and in perfect condition. These were probably worth a large amount of money. Nothing else of interest was around.

Disappointed, I exited the hangar and returned to the back of the building, incase traffic came. I decided I wasn't going to call it quits just yet and set my sights on the main buildings.

Checking for traffic once more, I quietly ran across the highway and quickly climbed the wooden fence. As soon as I crossed, I sped into the shadows. Between me and the ranch driveway there was a row of trees and bushes, which not only provided cover if a vehicle came, but blocked light from illuminating the field I was in. I made my way to a well trimmed set of trees next to the irrigation ditch that ran across the field. From there I could see the [X]'s guest home and part of the out buildings. I climbed a few feet up to get a better view of the area. A lot of lights were on, including one in a shop.

Since I was worried someone might have been working late, I stayed away from the shop at the time and decided to get a better look at the guest house. I cross another wooden fence, crossed the driveway, then another wooden fence, and found myself in some bushes alongside of the irrigation ditch. Luckily for me, there was a perfect trail there, meaning no trouble bush the growth. I was able to get up

nice and close to the building, making an assessment. By the looks of things, there was only 1 room being occupied at the time.

I decided not to chance entering the guest home and returned to the trimmed trees. From there I decided I was going to circle around to the east border of the ranch and enter the compound from there. I walked along the fence until I reached a small corral, which was unoccupied. After getting to the other side of the corral, I noticed a camp trailer sitting in an open outbuilding. Upon reaching the trailer door, I noticed 2 ATVs sitting right in front of the other exit, 1 appeared to be a larger adult model, while the other seemed to be either a racing quad or a kid's ATV. I didn't inspect due to them being too close to the light, but I reasoned you could easily roll them out the other side, push them through the field to a waiting vehicle, and drive off with both of them.

Upon entering the trailer, I found absolutely nothing of value, although I did manage to locate a letter tipping me off to the trailer keys - which I also found. I left the trailer and the building from the same side I entered and walked along the eastern side of the building. In front of me were several pickup trucks, all of which I decided to check out.

I flanked the trucks and found another pickup as well as another camp trailer. Inside the first pickup I found several boxes of .22 ammunition as well as a pair of binoculars. I then entered the unlocked trailer to find a roll of wide electrical tape, a well made Casio digital watch, and an enclosed wind-up clock - all of which I took. Everything else was the usual camping supplies including food and entertainment.

I left the trailer and headed for the row of pickups I saw before. The first was a nice Dodge flatbed. I opened the door (unlocked) slowly, weary of an alarm or the dome light kicking on. Sure enough, the dome lit up. I quickly and quietly shut the door and hid under the truck, watching for anyone to come out. No one did. I jumped in the back of the truck and was lucky to find a sliding rear window - opened. I opened it further and ripped out the dome light. Upon inspection however, the truck yielded nothing interesting.

The other two remaining pickup trucks were not accessed due to dome light problems. At the end of the row was another big ATV, in an easy-to-steal location.

Laying at the end of the row, I pondered my next move. I decided to check out the large shop in front of me. It yielded nothing of interest so I decided to then check two more pickup trucks which I found - neither yielding anything good.

The next thing I saw was the shop that was lit up. I decided it was empty since someone would have seen me from in there by now, so I entered. The shop had two semi-trucks inside of it. It also had a large parts room as well as it's own veterinary office. I grabbed two handheld radios, a bikini calendar, and a map of the [X] for future reference. My bag was full so I decided to leave for home. I reversed my route entirely, experiencing no problems on the way back, save for fatigue and stickers in my socks. I got home at approximately 02:30.

Total Operation Time: 4 1/2 Hours

What could have been improved:

First of all, the cotton pants just don't work because they grab too many stickers. They are also too short, and worn with shoes, stickers get into my socks causing annoyances.

Second, I took too long in my waiting periods before taking action. I could have shaved an hour off of my operation time.

Finally, I didn't have a good method of entering vehicles quietly. I also was too loud crossing gravel. In short, too much noise was made.

This operation shows some results of equipment used, and teaches the reader the basic layout of most ranches. It also shows some targets of opportunity that you yourself may run into.

Operation: [X] Striker II

Primary Objective: Obtain "[Object]".

Units: 1 (solo)

Unit 1: [Person 1]

Load out:

Uniform

- (1) Black Mid-Sleeve Shirt
- (1) Black BDU Pants
- (1) Black Leather Gloves
- (1) Brown Danner Boots
- (1) Black Cotton Mask
- (1) Black Bandana

Web Belt

- (1) Big Sky Hunter Field Knife
- (1) "AA" Flashlight
- (1) Compass
- (1) Multitool

I left home at approximately 11:00PM. After climbing out onto my roof, I jumped down to the oil tank, jumped over my wooden fence, and traveled to our equipment trailer. From there I crossed back over the fence and began quietly sneaking out of our driveway, taking extra care to step on greenery to muffle my noise.

Once I reached the highway, I crossed over to the poultry area road and walked up it until I was about 100 feet from the bunkhouse. Once there, I crossed the nearby barbed wire fence and traveled North towards [town] (1 Mile). During my travel, I stayed within 100 yards of the highway, using the tall grass plus the darkness to cover me.

When I reached the outskirts of town, I was at the lumber mill ditch. Since I knew from the first operation I couldn't possibly cross without getting wet, I decided to attempt a road passage.

I snuck my way behind the building near the antennas and plotted my course mentally. I crossed a fence to the East and reached the road. When I stood on the pavement however, I felt suddenly vulnerable. I decided to cross the next fence to the East and enter [town] via the field, using the trees, bushes, and tall grasses to my advantage. As it turned out however, the field was swampy, which made navigation difficult. At the first opportunity I got, I crossed the fence to the West again and got back onto the road.

From there I sprinted past the house to the West, and reached a fence where I was able to cross and gain cover behind a tree. The field I was in was filled with water ditches and wet grass, however I was able to navigate and barely got my boots wet. Unfortunately, I also spooked the horse that was one field over from me, but to no consequence.

I crossed one large field to the north, and cut diagonally across another one to the Northwest. Both were wet, but the grass made navigation easy. This brought me to a fence just outside of the [town] Football field. I crossed over and sat in some nearby dense brush while I mentally plotted my next move.

I decided to rush towards the announcer's stand along a shadow formed by one of the light posts. Once I reached there, I moved West to the tennis court. A car passed by, but I was easily able to lay down unnoticed.

I crossed the road to the West, walked behind a large Cadillac for cover, and crossed another road to the North.

This placed me in a gauntlet of fences and yards - I was getting closer to the middle of town. One by one I crossed three cyclone fences and a tall wooden one. As I moved North, I made a mental note of the total lack of security in the area. All of these sheds could easily be raided, but that's for another day.

Finally I reached the next road to the North and crossed it. After climbing a barbed wire fence blocking my way, I found myself in yet another wet field, only the water in this one was much deeper than the others. My boots kept my feet dry, thankfully. To the West, there was a large cluster of houses, which looked like prime targets.

After crossing the field, I crossed yet another barbed wire fence to the North, which brought me to a small dirt road. Approximately 100 feet to the East lay a corner of a seldom used road, but I wasn't about to take chances. I moved West along my road, looking for a good place to cross the six-foot cyclone fence to the North.

I found a good spot right where it met up with some trees, crossed, and waited in the tall grasses to make sure nobody was aware of my presence. After being satisfied that I was uncompromised, I moved to the West side of the [X] mechanics shop. I tried all doors to the place only to find them all locked. I then moved back to the West side of the shop where I could operate in total secrecy thanks to the line of trees surrounding me.

Taking bars from the scrap area, I attempted to brute-force my way into the school. Attempting

this, as well as attempting entrance through a greenhouse vent for about an hour, I decided I would need to come back another day with better tools.

Before I left, I checked out other facilities of the school. The set up of campus was perfect for operations, as nobody outside the complex could see me. I learned that I had free reign of all [X] buildings.

It was approximately 2:00AM, and I decided to return home. I navigated the same route I used to enter town and encounter no threats. I entered my house at approximately 3:00AM.

[Object] was never recovered - MISSION FAILED

This operation teaches long term tactics, and stresses the importance of recon to establish the gear you need prior to liberation attempts of an important item.

Operation: Empty House

It was late, and my friends wanted to go on an op. I was glad, because I brought some of my toys over to play with. Someone mentioned that there was a house that was empty, yet the people who owned it were bringing in boxes and boxes of stuff, probably moving in. This was the operation we'd do.

Person 1 Load out:

- Black Longsleeve
- Black Pants
- Black Shoes
- Black Baseball Cap
- Hand Drill
- Mini Flashlight
- Pocket Folding Knife

Person 2 Load out:

- Dark Blue Jeans
- Dark Blue Sweater
- Blue Baseball Hat

Person 3 Load out:

- Dark Blue Jeans
- Black Sweater
- Black Shoes
- Black Bandana
- Flathead Screwdriver

Person 4 Load out:

- Black Pants
- Black Longsleeve Shirt
- Brown Shoes
- Brown Baseball Cap
- Pocket Folding Knife

We all left the house at around ten o'clock to check the trailer my friend was talking about. We decided to put electrical tape around our fingertips to eliminate prints, yet not look too suspicious while walking down there. We cased the place as we walked by, then decided to circle back into an alley to hit it from behind.

Once we got up to these house, we started looking for ways in. We checked to see if we could open and windows or doors. Nada. Then we tried prying open the windows with Person 3's screwdriver, which didn't work for shit. We next tried the front door, as it was actually covered better than the rear, and we couldn't pop it open either. Same for the back. Person 2 found a hammer and we tried to use it to pry open a sliding glass window. That *still* didn't work, so we decided to drill the front locks.

The actual door lock was unlocked, by a deadbolt kept us outside. We began drilling into the lock in order to fuck up the pins inside. An hour later we were still outside. The drill was too weak and tiring to do anything. I got fed up with it and shouldered the front door in, worked like a charm. Upon entering, we

found that the house was empty!

We left the same way we came in, all upset at the huge waste of time and resources. What could have gone better? We could have not fucking went, for one.

This operation teaches the importance of having the right gear, and of expecting the worst. It also teaches that you can often find items you'll need at the actual site (a hammer). It also does a thorough sweep of the doors and windows before using brute force.

Operation: High Desert Storm

One time me and a couple of friends ran an operation on a school. It was nothing major, but the performance is worth a mention.

Mission Objective: Acquire soda and candy bars

Units: 3

Person 1's Load out:

- Black Clothing
- Urban Camo Mask
- Black Baseball Cap
- Field Knife
- Multitool
- Mini Light
- Watch
- Backpack

Person 2's Load out:

- Black Clothing
- Urban Camo Mask
- Black Baseball Cap
- Field Knife
- Pocket Knife
- Backpack

Person 3's Load out:

- Black Clothing
- Dark Blue Mask
- Black Baseball Cap
- Pocket Knife
- Backpack

Our unit was three miles outside of town, stationed at camp. We stashed our gear and headed out as the sun began to set, we had a three mile hike ahead of us. We reached town a few minutes after it got dark, timing was just right. Since we were all thirsty, we went to the park to get a drink at the fountain. I looked around and could see nobody in the area. All clear, we returned to the edge of town where we would turn back and begin to walk towards the school.

The school was easy to get to because it was on the Western edge of town and surrounded by mostly fields and ranch property. Our route was to follow a dry ditch up close to the school and circle around back. We did just that, passing through the dark field, crossing several barbed wire fences along the way. After about fifteen minutes, the school was finally in view. We hurried along the fence, then sprinted around the playground to our position behind the school. I was familiar with the school, so I knew there were no security precautions such as cameras or alarms of any sort. This was kind of funny considering the school proudly displayed ADT stickers everywhere.

I stashed 2 and 3 in a corner and went to go work my way into the gym. I had planned on making my way inside of the concession stands here, grabbing whatever I could. Well, much to my surprise, the door to women's locker room was unlocked. I got 2 and 3 over and we all went inside. It was pitch black, so I had to bring out my flashlight to see. Shining it through the cracks of my left hand, we walked up into the main part of the gymnasium. We went onto the stage where the concession stand was, and had to move carefully across all of the weight lifting equipment left out. When we got to the stand doorway, we went

inside. Not surprisingly, the thing was cleaned out. That was OK, because I knew where they stored all of the food, right next door in a closed off room. We all went inside and began rummaging through the refrigerator. A package of hotdogs. Person 3 took the package as camp food and we left the gym through the back.

We still wanted some candy and soda, so we decided to hit the main high school building. Staying in the back of the facilities, we walked past the outdoor freezers and into the main building (the back door was unlocked, no joke). The hallway had fake sensors everywhere, and I told 2 and 3 this so they wouldn't spot one and panic. We walked down into the student lounge where the student store was. This was easy, because the nearby soda machine gave me two free hands. For what? Unscrewing the door. That's right! The hinges were on the outside. Wondering where this school is yet?

I took the door completely off and slid in. No fucking candy bars where they should be. I opened the refrigerator inside. Nothing. Where the hell did it all go? The freezer? Didn't matter. Before long, we were all stuffing our bags full of soda. There was still soda on the palettes inside for the soda machine, so we stocked up. After screwing the door back in, we walked back out from the rear door, we planned our exit. We left basically the same way we came in, and after a long hike on the night road leading back to camp, we sat around eating hotdogs, drinking soda, and laughing about how much effort we put into the operation for this little reward. The experience was worth it, to me. This operation went so smoothly because I knew the area well, and we were camped far from the operation site.

The story doesn't end here though. Nope, there's more. The next morning we decided to have some fun across the road. We left camp early in the morning, before sunrise, and made our way towards this big trailer sitting on a hill across from us. It was of the camping variety, no wires to it or anything, so all three of us were curious about it. We took the same gear as we had for the night operation.

We approached the trailer by going straight up the mountain, sticking to trees and brush to remain harder to see from the road. We managed to find a road leading up the mountain but decided to avoid it as it was too obvious. When we got near the trailer, we split up. Person 2 hit it from the back, 3 hit from the front, and I hit from the side. No vehicles were around, and we determined the place to be empty. We found that all doors were locked, so we needed a way in. Our answer came in the form of a shovel.

I pried the front door open (sound was no problem) and person 3 rushed in to sweep the trailer. No people inside. We sacked the place looking for anything of interest. Interesting stuff we found and liberated indeed. Satisfied, we returned to camp with our new stuff. We took the same way back, sticking to trees and bushes. Mission successful.

Lessons to be learned here are the use of public facilities during the operation, use of terrain to get up close, and recognizing a target of opportunity. Remember that while this operation had a lot of good things going for it, like no alarms or locked doors, that is also a very rare occurrence. Another thing that led to success was that Person 1 knew a lot about the area, so that presented a big advantage to the unit.

Operation: Fuck Up

I had quite the disgruntling experience about 2 weeks ago now, involving the very first time I've been "compromised". I'll explain the quotes later.

It all started when two of my good friends wanted to go on an op with me. Now, I trust these two friends with my life, and one of them is pretty good on ops. Has a few novice habits, but nothing major. The other one though is simply no good. The person's a packhorse, tons of strength, but has zero endurance and almost as slow to boot.

So as one could expect, I kept refusing because we'd only be able to move as fast as the slowest person, which wasn't very fast and I like to keep a very fast tempo on ops. Eventually though I gave in, and decided I'd just take them on something simple, like going into a few garages I know well.

...Ah how I loathe my decisions sometimes...

I tossed on my dedicated gear while the other two put on the best stuff they could. Load outs ended up like this:

Person 1 (Psychlonic):

- Completely black outer layer with underarmor.
- Field Knife
- Mini Flashlight
- Leatherman Multitool
- 1qt Canteen
- Survival Kit (Altoid Tin in pocket)

Person 2:

- Black pants, camo coat, dark brown mask, underarmor
- Small Book Bag
- Pocket Knife

Person 3:

- Dark blue jeans and sweater w/black mask, underarmor
- Pocket Knife

As you can see, the basic idea in my head was to let myself do all the recon and entry, while I stashed the others in a bush or something until I told them they could come out.

My plan I laid out to them was simple: Exit my house, exit property perimeter, cross highway, traverse field 1 mile into town, cross a river via private bridge, and follow a fence to the first target. I would lay out all the options once we got to the small hill outside of the town so they could see what I was talking about. The average temperature was approximately 15 degrees F.

Well, problems emerged immediately. See, when leaving my house, one must cross my roof and climb down to the ground. Well, I just jumped, but the other two would not (slick roof). So, they took the louder route. Thankfully, nothing came of it, and we proceeded as planned.

One we crossed the highway, a car began closing in. I ordered them to immediately haul ass west before it got close enough to where it could see us. Thankfully we were paralleling a fence, so I simply told them to lay against it once we got a fair distance away from the highway. Person 3 began to complain so I had to give him some of my water from my canteen.

The trek to the hill above the river wasn't much better. Person three kept snagging his jeans on the barbed wire fences, which is a BAD thing because if you are standing on a fence and a car comes down the highway, there will be enough light to be able to see the person snagged. Normally when a vehicle approaches, I simply lay face down on the ground so that it's nearly impossible to see me.

Anyways, we finally reach the hill where I'd explain the town. Everyone took their rounds of water just for good measure. Arguing prevailed. Person 2 wanted to hit one of the schools here, because I was good at it and I had been there with said person once already for a good reward. Person 3 didn't think it could be done so he wanted to do something easy and guaranteed to get something - I promptly reminded him I had already done all of those that I knew about.

Never the less, a chain is only as strong as it's weakest link, so I knew we couldn't hit something of my caliber. I decided to go for the garages I described earlier to them.

We started out small with some shops on the edge of town. Everyone performed OK by me at first, save for the fact that Person 3, paranoid, was holding a fucking hammer he found the whole time until we left.

Nothing of interest, at least interesting to take, so we decided to proceed a little further into town. On the way out, Person 3 made a point to create a shitload of noise going across another barbed wire fence...

That's when I really started to become annoyed. I stopped behind a stack of hay bales and told him he had to shut up or else we'd get caught. Since he was so immobile, I reminded him that stealth was our best asset, not speed.

Then Person 2, who was on the other side of the bales of hay, started freaking out, thinking people in a house with it's lights on could see us where we were. I told him we were fine (numerous reasons: no silhouette, no contrasting, and we had the light advantage over the people in the bright house).

We crossed a wooden fence, where we had a great view of several roads, plus a group of trees to the South and the West of us. I soon discovered that there was some sort of meeting going on, and I wanted to get a closer look. It was perfect too, because one of the groups of trees was between me and the meeting, so I could get really close.

I slowly walked towards it, solo, keeping my eyes out for cars on the roads, people outside the buildings, and any security elements there might be. None, all was well.

I was by myself because Persons 2 and 3 weren't too confident of the idea. Fine by me, less is more up close.

The buildings were built of logs and I saw lots of flags as well as horns. That got me excited, as I was hoping I might be able to find a rifle in one of the trucks sitting outside. Alas, a gun rack silhouette search came up dry. Right about then a car came closing in. I hugged a tree as it parked facing away from me and the driver walked inside a building. What was funny was that I could hear Persons 2 and 3 running towards the fence to get better cover, though it was probably more harmful than just laying down face down.

I decided my search was too risky, so I crawled back to my group. Person 2 called out for me by my actual name as I approached, which further annoyed me. I didn't have time to tell them my plan though. Before I knew it, 2 spotlights were shining the field we were all in - one from the North and one from the East. Person 3 played it smart for once and laid face down behind some tall grass while Person 2 almost legged it. I

grabbed him and tossed him into a ditch and laid behind my own patch of grass. What was odd was the pattern in which the two were spotting - it was rather half-assed. I didn't know at the time whether they were looking for humans or animals that shouldn't be there.

Regardless, as soon as the spotters went behind some buildings, we booked back West then cut South, toughening any attempts of pursuit. I had to keep snapping at both of them not to step in the patches of snow the whole way home. Persons 2 and 3 split from me while I took my own route, cutting back and forth in attempt to foil any potential K9 pursuits. Silly, I know, but there was no good reason not to. We all gathered back at my driveway and went back into my house the same way we came. So far, there's been no reason to worry. After patching together all the information we could, we concluded that they could not have seen us, but rather heard us, and that we were animals in the field someone may have been worried about. Too many factors were against them knowing it was actually humans.

So, needless to say: mission failed.

If there was ever something to be learned there, it's this; don't take newbies on tours. This was a VERY routine operation yet it still got fucked up because my guests didn't know what they were doing. Don't even think they can just play pack horse and nothing else - it won't work that way.

I'm just glad I didn't take them anywhere that was actually moderately challenging - we probably WOULD have been caught...

I listed Operation: Fuck Up because it is a perfect account of why *not* to take newbies out in the field. It also gives a little insight as far as escape and evasion procedures are concerned. In short, it had a lot of do's and don'ts described for you.

The Tips - General Suggestions Concerning Operations

General ideas of what to do and what to keep an eye for on operations.

Remember that sound travels farther at night. Every mistake you make will be amplified.

Eat two hours and drink one hour before leaving your base. This way you can take care of your business before you head out, and you'll still have enough in your system to make it through the night.

Always have a way out. No matter where you are, and where anyone else is, always have a way out. If the place you plan on going to next does not have a good way out, then stay away from it!

Always wear a watch. Time is essential in the shadows, and getting in and out of certain areas at the right time will be the deciding factor between going to jail and going home.

Look around for targets of opportunity. If you see a shed that looks like it may have something good in it, open it up! You may find that targets of opportunity satisfy you more than the original objective. Be sure to keep an eye on the time though.

If you are just starting, start small! Everyone is a new guy at some point in time. Operations are like a ladder. Work your way up the ladder one rung at a time. Try to skip a couple, and you're in for a big fall.

Study your plan as best as possible. Try to find holes. If you see something wrong, stuff your pride and fix it. Don't lead yourself into a trap out of being stubborn.

When checking out pickup trucks, the first thing you want to do is observe the silhouette of the cab. It may reveal rifles sitting in a gun rack. You may also find stickers, indicating the possible contents of the vehicle.

Check your six at all times. There could be something or someone behind you at any given moment.

If there is anything to bet on, it's human laziness. Remember this when working around people, but also try not to forget Rule 10.

There's another thing you can bet on; human greed. Remember this when dealing with party members. They will look out for themselves before you in all likelihood. Take only close people you trust your life

with. If you don't, make sure they know nothing about you.

Make sure nothing shines. Check yourself from head to toe. It doesn't matter if you are fine in the dark, you need to worry about your ability to hide when a light is shone near you.

Make sure nothing rattles. Jump up and down a few times to check. If something does, either tape it into place or insulate it with cloth.

Remember that facilities are as useful in the night as they are in the day. If you are thirsty, use a water spout to get some water, just make sure to remain unseen.

Before you leave, play out the operation in your mind. Pretend you are acting your plan out, and maybe you get caught somewhere. Mental rehearsing can weed out any potential mistakes or conflicting plans which may confuse you.

If you are operating as a group, and you are a leader, be aware of your responsibilities. You must plan everything to a science, make sure nobody is caught, and complete your mission. If you succeed, you will gain trust and future partners. If you fail, you will lose trust, respect, friends, and will be punished the worst if you yourself are caught.

Forget honour. When out in the shadows, be a cheap bastard instead! Blind people, distract them, take the low roads, and swing below the belt.

Improvise and overcome. There is always a way into a place, you just have to find it.

Don't forget that you need to run and jump a little. Consider this when selecting equipment, especially on cold nights.

Speaking of cold nights, you should be slightly chilly when you head outside. You'll warm up quickly from all the movement. Be sure to keep your toes, fingers, nose, and ears warm though.

Adhere to The Rules, they will save your ass, no question about it.

The Links - Places to Go For Gear and Information

Here are several websites to go to before you decide to commit yourself to the shadows. Some will teach primary skills such as lock picking, while others will teach secondary skills like survival. Finally, there are also online stores listed so that you can find the gear you need, for low prices.

Online Stores

Stores that allow you to order equipment online. These are the best places I know of.

www.sportsmansguide.com - Has low priced new and surplus military and outdoors equipment.

www.cheaperthandirt.com - Another great surplus site.

www.cabelas.com - All new outdoors equipment. The prices are a bit high, but the gear is top notch.

www.galatiinternational.com - Yet another sporting goods store. Good prices too.

www.budkww.com - Blade seller. Most of their cutlery is garbage, but a few items are good.

www.coldsteel.com - Also sells knives, only more high quality ones.

www.unitedcutlery.com - Cutlery shop. A lot of bad knives, a lot of good ones.

www.ebay.com - Online auction site. Sells everything from computers to armor to toe nails.

www.amazon.com - Online marketplace also sells everything. Good sporting goods section.

www.walmart.com - That's right, it's online as well. Some good items to look at.

www.target.com - Also online, and also not bad. Give it a look over.

www.overstock.com - Has a sporting goods section with good prices.

www.opticsplanet.net - Has a huge variety of optics with good price tags.

www.uscav.com - New military and police gear. The prices are a bit high, but the wares are nice.

Public Services

Websites that provide a free service of some kind. Numerous uses here.

www.google.com - The place to go when looking for information.
babelfish.altavista.com - Find a foreign text? Translate it here.
www.teraserver.com - Online aerial photos, topographs, and other helpful tools.
<http://www.theultimates.com/white/> - Awesome person search website, uses many engines.
maps.yahoo.com - Road maps. Comes in handy.
www.switchboard.com - A good telephone directory.
www.uspto.gov - Patent search engine. Try searching for methods on how to do certain things...
www.pat2pdf.org - Use this to convert patents found on the USPTO search engine to PDF format.
www.recycler.com - Online classified ads.
www.freeclassifiedlinks.com - Lists classified ad websites. Useful in finding an objective.

Information

Websites that cover multiple subjects or facets of a single subject that may be useful in the shadows.

www.totse.com - Community of which this file was primarily intended for.
www.roguesci.org - Explosives and weapons forum, with more relevant info. Also has a great FTP.
www.frugalsquirrels.com - Survival site with a good library and forum.
www.texasminutemen.org - Another survival forum with great info.
world.guns.ru - Information on a large variety of firearms.
www.globalsecurity.org - Has a ton of military information, including manuals.
digital.library.upenn.edu/books/ - Contains a few good books dealing with the shadows.
gbppr.dyndns.org/proj/mil/ - Homebrew espionage. Lots of good info.
www.powerlabs.org - Has interesting security studies among other things.
www.bladeforums.com - A forum about blades, of course.
www.hardcoretalk.com - Forum with several interesting topics. Try it out.
www.fbi.gov - Contains their crime reports, some of which are handy. Paranoid need not apply.
www.fas.org - Lots of military information
www.cnn.com - Keep up to date on new technologies that work for and against you.

Also, I thought I would add this one link: <http://www.roguesci.org/theforum/archive/index.php/t-1690.html>

TONS of websites listed, with descriptions.

The Literature - Books that Helped During Research

Well, I couldn't have gotten this far on my own. Here is a list of the main books, guides, and manuals that helped my develop and sharpen my skills in the shadows.

MIT Guide to Lockpicking
Secrets of the Ninja
Secrets of Lockpicking
Night Movement - How to Fight at Night
Own the Night - Small Unit Night Fighters
FM 7-85 Ranger Unit Operations
FM 31-21 Special Forces Operations
FM 23-10 Army Sniper Manual
FM 21-76 Survival - Escape and Evasion
Navy SEAL Sniper Training Guide (Awesome, awesome read)

THE END

You now have the edge when going into the shadows. Although you have learned what you need to know, you must still practice the techniques described to truly know them. How you use this information is entirely up to you. I cannot personally advocate acting these procedures out, knowing full well their consequences, but you are ultimately the maker of your own decisions. Who knows? Maybe I'll bump into you during the night.

Thanks to everyone who helped me when I was starting out, as well as the operatives who helped me in the field. Major props to the Night Ops community of &TOTSE, who as of this writing is kicking some serious ass. Stay in the shadows, and may good riches come your way for many nights to come.