

# **UNDERCOVER, LLC**

**"WHEN CONFIDENTIALITY MATTERS"**

## **Description of Services:**

**UNDERCOVER specializes in deterring automotive spy photography for auto manufacturers, advertising agencies, production companies and photographers. Launched officially in 2018, our team of CODE RED experts have been the leading firm for providing superior photo security solutions specifically tailored to the industry.**

## **How we work:**

**UNDERCOVER is contracted on an as-needed, per-project basis. Initial consultation with clients is free of charge. In our experience, the entire process will run more smoothly, and security costs are typically reduced when UNDERCOVER is brought into the project during the early stages of location selection.**

## **What we provide:**

**We provide photo security on location anywhere in the US or overseas. We assign security operators (SECOPS) with specific skill sets required by the unique challenges and threat levels of each location. All operators are provided with their own radios, vision equipment, and any other equipment required to accomplish the mission at each location.**

**Prior to formulating an operational plan to counter the threat of a photo security breach, it's essential to understand the nature and mechanisms of the threat. There are two threat levels to consider on a secure shoot.**

### **First Threat Level:**

The first is the **CASUAL OPPORTUNIST (CO)**. This is an individual who had no notion that he would be coming upon a photo shoot. However, he notices considerable activity, lights, a camera, and a covered vehicle. This might sufficiently pique his interest to the point where he may attempt to take a picture. He may take the picture for his own personal interest or to possibly sell to a car magazine or an online car site.

If we consider the total readership of car magazines and fans of online car sites like [autospies.com](http://autospies.com), [templeofvtc.com](http://templeofvtc.com), [jalopnik.com](http://jalopnik.com), [leftlanenews.com](http://leftlanenews.com), [autoblog.com](http://autoblog.com), [motorauthority.com](http://motorauthority.com) and others, the pool of potential individual threats is in the tens of thousands. These are individuals who know cars and realize, from reading the magazines and websites, that there is potential to make some money and acquire a certain amount of bragging rights to “bagging” a car prior to official introduction.

To acquire his target, this individual needs:

- 1) Intent
- 2) Means
- 3) Opportunity

#### **INTENT:**

The intent of this individual is formed at the moment he realizes his opportunity. He has no plan of attack and needs to decide at the moment of the formulation of his intent a means of penetrating the perimeter.

#### **MEANS:**

The means of acquiring his goal is a camera, cell phone, GO-PRO, PDA with photo capability or some other image recording device. Almost all individuals who fall into the pool of **CASUAL OPPORTUNISTS** can acquire some means of capturing an image such as a cell phone with camera.

#### **OPPORTUNITY:**

An individual equipped with the intent and the means requires close proximity to his target. He will need to see the uncovered vehicle. He will also need a certain amount of time to acquire the image.

**Second Threat Level:**

**The second threat level is the PROFESSIONAL SPY PHOTOGRAPHER (PSP).**

**Unlike the CASUAL OPPORTUNIST, the pool of potential PSPs has grown significantly. These are people who make their living, or some part of it, by capturing pre-intro (embargoed) vehicles and selling the images. PSPs like Brenda Priddy, Hans Lehman, Chris Doane, Krista Lehman, Brian Williams, Jeremy Kupfer and Jim Dunne actively seek out and hunt cars. They wake up in the morning with the intent of capturing images of vehicles and as such, they carry with them the instruments of their trade – cameras equipped to capture images at short and long ranges. They have the means and intent. They have also developed the tradecraft necessary to capture their prey.**

**In 2013, PSP Brenda Priddy created a school for future spy photographers. There was immediate interest in the school and the first class filled up almost overnight. As a result, we can expect the threat levels in all locations, but especially heavy urban areas, to increase dramatically. In the past, PSPs utilized only rudimentary tradecraft.**

**Over the years, we have seen their tradecraft become more sophisticated and effective. With the introduction of spy schools, the level of sophistication will increase and require even greater levels of counter-surveillance, intelligence gathering, mis-information techniques and tighter communications security (COMSEC).**

**The final component they require to achieve their goal is the opportunity. The PSP will “hunt” for an opportunity and is not easily deterred. Past experiences with PSPs have shown that they will sometimes use diversions and distractions to achieve their goal.**

**UNDERCOVER SECOPS are trained to react to a threat but also to be aware that an overt, very conspicuous attempt to take a photo may be a diversion. The real threat may come from a different direction and from a second or third PSP.**

PSPs rely on information and intel on their intended targets. Much of that intel is accumulated through experience. In urban areas, permits are only issued for certain locations. These locations are used repeatedly by photographers. PSPs know those locations from experience and regularly patrol them for the opportunity to bag a car.



This spy photo was taken by means of a diversion created by two highly motivated professional spy photographers. The first individual positioned himself to the left and rear of the vehicle and made it very evident by his actions of his intent to take a picture. While the people with the vehicle focused their attention on him and tried to cover the rear of the vehicle, the real photographer was positioned to the front and right of the vehicle and managed to take this shot. As is evident from this scenario, there were insufficient SECOPS on the scene and they were not trained to be aware of the diversion.



**The image above is the perfect example of what happens when a CASUAL OPPORTUNIST combines a quick plan (intent), the means (a digital camera) and the opportunity. Unfortunately, in this instance, the opportunity was furnished by an untrained, basic uniformed security detail.**

**This is a BMW 1 Series on its way to a photo shoot being gassed in the desert. The unexperienced security agency that was hired for this shoot allowed the vehicle to be rolled off the trailer with minimal camouflage. In addition, the guard went inside the store to shop. Two COs spotted the vehicle as they drove by. They stopped some distance down the road to prepare their camera. They rushed back to the station, pulled up quickly, got their image and were gone before anyone had time to react. The individual with the beard and moustache at the rear of the car argued with another security officer days earlier over covering the vehicle. The bearded man claimed that covering a car only draws more attention to it so therefore it was wiser to leave the car uncovered. The results of leaving a car uncovered are obvious. The image appeared on the internet within 24 hours following this incident.**

**In the spy shot below, a VW Phaeton was captured on Olive Street in downtown Los Angeles. The shooter in this case was a PSP and was no more than 50 feet from the car and the manufacturers corporate security personnel.**



**Just days prior to shooting the Phaeton (top image) this PSP captured a Volvo mere blocks from the Phaeton's location. Despite the presence of a two-man photo security detail flown in from Sweden, the hero car was allowed to roll off the trailer without a cover, camouflage, or vision barriers in place. This was the result.**

## **COUNTERING THE THREAT:**

**The Security Operators (SECOPS) cannot neutralize the intent of a CO or PSP and cannot legally deprive them of the means of capturing an image. The only factor the SECOP can control is depriving the hunter of their opportunity.**

**The measures employed by UNDERCOVER are based on U.S. military counter-sniper doctrine. There is little difference between defending against an opponent with a precision long gun and a photographer with a camera.**

**The key in both instances is VISUAL ACQUISITION OF THE TARGET and the ABILITY TO NEUTRALIZE IT.**

**In the case of a sniper, visually acquiring the target is only 50% of the mission. The other 50% is hitting it. Seeing a target at 1.0 mile away is pointless until the sniper can get within the operating range of his weapon.**

**Similarly, a PSP or CO, needs proximity to the target. The distance is determined by the operating range of his camera. In the case of a cell phone with camera, that operating range is measured in dozens of feet. With a high-resolution camera and telephoto lens, the range increases to several hundred feet. Beyond that, the image quality required by magazine editors and online site managers degrades dramatically.**



**This Mercedes CLS was shot in downtown Los Angeles at a distance of no greater than 50 feet. Although there were 4 security agents at this shoot, they were not properly motivated, trained or deployed to foil this simple and straightforward threat. This security team was thoroughly lacking in discipline.**



**The image above is a representative sampling of how close a shooter is capable getting to their intended target to capture images of it with an untrained security detail on duty.**



**This image above was taken at what would be considered moderate distance. In this case, the shooter was 75 feet away, across a racetrack in a turnout. The vehicle was at speed and made numerous passes by the shooter before the shooter was able to capture a decent, non-blurry photo. In this case, intent, means, and ample opportunity gave the shooter the luxury of taking all the pictures he wanted.**



## **FIELD OPERATION PROTOCOLS:**

### **VISUAL VIGILANCE**

The primary defensive strategy is to maintain 360 Deg. surveillance. With multiple sets of eyes looking out to the perimeter, the SECOPS act as an early warning net for potential threats. SECOPS on perimeter watch are trained to contact the PRIMARY (lead security operator) by radio at the first indication of a potential threat. The PRIMARY's response is to alert CAR PREP of a possible threat and to cover the car immediately.

Ideally, a triple layer perimeter is established to provide early warning. Unfortunately, budgets don't always allow this depth of security. In circumstances that prevent an adequate triple layer, it is often the wisest course to locate the shoot in a safer environment. The number of SECOPS must match the demands and threat levels of the location.

CAR PREP standard practice is to have the car cover standing by the vehicle at all times and ready to be deployed in seconds. Perimeter watch SECOPS are equipped with binoculars, spotting scopes and, when required, night vision equipment. PSPs and COs need proximity. The SECOPS are deployed to deny them that proximity.

### **REDUCING LINES OF SIGHT**

Locations are also chosen on the basis of reducing lines of sight to the vehicle. If a vehicle cannot be seen, it cannot be captured. To eliminate or dramatically reduce sight lines we utilize:

- 1) CAMOUFLAGE
- 2) TERRAIN
- 3) ACCESS CONTROL
- 4) VISION BARRIERS

### **CAMOUFLAGE**

The off-side (side not visible to camera) of a shoot vehicle is always camouflaged in order to make it unrecognizable to a viewer.

### **TERRAIN**

Whenever possible, locations are chosen on the basis of reduced sight lines. SECOPS are trained to take advantage of terrain features (hills, curves in the road, vegetation etc) to reduce sight lines to the vehicle. SECOPS are also trained to attain overlook advantage in order to observe as much of the terrain as possible.

### **ACCESS CONTROL**

We maintain visual and physical deterrence to prevent unauthorized entry and deny lines of sight to the location. In urban environments, it is usually very difficult or impossible to provide restricted access. Public streets cannot be denied to pedestrians unless the proper permits are obtained and almost no cities will grant this kind of permit. Some do.

### **VISION BARRIERS**

Whenever possible, vision barriers are erected to block potential threats. A vehicle that cannot be seen, cannot be photographed.

### **BLINDING THE OPPOSITION**

Night is a friend to the SECOP and an enemy of the PSP and CO. We leverage the advantage of darkness by deploying 2 Million Candlepower spotlights around the perimeter. By shining the light at a potential threat, it will overload the shooter's internal light meter and "blow out" his image.

### **OPERATORS ARE STANDING BY**

From the moment the hero car rolls off the transport until it rolls back on, there is ALWAYS at least one operator with the vehicle at all times. Whether the cover is on or off, a SECOP is never more than 10 feet from the vehicle.

### **DEFENSIBLE SPACE AND NUMBER OF OPERATORS**

The number of operators required is determined by the physics of the location. In a desert environment a single operator can maintain miles of defensible space. In an urban location, as many as ten operators may be required to maintain adequate security. The number of operators, therefore, will vary.

On a two-lane road in a remote location, two operators working in conjunction with traffic officers (usually sworn officers as required by the permitting office) are sufficient to ensure tight visual security and access control.

### **LIABILITY**

Counterspy is mindful that deterring spy shooters, if not properly handled, can lead to a serious liability exposure to the manufacturer, agency, production and to Counterspy.

Civil and criminal laws such as unlawful detention, assault and even kidnapping apply when attempting to deter a spy shooter in a public place like a city street or public road. If for instance, a spy shooter is physically restricted from being in a public area, this is constituted as illegal detention or possibly kidnapping.

**UNDERCOVER's team of SECOPS have been trained and disciplined to never cross into the area that could be construed as illegal. The counter-measures employed are crafted to eliminate the potential for legal action on the part of spy shooters.**

**The video below demonstrates how a spy shooter was assaulted and his equipment destroyed by an over-zealous engineer on a durability run. The manufacturer was fortunately not prosecuted. The grounds are there for assault and destruction of private property but the spy shooter (BRIAN WILLIAMS of KGP) decided not to file charges.**

*<http://www.carscoops.com/2013/01/volvo-engineer-going-berserk-on-spy.html>*

**The procedures outlined above have been developed in conjunction with internal document and communications security procedures. Security procedures are not limited to those outlined above. Other procedures and equipment have been used in the past and may be used again depending on the situations as they arise.**

#### **LOCATION SELECTION**

**The ideal shoot location is on PRIVATE PROPERTY that provides PSP with no line of sight from a public area. These areas would include vineyards, estates, ranches or any large area with restricted access control.**

**The second most secure areas are those in remote locations with low population densities and very little pedestrian or vehicular traffic.**

**Urban areas create the greatest challenge to PHOTOSEC. While more difficult, they can still offer viable shooting locations if they're chosen carefully and properly scouted prior to shooting.**

**Some locations simply cannot be properly defended without extraordinary efforts and a large number of SECOPS.**

#### **DISRUPTING THE OPPONENTS INTERNAL PROCEDURES**

**The PSP is a threat that cannot be taken lightly. While the CO is easily deterred, the PSP is a professional hunter.**

**The PSP world is small, tightly connected and insular. They operate an effective intelligence network of local stringers and operators in a number of capacities. For instance, one well-known shooter in Los Angeles has an agreement with one of the LIFEGUARDS who works at LEO CARRILLO beach. This beach is a popular shoot location. This PSP pays this LIFEGUARD when he alerts the PSP that a CODE RED (confidential) shoot is scheduled for that beach.**

Similarly, a HOTEL employee in Moab, Utah (another popular shoot location) has an arrangement with a well-known PSP to alert the PSP when a confidential car shoot arrives at the hotel. These stringers and facilitators act as a **FORCE MULTIPLIER** for the PSPs. The PSPs know they can't cover the entire country all the time. So they rely on locals and others to provide them with intel and alerts.

A large part of UNDERCOVER's efforts are devoted to keeping track of the PSPs and their facilitators. UNDERCOVER maintains daily monitoring of the PSPs and their facilitators. This monitoring is not restricted to the actual shoot days for which UNDERCOVER is contracted. It's an ongoing, daily process that can, with a very high degree of accuracy, determine where PSPs are currently operating and what vehicles they have targeted.

By employing various protocols and countermeasures, UNDERCOVER has the capabilities to mislead, misdirect and misinform the PSPs and their local facilitators when required.

If you feel you can benefit from the package of services provided by UNDERCOVER, contact:

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Dave Spagnolo  
661-312-1244  
daspag@gmail.com