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Three 'Spy Secrets' That Can Protect You, Your Family and Your Business

Imagine yourself in a vintage tuxedo, sipping a "shaken, not stirred" martini as you make eye contact across the bar with a beautiful secret agent who is about to covertly hand you a dossier with information that will help prevent World War III.

Okay—that's almost certainly never going to happen to you. But you can use some of the same strategies employed by professional spies and operatives to prevent criminals from harming you, your family and your company.

These strategies come courtesy of Jason Hanson—a former CIA officer who spent nearly a decade at the agency. He then founded a business, Spy Escape & Evasion, to teach people how to be safe using insider spy tactics and wrote *The New York Times* best-selling book *Spy Secrets That Can Save Your Life*.

Secret #1: Run an SDR—a surveillance detection route

The SDR is a powerful way to make sure that you're not being followed by a predator.

Here's how it works for intelligence operatives. Because they are almost always being watched, they can't simply drive to a meeting with someone and get handed an envelope of secrets. So an operative might go to Starbucks, go to the gym, go shopping and do other tasks hours before the scheduled meetup. "If I saw the same person or same car in all those spots, I knew I was being surveilled and I would abort the meeting," says Hanson.

To see how you can apply that technique in your day-to-day life, Hanson offers a few examples:

- "My wife was at a home improvement store one day and got a strange vibe from a guy near her. So she ran a five-minute SDR: She walked from the garden section, where the guy was staring at her, to the washers and dryers section—and sure enough, he followed her. She walked across the entire store to the lumber section—and he showed up there too. She wandered over to plumbing, and there he was a few minutes later. Ultimately, she got a store manager to walk her to her car."
- "A woman I trained was in a department store shopping for shoes when she noticed an odd man staring at her. She ran an SDR by walking over to perfume—and he showed up a few seconds later. Then she left and went to women's clothes—and he showed up there too. She found a security guard and pointed out the man—who immediately ran out of the store into the parking lot."

Secret #2: Become a human lie detector

To size up someone's honesty, ask them a question they're not expecting and watch how they react. Hanson suggests the following:

- **"Tell me the last time you stole something."** Phrase it this way because, let's face it: Most of us have stolen something in our lives—even if it was a pack of gum as a kid. Most people will answer with a chuckle as they remember a minor transgression—and very willingly tell you about, for example, that time they accidentally walked out of the grocery store with a gallon of milk on the bottom of their cart. But if this question makes someone really nervous, you can bet you're dealing with somebody who isn't remembering a small incident from childhood!
- **"Tell me the last time you did drugs."** A lot of people smoked pot in high school or college but not since then, notes Hanson. People who did will say so. But others who have smoked more regularly or recently will stumble as their brains try to assess on the fly what they should reveal.
- **"So, how many vacuums have you sold today?"** Would-be thieves will sometimes pose as salespeople. When you open the door to them, they get to see who lives in your house and if you have anything nice they'd like to steal. As you chat with a salesperson, ask them "So, how many (type of product they're offering) have you sold today?" A legit salesperson will answer right away. A thief will look confused or act nervous in some way.



Secret #3: Prevent home break-ins

Most home invasions and robberies are planned. It doesn't matter where you live—criminals walk around looking for houses with the path of least resistance to break-ins. Hanson suggests the following safeguards:

- **Put up alarm signs.** You probably should have a working alarm system, says Hanson, but you can also go online and buy stickers for your doors and windows that suggest you have one.
- **Get a dog—or even a dog bowl.** If a guard dog isn't your thing, just buy a dog bowl and dog toys and leave them by your doors. "Criminals are very scared of dogs. They will choose another house if they see dog items at your place—they don't even need to see an actual dog," says Hanson.
- **Install security cameras—real or fake ones.** If a thief sees a camera, he will avoid your house—and Amazon sells fake security cams that look incredibly real.