



## *Surveillance and Tailing*

*A good, but unclassified, explanation of how to conduct surveillance – and therefore how to spot and shake tails – is found in an instruction handout produced by an American paramilitary group some years ago. The original document, quoted below, can be found in the Monday Collection at the Hoover Institution on War, Revolution and Peace at Stanford University. While the document is somewhat dated technologically, the concepts taught in the piece remain valid. The text and punctuation have been left as originally presented and do not meet all journalistic standards for clarity and stylebook-correctness.*

*Mark Monday*

*[theresearchschool.com](http://theresearchschool.com)*

### Reading I

Surveillance is the act of observing by surreptitious means for the purpose of gathering information otherwise unavailable or impractical to obtain. This act of observing may occur as stationary (stake-out) and/or moving (foot or vehicle) surveillance.

Before discussing methods of surveillance, let us take note of the few basic considerations for the work

**ATTIRE:** Always wear conservative clothing (nondescript), appropriate to the locale. Avoid wearing bright colors, gaudy patterns, and/or distinguishing garments, i.e. loud sport shirts or ties. In inclement weather, lighter colored raincoats are best for daylight hours, darker or black coats for the night. Avoid the "secret agent" trench coat look. Hats are useful; however, it is wise to wear an inexpensive one to be discarded or pocketed for a needed change of appearance. Do not have your name in the hat band. Snap-on type neckties are useful for a quick change. Rubber soles and heels on your shoes are preferable for foot surveillance (tailing) because of the noise factor, but especially noticeable in during late hours when traffic and cover noises are at a minimum. Wherever your assignment takes you, it is well to remember that "When in Rome, do as the Romans do" and look as the Romans look.

**PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS:** The use of persons with notable physical defects, of extreme height or greatly overweight should be avoided for foot surveillance. If the subject that you are tailing is well trained, a quick glance will tell him of any outstanding characteristics and a repeated observation of these will "burn" or compromise the member.

Personality habits: Pipe smokers, cigar smokers, chronic nose blowers, and perpetual hair combers should train themselves to refraining from said during surveillance work.

**EQUIPMENT AND DEVICES:** Quality sub-miniature equipment is desirable for obvious reasons; however, depending on the nature of the work, standard size equipment may prove best, especially in the realm of photography if telephoto lenses are required. "Bugging devices," pick-up transmitters, line monitors, beepers, etc., are available in the so-called "expendable" line; good equipment constructed with shorter-life materials, plastic clad, etc., with the intent that it may be necessary to abandon the equipment.

Vehicles: Vehicles for moving surveillance should be limited to passenger automobiles. Bicycles, motorbikes, motorcycles, etc. should not be used in this country because the "bike" to automobile ratio is too extreme; compromise would be immediate. The use of trucks is prohibitive due to silhouette and poor maneuverability. The acceptable automobile for surveillance would be American-made, common make and model, conservative in color, and high performance engine. If a "citizen's band" radio is installed, omit the pleasure radio and replace the standard antenna with the required CB antenna. The use of "walkie-talkies" between automobiles can be quite satisfactory, the limitations being only in lack of communication with a base station. For night mobile surveillance, render your interior courtesy lights inoperative. This will prevent the illumination of your car's interior as the doors are opened. Unless these lights are on a separate circuit, this is comparatively simple; otherwise, it may be necessary to remove the bulbs or splice in a toggle switch rather than merely removing the fuse from the fuse block. An accessory is also available to accomplish the same effect by means of a steel tab mounted above the door jamb plunger switch that swings down over the plunger to prohibit activation. The number of "gimmicks" to aid in your mobile surveillance is limited only by the member's imagination. A bank of toggle switches mounted under the dash to individually control various lights on the automobile is quite helpful. For instance, should the subject that you are tailing become "nervous," at your first opportunity (corner, etc.) switch off one of your headlights and your subject picks you up in the rearview mirror as a "one-eye." Again at an opportune time, switch back to normal. Do not repeat this procedure with the same subject. This type of light control works equally well on the rear of your automobile should you feel that you are under counter-surveillance. Keep in mind that you are subject to arrest or at least warning for lack of these lights. The switching of license plates is extremely were risky and not advised. Keep your cars in good operating tradition, quick starting, and prepared for foul weather.

Stationary surveillance: (stake-out) The "stake-out" is a function requiring the utmost of patience. Whether the observation takes place from an automobile, building, or obscure doorway, the efforts are quite often fruitless despite hours of intense attention. Depending upon the nature of the information to be derived from the observation, the "stake-out" may vary from a few moments to several hours or days, thereby requiring a rotation of members to assure alertness and cover. Keep in mind that the true value of the information gained is only as good as your ability to observe, record, and report. A small pocket notebook is most valuable to jot down pertinent data. Leave as little as necessary to memory. A few practical considerations for the stake-out are as follows:

(1) Precautions should be taken to prevent compromise through a poorly-located stake-out. Always have a cover story, have an alternate reason to be where you are if approached. Be constantly aware of "background" lighting at night. Do not silhouette yourself with street lights, store windows, illuminated

signs, etc. If your stake-out is from an automobile, it is advisable to use at least two members so that one member, if necessary, may have his back to the "area" with the other member facing him, looking beyond. If it is necessary to position your automobile in a noticeable location the stake-out will require a rotation of autos and surveillance teams determined by prearranged schedule or signal.

(2) If your observation is done from an adjacent building, it is well again to be extremely cautious of "background" light. Keep away from open windows and doors, do not "peek" through venetian blinds or around canvas shades. Tilt venetian blinds in a direction perpendicular to the line of sight from your subject. Raise canvas shades a few inches and observe through the three area. If at all possible, provide yourself with a second exit from your stake-out. Remember also, that your subject undoubtedly has made similar provisions. Be sure to consider all possibilities and have them covered. If you are working in conjunction with a moving surveillance team, establish a good signal or communication system.

(3) If photographs are desired during your stake-out, do not wait until the last minute to make camera adjustments; get your camera "zeroed-in" with distance and exposure set so that all that is necessary is the "squeeze-off." Remember, you may have only a few seconds to get what you have waited considerable time for.

(4) Keep alert; do not let the monotony of watching affect your efforts. Be aware of incidents happening near the location of your subject; they may have a connection.

Moving surveillance: (Foot surveillance) A few practical considerations for foot surveillance are as follows:

(1) Tailing by the use of one man only is quite difficult and requires many years of experience in the work, an ability to guess the subject's movements and a real adeptness to avoid compromise.

(2) Two-man and four-man surveillance teams are much more satisfactory if the manpower is available, if the value of the surveillance warrants same.

(3) If your subject has reason to think that he may be tailed, be aware of his "mirror tactics." If he window-shops repeatedly, and at stores where the displays would be of little concern, he is undoubtedly checking the rear.

(4) Be careful not to "overtake" your subject. If he stops abruptly and you have no place to loiter without arousing suspicion, cross the street, change direction, or take whatever measures are necessary to avoid close contact. If you accidentally meet your subject face to face, indicate by a prearranged signal to another of your team that you have been "burned" and drop out to prevent compromising the remainder of the team.

(5) If your subject hastens his pace, he may have spotted you or just may be testing. In either case, if you cannot maintain your distance by lengthening your stride (do not quicken pace) let another member "pick him up." If you are the A-man (first behind the subject), never follow the subject directly into a building; you may end up face-to-face with him in a small lobby or elevator. Let your B-man or C-man follow into the building while you cover another exit.

(6) Never turn the corner directly behind your subject. Never follow your subject into an alley, passageway, etc.; if you are in the A-man slot, you may have to get your head examined.

(7) If you are tailing a person of the opposite sex, make sure that at least one member of your team is of that sex. This will aid in the coverage of areas "normal" to a certain sex, i.e., powder rooms, toilet rooms, bars, dress shops, etc.

(8) Be careful. Do not become so engrossed in your operation that you become careless and meet with an accident. This may sound stupid but it has happened. Use normal safety precautions crossing streets, etc.

(9) If you lose your subject, don't dive in like a dog after a bone; tomorrow is another day, and benefit from your error. It is better to abandon the surveillance for the time being than to compromise the entire team with panic. Stay a short time in the vicinity; your subject may have lost you unintentionally and could possibly be "picked-up" again.

(10) Following a subject into a building is quite distasteful inasmuch as you cannot out-guess his next move within the building. He may have played you into the building for positive compromise with no business there or intention of staying. Make sure that the member having this close contact is your B-, C-, or D-man. It is probable that this close contact will permit the member to drop out without arousing too much suspicion since this may be the first visual contact.

(11) Remember that your mission in surveillance work is to observe and report; you are not trying to apprehend the subject, so be extremely cautious of "crowding" him.

(12) Do not carry concealed weapons; your objective is not to assassinate the subject.

Foot surveillance: as previously mentioned, foot surveillance is best accomplished by the use of two-man and four-man teams. The four-man team functions very well with a lesser chance of compromise due to the flexibility of members through constant rotation. Let us now consider the practical movements and rotation of a four-man surveillance tailing a single subject.

After obtaining visual contact (picking-up) the subject, the team should locate themselves in the following relative positions. (Figure No. 1) The "A-man" is the member nearest and directly behind the subject. A good tailing distance for the A-man should vary between one-third to one-half block, depending upon time of day, traffic, weather conditions, etc. Experience will best to regulate this distance for the members. "B-man" will be directly across the street, parallel to the subject. "C-man" will be directly behind the A-man at a distance of about one-third of a block. "D-man" will be directly across the street and parallel to the A-man and at a distance of about one-third block behind the B-man. This "staggered" spacing will be self-explanatory as we consider a hypothetical tailing problem.

Assume that the subject is "picked-up" proceeding north on the east (right) side of the street. (Figure No. 2) A-man takes his position behind the subject, B-man across the street on the west (left) side, C-man behind A-man, and D-man behind B-man. Suppose the subject approaches an intersection and walks directly east (turned right), the A-man will proceed across the street north, then turn east on north side of the street. B-man who is able to have the subject in visual contact due to his "forward" position, now turns east, crosses the N-S street and proceeds east in the A-man position directly behind the subject. C-man and D-man have the option of position – one must cross the E-W street to the north side to take a position behind the original A-man who is now in the B-man position. It will be necessary for the new B-man to take up some slack to get into position directly across from the subject in order to maintain visual contact should the subject turn right again. Now let us return to our original "pick-up" positions and assume that the subject is proceeding north on the east (right) side of the street as stated. (Figure No. 3)

Suppose now that our subject does not turn east (right) immediately but proceeds across the E-W street to the north side of the street and THEN turns east (right). If the A-man is lagging enough, it will be very easy to turn east (right) while still on the south side of the E-W street and take up a new B-man position. The B-man will proceed north across the E-W street, turn east (right), cross the N-S street and take up a new A-man position. C-man follows his original A-man taking a new D-man position. C-man follows

his original A-man taking a new D-man position. D-man follows his original B-man, taking up a new C-man position.

Let us return again to our original "pick-up" positions and assume again that the subject is proceeding north on the east (right) side of the street as stated. (Figure No. 4) This time to let us have our subject turn west (left) while still on the south side of the E-W street and proceed west. In this instance A-man may retain his position directly behind the subject because he is not turning a "blind corner." B-man should proceed across the E-W street to the north side and turn west (left). C-man will follow A-man while D-man will follow B-man without interrupting pace. This results in an identical grouping except that the pattern is in reverse or "opposite hand." An option here if deemed necessary, would be to have C-man and D-man alternate positions.

Let us return again to our original "pick-up" positions and assume again that our subject is proceeding north on the east (right) side of the street as stated. (Figure No. 5) This time to let us have our subject proceed across the E-W street to the north side, turn west (left), cross the N-S street and continue west. Unless the B-man can lag behind in anticipation of the turn off, he will be crossing the E-W street at the same time as the subject and should therefore proceed north to a close position where he can pause and regroup as a new C-man moving west. A-man should have enough lag to see the turn west and make his own turn west while still on the south side of the E-W street with his C-man following behind. This will put the original A-man and the C-man in a new B-man and D-man position respectively. As the original B-man overshoots and returns to regroup, the original D-man proceeds across the E-W street, turns west (left) and assumes the new position of A-man.

Returning again to our original "pick-up" positions we once more assume that our subject is proceeding north on the east (right) side of the street as stated. (Figure No. 6) If the subject proceeds to north on the east side of the street, the team will maintain their respective positions until a change of direction; therefore, with the exception of a direct reversal of direction only two other alternate changes of course remain. This being the situation where your subject would proceed across the E-W street on the north side, turn west (left), proceed across the N-S street to the west side and turn AGAIN north and proceed on the west (left) side of the N-S street. In this case improper lag will place the B-man in a compromising position. It may be necessary for the B-man to turn west after crossing the E-W street to return and regroup as D-man moves into his new A-man slot. In this case the original A-man has already made his move and is moving to the west side of the street. The A-man should then turn north, cross the E-W street and take up a new C-man position. The original C-man, still on the east side of the street, can be easily moved north to assume a new B-man slot. The original B-man waiting to regroup will cross back east across the N-S street, turn north and take up a new D-man position.

A direct reversal of direction by your subject need not create panic. The A-man, of course, will be in the most delicate position; however, if there is any pedestrian traffic for cover, the A-man should be able to divert his route in time to avoid compromise, especially if the one-third to one-half block tailing interval is maintained. The C-man as well as his fellow members, B-man and D-man across the street, should have little trouble covering themselves for new positions.

Remember, good undetected surveillance is directly dependent upon the ability of the team to ROTATE the members effectively. A good surveillance team needs cooperation in practice. Establish concise signals for rotation, etc. Keep the signals simple yet distinctive enough not to be confused with normal gestures or actions.

Vehicle surveillance: Trailing by means of vehicles requires considerable advance planning, mainly setting up of basic "pick-up" stations, rendezvous, codes for CB Communications, etc. Unlike foot

surveillance, the A-car does not enjoy the security necessarily of having an associate immediately nearby to pick up the subject. Traffic lights provide a constant problem. Running a light to keep pace with your subject or a member can prove disastrous. In the practice of moving vehicle surveillance, a pattern should be established the same as in foot surveillance. It is advisable to maintain about a block distance between the subject and the tailing car. A suitable formation of automobiles would be to have your A-car one block directly behind the subject. B-collar would be proceeding in the same direction one block to the left and one block to the REAR of the A-car. C-car that would be one block to the right and one block to the rear of the A-car. D-car will be one block behind A-car, parallel to B-car and C-car. This staggered formation permits the subject to turn either direction and be "picked up" at one-block distance by B-car or C-car so that A-car can drop out and regroup. It is well to let your B-car or C-car pick up the subject at the first turn in case the subject makes the same direction turn again; A-car will have covered the position held previously by the new A-car. If the subject covers considerable distance in the same direction, A-car should drop out, permitting D-car to take the A-car position, rotating with the D-car. If your subject "doubles back" do not turn around and follow; radio your adjacent cars, pull off on a side street to turn around, or circle the block. If your subject stops abruptly or pulls in to park and you are past an intersection, pass him by and radio your D-man. Do not pull in behind him a few feet away as you see on television. If you take up a position of stationery surveillance near the subject's car, attempt to prevent him from observing any occupancy within the car as he leaves. This is easily done by merely bending over in the auto and as he proceeds by. Give him a little distance or a corner and follow.

It is well to remember your practical considerations for foot surveillance while performing vehicle surveillance. Be careful of turning "blind corners" behind the subject; do not follow him into an alley or "dead end," do not "crowd" him, etc., etc.

In conclusion, one final consideration of the utmost importance - BE CAREFUL, do not jeopardize your life or the lives of others by unsafe driving practices during vehicle surveillance.

## Reading II

Surveillance may be classed in its own right as an "art" for it takes a certain amount of skill and alertness to conduct a first-class surveillance without being detected by the subject.

### Types of surveillance

1. Moving surveillance, by foot or any mode of transportation as may be required.
2. Stationary surveillance, where the surveillant watches from a fixed position, at one or more points.

### What is surveillance?

Surveillance may be defined as the secret observation of a thing, person, or place.

### The surveillant

The surveillant is the investigator, observer, or person conducting the surveillance (also known as "shadow or tail").

### The subject

The person, place, or thing under surveillance is the subject.

### **Convoy**

Any associate of the subject who attempts to detect the surveillance is known as a convoy.

The surveillant must have a great amount of patience, for he will be called upon to spend many long hours in wait to secure information. In addition the surveillant must do his best to keep from being detected while making the surveillance. He must try to adjust himself to the locality in which the surveillance is being conducted.

A good operator who goes on a surveillance case will try to determine beforehand just where he may have to follow the subject. He must secure as much background information as possible regarding the subject and his associates before attempting the surveillance. By being aware of the facts the surveillant can make certain arrangements before starting out on the case. The proper dress is important; at times, a simple disguise will help. The main thing is to remain inconspicuous in voice, appearance, and action.

Should the surveillant have any idea at all of where his case will take him he should check certain things in advance. Transportation facilities, public places, avenues of escape, and any other feature of the particular neighborhood. In the event the surveillant is detected, he should have a reasonable story to present in the event he is challenged regarding his actions.

### **Foot surveillance**

In the foot surveillance of a subject there are several factors which must be considered: 1) the volume of pedestrian traffic; 2) the alertness of the subject; 3) the degree of surveillance desired.

The number of surveillants may vary in different situations. The greater the number of surveillants the less chance for detection by the subject as the surveillants can change around as the situation demands.

### **"ABC" method of surveillance**

Any effective method of conducting a good foot surveillance is using the "ABC" method. In this method the subject is always in the middle of the bracket in example, surveillant 1 follows the subject. Surveillant 2 follows surveillant 1; surveillant 3 should place himself across the street and try to keep abreast of the subject. In the event the subject makes an unexpected turn, surveillants 2 and 3 are in a position to change places with surveillant 1; the surveillants should change places from time to time to lessen detection by the subject.

### **How to avoid detection**

In attempting to avoid detection there is always the risk of losing contact with your subject. If the subject does notice the surveillant the surveillant should appear to be engaged in some

natural act such as looking for a house address, tying his shoe, or any other act that would make it appear he is not concentrating on the subject.

### **Automobile surveillance**

Automobile surveillance is a tough proposition as there are so many unexpected things that can happen in the heavy traffic encountered in most cities. A simple flat tire can cause the loss of many hours work. A minor accident can cause you the loss of the subject.

The surveillant must be an expert driver, he should have a vehicle that is in first-class condition. You should have the use of the radio to communicate with other officers or surveillants if at all possible. The gas tank should be kept full when starting out on a mobile surveillance.

Should the surveillant have a general knowledge of where the subject is going or have him in a position where he cannot turn off, the surveillant can pass the subject and then in a short while let the subject pass the surveillant. This is the natural move as vehicles in traffic are always passing and being passed. However, the surveillant must keep a sharp eye on the rearview mirror when he passes the subject.

A subject may attempt to detect automobile surveillance by speeding up and then slowing down. He may attempt to stop just on the other side of the hill crest or around a curve. Be alert for these tricks or you will be detected for sure. If you are caught in such a trick, the only way out is to keep going and attempt to pick up the subject at a later time or place.

Two-way radio is a great help in conducting surveillance by automobile. It is easy to switch places with other surveillants by keeping them informed of your progress. Your assistant surveillants may even travel on parallel streets and come into contact with the subject from any point you advise. Then you can fall way from a subject while your assistant takes over.

### **If you lose the subject**

No surveillance ever goes off as a complete success, there are too many unforeseen things that can come up to cause loss of contact with the subject. The event contact was lost, the following steps must be taken:

1. Relocate the subject by observing his home.
2. Watch his known "hangouts."
3. Call the subject's home phone number to see if he will answer. (If he does answer, state: " Sorry, wrong number," or offer other excuse; never hang up as this will arouse the suspicion of the subject).

Equipment used in surveillance

1. Binoculars.
2. Cameras with wide-angle or telephoto lenses.
3. Recording devices.



4. Disguises (simple ones are always the best).
5. Two-way radio.
6. A good motor vehicle.
7. A base of operations for fixed surveillance.
8. Electronic "beeper" transmitters that can be attached to subject's car to make the following easier.
9. Other electronic equipment, directional microphones, etc.

### **Typical situations**

In actual practice several different techniques will generally be used on a single surveillance case.

Perhaps you will need to start out by watching the subject's residence for several hours. This will require an excuse for being in the neighborhood. If you simply sit in your automobile this long you will soon be noticed and perhaps be questioned by a roving police car.

In long-term surveillance cases it is worth trying to rent a room or apartment within sight of the subject's residence. If you must park your car in the area for a long time, perhaps it may be made to appear that you are having mechanical difficulties, or some similar pretext may be used. If several people are available they should work on the case together, switching automobiles frequently.

If the subject is expected to leave by car, then two or more of your own cars can be used at some distance from the subject's residence and simply watch for his car to pass by the most logical routes. Radio contact between these cars is most helpful. If an observer is placed in a rented room or an apartment nearby, he too, can be in radio contact with one or more cars.

Small citizen S-band radios will work well for this purpose. It should be noted, however, that such radios have been used frequently by criminals during burglaries or robberies. For this reason the police departments of most large cities monitor the citizens band channels and they may send a car to investigate any unusual conversation. A system of innocent code words should be agreed on in advance to convey such instructions as may be required.

In following either by automobile or on foot, more than one surveillant is a tremendous advantage. Cooperation between several surveillants is almost essential if the subject is to be followed for any considerable distance without his becoming aware of it.

### **Losing a tail**

All members should become surveillance-conscious.

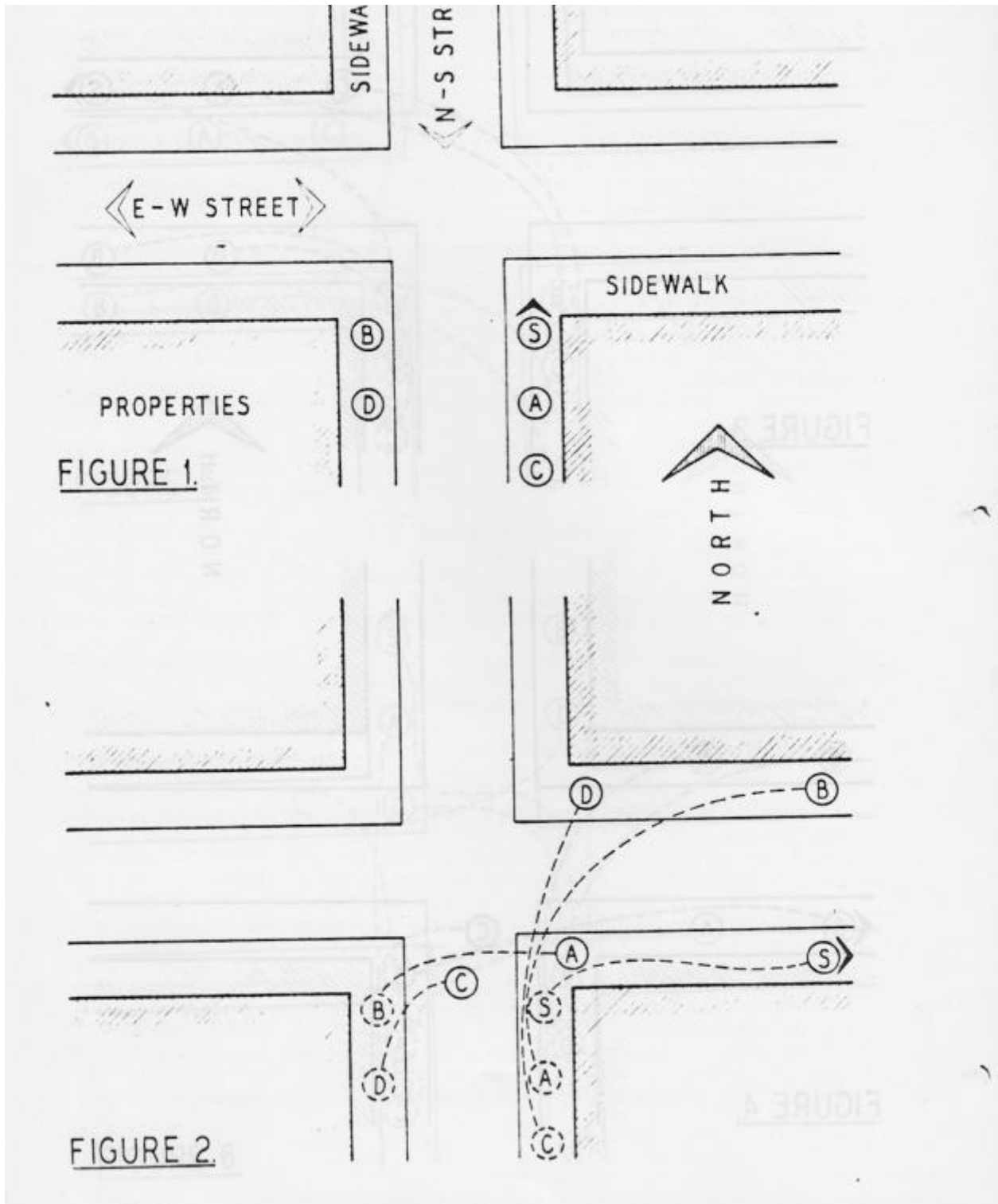
Continually watch the neighborhood where you live for strange automobiles. Give particular attention to new people that moved into your neighborhood. Call on them unexpectedly on some pretext which will let you enter the house or apartment to see how it is furnished, the number of people present, and any evidence of a surveillance operation.

Here are some common tricks to use to determine possible surveillance:

1. Getting on or off a public conveyance at the last possible moment to shake the surveillant.
2. Double back to observe persons that have been following.
3. The subject may drop an item to see if it will be picked up by anyone following.
4. By the use of a "convoy" second party to observe persons following the subject.
5. Use of suitable radio receivers to monitor the conversations of surveillants.
6. Subject may walk rapidly into a building that has several exits as summary intended to rapidly go out another way but, instead, he waits inside to see who will follow him in.
7. Subject may drive to a high vantage point then examined routine he has come through binoculars.
8. Subject may meet another car by prearrangement and quickly switch automobiles.

Of all these and several other methods that can be used, the most effective means of determining whether or not you are being tailed is by use of convoys. One or preferably two cars can follow principle subject. One car should stop but from time to time, making a list of all cars that follow during a five or 10 minute period of time. This car can then intercept the subject's car at some prearranged time and place. One of the convoy cars should drive ahead from time to time to see if other cars are waiting at key intersections that the subject's car must pass route.

When traveling on foot, other friends can use the convoy system to watch for any evidence that the subject is being tailed.



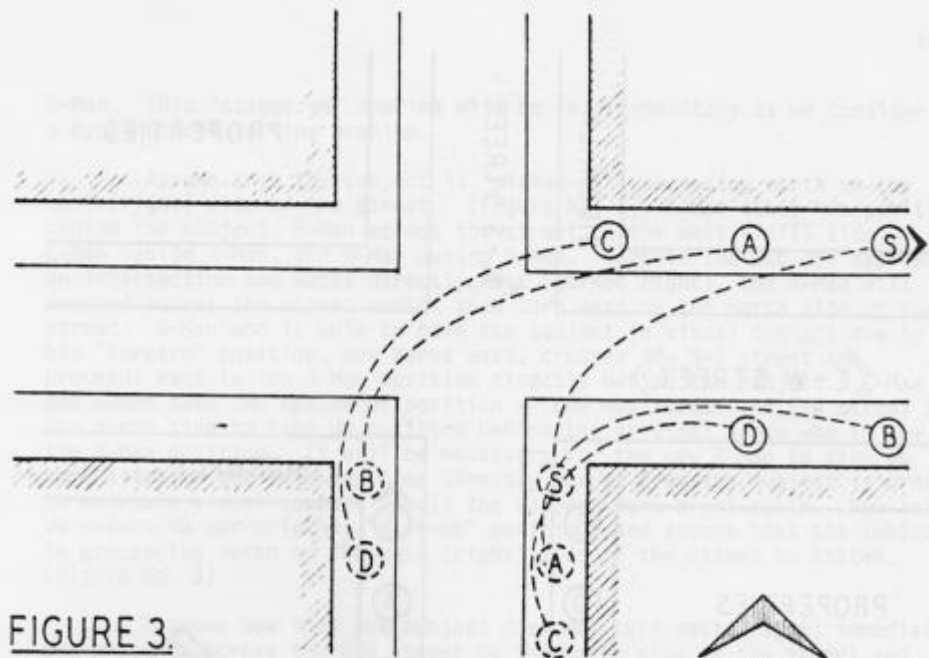


FIGURE 3.

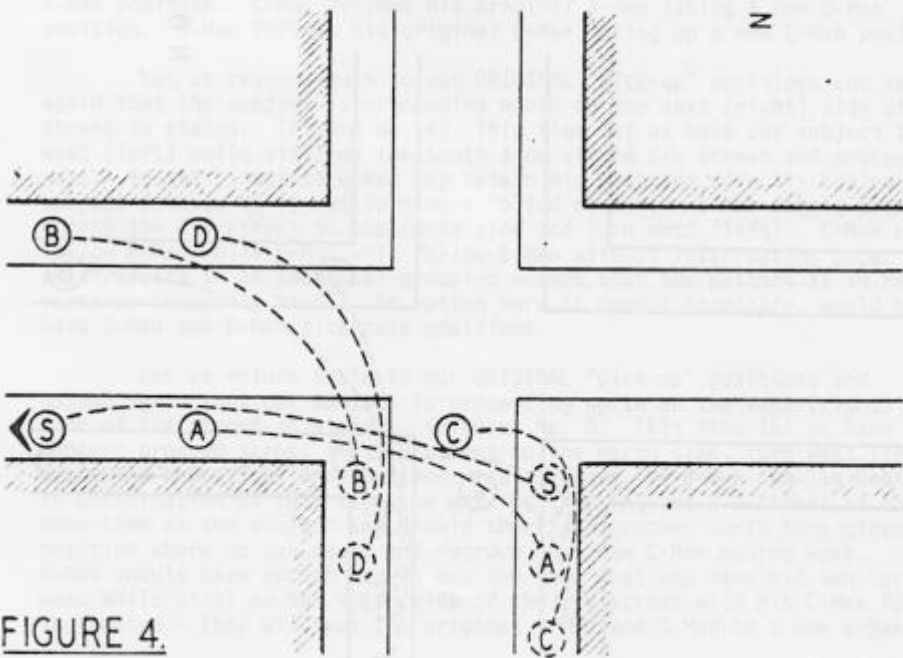


FIGURE 4.

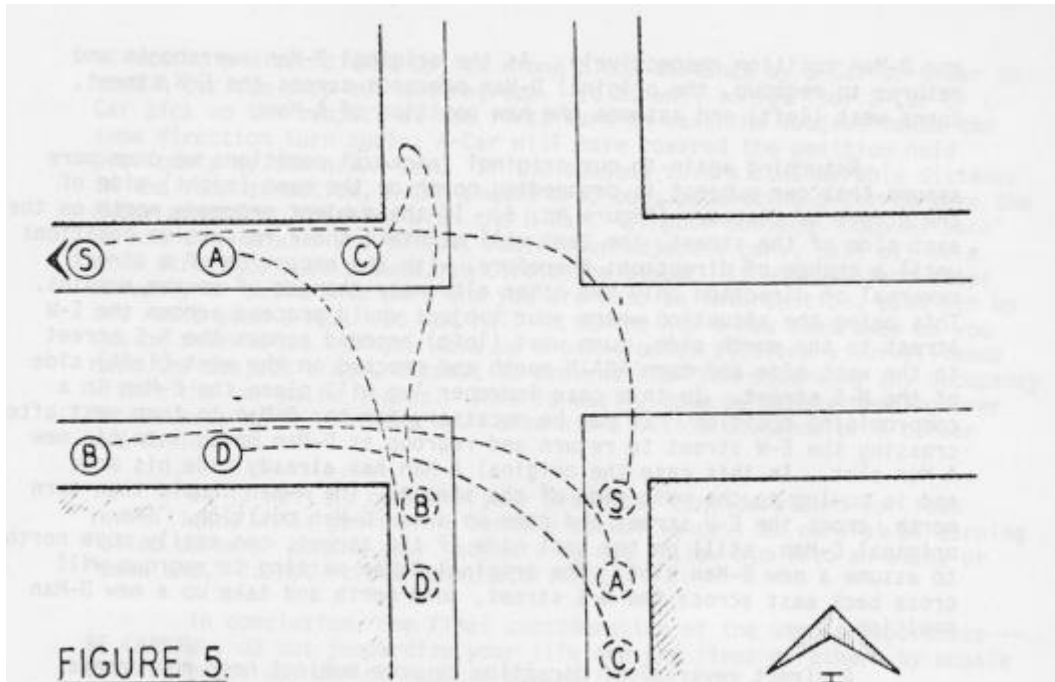


FIGURE 5.

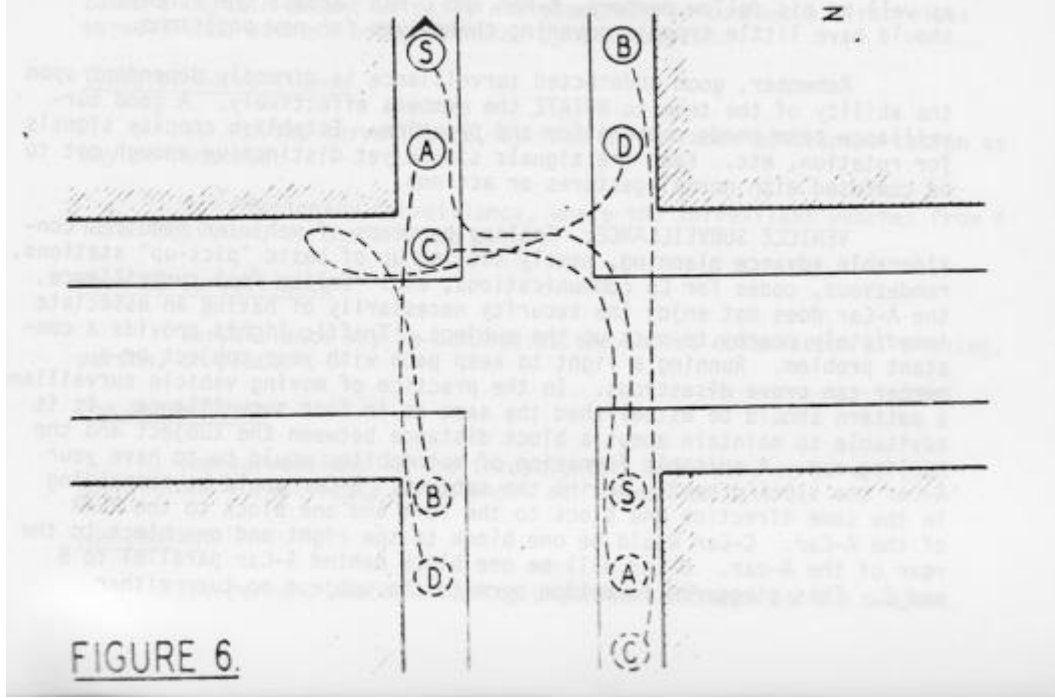


FIGURE 6.