

EP VS. HTPSD TEAMS PROTECTING HUMAN ASSETS

I arrived back in Baghdad earlier this May after a two-year hiatus. I was met with searing heat, the likes of which you could only come close to understanding if you put your clothes dryer on high heat and stuck your head in. Oh yeah, and a sandstorm. That's right, hot dust filling your lungs—welcome back!

The Baghdad International Airport was noticeably more accessible. When I first arrived in September 2004, there were military personnel standing guard and no one was allowed inside or within a half mile of the front door to departures. Now, there is a clear indication that the country is beginning to become less reliant on Coalition Forces for security and more on, you guessed it, Private Security Contractors. There is even a restaurant open inside. I didn't try it, because my name's not Andrew Zimmer and I don't have a television show on the Food Network eating unusual dishes.

The purpose of this report is to delineate the differences between executive protection (EP) and high threat personal security details (HTPSD). I also would like to touch on the different qualities needed to accomplish the missions that these two professions have.

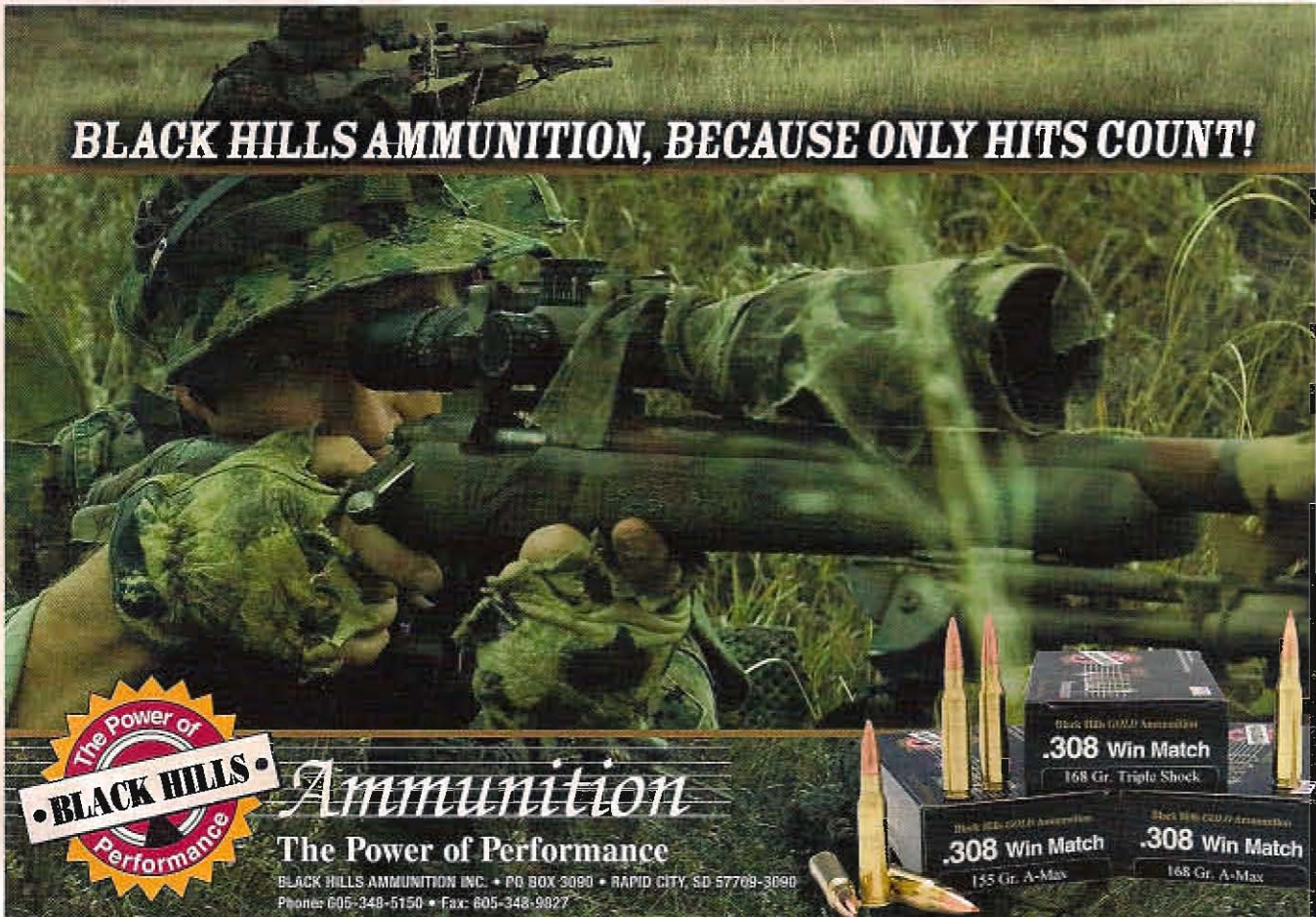
Executive protection (EP) is the protection of human assets, aka people. These assets could be corporate figures, celebrities, or diplomats. The threat levels range from low to high threat, typically in an urban environment that is secure for the most part. The uniform of the day is most likely business to business casual. Weapons, if carried, are concealed so as not to give the protection specialist away (even though most of us are wearing the telltale earpiece and Oakley sunglasses).

An EP agent must balance the need for protection and the client's need to conduct business as usual. More often than not, EP agents become more of a

personal assistant than a protector. We find ourselves making and confirming schedules; making sure our client doesn't forget anything, including their spouse's birthday; and dealing with the client's other "personal assistants." We typically take on these additional tasks in order to ensure long-term employment, but in the end, shouldering some of the scheduling issues keeps us informed of destinations and conditions, thus enabling us to provide more comprehensive and seamless security. We must maintain a proximity to the client that is close enough to protect them, yet far enough that they don't feel compelled to introduce us. The objective in EP is "invisible" protection.

High threat personal security detail (HTPSD) is also the protection of human assets, but this level of protection is typically provided in a socio-economically underdeveloped country under austere conditions. The threat level is high all the

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time due to civil unrest or terrorist activity. It could be provided in an urban or rural environment. The uniform of the day is usually paramilitary. Long guns are exposed, heavy tactical body armor is worn and armored personnel carriers are used.

An HTPSD operator worries less about the balance between security and the need to conduct business as usual. If the team decides that it is not safe to move, then the client has no choice but to postpone to another date. Keep in mind that this type of protection is mostly conducted after battlefield operations have ceased and while the host nation is still in the reconstruction phase. With that being said, I have worked on HTPSD missions where the task at hand has a Presidential directive behind it, so the acceptable level of risk is raised to complete the mission.

While both have the same end result—protecting the client—they go about achieving the result in different ways and with modified focus. An EP agent in the States may go through the steps of checking for an IED placed on a car without putting much effort into it. An HTPSD operator will put a lot more effort into the search. The reason for this is obvious: in high-threat environments you are far more likely to be attacked using some sort of explosive device than you are to be shot. If you are being shot at, it is with a much heavier caliber weapon than is commonly used in domestic EP.

Domestically we place more emphasis on close proximity attacks by threats using hands, knives, handguns, impact weapons or improvised weapons. It's a little out of the ordinary for someone to be standing on a street corner in downtown Orlando with an AK-47, but in the Middle East if someone *isn't* standing there with an AK, something is wrong. While attacks using explosives and long guns do occur domestically, they are much less frequent.

So what makes an effective EP or HTPSD person? The simple answer to both is diversity. A diverse background for an EP agent could be a smattering of law enforcement experience, martial arts, nursing or concierge experience. For HTPSD a more solid background in military or law enforcement/SWAT operations is needed. My background ranges from military and law enforcement to nightclub manager. I feel that this diversity helps me greatly in dealing with

people. I have ten years experience in EP and two years in HTPSD. I know for a fact that all of the things I learned doing domestic EP work helped me in HTPSD and vice versa.

When I teach EP or HTPSD, there is one thing I always stress: Remember what your Mom and Dad used to tell you, "You get more flies with honey than you do with vinegar." Simply put, be nice until it's not time to be nice, then be nice some more. Your role is to protect your client from threats, liability and embarrassment. You must be able to control your emotions when faced with a hostile subject who is calling you everything but

your name in order to get you to take a swing.

The protection community is a small one. Be professional in all that you do. ☺

[Timothy Cash is currently in Iraq providing HTPSD to the U.S. Government. Mr. Cash has served as the Senior Detail Leader on the Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service High Threat Protection Mission to Iraq at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. He also served as the Tactical Commander for the Protective Services Detail assigned to former Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte. He can be reached via email at timothycash@yahoo.com.]

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