

## Podcast #184 Transcription – CIA Escape & Evasion Abroad

**Jeff:** We've all seen the movie. Liam Neeson and his particular set of skills travels to Paris to rescue his kidnapped daughter. Along the way he does several hundreds of thousands of dollars in property damage while breaking the clavicles of practically every person he meets. The movie touched off a new genre called, at the time, dadsploitation, because it popularized the idea of family providers and protectors becoming action heroes to save their endangered loved ones. In fact, in 2015 the movie *No Escape* followed Owen Wilson as he tried to get his family out of a country seized by civil unrest. It, too, was built on those same ideas.

Movies aren't real, but the successful ones tap into real fears that we all have and real dangers we all face. The reality is that you and your family are in greater danger abroad than ever before. My own teenage son is about to go on his first trip abroad as part of a group, but without my protection, which to be completely honest, is totally freaking me out.

My goal is to set him up with an escape and evasion plan that would make Liam Neeson raise an eyebrow and it would make Owen Wilson proud. I want my son to be able to protect himself. And I want you to be able to protect yourself when you're traveling abroad, despite the possible dangers you may face.

Hello, everyone. This is Jeff Anderson, Editor for *Modern Combat and Survival Magazine* and Executive Director of the *New World Patriot Alliance*, with another podcast to help you better prepare for any threat you may face in your role as a protector and a patriot. With us today to talk about escape and evasion abroad is my friend Jason Hanson. Jason, welcome back to the program man.

**Jason:** Hey. Thanks for having me, Jeff. I appreciate it.

**Jeff:** Long overdue, but I know you've been super busy. You've got a new book coming out, which is one of the reasons why we're doing this podcast, because you're the perfect person really for me to go to for—I need some tips here to protect my son. We're going to get into all of that.

Listen, everybody. If you haven't heard our previous conversations with Jason. He's a former police officer who set his sights toward the Central Intelligence Agency, spending nearly a decade in the CIA, earning two exceptional performance awards and distinguishing himself among the other CIA ops personnel.

Leaving the CIA to start a family, Jason continued his research and work using the CIA skills that he developed to adapt them for civilian use so, that citizens could be better prepared for everything from protecting yourself and those you

lose from a violent criminal attack to surviving during times of civil unrest and martial law.

He's been featured on television's *Shark Tank*, where he won a deal for bringing his skills and spy gear to a wider market. His book *Spy Secrets That Can Save Your Life* is a best-seller, that frankly, I think should be in everyone's library, and it's going to really help you master escape and evasion tactics for worst-case scenarios. He also has a new book that's getting ready to come out. Not out yet, but it's going to be out here soon. It's called *Survive Like a Spy*. I'm really excited about this coming out. You can learn more about Jason and his work, and these books, by going over to his website at [www.SpySurvivalTraining.com](http://www.SpySurvivalTraining.com). .

Jason, I really wanted to start this from the very beginning, because as I've alluded to, my son is getting ready to go on this school trip. He's going to a foreign country. On the outside it looks like a safe country, but there's a couple of stops there where they have to stay overnight in areas that I wouldn't necessarily call—I wouldn't call them unsafe, but let's just say that as a father I'm going to be freaking out nonstop.

I know from my work in military, and as a bodyguard and things like that, a lot of the work is done ahead of time. It's in assessing. Knowledge is power. If you go into an area that is really just kind of a total mystery to you, well then you've got a whole lot of orientation to do, and any homework that you can do ahead of that is going to help you to be better prepared once you get boots on the ground right there.

So here's what I want to do. I'm asking you to help me put together my son's protection plan, while he's there without my protection. So let me ask you. In that assessment stage, in that doing the homework stage, what are some of the main things that we need to do before he even sets off on his trip, to know more about the area and make sure that he has the best plan to safeguard him when he gets in country?

Jason: Sure. So first, obviously it depends on the country, what country is your son going to. Once you find out the country, is it a place like Mexico, where you want to avoid the plague, and it's a higher chance of kidnapping and bad stuff? Or is it a much safer country, like you're going somewhere in Italy, kind of thing?

Next, State Department websites. So that's easy to do. It's public information. Also write down all the numbers. So write down the embassy numbers. Write down the consulate numbers. The beauty of the Internet age is you can do an Internet search and say "have there been any bombings in Medellin, Columbia lately", have there been any bombings wherever. So you can find out what's going on locally.

Then, depending on how high you want to take it, know people. So personally, me, I'm very blessed to have a network of people all over the world, CIA officers and former CIA

officers. So I can call them and say give me the lowdown, what's going on here lately, what do we need to know. They'll know little things such as, hey, pick pocketing is up huge, don't have to worry about kidnappings lately but worry about putting your wallet in your front pocket and make sure—all that kind of stuff. So spend 30 minutes doing some very easy, simple Internet research. Again, be more careful in Mexico than in the nicer countries of the world.

**Jeff:** So let me ask you about that. If I don't have a good lead into CIA operatives that are out there, for the average Joe Shmoe out there, who can I contact? Would I contact the embassy there? Would they have people there that would say, yeah, here are the conditions right now in our country? Or what's the best person for me to go to if I don't have an insider?

**Jason:** Sure. So the best thing to do is just go to the state department's website and you can search by particular country. It will say when you search this country, here is what's dangerous lately, pick pocketings are up, or kidnappings are up, or do not go to this country. Which again, I keep mentioning Mexico just because I have a lot of people who contacted me wanting to know if they should do business there. Well, the State Department issues information, like don't go here in Mexico, don't go to this city, kind of thing.

So it's very easy, because the State Department obviously doesn't want American citizens kidnapped, because that's not good for American citizens and they have to deal with that. So yeah. You can call the embassy. They will be very, very helpful. So I would take advantage of that because your tax dollars are paying for it.

**Jeff:** Yeah. Okay. Great. So Jason, let me ask. I'm a gear person. And my son keeps asking me, "When are we putting together my escape and evasion kit?" Fortunately, my son has that mindset. Right? He's his dad's son. So he's into weapons. He's into training with weapons. He's my machete training partner. I mean, he has that mindset, which is good. He's not going in there, "Oh, dad. Everything's going to be fine. It's going to be paradise." But he also knows that there are going to be situations where he might not be able to have his knife with him now. He always carries a knife with him. Things like that.

So in putting together, let's say an escape and evasion kit, for things like kidnappings or a terrorist—whatever it might be for him to get out of a really bad spot. However, since it is traveling abroad it has to be something that he can get through baggage, or he can get through TSA. Going to a country where you're not going to have those laws that we might enjoy here, where—I mean, he doesn't walk around with a firearm. But nonetheless, knives, things like that, that he can use for self-protection.

So this is kind of a two-part question. What would you put inside of a small escape and evasion kit? And then what's the best way to conceal that? I know you have some—you actually sell some items off your website that might be good for

**this too. But I would like to really kind of get an idea for what's the best way to set up my teenager going abroad, with what items he should have and know how to use, and then the best way to conceal them so they're not just flopping off of his backpack or whatever?**

Jason: Sure. I'll tell you exactly what I do, because I still travel the world and I take all this stuff with me. One super easy thing is a tactical pen. Tactical pens are great. It's a writing pen. I travel all over the world with mine. So you should absolutely have that because you can stab somebody with it. It does serious damage.

Second is a flashlight. Flashlight, again, you can take anywhere. But buy a high quality metal flashlight. Actually, I'll show you—I'll turn around here real quick, just so you can see mine. I'm talking about a larger metal flashlight. One, obviously, you can blind an attacker with this. But also, if you whack somebody over the head with this it's a great self-defense tool. So you can walk down the street with a flashlight in your hand and nobody—it's not like walking down the street with a gun in your hand, which is obviously illegal. So tactical pen, flashlight.

I wear an escape and evasion belt, which is a belt that has little hidden compartments. So you can buy money belts like that. Cash. Have cash. Maybe later on another one I can tell you how to bribe the police in a foreign country, if they're corrupt police, and how you do that to get out. But cash is king because you might have to buy your way out of somewhere.

I have a handcuff key on me. You can buy handcuff keys for a few bucks and they're universal handcuff keys. I have bobby pins and hair barrettes, just because I know how to pick handcuffs using bobby pins and hair barrettes.

Then absolutely paracord. So paracord you can use to cut through rope, to cut through duct tape so you can escape restraints. You can have paracord shoelaces. You can also have a paracord belt if you wanted to, or a paracord backpack. So have paracord on you. That's crucial.

Then another thing that I always have with me is some antibiotics. I know that sounds weird, but if you end up in a bad place, and maybe you're trapped for a little bit and you're getting sick, you'll want to have those antibiotics. The flu is going around like crazy right now. I actually just got over it, thanks to antibiotics. So add that to your kit.

Those are just a few of the things, you can take them all over the world and they may save your life.

Jeff: **So how about to conceal those. One of the things that I've looked at is on his backpack—so he has a daypack that he takes with him. It has a little—it's kind of a blend in—it's our SCRAM pack. We call it our social chaos response and mobility pack. It does have a small unit patch, Velcro, on it.**

**So what we were doing was taking just an obscure patch. Not a we're Americans, fuck you, or anything like that, on it. But just something innocuous that he can hide inside of that Velcro patch some of the items that you were talking about.**

**If he doesn't have that bag—right now the belt that he has is one of the—one of the things I always look for is—the belt I use has, not a karabiner loop—yeah, it's like a karabiner loop on it. Right? It's a tactical belt. So basically, if I needed to be airlifted out, I didn't need a harness or anything, or I could use it as a harness if I wanted to, just hook up a D-ring out of a helicopter and be lifted out somewhere. But that has Velcro on it. It's a Velcro belt. So the Velcro goes around all the way to the back.**

**So I thought, well okay. If he doesn't have that patch on the pack, the backpack, then he could just put it on the back of his belt or something. It would be there. Nobody would see it. But it would be there if he—even if he was handcuffed, it would be behind him.**

**What are some different concealment methods that you know of for hiding this kind of stuff on your person, without other people knowing about it?**

Jason: Sure. I'm a big fan of redundancy, having a backup for the backup. So if I've got a kit in my backpack, I'll also have it on my body. What I do is in the past I've put it in my belt. But also, you can buy these travel wallets. Like you said, have a karabiner. And they hang down inside your pants. So you literally—I mean, it looks goofy. You have to reach down into your pants to get this, but it's right in the crotch area, which gives you easy access but also makes it very difficult for pick pockets.

So you could have one of those kits in a belt. You could have one of those kits in your backpack. You could have one of those kits in one of these travel wallets that just hangs down inside your pants. That's the kind of stuff I do, is again, just having plan A, B and C. Because obviously, if something happens you may lose the backpack, but you're going to get your belt. Or what if they take off the belt? Then you've still got that thing hanging in your pants.

In really crazy countries, where we do consulting, if you really want to go extreme. I'm going to hold up my two fingers for a reason. We've all seen people with their fingers taped because people who play basketball, people who play sports, jam their fingers. Well, when you get to a foreign country you can tape a handcuff key, you can take a bobby pin, a hair barrette, tape up your fingers and it looks like you have smashed fingers. But now you've got a little escape and evasion kit in between your fingers. That's obviously for more extreme circumstances, but you could do it going anywhere.

Jeff: **Oh that's sneaky. That's super sneaky. Good stuff. So Jason, we've interviewed you before on "gray man" tactics, which essentially is blending in wherever you are, so that you don't trigger criminals that are looking around, they're scanning for their next victim and they're looking for the juiciest, easiest target that they**

can get. Of course you don't want to be that person. This applies to survival scenarios and all kinds of things.

But when traveling abroad, it seems like it's even harder because you're not in your element. You don't necessarily know what gray means in that spot. So when you touch down, or maybe there's work you can do before you even go there. I don't know. But what are some ways that—in this example, my son, who's going to be traveling to a foreign country, when he gets there can blend in more, as much as possible anyway, so that he doesn't look like an easy target to scam artists, kidnappers or whoever else might be out there, the wolves of society that might target him.

Jason: A lot of this research can be done ahead of time because of the Internet. So you can just Google, or go to Google images, what do people wear in this country. You can see, is everybody in a suit and a tie, or is everybody in—I'm just making this stuff up. The best example is if you go to the Caribbean and it's 100 degrees, you're not going to be walking on the beach in a suit and tie, you're going to be in a bathing suit, because if you did you'd stand out. So do some of that research.

Think about logos. So you don't want to have a logo that's an American company logo on your shirt. Buy the plain Hanes white t-shirts or gray t-shirts, or anything like that. It's funny. I'm sitting here with this shirt. I know you can only see the top. This red shirt is a July 4th shirt. So it says 4th of July. Clearly not a shirt I'm going to wear overseas.

So you really want to pay attention to this, because we know Americans are targets. Depending on the country, most of the time they'll have spotters in hotels. This is especially true in Russia. They'll see who looks like they're an easy target. Who's coming in with a Boston Red Sox hat or a New York Yankees hat, that kind of stuff.

So try and be in boring, as plain as possible. Be the Canadian. Be somebody who does not have anything which points out that you're an American. Don't do things which Americans can do. Again, that's very broad. But Americans are usually loud and obnoxious and they're talking about, hey, I'm glad the Eagles won the Super Bowl, kind of thing. That's what Americans talk about.

I'm going to use this disclaimer more than once. But if you're going to a safer country, you don't have to worry as much. If you're going to a Third World dangerous country, you would watch your conversation and not say anything which only Americans would be speaking about.

Jeff: **That makes total sense, especially nowadays, these are volatile times all around the country. I mean, all around the world. Sometimes it's hard to—you've really got to do your homework on this stuff. Just because a country doesn't come up on the news, doesn't mean that it's not a potentially dangerous country, that they have bad feelings towards the United States. It's kind of hard to know that without doing some digging sometimes. So that's awesome.**

**So Jason, let's assume that something bad happens now. So we have been targeted. Whether it's me or whether it's my family member, my son that's traveling abroad. But has been scanning, has some awareness going and recognizes that they have been targeted. It could be a terrorist attack. It could be something like that. It could be a kidnapping attempt. But you know right there there's a problem. I'm being targeted. I have to get out of this spot that I'm in right now.**

**So we're talking about immediate escape measures, to be able to get to at least a temporary safety—at least get out of the crosshairs, if you will. What are some of the best on-the-spot tactics that somebody can use to quickly clear an area, quickly get away from danger to plot the next move?**

Jason: One, make friends ahead of time. Meaning when you're going to the hotel be super chatty and nice. Tip good to the concierge. When you're going to restaurants, you're going to go to the same restaurants, always make friends ahead of time. This has saved me. In my new book *Survive like a Spy* you'll see how it saved us, literally overseas, because you make friends and they warn you when something's going down.

But if you don't get that warning, just remember movement saves lives. Meaning if you freeze you're going to die, but just make some kind of movement. You should always have your tactical pen on you. You should always have your flashlight. In extreme cases, if you've got to whack somebody over the head with a flashlight, if you've got to jab the tactical pen in somebody's neck to stay alive, do it, but just move fast.

Of course, anytime you enter a place always recognize immediately two exits, because you don't know if the bad guy is going to come through one of the exits leaving the other exit open. So it takes about 30 seconds when you walk into a hotel, or wherever, to say, okay, here's one door, here's another. That way if the bad guy is trying to get me through this one, I can go through this exit. So have your head up. Identify the two exits. Always have that weapon on you, so you can move quickly after you've taken action.

Jeff: **Yeah. That's great advice. We talk about that a lot, just in general, when you go to a restaurant or anything like that. One of the other things I tell people is when you sit down see whether or not your table is bolted to the floor, or whether it is moveable.**

**All of those things, especially if you're in a public setting, they can be obstacles. Right? it can make it harder for you to get out of a crowded café that has chairs and tables all over the place, trying to run over them. But it can also be your friend. If you have somebody that's trying to attack you, you can tip over your table. You can take a chair and use it to throw in front of somebody or something like that.**

**But unless you're used to looking at your surroundings with that kind of an eye and a perspective—that's not stuff that you want to try and make up on the spot, when all of a sudden you're still trying to assess what's happening there. So yeah.**

**So Jason, let's talk about I'm out of the immediate danger right now. But my goal is to get home alive, get my family home alive. For my son, my son's getting ready to go over to a foreign country, and all of a sudden something happens, of course I'm going to be freaking out. Well me, I'm probably going to be on a plane trying to use my special set of skills to track him down in the country and brake some clavicles myself. But I want my son to have the tools to be able to—okay, he's lost whatever that predator was. He's in at least temporary safety now. But now the goal is for a permanent safe relocation.**

**So how do I leverage those actions from immediate escape, and now evade that person, but mostly get to a permanent safe location that I know I'm going to get help and I can get back home?**

**That Owen Wilson movie I think is really—it's a scary movie for everyone, where he's traveling with his family and all of a sudden civil unrest breaks out, political unrest and things like that, and Americans are targeted, just being butchered out there, and you've got to get permanent safety. In these movies there's lots of little like, okay, we're safe now, we're hiding right now, but everybody's still out there looking for me. They still need to get to permanent safety.**

**So what are some of the best tips that you have for somebody to be able to get back home into their living room, into their Lazy Boy recliner, the best way possible?**

Jason: Sure. So a few things. Some of this stuff I forgot to mention earlier. One, you can buy the personal beacons, the tracking beacons, which I would get for your son. Amazon, so many companies, make these beacons where you can be GPS tracked 24/7. Also have an international cell phone. When I travel overseas I've always gotten an international cell phone. That way they can call you.

Important thing to remember is depending on what's going on, you mentioned the Owen Wilson movie, if they're targeting Americans, if everything is going down, you probably don't want to go to the embassy. Because if everybody's targeting Americans going after them, they are watching that route to the embassy. So that's the last place you want to go. It's different—if you lose your passport, okay, you need to go to the embassy to get a new passport. But if they are butchering Americans, stay away from the consulate, stay away from the embassy, because they're going to stay there since they know where every American is going to run to.

Don't go back to your hotel because they probably know you were there. Find somewhere different, which is why you want to have cash and credit cards. Meaning find



a random hotel that you've never been to, that you've never checked in. That way nobody has ever seen you there.

You can also run what is called an SDR, which is a surveillance detection route. That's a fancy way of not going directly from point A to point B. So if you're trying to find a new hotel which you've never been to, don't go directly there. Instead maybe go to a café for a minute. Then maybe go to another café. Go to five different places, and see if you see anybody suspicious or following you.

After you've run that surveillance detection route—you can run these as little as ten minutes, which I have—and you know it's safe, then you can proceed to the hotel. But try and stay calm. I know that's not hard. But never go from point A to point B, because you're just leading the guys to your next safe house.

**Jeff: One of the other things, and one of the reasons why to bring cash with you as well and have that, because one of the evasion tactics that we've—I've talked about this before. If you can go into a café, or something like that, and then flip the waiter \$20 and just say, "Look, I saw some guy. It looked like he was following me. Can I go out the back door?" Somebody might be looking to see if you're going to come out the front door or whatever, and maybe that's a way to lose them is just to go out maybe the back and find an alternative way out of that location. I don't know if that's something that you recommend as well. I'll ask you about that.**

**But the other thing I wanted to ask you about was that international cell phone. Are you saying when he gets there—we're talking about my son going to this foreign country—my son gets there, to go and buy a phone there? Or is there a chip that he can bring with him that will take his current phone and make it international? What's the best way to do that?**

**Jason:** The best way for the cell phones, just do it ahead of time. You can go on Amazon. You can buy them. When I travel overseas I'm always changing phones. I buy cheap flip phones. So it costs me \$30. Then you buy an international SIM card. Then you put how many minutes you want on it. So say, hey, I want a hundred minutes, I want a thousand minutes. So when I'm leaving the United States I have my flip phone, the SIM card is in, I have 500 minutes on it and I know it works where I'm going to that specific country. That way, the moment I land I'm good to go for calls. So super easy to do and very inexpensive.

As far as the cash thing you mentioned, absolutely I recommend it. I know guys who have used that tactic of going into a place and paying a guy. What I recommend, and my guys recommend, is \$100 bills. They love American money. Obviously you only use it in an emergency situation. But I know for a fact, because again, my guys have done it, if you go in a place and you stick a \$100 bill in somebody's face and say, "Let me out your back door," nobody is going to tell you no. So keep those \$100 bills around for emergency purposes.

**Jeff:** Are you saying that it's better to have an American \$100 bill, or should it be the equivalent in the local currency where he's going to?

**Jason:** If you're going to a Third World country, if you're going to a crappy country, American dollars, because they love that. It's worth so much. They know what it is. If you're going to a place in Europe which is nicer, I have both. So I'll have \$100 in equivalent of whatever country, but I'll also have a \$100 bill. That way if I shove the equivalent of \$100 and they say no, I can pull out the \$100 in American and see if that makes any difference.

**Jeff:** Jason, there is a lot of stuff in here that I haven't heard before. So this definitely makes me feel a lot better about sending—I'm still secretly thinking about disguising as a bush and just kind of going along, kind of tiptoeing along with the group that he's with. But this helps me out a lot. I know it's going to help out our readers a lot as well, so I really appreciate you taking some time for us today.

Listen, everybody. This is the kind of stuff that Jason unloads. These are things that he's been trained in. These are things that he's actually used—we've talked about this in the past—for escape and evasion in other countries, and actually putting it to use. It's not just theory. This is based upon government training, as well as putting it to use.

He does give this for civilian use in his books that he has. He's got another one coming out here very soon. I highly recommend going ahead and getting it. It is going to be *Survive Like a Spy*. So definitely check that out. You'll find it over at his website, along with a lot of the items that we talked about today that you can pick up for yourself. I highly recommend it. I'm a big fan of all of Jason's work, as well as the items that he has. So go check it out. The website, again, is [www.SpySurvivalTraining.com](http://www.SpySurvivalTraining.com).

Until our next *Modern Combat & Survival* broadcast this is Jeff Anderson saying prepare, train and survive.