



“How to Choose the Right Training School”

Thank you for taking the time to contact us. We appreciate your business and hope you find the following information useful. It has been written in as much of a straightforward and down to earth manner as possible. We have avoided trendy buzzwords and directed it towards the human being who is on the receiving end....you.

This report is designed to make you think and will force you to question some preconceived stereotypes. It is long on common sense and is written in a manner so as not to overwhelm the reader.

The truth is that this industry is not exactly rocket science. A college degree is not a prerequisite. Having said that, those who can think on their feet, demonstrate teamwork skills, and are broadly cross-trained, enjoy the profession more. They are also able to gravitate towards the better paying sectors of the industry in comparison to their lesser-trained colleagues.

If you lack initiative, self-confidence, and the ability to work with others the truth is you won't make it here. Same rule applies to common sense, which in our job is (sadly) occasionally the least common of all the senses. If you DO have what it takes, then the next step is to find the right facility, which allows you to ingest the entry-level knowledge necessary for success in this career path.

Your mission is to step forward with the right attitude, learning curve, and desire to succeed. Our mission is to instill the knowledge base, and try to develop the whole package (who you are as a person and what you know) to absolutely maximize your chances of success.

Long term research on our graduates, many who attended the course over a decade ago, has provided meaningful insight. Those that have stayed the longest in the profession were those that were prepared as realistically as possible and whose job descriptions were based in the daily grind of the real world versus the over-hyped fantasy one.

To that end, within the content of the following pages, we have tried our very best to provide a *realistic* introduction into what, for many of you, is the start of a new career. To that end you should study this document in depth as it provides important insight into the less glamorous, day-to-day side of the profession. There is quite a bit of material here, but we feel the better informed the potential candidate, the more likely he/she is to make an intelligent decision regarding their future. And we are always looking for intelligent people.

The occupation of a Close Protection Officer is an extremely varied one. It is occasionally exciting, sometimes boring, and upon occasion...deadly. It is most definitely challenging all the time. Whether you are arranging for Lear jets in Brazil, working a yacht plying the Caribbean, or providing high risk protection in the back alleys of Baghdad, you can be assured of interesting work at a very attractive pay scale.

There are a few major misconceptions about the field of Close Protection however. You don't have to be 6'3" and weigh 250 lbs. nor be a Tough Man competitive fighter. One does not need years of martial arts training. Finally, a military or law enforcement background is not a prerequisite either.

What you do need is the ability to think under stress, act decisively, and even be able to assume command as a leader if necessary.

The days of the gorilla in a suit are over.

Today's executive requires someone who can blend in with his office staff, assist with travel arrangements, and in general look, think, and act on a highly professional level. Are there clients out there that are looking for the "gorilla" stereotype whose primary mission is to appear intimidating? Yes, a few. But they are for the most part B-grade celebrities, and even then you don't make it for very long if you lack the capacity to think and adapt.

The absolute and sad truth is that there are more bodyguards than there are jobs available. Any ex-soldier, police officer, or even bouncer can hang a "bodyguard" sign on his door and start operations, without having any real knowledge of what the job entails. Regardless of what you may hear or read elsewhere there is NO certifying agency, with the exception of the United Kingdom, which has the responsibility of maintaining a given set of standards in the training of bodyguards. Many security companies will tell you that they are the certifying agency but none are bound by law. For this reason you have many different associations, organizations, etc., each with its own independent set of standards. There is even one school that promises you college credit hours for your course of study. The resulting chaos makes it difficult for everyone to separate the quality organizations from those that are not. For what it's worth, large client companies have the same problems finding quality security providers. Once they do find a quality security firm they do not change, and they spread the news by word of mouth.

This is very much a personal business; many contracts being gained from word of mouth by others. Without these "contacts" it is nearly impossible to get started in the industry. You may have received the best training in the world, but if nobody knows who you are, you are foredoomed to failure and the loss of thousands of dollars.

POINTS TO CONSIDER:

1. Your Goals: How serious are you? What are your goals in the industry? What exactly do you want to do? Hollywood celebrities? Iraq? Corporate?
2. Training Facility: Selecting the training facility that's right for YOU. High volume versus low volume. Length. Student teacher ratio. Does the training syllabus align with your goals?
3. Instructors: The single most important piece of the puzzle. Do they have the background? Are they still active? Are biographies available? Can you talk to them?
4. Price Structure: What exactly are you getting for your hard earned dollar?

The answers to these questions are based upon your expectations and the services provided by the facility in question. Some of what follows is a straightforward explanation of how we do business. You can then use our responses to compare to other organizations.

1. How serious are you?

It takes 2 years to train an SAS trooper, Army Ranger or Green Beret. It takes about 90 days to train a conventional infantryman. The same theory applies in this industry. If you want to earn a little extra cash on the weekends, with minimal responsibility, you can probably squeeze by on a 4-7 day course. But, if you plan to work abroad, aim toward being a team leader, or secure top paying contracts, you need all the training and experience you can lay your hands on. There are several companies that claim they can train you to be a professional bodyguard in under a week. There is one organization that will certify you as an "Executive Protection Specialist" by having you read their short manual and then fill out the test and send it in with the appropriate fees. At no point do you ever talk to an instructor or a staff member, nor is there any kind of check on your credentials.

We run several courses, to include the longest commercial protection course available. Our "High-Risk Tactical Operator's Course" is 14 days long, and our "Advanced Executive Protection Course" is 29-days long, and each program consists of 12 to 18 hour days. The ONLY way to become proficient in any field or occupation is through repetition, practice, and experience. There are no secret shortcuts in this profession. There are no "Revolutionary Training Techniques". We realize that several major training facilities offer videos, home instruction, and even college credits for their training but none of it is comparable to hands on, day in-day out, professional mentoring.

It is our strong belief that nothing can replace hard work and practice, practice, practice. There is no substitute for experience. Our top paying clients feel the same way.

They quite simply have no intent of paying up to \$1000.00 US a day to someone who has a 4-day course under their belt.

Industry wide, about 1 in 10 Executive Protection Officers “makes it”. Thankfully our rate is much higher than that. Determination, attitude, and enthusiasm can heavily tilt the playing field in your favor. You will NOT start at \$1000.00 a day. This is a totally unrealistic expectation and any school or organization that promises ***any type of post graduate employment like this to an untested student is grossly misrepresenting itself***. You should think of starting more like \$300.00 a day plus expenses. As you become more proficient, your pay will increase. When you become a team leader, then you are in top dollar range. Like any other industry, you will spend your time in the trenches before you move up. As a general rule we try to start our people out at \$350-400 per day and usually get it.

So before you read any further you should be asking yourself, “What type of work do I envision for myself?” Is it full time or part time, in the US or overseas, is it low risk or high risk, and where can I find the best cost-to-training ratio?

2. Selecting the Training Facility:

“As a prospective student you should be approaching your potential school with 2 things to be on the look out for; one is the opportunity to learn as many skills which have a practical application as you possibly can. The second is to have the greatest chance of putting your newly learned skills to work with a contract.”

Therefore:

1) Be very, very careful of facilities that have an over-emphasis on “commando” type training.

We will tell you right up front that you are not going to get hired because you are brilliant in the martial arts. Other than weapons retention and basic disarming techniques, we don’t even teach it anymore as nobody has ever needed to use it. Today’s top clients demand an Executive Protection Officer who is adaptable, forward thinking, and multi-skilled. You need to be just as competent at arranging airline tickets, running advances, and writing operations orders as you are at shooting and driving. The Center will be the first to admit that these topics are less glamorous or “tactical sexy” as compared to showing you pictures of black hooded figures clutching some exotic weapons system. THIS IS A SERVICE INDUSTRY. As much as we would like to tell you otherwise, you are still going to have to occasionally walk his dogs, water the flowers, or whatever as part of your job. Even in Baghdad with the most at risk clients, you still spend a lot of time watching the sand blow by.

Advertising “resistance to interrogation” as a course topic is appropriate if you are planning to run search and rescue missions in Tajikstan. Other topics, such as teaching an “anti-beheading” courses are farcical and only serve to lower the professionalism of the industry overall. These esoteric “James Bond” skills are only designed to one end, to separate students from additional funds. Topics such as these have absolutely no place whatsoever in a course curriculum for Protection Officers whose sole mission is to know how

to avoid getting the client into those situations in the first place. The same goes for photos of men rappelling down walls. Are you planning on taking your client mountain climbing? We have run an enormous number of operations in South America, Africa, and Iraq and we have yet to have a reason to dress all of our Officers in black hooded suits armed with submachine guns, night vision goggles, and rappelling gear.

There is no shortcut. For instance, writing operations orders is not a whole lot of fun, but it is a critical area and you need to be proficient at it to secure a good job with a future in the industry. The same holds true with the Advance, surveillance, counter-surveillance, photography, etc. We are looking for well-rounded professionals because that is exactly what our clients want and are willing to pay for. Overall, this industry is seeing a shift to a more integrated approach with overall security management as a key foundation to success. Yes, there are moments that occur just like in the action movies, but they are few and far between and do not serve as enough of a motivator for you to succeed if that represents your expectation of what this industry has to offer.

When you are reviewing the curriculums of various training facilities you need to be *thinking, not dreaming.*

The absolute reality of it is that if you are only visualizing guns, fast cars and great feats of daring, you are already losing focus. If you only wish to engage in confrontation and combat, you really should be conversing with an Army recruiter as opposed to us. No client wants to be shot at and the whole purpose of schools such as ours is to learn how to avoid that lethal confrontation in the first place. Do we teach you what to do if the worst does occur? Of course we do, absolutely. With ruthless precision integrating all weapons systems and tactical movements for maximum violent destructive effect. But for those of us who have actually been shot at, and have a few empty places at the dinner table due to dead friends, one realizes the key to success is your brain, not pure physical brawn. Any training facility, which ONLY focuses on the “exciting and high speed” aspects of training, is interested in cannon fodder and a profit margin based on volume training as opposed to thinking, intelligent, “operational ready staff.” You may as well sign up for a course at Disneyland because that is about how close you are to reality. We encourage you to look PAST the hype and laser sights and carefully examine the topics taught. That is where you will win or lose.

2) Beware of large classes.

There are several schools, particularly in the US, who routinely graduate 40 plus students every 8 days or so. We are talking about over 100 graduates a month here. There is not a security company on the planet that can successfully employ these sorts of numbers on a long-term basis. With this type of volume education 2 events are occurring simultaneously.

1. There is no contract because they do not know you well enough. There has been insufficient time for quality instruction and the development of strong student-teacher relationships.

2. You spend a lot of time in a classroom learning the “theory” because practical exercises on the ground are difficult at best with so many students. As a result, you get very little time in the field where the real learning curve takes place. An instructor of ours attended one of these courses a short time ago and was never even on a practical exercise. At \$3700 US it made for a very expensive week.

There are even schools who guarantee employment upon completion of their course. Here is how that particular gimmick works. Upon graduation, they assign you a site survey in your local area. Upon completion of the assignment you submit the report, and then they send you a small portion of your original tuition as your pay. Upon receiving the check, you have been duly employed and paid for professional services. Their obligation has been met and it is now your problem if you never hear from them again. They have thus achieved a staggering 100% employment rate with guaranteed employment to every student who finishes.

A professional training facility should have between a 1:3 and 1:4 instructor-student ratio. The highest we ever run is 1:4. Any more than that and you lose training time because your numbers are too big too work with. We average about 2:5. Trying to effectively teach a couple of dozen students with 3 or 4 instructors is logistically hopeless. Far too many man-hours are lost in the daily administrative issues. The largest class we accept is 6. This smaller number allows us to individually assess each student and give personalized instruction. Because the numbers are so low, and at least one of our instructors lives with them 24/7, it provides for a stronger instructor-student relationship as well as increases the odds of placing the student in a good contract after graduation. The last part of the previous sentence is just in keeping with rule of common sense. Would you rather be competing with 4 to 6 others for a contract, or 40 others?

Finally, because former students and instructors routinely work together on operations, our training cadres are highly motivated to produce the best possible students, as these same students could very well be on that instructor's team at some point in the future. We have found this technique to work very well as we are all in the same boat, so to speak. This point can even be cross referenced in the photo gallery on our web site which shows the same students and cadre both in the Center while learning, and in the field on operations.

3. Instructors

If there was just one segment of this report we could tell you to cut out and paste to the wall, it is this section concerning your potential instructors, also known as Cadre. Here is where the rubber hits the road. These men, more than anything else, will have the most impact on the course, what you learn from it, and how well prepared you are to face the real world. This is equally true regardless of whether you train with us or anybody else. Please read the following very carefully and if you are serious, you should sit down with a comparative background of other competing facilities and study the two diligently. For it is here you will learn about the people who make things happen. A potential student needs to know their level of professionalism, devotion to the job, and how well they teach. All of which impacts your overall experience.

To that end, this report, and all other course documents you may receive from the Center, were written by instructors and not by sales staff, and so could be used as a comparative basis for other schools, if you so choose.

Here are seven qualities we feel are of critical importance to you as a prospective student. These seven notes list how our instructors do business and why we feel they provide stellar service and excellent value for money.

One:

We care. And no, we are not afraid to admit it. We care deeply about every face that passes through this course. Which is why we only accept two out of every three applicants, and why our student numbers are so low? We want to get to know you as human beings, for in so doing we are both better able to teach you, and better able to assist you in getting started in the industry. To be brutally honest, if we did not care and did not derive great satisfaction from seeing people like you succeed, we could not do our jobs. It's not the pay. We make significantly greater wages on operations. But we feel we have something to offer, and are quite competent at passing along this hard earned knowledge. So yes, first and foremost we care.

Two:

We are relatively OLD. Our instructors come in at 60, 47, 44, and 37, respectively. That's OK though as they still will lead PT in the morning and will grind most of you to pulp when it comes to physical conditioning. Age means you have been around the block, or in our case the world, more than a few times. Wisdom is accrued along with experience and that makes for a pretty lethal combination. It is one thing to be 28 or 30 and be Mr. Important Instructor in your snappy black Polo shirt with your solo year of experience wherever, and be the center of student attention. It is quite another student experience to realize that the quiet, ego-less professionals in front of you really HAVE spent a couple of years undercover in Northern Ireland, and really HAVE run 17 bodyguards, 2 jets, and 7 armored vehicles in South America and ALL of them have spent a lot of time in Iraq. Scars from bullets, knives, shrapnel, freefall parachute mishaps, and reconstructive surgery speak volumes about having really been there versus all the BS sales talk in the world. Older equals wiser, and being wiser means we have the knowledge and skills to impart to others drawn from real experiences as opposed to a flashy resume.

Who would you rather be taught by, somebody with a year or so experience as an operator, or men who have been project managers in addition to shooters, and have been and done nearly everything imaginable? We have one who is considered an industry wide subject matter expert and has been published as THE author with the most in depth knowledge of the Private Military Companies today. His book, produced by a major publishing house, will be available on Amazon and in Barnes and Nobles in early 2009.

Three:

Every instructor has been through the course as a student. How can you possibly expect to teach if you have no appreciation for what the students are going through? We have earned the right to be where we are, without shortcuts, and the same level of expectation is placed upon your shoulders. By the way, having attended as students, it is difficult to pull the wool over our eyes or get away with substandard performance.

Four:

Every single cadre is still operational with one exception. The exception is recovering from the effects of a car bomb in Baghdad and he is currently the only permanent instructor for every class. His and our hopes still run high for his full recovery and return to operational status.

Having said that, there is a terrible old truism that is still valid today that states, “Those that can, do. Those that cannot, teach.” Yes, we all enjoy training and find value in teaching and the self-satisfaction that comes from seeing our students progress. But our hearts equally lie on operations, where life is viewed through the harsh microscope of reality as opposed to the sterile atmosphere of the training room. So our cadre rotates, from Ops to teaching. This prevents burn out on ops and keeps training fresh and fun. In so doing we are able to strike a balance between both worlds. *Be wary of courses whose instructors only teach and have never actually been there.*

Never judge a training facility based on who the staff *were*. Base it on who the staff *are*. Take a careful look at the biographies of the primary instructors and compare them to other organizations. By the way, should your application be accepted, you will be interviewed by one of them prior to the final approval of your attendance to the course.

Five:

We Lead by Example. Our instructors are not the type to hold cups of coffee at the finish line urging you on as you cross. We do not engage in high fives, false motivation, or a lot of cheering when things go right. Things are supposed to go right. That’s your job and what you do. Trust and confidence are earned, never granted. The same goes for our cadre. No matter what badge or rank we wear, we too must earn your trust, your confidence, and your respect. That means we perform PT in the morning with the rest of you, and are there for training every day you are. We perform the same exercises as you. We eat the same food as you. Actually, we cook the food and we eat AFTER the last student has gone through the line, that way if anybody is still hungry it will be us and not you. Every single instructor is capable of demonstrating any single topic at any time. Every cadre will be more than happy to pick up any pistol at any time and demonstrate. The same goes for in the darkroom, the classroom, and the field. This avoids “tag teaming” or using instructors only in their strong areas while avoiding weak ones. We exist under exactly the same rules and regulations as you, and if we inadvertently drop a weapons magazine in the sand on the range, then you will find the student fridge stocked with Gatorade, or beer, or what ever else they drink in an identical manner as if a student dropped his magazine.

If there is no leadership by example, there is no leadership. And one cannot learn in a leaderless vacuum.

In reality, what happens is that we gain respect the old fashioned way. We earn it. But we expect the same from you. It is much safer to teach from a distance, but the results on graduation day are less impressive. So there you have it.

Six:

In many cases, who we teach in the course goes on Operations with us. That means that teams who train well together often wind up in far flung places intact, with the person

who taught them now working as the Operational team leader. We have literally dozens of case histories to this effect. Obviously this highly motivates us to give you the best training we possibly can as you may very well be riding with us one day. To us, that is the ultimate acid test of authenticity. That we train and teach well enough, to be confident enough, of taking graduates on live operations is really all we need to say.

Seven:

Informal approachability. What does that mean? These two words mean that it is impossible for us to co-exist under the same roof and still pretend to be something that we are not. You cannot fool motivated students when you live with them for practically 24 hours a day. You either know it, or you don't. When the students realize we are the real deal, and when we recognize the necessary traits amongst the student body, amazing things happen. By maintaining an informal approach during certain portions of the course, and especially during dinnertime, we encourage open conversation without rank. An unprecedented exchange of information changes hands, teams are built, and a camaraderie, which is capable of sustaining serious stress, is developed. In short, a team is formed. A cohesive team that is much stronger, in part, due to the informal exchange of knowledge oriented approach. Do not confuse this with lack of personal discipline or the quest for personal excellence of the highest standards. We have just found that students thrive in an environment where they are still recognized as people, with thoughts and intelligence of their own. That is exactly how the top teams in the world operate.

4. Price Structure:

Be sure to compare apples to apples and oranges to oranges when you look are comparing the cost of schools. Prices vary from a few hundred dollars for a weekend to \$4000.00 for 8 days, and even \$10,000 or more for 14 days. With wildly different price parameters it is important to know exactly what you are getting for your hard earned dollar (Or pound, kroner, Euro, etc).

Some facilities provide food and transportation, some do not. Some schools have you shoot live ammunition. Some do not. Some schools have you pay extra for accommodations, some...well, I am sure you get the picture. \$4000 for a one-week course translates to \$16,000 for a month. For that price you had better be getting some unbelievably good training.

In a separate report you can see a full accounting of our school. We suggest you use it as a guideline to compare against all the others.

Do not be afraid to ask the hard questions.

Do not be afraid to ask to speak directly to one of the instructors and/or ask for references. If you get stonewalled you are probably dealing with a sub-standard organization.

Almost all of our graduates have told us that they had the financial resources for only ONE CHANCE for a career change. They simply do not have the cash to go to a second one

if the first falls short of expectations. It is in your best interests to conduct a careful personal audit of what the school provides. We will gladly respond to most of your questions, whereas many companies will not.

Additionally, there are a number of follow on areas, which can dramatically impact your expectations and experience. They range from who attends the course beside you through your ability to research well. All provide food for thought that should assist you in the decision making process.

Your Fellow Students:

What type of fellow applicants can you expect to see? Are they mostly teen-agers with limited real world experience that failed to get into the Armed Forces? Are they all much older corporate types or retired military looking for a second career? Are they all one nationality? Are they mostly civilian or mostly military? Does the training facility accept *everybody* who applies?

Our stats are roughly as follows:

- We finally accept between 50-75% of total applications. We conduct a fairly aggressive application selection and telephonic interview policy so as to weed out anyone who is plainly unsuited for the course. Nothing is worse than having 1 idiot drag down 4 or 5 motivated students in what should be a stellar month. If it gets that bad, we will throw the student off the course. Many years ago we started with a class of 5 and graduated *ONE*. The other four were asked to leave. Graduation dinner was a rather quiet affair. He graduated and was offered a position in the Middle East within a week. On average each class, we lose 10-20% who will either quit due to the stress, be removed from the course for failure to meet standards, or be removed for a violation of safety protocols.
- Our average class age is about 35. That isn't to say we don't accept the odd 20 year old, as we do. But that means somebody else is 45 or so. We get a fair number of ex military or law enforcement types, about 55%, but civilians represent the other 45% so it is reasonably balanced. We try to avoid all military/law enforcement or all civilian classes, as there are advantages and disadvantages to both types of backgrounds and a mix works best.
- About half of any given course will be from the USA. The rest will be from overseas, mostly Western Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Again, we refrain from All American or all "other nationality courses" as a mixed class invariably produces better overall results. About 3% of our graduates are women and guys; look out, because we have had some amazing women complete the course while putting their male counterparts to shame. One is currently employed with an absolute plum job in Almaty, which is the capital of Kazakhstan.

- After the above statistics, it is as diverse a crowd as you could imagine. Having said that, all students are selected upon the basis of the application. We are specifically looking for determination, attitude, intelligence, physical conditioning, a sense of humor, a high learning curve, and the ability to work as part of a team. Notice, we did not ask for your resume or your marksmanship abilities.
- Lastly, we tend to draw the students who have done their homework and have carefully compared all the available training facilities. We get very few “impulse shoppers” applying for our course. We consider this a big positive as this is precisely whom we are trying to recruit in the first place: those who can execute intelligent, rationale decisions without distraction, and are looking for best value for money with as high a caliber of fellow students as possible. In short, we tend to get serious adults (even if they are only 22 years old as has been the case a couple of times) who are focused on starting a new career with the most professional kick-start they can find. We leave the fun and games training for other schools who teach exactly that: fun and games with no bearing on the real world job market.

Firearms Training:

This topic invariably causes considerable angst amongst prospective students. So we would like to set the record straight early on. If you receive training in the US you may have the opportunity to fire live ammunition. As a student training in the United Kingdom you will not fire live ammunition. It is illegal. You must use .177 air guns. As a candidate it is critical to know exactly HOW MUCH ammunition you are allocated. One very big name school in the US has you firing precisely 36 bullets from a revolver and 5 shotgun shells. Yet they advertise “firearms training” and you will graduate as having been “Certified” on a “Personal Protection Officer Tactical Firearms Course”. There are NO commercial, entry-level schools that have you firing sub-machine guns that we know of; it is against the law for starters.

Yes, it is important to be able to shoot well. You will expend in excess of 3000 rounds of ammunition while you are with us. You commence with .22 cal target pistols and shortly thereafter convert to 9mm semi automatics. Shotguns are introduced after 9mm pistols, to be closely followed by assault rifles such as the AK-47 and AR-15 (Both semi automatic versions of the M-16 and AK family).

You will commence with holster drills and range work. As your skill increases, we begin to integrate live fire exercises with the foot drills you have learned. Your last week involves extraordinarily difficult full team tactical scenarios. These are combined shoots with all weapons systems utilized. There are no instructors at this point telling you what to do. You as a team need to identify the threat, neutralize it, shooting only if necessary, all the while maintaining positive control of your client. It is as close to a real world scenario as we can get. You will graduate as an excellent instinctive pistol shot.

As previously noted, we start you on a .22 cal target pistol, and not with a 9mm. Since few students have been trained in instinctive shooting, we begin with weapons that

allow the operator to concentrate on the basics without having to worry as much about recoil. This allows you to learn the correct techniques, on a more forgiving system. This also helps us keep the cost of the course down, which means less money you have to pay in tuition. With 9mm running about \$30 per 100 rounds you can figure out the price yourself. So if a school is promising you 5,000 rounds of 9mm for training, then the COST of the bullets alone is over \$1500.00 Yet if the tuition is say, \$2000.00 for the course, there is something wrong somewhere!

To become proficient to the standards we expect of our operational staff requires many long hours of practice. 3000 rounds is about half of what we would like you to shoot, but you will nevertheless graduate as a highly competent instinctive pistol shot.

Firearms' training is a vital portion of the overall program, but is NOT the primary focus of the job. But when things go very sour, as they sometimes do, it is critically important to be able to shoot well.

Do Your Homework:

Don't get caught short. Start doing some research on all the wild claims out there on the Internet. There is a thing called the Better Business Bureau who monitors companies with horrible track records with the public. Dig around. Beware of companies living in pre-Iraq days for that event turned this industry upside down. Ask for phone numbers and ask to talk to somebody who actually teaches. Ask trick questions. Do they respond or leave you hanging? Do they try to browbeat you during the conversation or do they attempt to respond to your questions in as intelligent a manner as possible? Will they let you talk to students or former students? If they are legitimate they will realize, as any fool realizes, that word of mouth from a former graduate is the best advertising imaginable. If they don't, then why don't they? Usually it is because if you talk to former students you realize that what once were sunny skies are now clouding over rapidly.

There is no reasonable justification for secrecy unless it directly pertains to ongoing operations, which is rather a long leap of faith since you are discussing training, not ops!

When an individual or company starts reciting "security reasons" to deny responding to an intelligent and well thought out question (within reason) it is time to start scratching your chin. No company will provide you the crown jewels but you deserve a reasonable response to a reasonable request. If somebody guarantees you employment over the phone or internet, or they immediately offer a "special discount" for the very next course without your asking, be very, very aware. You may be talking to a used car salesman, not a training facility.

It doesn't take much to plaster a web site with a multitude of links to mutually admiring Leagues, Associations, Affiliations, logos, etc. Sometimes it is truly valid, and sometimes it is a collection of weak training platforms banding together for mutual strength. It is our belief that a competent, intelligent program stands alone and should be judged upon the merits of its contents. The rest is just fancy eyewash. So please pay attention to the contents of the course, which is where you will truly, be able to separate the best from the rest. A company that has been in existence for over a decade might actually know something worthwhile to pass along.

Iraq:

The war in Iraq has changed the industry forever, and not always in a positive direction. There is still considerable hype regarding employment in the Middle East so here is the truth.

In 2003 and 2004 you could work in Iraq with zero qualifications and make \$400-\$500 a day. Many made over a \$1000 a day. It's over. The party has finished. There are still job opportunities, but they come with increasingly stringent sets of strings attached.

First of all, immunity from prosecution is in the process of being scrapped. This means that if you pull the trigger by mistake, you have the opportunity to see the inside of an Iraqi jail as a resident.

Secondly, the war has produced "shooters" in staggering numbers. So if your only qualification is being a competent marksman with weapons, you are on the bottom of the hiring food chain.

Lastly, as the industry in Iraq shrinks, companies are keeping only those (or hiring those) with the MOST qualifications. This means cross-trained skills. Those who can write Operations Orders, provide logistics, speak another language, or are EMT's in addition to being a "shooter" stand the best chance of getting picked up. We are now seeing Iraq veterans (who can read the writing on the wall) applying with us in order to round out their skill set thus making them more attractive to potential employers. That should provide serious food for thought to any potential candidate.

That which was once routine 4 and 5 years ago is gone forever. The faster an individual adapts to a new reality the greater the likelihood of his thriving in it. The best all round candidates get the top paying jobs. Remember that. Iraq was the exception to the rule, not the norm, and actually lowered professional standards across a broad spectrum of the industry. Many of the "cowboys" who thrived in Iraq are currently finding themselves unemployable anywhere else in the industry. With that experience now coming to an end, the focus will once again return to where it needs to be in terms of professional Executive Protection services.

The Rule of Common Sense.

Some final words; we believe in the rule of Common Sense. That is "If it doesn't make sense, don't do it." There is no hidden agenda in this profession. Avoid schools long on mystique and short on facts. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. No school (including us) can promise you perpetual employment without ever having met you. Think about it. Would you hire a total stranger you have never even met for a high-risk job? Does that make sense? We refer you back to the rule of Common Sense. A really inexpensive school is exactly that - A cheap school. We feel that you can't learn enough in a week to be any good and a \$3500 price tag is too high for 7 days. We feel that we have the **best value for money** facility in the world today, with the greatest REALISTIC chances for success. We are very reasonably priced for what we offer.

We constantly receive comments from our graduate students now working stating that this packet was a bit of an eye opener for them. Many viewed it in a negative light compared

with the rosy forecasts of other training companies promising jobs at \$1000.00 a day just begging to be taken. After following the guidelines suggested above they realized that we deliver exactly as promised, in that we offer the most REALISTIC training with the sole aim of getting you HIRED. We maintain extremely close relations with our clients, and are continuously striving to deliver what they need. If they were all demanding “commando” type bodyguards, then that is exactly what we would produce. But they do not. Every single topic on the course is designed to produce a first class Protection Officer who will be EMPLOYABLE. And currently the commandos not in the Army are in the bread line, because nobody wants them. Even in Iraq.

As a prospective student the onus is on you to determine the good quality from the poor. If you follow the above guidelines you should have no serious difficulties in choosing a training facility. We hope you have learned something from these few short pages. The career of a Protection Officer is a fabulous profession. It can be exciting, glamorous, boring, and terrifying all in the same day. You may travel constantly, and quite often visit some pretty exotic places. Your expenses are paid and you have the potential to make a ton of money if you get trained and employed properly. It is one of the few professions where former military personnel are competitive. We are really excited about teaching it and we love to hear the success stories of our students. Some, who give “guest” lectures to training classes about their own personal experiences in the field.

The operators and staff here at the Center for Advanced Security Studies wish you the best of luck in all your endeavors.