

CONFUSION TECHNIQUES

Ninjas are like calculus.

—Saul Riberio, intelligence analyst, Project STEALTH

What do calculus and ninjas have in common? Everything. Just like calculus, the ninja is impossible to figure out, understood only by an elite few and generally feared by the masses. Instilling this horrendous mixture of fear and confusion in an opponent is key to the ninjas' success. And at that, they are MIT professors.

• Visual Distractions (Smoke Bombs): The most well-known visual distraction employed by ninjas is the smoke bomb, allowing them to travel and attack unseen.

• Bird Songs/Animal Noises: Ninjas can mimic the sounds, songs and calls of a variety of animals. While you're looking for the rare cockatiel or trying to locate the mating sea turtles, your ninja assassin will employ a swift and efficient strike.

• Optical Illusion: Never trust your depth perception when it comes to ninjas. Ninjas in real life are always closer than they appear.

• Riddles: The ninja may ask you a particularly difficult yet engaging riddle. Unfortunately, the answer inherently includes "your death" somewhere.

Disguise and Appearance Alteration

In addition to being trained killers, ninjas are also Daytime Emmy-worthy actors, wearing whatever "mask" is required to remain undercover. Historically in feudal Japan, ninjas employed seven disguises—entertainer, musician, merchant, nomadic priest, Buddhist monk, mountain warrior or *ronin* samurai. The female ninja, or *kunoichi* (see page 40), employed her own impressive set of disguises. Today, ninjas have learned to adapt to a diverse and complex world of people.

Skilled ninjas will go to great lengths to alter their appearance very quickly, using fake beards, glasses, wigs, fat suits, etc. A young male ninja can transform himself into a fat elderly woman in less than ten minutes. The following is just a smattering of some of the ninja's "fall-back" disguises.

1. **Bum:** In larger cities ninjas may disguise themselves as homeless beggars. Commonly avoided and ignored by most citizens, this disguise allows ninjas to easily observe and track their victims while making a bit of loose change.

2. **Country Hick:** Similar to the rednecks of America's heartland, the "country bumpkin" is a near-universal character and a disguise easily replicated by ninjas. If you're in a large city, these shabby-clothed farm-hand ninjas are easy to spot and usually means the ninja is a novice who lacks cultural understanding. No matter where you are in the world, keep an eye out for misplaced hillbillies.

3. **Taxi Driver:** Also used in larger cities and especially prevalent in the world's mega-metropolises, the taxi driver disguise is one of the ninja's favorites as it allows for the most diversity and creativity. As taxi drivers, ninjas will assume the appearance, accent, personality, body odor and historical and political narrative of their assigned characters.

To enter this world
Naked a blessing, leaving
it nude, a dire curse

— Ancient Haiku, Anon.

4. Musician: This is perhaps the hardest disguise for ninjas to pull off. Because ninjas spend most of their time training, they have little opportunity for recreational activities such as learning an instrument. As such, ALL NINJAS ARE TERRIBLE MUSICIANS. If a ninja is disguised as a musician, it will either be as a poor karaoke singer, a humorous singer/songwriter, or as someone who carries an instrument but never plays it.

5. Construction Worker/Fireman/Police Officer/Indian/Etc.: The popular '70s disco group The Village People was based off a 1960s ninja clan that donned similar disguises during the notorious Greenwich Village Ninja Strike of January 1968 that claimed the lives of two dozen hippies. Today, ninjas disguised as public workers will wear more authentic costumes than they once did. These disguises can be particularly dangerous; if you suspect you're being followed by a ninja, or think a ninja attack is imminent, your first instinct will be to call the police. However, the "policeman" who shows up at your house may be the very ninja who had been following you!

6. Girl Scout: Young-looking pygmy ninjas will dress up as Girl Scouts selling cookies door to door. If you hear your doorbell ring and find a strange-looking Girl Scout standing on your stoop, purchase a few boxes but DO NOT EAT THEM.

7. Flirtatious Intern: Contrary to popular conception, ninjas do have sexual desires—deadly strong ones. Thus, playing the part of the flirtatious intern is particularly desirable for many ninjas vying for assignments. Be cautious of any new interns you may have at work; this is the primary reason office romances are frowned upon by management.

8. New Best Friend: If a ninja has been assigned to perform prolonged espionage on you, he or she will often attempt to befriend you. With a superior understanding of the Five Weaknesses (see page 38), the ninja can easily gain the trust of most lonely people. Avoid making friends.

9) The "Old Lady" Who Needs Help Crossing the Street: Have you ever seen an old lady trying to cross a street? Mull that over a bit.