

CHAPTER 3



DETECTING A NINJA

Ninjas, more than terrorism, flu pandemics, economic failure or climate change, are America's biggest threat today.

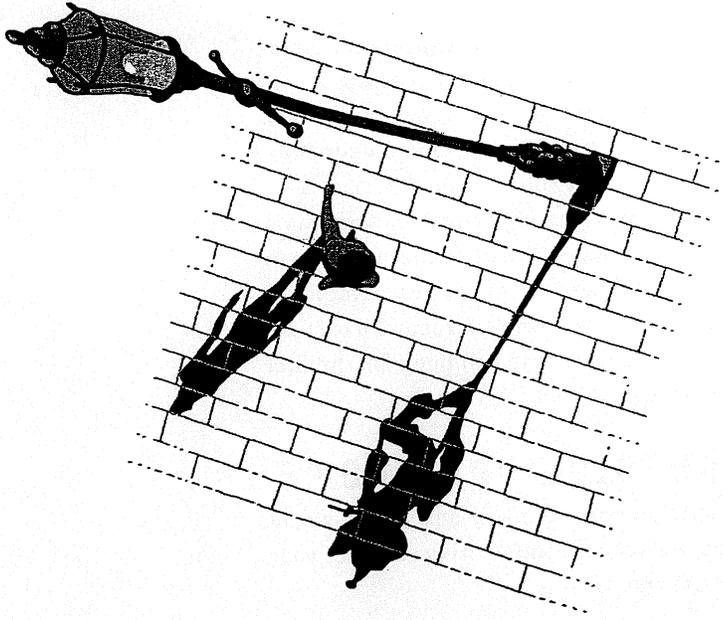
—Henrich S. Mjolner, co-creator and under-secretary, Project *STEALTH*



This chapter covers the most common spots you might encounter ninjas in your day-to-day life, from classic hiding places like treetops and alleyways to less-expected locations such as bathtubs, pantries and telephone wires. Furthermore, the information provides guidelines for detecting ninjas yourself, no matter what the location. This list is by no means exhaustive, nor does it cover every place where you might find a ninja. After all, ninjas are tricksters, neither mechanical nor predictable. These lethal killing machines are not robots, zombies or elite military forces. They're ninjas, the world's foremost assassins and spies. Once you accept that fact, your eyes will open for the first time, and you'll see ninjas everywhere.

IMMEDIATELY OUTSIDE YOUR HOME

It's important to look at the outside world the way a caveman would in the bear-infested Stone Age. As you exit the relative safety of your hovel, prepare for and expect the worst.



TREETOPS

Treetops are the quintessential ninja hideaway, according to countless works of ninja literature and cinema. The canopy-shrouded upper branches of a tree provide ninjas with an unrivaled vantage point out of the average pedestrian's line of sight. Most often, ninjas prefer trees with dense foliage. In the United States, these include maple, palm, oak and even the towering redwood. Trees with extensive foliage help obscure the ninja's body, wrapping it in a delicate and shimmering shadow. If no leafy trees are available, ninjas are likely to choose bald or dead trees with beefy branches that can support their entire body weight. They'll wrap their bodies snakelike around a branch, becoming just another knot in the bough.

Wearing traditional *jika-tabi* footwear along with *aishiki* (shoe spikes) on their feet and *shuku* ("tiger claws") on their hands, ninjas can scurry up all varieties of trees. Once they're at the top, they use their extraordinary leg strength and agility to jump from tree to tree, only slightly disturbing the canopy and nut-fetching rodents. A ninja's treetop travel mimics the sound of a slight wind rustling the branches.

Remember, trees are just as likely to be used as hiding places in the big city as in rural areas. Even in neighborhoods where foliage is sparse, ninjas may still make a home in shrubbery or young saplings.

Scouring the trees for the silhouette of a ninja is pointless. Chances are you won't be able to spot him or her. Instead, focus on searching for movement among the branches. Employ powerful binoculars to scan the trees directly outside your home or office. To avoid getting arrested for perverse behavior, keep a copy of *The Compendium of North American Birds* in your binocular case.

Spotting a ninja in a tree may be confusing. They may be dressed not in traditional loose black clothing but rather in neutral-hued spandex or camouflage-colored lightweight cotton. Both provide ease of movement, comfort and a covert "tree-hugger" look.

If you find a ninja perched in a treetop in your neighborhood, consider taking a lengthy vacation in hopes he or she will get hungry and leave. Climbing a nearby tree to spy on or shout at the ninja is a very bad idea. If you must take action, call your local fire department and notify them of a "large black cat" stuck in a tree. The commotion will likely cause the ninja to flee.

ALERTING THE AUTHORITIES

Never call 911 and inform the dispatcher that you've spotted a "ninja who may be trying to kill me." You'll end up under forced 24-hour psychiatric evaluation—the perfect locale and opportunity for a lethal ninja attack.

If the ninja temporarily abandons his or her treetop post, take the opportunity to hire a tree trimmer. This is also your chance to plan, read the rest of this guide and try to figure out why the ninja is conducting reconnaissance on *you*.

TELEPHONE POLES, LAMPPOSTS AND WIRES

Telephone poles and lampposts, the modern urban incarnations of tall trees, are favorite ninja hiding spots in the big city. Like their natural leafy counterparts, these poles are easily scaled by the agile ninja with hand and foot claws. In moments of conspicuous ascent, ninjas may pose as phone or city maintenance crew to make their way up in a less stealthy manner.

CABLE AND TELEPHONE REPAIR

Trust nobody who claims they need to work on power lines, TV/ internet cables or telephone wires. Their shifty, unpunctual nature is purposefully obnoxious and distracting.

Besides being adept climbers, ninjas are expert tightrope walkers. They can meander across telephone lines with the ease and grace of a squirrel. The ninja you thought you saw a second ago may be well down the block by now.

As a precaution, consider moving to an apartment or house where your windows are not accessible via telephone lines. Many cities have put their telephone lines underground in response to the perpetual ninja threat. Yet, at present, proximity to telephone lines remains a serious factor to consider when protecting yourself and your family against ninjas. Lobby your local city government to bury all wires and cables.

DARK ALLEYS

Muggers, thugs, vagabonds, rats, roaches, garbage and ninjas are all found in the dark recesses of urban alleyways. When strolling down

an eerily silent alley, casually check behind dumpsters and scan overhead fire escapes for crouching ninjas. Dark alleyways may seem more ominous at night, but remember, a ninja will strike at any time, day or night.

Consider the average alleyway a kind of seedy Thermopylae. Battling in an alley is narrow and difficult. The ninja, like the Spartans before them, know how to take advantage of the funneling effect, making your escape much harder. If you have to enter an alleyway with more than one person, always travel single file, at least 28 paces apart, to avoid a lethal bottleneck.

THE SOUNDS OF SILENCE

You won't hear the pitter-patter of little ninja feet, so don't listen for them. Audible footsteps behind you are a sign that you're safe from a ninja attack, at least for now. If an alleyway is completely silent, don't walk into it. Listen for the reassuring soft moans and whispers of human life before entering.

In an alleyway you've never taken before, if you think you glimpse a ninja out of the corner of your eye, keep on walking as if you haven't seen a thing. Chances are this ninja is not laying in wait for you, or you wouldn't see him or her at all.

YOUR VEHICLE

No matter what type of car you drive or how well you drive it, your vehicle will always be a prime target for ninja attacks. Take special precaution when entering, exiting and operating your motor vehicle.

CAR TRUNKS

In the past five years alone, there have been over 200 reports of ninjas hiding in the trunks of their victim's cars—especially open-compartment SUVs and station wagons. Hiding in your car for an extended period of time, especially in the trunk, allows the ninja to get a sense of your daily routine and figure out the least conspicuous place for an attack.

12

