

Witness Protection

The WPO cannot afford to be misled!

IT'S **HIM** HUMAN
INVESTIGATION
MANAGEMENT

Witness and Protection Profiling.

The Witness Protection Officers *and* Witnesses cannot afford to be misled

When the WPO cannot read the situation, the people-on-the-ground or a person of interest then they invite collateral damage.

The 'Principal' (Witness) may be whistle-blowers, hostile witnesses or bystanders that became witnesses by default. The WPO must be able to determine the profile of the Principal because ¹it would give direction on issues to keep-in-mind during the mission. A particular issue regardless of their profile, is the fact that bullying, and blackmail could become a major variable. This level of threat depends on the cost to the witness, the motivation of the witness which will impact on methods to protect the witness and the protection team.

The protection profile of a Principal is unlike that of protecting a religious cleric, a politician or any celebrity. The witness could be hunted by predators that *intend on keeping something secret*. Failure to do so, may lead to imprisonment, reputational damage and huge losses of material wealth. Subsequently, the protection begins with the primary interview and protection instruction.

The instructions would be to notify the principal that they could be traced and tracked with technology, i.e., mobile phone, social media, etc and/or by physical contact with any person that they may know. They cannot afford to be found by any predator because their lives are at risk and the lives of others are at risk. Consequently, the WPO must be in a constant state of awareness not only for predators, but also the principal because they may compromise the security team and the case itself.

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The Primary Interview

In the in-depth and wide-minded research of ²Dr Gavriel Schneider (2005), he Included in his research, by paying attention to various forms of communication that the CPO would be involved in, i.e., in the stages of planning, mission and de-briefing. Furthermore, he stresses the importance of observation, awareness, and quick thinking. In this guidance article, we stress the importance and re-iterate that security success for a WPO will depend on their *level of situational awareness* of the *decision-maker* on the ground and *reaction speed*. The emphasis on this article is on the situational awareness – decision-making and reaction speed.

Situational Awareness

In the primary interview, the WPO may ask questions related to the health of the client and inquire about issues that may negatively impact on the safeguarding of the witness. The principal needs to know more than just the health status during the brief and to continuously monitor the truthful situation throughout the mission because critical and mitigating issues could have been missed.

Information gathering

The primary interview's objective is to gather reliable and all-the-information from the client and the principal. The client may provide a brief overview of the case, but it is the principal that may know the players and predictors attached to the story. When the principal has no idea of who or what is their true threat, then no-one can protect them. Knowing the X Factor (there may be something happening that the person is unaware of) can prepare the WPO, and in failing such, could lead to collateral damage.

² Dr Gavriel Schneider (2005)

<http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/734/dissertation.pdf>

The principal may know of specific people but there may be others that have intention to harm the principals that are not part of the case-in-question and may be related to other issues. For example, the principal may be in debt to a drug lord who has nothing to do with this case

The decision-making to plan and protect the witness begins at the stage of interviewing, whereas the WPO must establish the true situation. *The witness in fact could not only be the principal* but also their entourage, e.g., partners, kids, wife, etc. The principal may not disclose their little secrets nor other members of the entourage, e.g., the children not disclosing who they are in contact with, or what they are truly up to - that could impact on their protection.

The major issues are that the witness may not provide all the information or part information because they may have their addictions or issues that others are unaware of. They may have habitual behaviour that can be traced, for example, the addiction to use social media.

People do lie, hide or volunteer information, be it the witness, their entourage, the management or staff of a venue that may be used to house the witness, or even the door security officers of any establishment. It is not the weapon that is the issue – it is the people. Subsequently, it is in the cognitive and specific skills that take precedence over hard skills . Any planning, managing and monitoring the protection of the principal based on insufficient or unreliable information could lead to life impacting or life & death outcomes.

Earning the Trust and Respect of the Principal

This is vital, because if the principal does not trust and respect the WPO then pertinent information may not be forthcoming.

To read the complete-narrative or the people involved, we may dissect the situation. When dissecting the situation, the situation could be impacted because of cultural differences. These cultures interact differently taking cultural behaviour and cultural conduct into consideration. If one does not know what others are reading in others or saying to others using their hands or face in cultural behaviour, then situational awareness is non-existent. Furthermore, the principal could be misinterpreted or be misunderstood which opens the door to possibilities that can *cause collateral damage in the field or even destroy the relationship with the principle. The principal needs to trust the WPO!!! So, the WSO must know cultural behaviour, cultural communication (cultures can speak to each other just using their hands) and cultural conduct.*

We need to take this further and make decisions on which members of the team are best and need to vet the team, whereas, it could be possible for the WPO to have an issue with the principal if they are racist or bias in any way. For argument sake, let us say that the principal may be an extremist right or left-wing celebrity or a paedophile, then there may be team members that the issue and could cause a situation whereas the principal could experience collateral damage on purpose.

In the field

Vetting the client and team. The team begins with the client that hands over the principal. It is vital that the client's team must be unaware of the location of the principal. Furthermore, the protection team's must be insulated and administrated securely.

Physical and Mental Awareness of the principal. The Principal being under threat may be feeling nervous, depressed and filled with anxiety. It is vital for them to have peace of mind besides feeling physically able. The WPO must consider the responsibility of ensuring the principal's mental and physical well-being because these factors could lead to suicide or perhaps an issue that could compromise the case. Subsequently, this leads to considerations for accommodation that can provide the necessary environment for good mental and physical health.

The pre-check of a venue or site by the WPO is a critical part of protection. They may need to interview the people on the site to vet and validate the security. Venues derive revenue by holding functions and may not provide all-the-information as they do not enjoy turning business away, therefore, the people on site may not provide accurate information to secure their financial return. The WPO needs to know the truth of the matter.

The impulsive visit. Simply put – there are no impulsive touring for any reason whatsoever.

VERY IMPORTANT: The WPO could enlighten the Principal on situational and/or environmental awareness. *The sharing of the skills will bond the WPO and the Principal through trust and respect.*

If the mission period is over a lengthy period, then the WPO could provide the principal the HIM e-Connect Tool for them to discover their insider threat besides educating them on the skills that are mastered by WPO. This would *bond the principal even more so with the WPO*

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