

Undercover Cops

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Identifying Police

Sometimes police drive in their regular cruisers, visible from a mile away, but there are times they'll resort to undercover vehicles, and plainclothes policemen. They are a big threat for activist groups as they can get very close to us compared to regular pigs.

Cops Themselves

Most undercover types are actually real live police academy graduates, probably have some military or maybe just a college grad who likes to push people around. A few signs that have worked in the past to ID undercovers are the following:

- Boots, cops love a tough ready-for-action footwear, maybe they are paranoid but they are almost never caught in sandals. More than likely this is because cops have a high percentage of ex-military in their ranks that are accustomed to boots.
- Belt, funny that they love to wear a tough leather or nylon webbing belt, to a cop they need a place to hang a piece or clip a knife or radio
- Groin Bulge, actually they can hide a gun many places, and it might just be a boner
- Vest, someone besides a photographer in one of those fishing vests is either a civilian gun packer or a cop, it provides great concealment for a shoulder holster.
- Wires and Cameras, forget it you will never find all of the new micro bugs and wires, they might even be taping from that pizza van that follows him around but be cautious if they slip up.
- In a protest situation, just go up and ask them if they're a cop, it has a serious intimidating effect. This has been demonstrated in the Toronto G20 protests; in Canada it appears possible that they can't actually deny it (if you've got a camera pointed at them...) so they tell you to go away. Use your judgment in evaluating responses. In the US you might surprise them but current case law explicitly allows cops to lie, the urban myth about police identifying themselves when asked is just that a myth.

You can't ID them all, some are not even cops just paid informants or turned members of the movement, so use Security Culture to stay safe.

Vehicles

Police undercover vehicles are scary as hell on a roadway... one minute you're just driving along, the next the car beside you turns on the blue lights and the siren. "oh fuck". Thankfully, with the trained eye, one can often pick them out pretty easily.

In some jurisdictions, it is illegal for a cop to pull you over in an unmarked car. Be sure to check with local laws.

Car Model

Due to fairly recent legislation, they drive American made cars. Often, they will use the same model car as regular cruisers. Most police vehicles are fairly large, which helps. Specific cars to be on the lookout for include:

- Ford Crown Victoria
- Ford Five Hundred
- Ford Explorer
- Dodge Charger
- Dodge Durango
- Chevrolet Impala
- Chevrolet Tahoe

Current civil forfeiture laws allow police to seize the vehicle and property of anyone suspected of using that item for illegal purposes especially drugs. Go ahead look around at any police motorpool and you will probably see a few big unmarked 4x4's, maybe some muscle cars, low-riders, they might even have a fleet of Toyota Prius hybrids painted with hearts and flowers although these are likely rarely assigned except as a punishment for bad cops. The point is even with the procurement regs there are ways around for the cops to get unexpected vehicles. Be careful not to fall victim to unexpected car models.

Gear

They have to hide their dreaded flashing blue/red lights somewhere! Often, LED light bars are employed. Common placements include in the center bottom of the windshield/rear window, across the whole top surface of those windows, and in the grilles at the front of the cars (particularly ford crown vics have a grill suitable for mounting lights). They try to hide them with tinted windows and such, but as there are laws governing tint levels, particularly on government vehicles, you can still often spot them. The best concealed lights the author has seen are in the top dark tinted bit of a windshield on a green/blue Ford 500.

^Aforementioned Ford 500: the only giveaway is the cage being visible through the windows.

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Sometimes cops are just fucking stupid... vehicles with obvious search lights on the driver side window are often police. Vehicles with ridiculous radio equipment poorly concealed are often police. If it has plastic cuffs hanging from the rear view mirror... you guessed it!

False Ideas

Don't fall into the stupid trap of believing that they're all black. They're not! In the author's area, a large number of silver, tan, and green-blue undercovers have been seen.

Also be aware that a car with green lights instead of blue (not concealed) is private security, not police. Blue is reserved by law almost exclusively for police use, although it has been seen of firetrucks in some areas.

"It doesn't fit any of the signs, so it's safe" If a car pulls up next to you while you're doing (have done or are planning to do...) questionably legal actions, or drives with ridiculous aggressiveness towards

your current or previous location, you would do well to make efforts to avoid it. Cops are by nature aggressive personalities, sometimes nothing more than the brazen style of action is a way to ID a police vehicle.



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