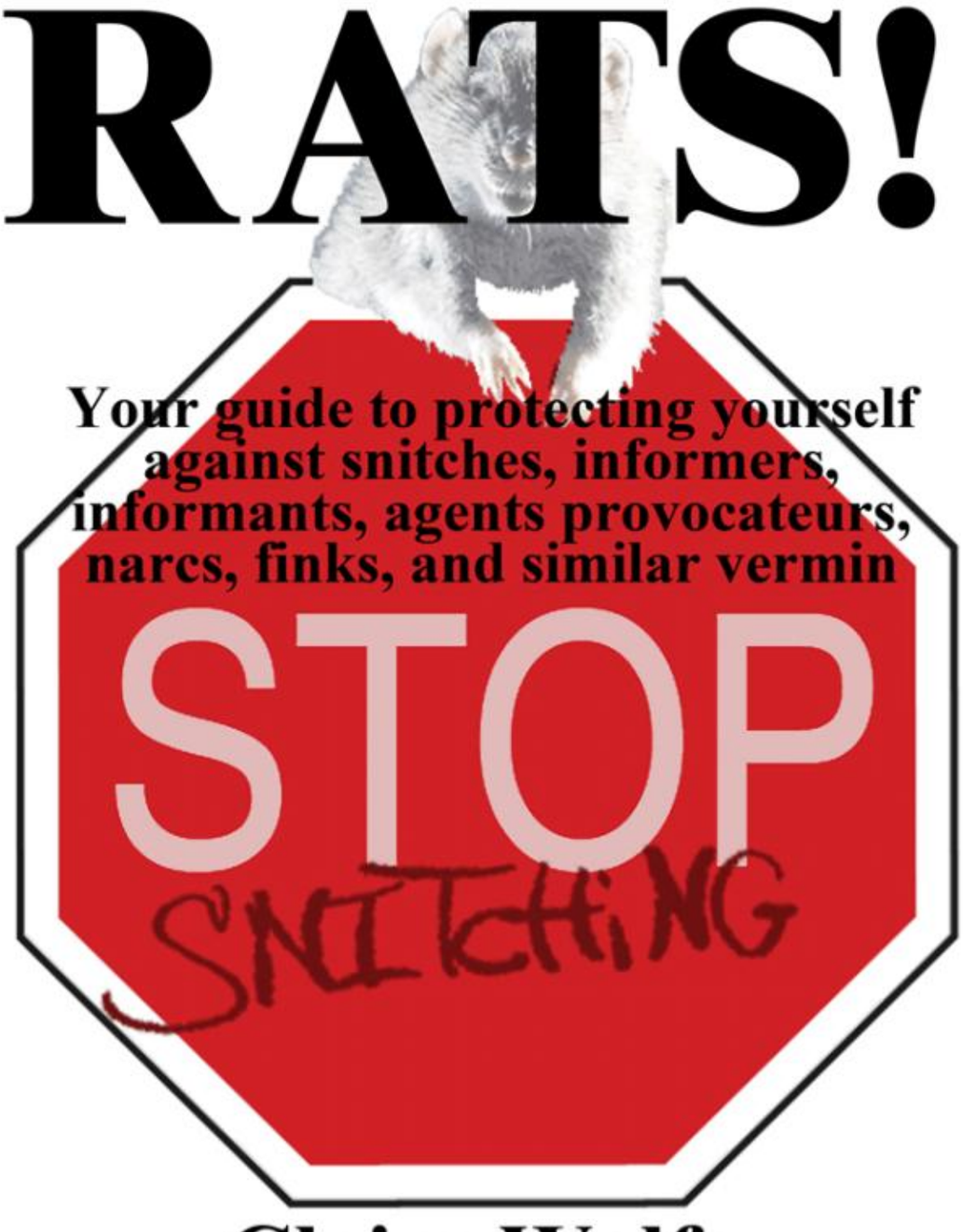
RATS!



Your guide to protecting yourself against snitches, informers, informants, agents provocateurs, narcs, finks, and similar vermin

Claire Wolfe

with the Commentariat of the Living Freedom blog

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Acknowledgments

I intended to acknowledge the dozens of people who contributed to this book. Given its touchy subject matter, I figured I'd use only their online nyms, not real names. But, sadly, almost everyone I asked responded, "Don't mention me!"

Such is the nature of the police state.

So the only contributors credited anywhere in the book are those who wrote items especially for this project or whose comments on my blog, ***Living Freedom*** [1] I reprinted here. Their nyms appear with their contributions.

Despite the lack of credits, this book was truly a collaborative project. Contributors included lawyers, former cops, security specialists, political activists, members of the drug culture, business executives in "sensitive" fields, outlaw bikers, and in a couple of cases people whose identities are so deeply secret that I couldn't credit them even if I wanted to. (To guard against the possibility of any snitch sympathizer planting misleading information, outlaws, former snitch victims, and lawyers checked the text *after* more "official" folk had their say. I'm relieved to state that, while many people added valuable information as the book grew, nobody in this very experienced crowd spotted anything false or suspiciously "coppish.")

Contributors came from all walks of life — from the ultra-respectable to the underground. All shared the same goal of helping non-violent people save themselves from snitches and — hopefully, someday — ending the corrupt and evil "snitch culture." Once I pulled the book together with all that help, an anonymous proofreader and a friendly layout artist took it from there. There are two people I am allowed to credit: cover designer Keith Perkins and illustrator Travis Halverson, whose

[1] www.backwoodshome.com/blogs/ClaireWolfe/

"no rattin'" drawing you'll find at the end of the book.

Each and every contributor was a volunteer. This book couldn't have happened without them.

This book is for you if ...

You are a non-violent person engaged in any activity that may be controversial, illegal, or merely "sensitive" or unconventional. These days, anything out of the ordinary can make you a target.

Some people who could use this book:

Anti-war or environmental activists

Recreational drug users

Participants in the underground economy or anybody who does business in cash

Critics of local or national powers-that-be

Anyone whose profession involves "sensitive" information or activities

Gun owners or dealers

Third-party or "fringe" political activists

Hobbyists who work with dangerous materials

Photographers/videographers

Religious dissidents

People with offshore or unconventional investments (including perfectly legitimate ones)

It doesn't matter where you fall in the political spectrum or even if you're apolitical. If police might target you or your activities, you need to understand how snitches could mess up your life.

This book is NOT for you if ...

You aim to commit violence against innocent people. In that case, reporting on you isn't snitching, it's self defense.

What exactly is a snitch?

There are a lot of different types of snitches. We could write an encyclopedia defining them. But we're going to keep this simple.

For purposes of the book, a snitch is anybody who inserts him- or herself into your non-violent activities on behalf of government. "Government" may mean local cops. It could also mean the FBI, the Department of Homeland Security, or a host of other state or federal agencies. It's absolutely mind-boggling how many seemingly innocuous agencies these days have arrest powers, armed enforcers — and snitches employed in sneaky sting operations. And thousands of them use snitches.

There are two common categories of snitch you need to look out for:

The infiltrator/agent provocateur. This is someone (often a professional) who is inserted into a group for an active purpose, such as disrupting the group, or worst, talking formerly innocent (or at least formerly non-violent) people into committing crimes in order to bust them. Agents provocateurs may, among other things, try to turn non-violent protest into violent action, thus discrediting movements, giving excuses for crackdowns, and giving more publicity and power to government agencies.

The informer/informant. This snitch is often a legitimate member of a group or social circle who continues to be active while giving information to the police. This person may be acting under duress (to save his own skin after being arrested, for instance). This person may be hoping the cops will pay with money, drugs, or ongoing criminal immunity for her dubious "services." While this person isn't necessarily a professional agent provocateur, he may nevertheless try to talk friends into committing crimes so he can get more

credibility or rewards from his police handlers.

These aren't the only types of snitches. For example, there's also what we'll call the **"accidental snitch"** — though **idiot snitch** might be more appropriate. This is the person who simply can't keep her mouth shut about illegal or controversial activities. Cops *love* these guys! They don't even have to threaten them, pay them, hire them, train them, or gain any leverage over them. They just sit back and listen to them reveal secrets.

Then there's the type of snitch the British call a **grass** and old American gangsters might have called a **stool pigeon.** This is a person who blabs to cops or other government agents *after* you (and probably he) have already been arrested. This person isn't going to interfere with your activities; that's already been done. He's "only" going to give sworn affidavits and courtroom testimony against you, justifying it as a means of saving his own skin. There's not much you can do about this person. By the time you learn one of your former friends is a "stoolie," it's too late.

There are **vengeance snitches** — people who turn on friends and associates after having a falling out or not getting their way. There are **jailhouse snitches** — either deliberately planted in your cell after you've been arrested or just opportunists who happen to be there and are willing to share whatever you say (or make up lies about things you said).

Each and every one of these people is a betrayer of friendship and trust. All of them are just plain *rats* — and they're as welcome in the company of good people as rats are in a pantry.

To keep things simple we're going to call them all snitches — though we'll differentiate when we need to help you look out for specific problems.

What makes snitches so dangerous?

Snitches are everywhere and their use is growing. In many cases, genuine police investigations into actual crimes are almost a thing of the past. Government agents just round up some snitches, get them to lie or arm-twist them into spying and — *voila!* — an instant and easy case against virtually anyone they want to target. Sometimes they get everything they need from some anonymous person who makes false accusations via a tips hotline.

Snitches (and cops) lie all the time and get away with it. So do prosecutors and virtually all government investigators. Good luck "proving your innocence" if some liar says you were part of a drug deal, laundered money, plotted to blow up a bridge, or asked him to help you murder somebody. Never mind that, in our legal system, the government is supposed to have to prove your guilt; that's become a quaint notion.

Snitches damage individuals, organizations, and movements even before they actually rat on anybody. The mere fear of them destroys trust, friendship, and cohesiveness. Some are deliberately inserted into groups to cause exactly that sort of chaos and dissension.

They tarnish otherwise legitimate political movements. When the media reports that members of Group X or Movement Y have been caught running drugs or guns or plotting to dump toxic chemicals in a reservoir, guess what sticks in the public's mind — your legitimate goals or the "fact" that you're a bunch of terrorist whackos? Later, when it comes out that the entire plot was a fiction created by an agent provocateur who got a few marginal members to go along with a scheme the government itself cooked up, hardly anyone notices. All they think is, "Oh, Group X; yeah, they're a bunch of violent loonies. Thank God the FBI saved us from them."

They send people to prison. Sometimes innocent people. Often the victims of snitches have committed "crimes" that are much less serious than those of the snitch himself. A snitch is often either a real scumbag who's in the pay of police or a formerly decent person trying to save herself (or family members or friends) from a long prison sentence by getting others to commit crimes.

They may literally cost you your life, your fortune, and your sacred honor. Not to mention your family, your freedom, your friends, your job, your savings, and your reputation. *And don't imagine that "mere" innocence will protect you.* The more innocent you are, the more you're likely to be blindsided and hurt by one of these betrayers — because innocent, naive people make easy targets.

They corrupt entire cultures. Think of East Germany under the STASI or the old Soviet Union. Literally husbands couldn't trust their wives. Parents couldn't trust their children. Brothers couldn't trust brothers because so many were reporting to the state. Now, some countries that knew the horror of snitch culture forbid or limit the use of snitches. At the same time, formerly free nations are relying on snitches for everything and encouraging every moron in the land to "see something and say something."

A fact to remember

This book could help you avoid becoming the victim of a snitch. It could even help you avoid being pressured into becoming a snitch yourself.

But there are NO guarantees. Snitches are effective precisely because they're so hard to detect.

Snitches prey on the naive and unsuspecting and on misplaced friendship. No book is a substitute for common sense and healthy skepticism. You have a brain: USE IT.

You have a gut. When it tells you you're in danger, BELIEVE IT.

PART ONE

Recognizing and Avoiding Snitches

FIRST RULE:
Learn and practice
good security consciousness

The military calls this OpSec — Operational Security. It means conducting yourself in such a way as not to give away secrets or walk stupidly into avoidable dangers.

Don't talk about secret or illegal activities outside your group.

Within your group, talk about them only to people who have a need to know.

Keep groups small. Maybe even as small as a "cell of one."

If you use email, encrypt it. Not only that, but encrypt all email you possibly can, not just email containing sensitive material. Encrypt your cute cat jokes and your discussions of last night's favorite TV show (that way you don't call special attention to your most confidential exchanges).

Attorney safety tip:

A lawyer who consulted on this book says:

"When dealing with police, prosecutors or their agents, do NOT base your theory-of-the-game on TV, movies, or other sources. Or on constitutional theory you may have learned in school. The other side is playing for keeps and to them rules are irrelevant inconveniences. Ask Bradley Manning."

Do not post sensitive material on social media (a no-brainer, but apparently some still do it).

Do not post sensitive material on social media *even when your privacy settings allow only "friends" to see it*. A 2012 court ruling said it's perfectly okay for those "friends" to turn around and show your allegedly private info to government agents.

Do not talk to cops or indeed any government agents — about anything. Ever. The most innocent remarks can be used against you. The "nicest" cop is still not your friend. (We'll have more on this in Part Three and in the appendixes. This is *extremely* important!)

Know the laws, potential sentences, and likely prosecutorial practices against any crimes you're committing.

If you're a political activist, keep your nose clean in other ways. For instance, if you're an anti-drug-war activist, don't sell drugs on the side. Don't make yourself an easy target for spurious (or worse, real) criminal charges.

Unless you actually want to be arrested to become a test case (a dangerous but sometimes useful tactic), then do everything you can to avoid giving anyone ammunition to tarnish you or your cause.

Do your best to make sure your associates also follow good security practices.

Tip from experience:

This comes from a friend of mine who spent "the worst two weeks" of his life in jail, courtesy of a snitch: "Don't hang with people who are dishonest or lie, even in small, unimportant things. They have no honor to lose and everything they say and do is based on profit or benefit to them."

Get yourself *away* from associates who are blabbermouths, boasters, loose-lipped drunks, or "friends" who insist on posting their (and your) every activity on the Internet.

We repeat: GET YOURSELVES AWAY from anybody who can't keep his mouth shut!

Recognizing a snitch

While some clumsy snitches are obvious, many more are nearly impossible to recognize. What follows are only guidelines. Use them as an aid to your own brain and your own gut, but understand that when you organize with others to do controversial things, you very probably *will* have at least one snitch in your midst. There is simply *no* group that cannot be infiltrated. The longer you continue and/or the more controversial your activities, the more likely you are to attract one or more rats.

Some typical things snitches and/or agents provocateurs do:

A stranger or casual acquaintance tries to get you to do or advise on illegal activities.

A friend suddenly starts pushing you to do or advise on illegal things.

A person joins your group and statements he/she makes about his/her background just don't add up.

A person joins your group and starts stirring up trouble and creating divisions.

A person joins your group and is overly eager to be useful, to pay for the group's activities, to initiate activities, supply equipment, to escalate dangerous activities, etc.

Advice from the underground

This ultra-basic piece of advice goes back at least to the agitators of the 1960s. Yet people still get entrapped by ignoring it: "You can always tell the FBI agent. He's the one who's trying to get you to bomb something."

Someone goes out of his way to gain your trust, to be really buddy-buddy with you. Then, when you resist getting into dubious activities, he drops all interest in you (he's looking for an easier mark).

You're asked to do illegal or dubious business with a "friend of a friend." This is a big one. It's amazing how many "friends of friends" (where controversial activities are involved) are actually undercover cops.

Someone asks you to do something illegal or dangerous that he could just as easily do himself or have done elsewhere.

Someone starts agitating to have your group do something outside the group's purposes. ("Hey, we just run a little of this 'stuff' across the border and it'll make us a lot of money that we can use to do good.")

An older, "more experienced" person joins your group or circle and soon becomes a counselor of sorts to the youngest, most edgy, most insecure, most angry, or most naive members. He "cuts them out of the herd" in order to pull them into illegal plots. (This is a classic tactic of the agent provocateur.)

Anyone in your group starts agitating for violent action. People who agitate for illegal activities may be snitches; *or* they may be genuine fools who will attract snitches.

These are not the *only* ways snitches get you in trouble. But they're among the most common ones.

On the other hand, appearances can be deceiving.

An online commentator who goes by the handle Bulucanagria recalls:

Some years ago I was returning from a job interview. I was changing buses in downtown Cincinnati when I saw that there was a hemp rally about to begin. Naturally I stayed on to enjoy the festivities.

Coming from a job interview I was dressed casually, but rather nicely; slacks, button down shirt, decent shoes. Also, I'm a fairly large white guy with short hair, my preference because when my hair

grows out I look like a used Q-tip.

So, I'm standing at the back of the crowd when a band comes on to warm up the crowd. The singer intros the song by saying, "This is dedicated to all the undercover cops out there today ..." and about a dozen people turn and look at me with knowing expressions. I had to laugh out loud!

The first speaker comes out (Gatewood Galbraith RIP), and soon some naif sparks up a joint ... and is immediately arrested by the tie-dyed, long-hair, bearded hippie! Again I couldn't help myself and laughed out loud. I've smoked my share of The Devil's Lettuce but sometimes potheads just ain't too bright.

My point is that another potential sign of a plant is somebody who seems to match all the stereotypes of the group you're in. The agent involved may be smart and subtle enough to provide a nuanced portrayal of a "fellow traveler," or he may be an ignorant jackwagon who believes all the hype put out by his overlords and thinks of his quarry as cartoon characters. It's true that stereotypes become so by generally being true, but it's doubtful that any one individual would embrace them all.

Again, this seems like something a savvy person would already understand but, since we're trying to explain these things to ignorant fools (i.e. me 30 years ago), I thought I'd share.

What makes snitches so persuasive?

Snitches, especially professional agents provocateurs, can be master manipulators. Many otherwise-smart people have been drawn into their traps because they failed to recognize not only the specific techniques listed in the last section but because they failed to understand the psychology of snitchery and entrapment.

Snitches play on your trust and/or your desire to go along with others.

They may appeal to your loyalty or your fear or some other emotion ("You won't do it? Wow, and here I thought you were one of us." "C'mon, if you had any guts you'd do this." "How are we ever going to change things if we don't take radical action?")

They may literally "cut from the herd" the most naive, trusting, foolish, or discontent of your associates, isolate them, and psychologically manipulate them into committing crimes.

They may pretend to be your friend. — especially a friend in need. ("I know you don't usually deal, but couldn't you just sell me a little from your stash?" "Look, just help me get this money out of the country; it's no big deal." "Hey, I know you have a machine shop in your garage; how about helping me cut down the barrel on this shotgun? I'll pay you.")

They may actually *be* your friend — but a friend who has gotten into legal trouble and has turned to snitching to save themselves from a long prison sentence. (Same sorts of urgings as in the last bullet point, but this time coming from somebody for whom that wouldn't be characteristic behavior.)

They may make it easy to commit crimes by not only pushing the idea, but actually supplying the funding, the

equipment, the transportation, and the planning for the crime. They may come across as natural leaders ("Trust me, I know how to do this!")

They may make hyper-strong appeals to your cause — then use the leverage they gain to make equally strong appeals for committing crimes.

They often play upon a normal human desire to want to DO something - which is likely why, if you're a political person, you're a member of the group in the first place.

And finally — let's never forget — some snitches play on that most basic instinct of all — S.E.X. Spy agencies have known this as long as there have been spy agencies. The KGB used to call it "the sparrow trick"; get a red-blooded heterosexual male up close with an attentive, manipulative female and said male will eventually whisper all manner of secrets into her ear. These days, it probably works the other way around, too. And no doubt homosexual attraction can blind eyes and loosen lips just as effectively.

Case in point: Steve Haug

Haug is one of the agents provocateurs the FBI planted with the Hutaree Militia — a group that basically did not do much while its members spouted unpleasant political rhetoric. Haug inserted himself so persuasively into the group that he became the best man at the leader's wedding.

And all the while he was recording hundreds of hours of conversations and aggressively trying to get the group to cook up a "bomb plot." A judge eventually threw out all the major charges, but not until some Hutaree members had spent two years in jail awaiting trial.

- - -

It's also worth noting: One of the other snitches who helped bring down the Hutaree was a mouthy radio-show host called Hal Turner.

Turner used another infamous tactic of snitches; he constantly urged, and even threatened, violence against public officials. All the while he was on the air, rousing dimwits into a frenzy, *he was also a paid FBI informant, reporting on the very people he was inciting.* And that's not at all unusual or surprising.

Another point to remember about snitches

This comes from "just waiting," who also contributed the excellent primer on interrogation that you'll find in the appendices. He notes: "While all snitches are cowards, not all snitches are wimps or sissies. Just because we talk about them as lesser beings doesn't mean some of them aren't tough as nails — fighters and brawlers.

"If nothing else, snitches show a very developed sense of self-preservation and a willingness to do anything to save their own ass. Being a rat doesn't diminish their ability to fight, it just changed their tactics and focus temporarily."

So beware: Another way snitches can be dangerous is to physically hurt you if you get in their way.

"Mere" snitching vs active entrapment

Back in the late sixties or thereabouts, there was a federal case in which Treasury agents latched on to a printer who was willing to fantasize about doing some counterfeiting. Undercover Treasury agents encouraged him to really do it. Despite being a printer, he didn't have the special plates required to print money. So the Treasury agents provided them. Then he didn't have the special paper required to print money. So the Treasury agents provided it. And so on.

A judge tossed the case. And rightly so. There would never have been a crime, had the federal agents not provided the means and a big chunk of the motivation. That's entrapment.

Today, that dumb sap of a printer would be in prison for a long, long, time. As Bovard says, standards have changed. Although a jury will occasionally decide that some act of entrapment is so outlandish they'll refuse to convict (do an Internet search on "FCPA Africa Sting" for a great example), victims of entrapment have ended up serving decades in prison for going along with plots cooked up entirely by government agents. Even those eventually found not

Times have changed — not for the better

In a *Playboy* article, James Bovard wrote: "Up until the early Seventies, defendants often successfully challenged entrapment as a violation of due process. But in 1973, the Supreme Court, in an opinion written by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, gutted most defenses against government entrapment by focusing almost solely on the 'subjective disposition' of the entrapped person. If prosecutors can find any inkling of a defendant's disposition to the crime, went Rehnquist's logic, then the person is guilty, no matter how outrageous or abusive the government agents' behavior. Justice William Brennan dissented, warning that the decision could empower law enforcement agents to 'round up and jail all 'predisposed' individuals.'"

guilty may lose everything in the effort to save themselves.

With courts allowing more and more acts that would once have been considered illegal entrapment, more and more "mere" snitches are using their wiles to talk people into illegal deeds and are even providing the means and money to carry those deeds out. The lines between "mere" snitches and agents provocateurs are blurring.

Beware of anybody who not only wants you to commit illegal acts but goes out of his way to "help" you do so!

Dangerous myths about snitches and undercover agents

There are two huge myths about snitches, narcs, undercover agents and other cop-associated rats that you'll hear all the time. The people spouting this BS always sound as if they know it for a fact. But the only fact is that they're misinformed — and are dangerously misinforming you.

Here are the two myths:

Myth #1: If you ask if someone is a narc, they have to tell you.

NO they don't. The myth holds that if you say, "Are you a narc?" or "Are you a cop?" and the person replies, "No," then they can never, ever bust you. Baloney! Every variety of snitch can look you straight in the eye and say, "I'm not a snitch" — then turn right around and land you in jail. Court cases around the nation - a search engine is your friend, here - have affirmed the "right" of government agents to lie to their targets. Which brings us to:

Myth #2: Cops are never allowed to lie to you.

OMFG, cops — and all kinds of other government agents — lie and they lie and they lie. And in nearly every case the courts allow them to get away with it.

But that brings up a related subject. Increasingly, *you* can get in trouble for lying to *them*. Even an innocent and harmless misstatement can be twisted into a prison sentence for you (search on "Martha Stewart prison" for an example).

There *are* a few sorts of lies that are so egregious that if a police officer tells them the case against you may be thrown out of court (attorney Jamie Spencer gives an example here[1]). But

[1] http://blog.austindefense.com/2006/10/articles/war-on-drugs/are-the-police-allowed-to-lie-to-you-during-a-criminal-investigation/

only *after* you've been busted, scared out of your wits, deprived of your property, and perhaps driven into bankruptcy.

> **Attorney safety tip:**
>
> A day or two spent in jail because of a frustrated government agent beats a lifetime spent there because of a verbal misstep.

So just remember: Cops and other government agents are the most evil liars in the world — because they have power to hurt you, they'll use it ruthlessly, and they know they can get away with almost anything. If you know, or even have good reason to suspect that someone is a cop or any sort of government agent, DO NOT TALK TO THEM. About anything. Don't try to outwit them. Do not try to turn the tables on them. Don't even talk about the weather around them. The only things you ever want to say to a cop are things like, "Am I free to go?," "I do not consent to a search," or "I will not speak to you without an attorney present."

What to do if you believe a snitch is personally targeting you

Let's assume that you suspect — but aren't sure — that someone in your circle is a snitch. And worse, you think the person is, or even might be, targeting you. What do you do?

Again, get away from the person

Do not try to outsmart the person

Do not feed the person false information (because if that person is an undercover agent this could be a crime in and of itself)

Do not commit violence against the person

Just get away — even if it means leaving a group

If you think you've already said or done something compromising with this person, see a good lawyer and read the section of this booklet on how to conduct yourself if you get arrested.

Another tip from this book's helpful attorney: "Consider making your OWN complaint to the authorities about this 'nutball' [the person you suspect of being a snitch]. This a) puts you on the record as NOT being in bed with the snitch, b) alerts the snitch and his handlers that you're aware of him and are thus less likely to be an 'easy target,' c) creates an appearance that you're not one of the bad guys - since you're not hiding anything, and d) maybe - with a little luck - the snitch ends up in jail himself for some time. I would not consider this 'do not try to outsmart' described above (which I agree with)." Of course, if he turns out *not* to be a snitch, you may have harmed an innocent person by calling the cops on him. It's a risk. But if the person really *is* an agent of the government, this can be a pretty good act of self-protection. Oh, and one of my friends who speaks from

experience, points out that if you're going to report a snitch to the cops, it's best to do it through a lawyer. Otherwise you're talking to cops, which is a no-no.

It's an old joke, but ...

SterlingStrings writes:

Back in Soviet Russia, twin brothers were born. They slept in the same crib. As they grew older, they went to the same schools, and entered the same military duty side by side. After the military, they started work next to each other in the same factory. They were married on the same day, and raised their families next door to each other in the same apartment building.

The years go by, and the brothers find themselves as old men, sitting on a park bench, sharing a bottle of vodka.

"What do you think of these new reforms they keep talking about?" asks one brother.

"Nyet" Says the other, "One of us might be KGB!"

As I said, old joke, but an element of truth. The sad reality is, everyone has their version of the "thirty pieces of silver." Pressure on a family member, fear of jail time, exposure of a dark secret ... anybody can be turned. The trick is in riding the fine line between necessary trust and over extending yourself and putting yourself at risk. Personally, I'm in favor of compartmentalizing information. Discuss "X" with one person/group, share "Y" with another group, and keep your yap shut about "Z".

Also, remember that the Internet is the greatest snitch out there. Every click, every search, every action CAN be recorded. I have no evidence that it's being done successfully, but it can be done. That's enough for me to never use a single point of entry to the WWW. Visit the public library for some, your local coffee shop for more, do some lightweight stuff at home, and don't surf and research at the same time. Find stuff, data dump it to a secure source, and read it later. If you find it irrelevant, trash it then.

Heads down, eyes up!

PART TWO
A Snitch Uncovered

If you believe there's a snitch in your group

We've talked about how to recognize snitches and what you, as an individual, should do to protect yourself. Again, we have to stress that there are no magic bullets; you might be blindsided and severely damaged by a snitch despite your best instincts and best efforts at OpSec. The advice in this booklet can lessen the chance of that, but nobody can give you any guarantees.

Let's say, though, that you believe you've spotted a snitch and this snitch is not only in a position to harm you, but also a group you belong to — whether that be a bunch of dope-smoking friends, a group of hobbyists or gun owners, an activist political organization, or a religious group.

The first thing to do, as we have said before and will say again, is to get away from that person and his or her influence. However, now you've got other people to worry about.

Some members of your group may be absolute innocents. Some may be blabbermouths or edgy types who are walking stupidly into the snitch's trap. Some may be friends with the snitch and hostile to anybody who expresses doubts about the person. Some may even be associates in the snitch's plan to bust you (it's not unusual for government agencies to plant multiple agents into one operation and the bitter old joke that, if not for the snitches, some meetings would be empty, isn't that far wrong).

What do you do?

Document your suspicions.

If possible, conduct some careful, subtle investigation to see if your suspected snitch's background and life matches her claims. Does she really live where she says? Has she been seen with police? Do her statements about her education or her friends hold up? If not, you may not have a snitch, but you have an untrustworthy person, for sure.

Share your specific reasons for suspicion with people in the group that you trust. Yes, we know that snitches destroy trust, so be very careful when choosing one or two others to confide in.

If you can do so without violating your state's law, quietly begin video or audiotaping all interactions with the suspected person. If state wiretapping laws forbid recording without the consent of all parties, then at least consider openly recording meetings to counteract any lies the snitch may tell his handlers.

Start a 'Facts, Acts, and Circumstantial file.' After each incident write details down. Facts are the time, date, occasion, incident, characteristics of the person(s). Acts are what they did. Circumstantial is the impressions and anything odd about the situation. Use the FAC file and keep notes from unsettling situations and see if a pattern emerges. (Note: This item also appears in Appendix 2, where you will find details on how to do this, along with many other commonsense OpSec tips.)

Do not make open accusations unless you have proof positive of snitchery or copness (as when New York Libertarian Party activists (see below) spotted a former "suspicious" member in the *New York Times*, helping the FBI with an arrest).

Discuss with your most trusted associates what to do.

Just as your first individual move is to keep away from the

suspect individual, the best group action may be to simply shut the person out. Stop talking with them. Stop inviting them to meetings. Stop asking them to be involved in projects. Freeze them out of all activities and discussions.

In a serious case, you may end up having to shut down the entire group to foil a snitch or agent provocateur. If so, have a plausible excuse if you can.

Always, always make sure that you and the other "on the up and up" members of your group remain on record as NOT advocating illegal, and in particular violently illegal, activities. Got a blog, a Twitter account, a Facebook page? Make your opposition to certain activities clear and public.

Furthermore, make sure you stay on record as NOT advocating things that the snitch wants. Do not line up behind, or even pretend to agree with, that person's policy recommendations, strategies, or tactics. Remember, you may well be being recorded. You do not even want to appear to superficially agree with things an undercover operative is trying to talk you into.

Again, finally, you may have to recognize that you can neither help nor save those who do not wish to be helped or saved. It may be that your final act has to be turning your files over to some other trusted member of the group and leaving. You always have a chance of finding another group. You're not going to have a chance to find another you.

One interesting (though dangerous) way to ID snitches

In his youth, Steve was a member of a number of groups that attracted the attention of cops and snitches. There were so many iffy hangers-on that the tiny core of solid people weren't sure who was a cop or who just smelled like one, or who was a snitch and who might just be a misfit or an idiot.

Then three people hit on a plan. Steve explains:

"Three of us who fairly trusted each other wondered how bad we

were compromised and decided to try a test. We were a lot of loosely organized groups with a variety of hangers on. Each of us met with some of these people and called a 'secret' meeting. It was a cop's wet dream — with guns, drugs and heavy people promised. One of us went to each of these meetings and it was only some of the people told about it and a massive police presence at all of them. (The smart people stayed home.) It became unpleasant when the Feds, cops and such realized it was a trick.

"It left me with the depressing feeling that it was next to impossible to put a heavyweight group of more than one person together without a snitch."

Here's one way to spot a snitch!

Online commenter BusyPoorDad writes:

Years ago, when the New York Libertarian Party was starting up, a new member joined and became active. He said he was from a low-income neighborhood, worked a manual labor job, and did not know much about politics. He looked the part but things just did not add up.

He knew how to set a table for a formal dinner, used the Robert's Rules very well, and fit in very well with the highly educated members. After about four months of working with us, he just stopped coming. This sort of thing happened a lot but there were no signs of discontent. He was always willing to do everything he was asked to help do (petition, run Nolan chart tables, etc.).

About a year later he was spotted in the NY Times holding on to someone arrested by the FBI for something.

His background just did not fit with him. We never saw him reading books, he talked about watching TV and working at a warehouse, but he was able to be cultured, had a good vocabulary, and really wanted to be part of everything.

HISTORICAL ways of dealing with *known* snitches

Since, as one wag observed, the first snitch arose shortly after the first secret, history offers us lots and lots of examples of how groups have handled the betrayers in their midst.

We do not recommend any of these methods! On the contrary, we advise in the strongest terms possible *against* them. This is just to note how seriously people have historically taken those who betray them. But, again, to be blunt - DO NOT DO ANY OF THIS! These examples are for historical, educational purposes *only*.

The IRA used to shoot betrayers in the kneecaps. It wouldn't kill them, but everyone who saw a former activist lurching down the street on destroyed knees knew what he was.

The Mafia would famously send stool pigeons to "sleep with the fishes."

Resistance groups, particularly during wartime, have been known to leave the bodies of betrayers in public squares with messages pinned to them — or even carved in them. While still saying it's a bad idea, it did have the effect of discouraging the general populace from working with the enemy. Today snitches and betrayers often see benefits and face nowhere near enough drawbacks for their dirty work.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the African National Congress punished perceived collaborators with the monstrous method called "necklacing." They'd shove a gasoline-filled tire over a miscreant's neck and arms and kill the person by setting the tire alight.

After World War II, many women who had slept with or otherwise collaborated with Nazis were humiliated by having their hair hacked off while mobs screamed, "Nazi whore!" This might not sound like much compared with

beastly punishments like necklacing. But public humiliation, shunning, and the attack on their femininity was hugely degrading and psychologically damaging.

How do YOU treat an exposed snitch?

Since you are not a Mafioso, and since (so far) we are not in an outright shooting war with an enemy state, there is no justification for historical hardcore tactics. We'll say it again: your best bet is just to get away from the snitch and take protective measures as described above.

However, if you're very sure a person is a rat and you want to take further steps to render the snitch ineffective or miserable, here are some milder, but potentially effective, tactics. Again, we DO NOT NECESSARILY RECOMMEND any of these things. They may be good or bad ideas, depending on the people and the circumstances. They're just possibilities:

Spread the word. Use social networks both online and in the real world to notify others that the person is an informant. Be as factual and give as much evidence as possible. (There is even a website that contains a national database of known rats, but since it's a paid membership site, we're not recommending it here. Do a Startpage.com or DuckDuckGo.com search[1] to find it if you're interested.) Post the snitch's photo, address, orother personal details online unless that violates a law in your area. This strategy is, however, a serious two edged sword - as those methods are ones that may be used by agents provocateurs in attempting to damage a group by further destroying trust. In fact, such tactics may well end up with YOU being labeled - no matter how unfairly or incorrectly - as the snitch! In fact, removing competent and trustworthy personnel from a group is high on a snitch's to-do list, and this can be a gift from on-high to a snitch.

Expel the person from the group. You can do this quietly — perhaps just by moving meetings and failing to inform the

[1] Both are more secure than Google

person of the new place. Or you can do it publicly, literally holding a purge or a type of trial where you present the evidence against the person.

Organize a shunning. Shunning has historically been a *huge* tactic in close communities. Shunning means shutting a person (and sometimes his family members) out of virtually all ordinary activity. A target of shunning isn't welcome into people's homes, can't get served at restaurants, doesn't have his greetings returned, can't get help from any of her former friends, and is generally unable to function within the community. Obviously in many ways this has become harder to do as we've become less reliant on our towns and neighborhoods. On the other hand, the Internet has made other, non-traditional forms of shunning possible.

Turn them in to the "legitimate" authorities. We mentioned this option before as a means of protecting yourself and your true friends. The same tactic may work to halt the snitch in its tracks or even put it in jail. Snitches are often serious criminals. They may well be up to nefarious deeds that their handlers in the police departments or government agencies don't know. Or a snitch who's working for the local PD may be unknown to the FBI, who might be interested to learn about other things he's up to. Again, we are very, very squeamish about the idea of turning any non-violent, non-thieving person into to *any* law-enforcement agency. But ... well, you'll need to judge for yourself what the snitch in your midst deserves. And of course, do this through a lawyer. Don't talk directly to government agents.

Fun and games. Again, this is a tactic ***we do not recommend***. However, traditionally it's been used as a lovely bit of revenge and a way to keep snitches busy without letting them know you're already on to them. The idea is to keep the snitch running in circles with false leads. Set one snitch spying on another. Or give the snitch false evidence to focus

on while you go about your real business unmolested. We consider this to be in the category of trying to "outsmart" the snitch — which is not wise. And you must be especially careful that you never put yourself in a position where you can be accused of "lying to law enforcement," since you can go to prison for that even when you're innocent in every other way. But such games can be fun while they last.

Rehabilitate and take the snitch back into your circle. There are people who believe that some snitches — especially young, inexperienced people who get in over their heads, get in legal trouble, and are intimidated into becoming snitches — should be forgiven, rehabilitated, and eventually brought back into the fold of trust. A very humane anarchist, Tom Knapp, took this position when young anti-drug-war activist Stacy Litz was arrested and pressured into becoming a drug informant. Not many people sympathized (and Litz made her own reputation worse with her online writings). But some very decent folks might want to open their arms to a "reformed" snitch. All we can say is, if you want to go that way, make damned sure the rat has actually reformed first — and can prove it through actions, not mere words.

A modern shunning

In the mid-1990s, Bob Black was a very well-known anarchist. Then, after a personal dispute with fellow writer Jim Hogshire and Hogshire's wife (a "he said-she said" encounter whose facts are known only to the three who were present), Black did the unthinkable.

And in this case the unthinkable was verifiable. On February 21, 1996, Black wrote a letter to the Narcotics Division of the Seattle Police Department, accusing Hogshire of a multitude of drug crimes, and implying that Hogshire was armed and dangerous.

Paramilitary police descended on the Hogshires' apartment. They confiscated perfectly legal items (including dried poppies and a mug

warmer they mistook for a drug-weighing scale). Both Jim and Heidi Hogshire spent three days in jail. Even though a judge eventually dismissed the charges, Black's accusation made a hellacious mess of Hogshire's life, cost him tens of thousands of dollars, and contributed to the breakup of his marriage.

In the long run, however, it was Black who paid the bigger price. His publisher (who was also Hogshire's publisher) destroyed all remaining inventory of Black's books and published an article exposing Black's perfidy. Another publisher Black had worked with wrote an open letter in defense of Hogshire. Years later, archives all over the Internet still tell the story; you can easily find a copy of Black's snitch letter. Although as of this writing, Black has managed to keep his Wikipedia page scrubbed of the gory details, the evidence will be out there on other sites as long as he lives and few people will ever again give serious credence to an "anarchist" who reports people to the cops the moment he gets irritated with them.

Repairing the damage snitches do

Unfortunately, it's quite possible you'll never be able to repair the damage done by a snitch. You or someone you care about may end up in prison, broke, or otherwise badly hurt. A group or movement you belong to may collapse or members may split off in anger and distrust.

As one former government agent pointed out after reviewing a draft of this book, ruining activist groups is "at least one of the auxiliary functions of snitches."

But finding a snitch in your midst can also be a valuable learning experience.

It can teach you the importance of good security practices.

It can reveal who's trustworthy and who's not.

It can teach group members not only to be less gullible, but teach them what signs to look for when a snitch is targeting them.

Uncovering a snitch can help the remaining trustworthy members of a group to pull together.

If you're lucky and the activities of your snitch are particularly egregious, you might even get sympathy, donations, or renewed positive attention once good people realize what evil that person and her handlers tried to do to you.

In part, the long-term results of being targeted by a snitch depend on how you and your associates handle the problem. After the initial shock and recovery, look upon it as a chance to learn and teach others.

Beware of accusing someone who might not be a snitch

It can be very, very difficult to detect a snitch — until it's too late. We sometimes face the evil choice of making a false accusation against an innocent person or keeping quiet about our suspicions and ending up with somebody (maybe even us) getting busted.

The damage a false accusation of snitching can do is horrifying. First, an innocent person suffers a grave wrong. He loses his reputation unjustly. She may be attacked by others. Second, your group of associates may break down in chaos. Your real work may suffer.

Then — this also happens — a wrongly accused person who gets expelled, shunned, or attacked *may actually become a snitch in revenge.*

It's also important to remember that a person who makes a false accusation of snitching is acting like a snitch himself. And in fact, one tactic a snitch might use to divert suspicion from herself is to point the finger at someone else.

So if you suspect someone of snitching but you have no solid reason for your suspicions, it's usually just best to detach yourself from the person while remaining watchful. Do not do anything in that person's presence or within that person's knowledge that you wouldn't do in front of your mother. Quietly encourage others to be watchful (it's just good OpSec, after all), but do not make public accusations without real reason.

Is there a danger in such a wait-and-see approach? You betcha. Around snitches, and in a "snitch culture" like ours, there is *always* danger in many forms.

PART THREE
WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU GET BUSTED?

You may be pressured to become a snitch

It happens all too often these days. You get busted and the next thing you know the cops are either threatening you or sweet-talking you into snitching on somebody else. They may promise to "help" you if you agree to become an informant. They may tell you that a friend arrested with you is already singing like a bird, and you should, too, if you want to save your ass (see "The Prisoner's Dilemma" later in this book). They may say they already "know everything," so you might as well tell "your side of the story" to make others look worse than you. If they think you're particularly dumb and harmless, they might even take you out and buy you donuts while talking you into being their pawn (yes, Philadelphia cops actually did that in their successful effort to turn anti-drug-war activist Stacy Litz into a drug-war informant).

You may imagine, sitting here reading this, that you'd never, ever, ever stoop to snitching on other people. But the fact is, until we've been tested, not one of us really knows what we might do under the right kind of pressure or persuasion.

The good news is that just a bit of advanced preparation can help any of us understand how police get us to work against our own interests and how they turn scared people into informants. Some pretty minimal knowledge can help us protect ourselves and our rights. Some of this knowledge can help us avoid being busted in the first place. Some of it can help us withstand the cynical manipulations of cops and prosecutors if we do get busted.

IMPORTANT: Please read the article on the Reid interrogation technique (TM) that appears toward the end of this booklet. The Reid technique is used by police to manipulate arrestees into cooperating — which may include everything from confessing to a crime you didn't (or did) commit to agreeing to rat out your friends.

The article was written by a man who, as a young outlaw, was twice subjected to Reid interrogations. He then grew up to study and employ the Reid Technique in his profession as an auditor/investigator.

Read and heed it. You're far less susceptible to manipulation once you understand how the manipulation works.

Do NOT talk to cops. Period.

And remember: Everything we say about not talking to cops also goes for every, single kind of government agent, local, state, national, or international.

If you are confronted by a law-enforcement officer under any circumstances — at your front door, during a traffic stop, because you've been fingered by a snitch, or for any reason whatsoever — *DO NOT TALK*. If you get arrested, *DO NOT TALK*.

The only things you should *ever* say to a police officer are things like these:

No, you may not search my vehicle.

No, you may not enter my home.

I do not consent to any search.

Am I free to go?

On the advice of my lawyer, I cannot talk to you.

I will not talk without my lawyer present.

You should never lie to a cop because that in itself may be a crime.

You should never imagine you can outsmart a cop with clever talk. They've heard it all.

You should resist the temptation to babble nervously (very difficult for some of us).

Do not try to explain yourself (also very difficult for some of us).

Do not try to talk your way out of a situation *except* where

you can state a legal or constitutional principle that demonstrates your innocence. This is a technique that can be used by people who photograph or videotape cops at work, people who legally open-carry weapons, or people who are legally protesting. (Even then you may still get busted and/or beat up, but you'll be creating a case in your favor that might come in useful later.)

Oh yeah. And if you get tossed into jail, *DON'T TALK TO YOUR CELLMATES OR THE JAILERS, EITHER*. You can chitty-chat with your cellmates to pass the time and keep them from thinking you're a jerk; you can probably also learn quite a bit from them. But *DO NOT TALK* about anything to do with your case. Even if you don't think you're admitting anything incriminating, you're opening yourself up to every jailbird who might want to trade information, even false information about you, to the cops.

JUST SHUT UP!

TIP: Know a good lawyer, keep his or her card on you, and insist on talking to that lawyer if you ever get busted or even accosted by a cop who won't take no for an answer.

Avoid using public defenders if you can. Not all of them are bad, but many of them are overworked and/or just geared to processing cases as fast as they can. They often deal with petty criminals who expect nothing more than to be "processed." With rare and noble exceptions, they are probably not your best resource if you really hope to be represented as you wish.

Attorney safety tip:

This video, mentioned again in the appendices, is possibly the best and most useful 49 minutes you will spend on this topic without paying an attorney first:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZGgKLgVNfAo

The police officer is NOT your friend

Again remember: Everything we say about not talking to cops also goes for every, single kind of government agent, local, state, national, or international.

Contrary to what you might have learned in kindergarten ... contrary to what you might hope ... and contrary to the image the officer might be trying to fake ... *THE POLICE OFFICER IS NOT YOUR FRIEND*. Let us say that again, just in case you didn't get it the first time: *THE POLICE OFFICER IS NOT YOUR FRIEND*.

Unless you've been living in a cave most of your life, you've probably heard of the "bad cop/good cop" technique. When you've been arrested and are being interrogated, one cop will bully and intimidate you until you're just a little puddle of terror. Then another cop (who may be present at the same time or who may come in later) will pretend to sympathize with you and want to "help" you.

Don't *ever* believe it.

If you've done your proper work and just said no to interrogation or said you'd only speak with your lawyer present, you may avoid this

Attorney safety tip:

[In the bad cop/good cop technique]

Officer A will threaten you, your family, your friends, your pets, with severe harm going back nigh unto the 10th generation. Officer B will then call him off and suggest that "just a little cooperation" on your part will help avert all that.

Also be aware that sometimes they don't HAVE to lie to get what they want from you. Seriously, I've lost count of the number of defendants I've dealt with who were skaaaaaREWED by talking to the PD and who told me, "But the officer was so NIIIICE." Not every officer is going to be Officer McGruff - the "Officer Friendly" model can achieve amazing results.

particular form of manipulation. But wherever and whenever you meet a cop — or any federal agent or investigator, a jailer or a prosecutor — who acts like he's "on your side" or wants to "help" you or promises to get the system to "go lighter on you" — *DON'T YOU BELIEVE IT!*

The Prisoner's Dilemma

When "the authorities" have arrested you and want to turn you into a snitch, they have a powerful phenomenon on their side. It's particularly useful if you've been busted along with friends or associates, or even if the cops persuade you that they have busted or will soon be busting others in your circle. (And remember again, cops are among the biggest liars on the planet.)

In game theory, the phenomenon is called The Prisoner's Dilemma. It works something like this:

Two (or more) people are arrested but the police don't have enough information to convict either of you.

They separate the arrestees and offer each a similar deal; if you cooperate (testify against your friend, agree to become a snitch) and your friend remains silent, you'll go free. Your friend will be hit with the full legal penalty.

On the other hand, if you rat each other out, you may both get a lesser sentence.

On yet another hand, you realize that if you both remain silent, you *both* may go free — but you have absolutely no idea what your companion is doing — and the cops have given you both quite a lot of incentive to rat each other out.

In game theory, according to Wikipedia, "... the logical decision leads each to betray the other, even though their individual 'prize' would be greater if they cooperated." In reality, if you and your fellow arrestee were allowed to discuss your decisions, you'd probably both opt to clam up; it's part of the goodness of human beings that we'd rather cooperate than betray. However, the police are going to keep you apart through this process as best they can, which makes the temptation to betray seem the only logical, self-protective course of action.

Sitting here, safely reading this booklet, you might very well say to yourself, "I'm a good person. I would never rat out my friend." You imagine yourself thrusting out your chin and saying, "NO!" no matter what the personal cost to you.

And there are really some people who would do that. But they're in the minority.

In reality, you don't know how scared you'd be. You might be sitting there worrying about what your mother would think if you went to jail. You might be terrified of losing your job and being unable to pay your bills. You may have a pet or child at home you're desperate to get back to. The police will remind you that if you go to jail you'd be leaving your newborn baby or disabled spouse without protection. The police might badger you until you'll agree to anything just to have some peace.

Relationships between friends and associates complicate matters, too. Seeking self-justification, you might tell yourself you're just an innocent who got dragged into the whole situation by the other person. You might think, "Hm, well Bill's probably ratting me out right now," or "Well, there was that time when Mary didn't treat me fairly, so why should I sacrifice myself for her?" One snitch justified her betrayal of principle by telling herself that she'd be "more effective" as a political activist if she didn't go to jail; she told herself she would only snitch on certain people, ones she didn't know well or like very much.

So you never know.

If you're arrested and more than one person in your circle might join you, the only way to avoid The Prisoner's Dilemma is to decide in advance that you *WILL NOT TALK* and make sure all your associates are well schooled in their legal right to keep silent. Have them read this booklet!

But as always, there are no guarantees. We keep saying that. It's sadly true.

Mindset: The common territory between snitches and victims

Another reason that it's often easy for cops to turn victims into snitches is that there's sometimes a common mindset between people who snitch and people who fall into the traps set by snitches.

Obviously, this isn't true of everybody who gets busted or otherwise becomes the target of a snitch. But both snitches and their easiest "marks" are frequently:

Overly naive and trusting

Unprepared for bad things happening to them

Cocky and overly confident

Loudmouthed or prone to blat information without thinking

Prone to believe that "nice" cops really do want to "help" them (yes, it's another form of being overly naive and trusting, but it bears repeating because if you get caught because you trusted a rat you're more likely to turn around and trust that rat's handlers)

Very good at rationalizing their own less-than-stellar behavior

(Or conversely) So idealistic and starry-eyed that reality, when it hits, knocks them for a loop.

What happens if you refuse to snitch?

If you refuse to snitch or otherwise cooperate with government, the prosecutor may pin more charges on you and may pursue them with more determination. Worse, prosecutors may threaten to bring charges against those you love.

Or that may not happen. Sometimes pressure to snitch is just a gambit and nothing terrible will happen to you for refusing.

If you do refuse to snitch and "the man" becomes more threatening, consider going public with your courageous refusal. This *might* offer you some protection and will very likely gain you friends and supporters. As soon as you're out on bail, tell your associates what happened to you. Blog about it. Put it out on social media. Explain the kind of pressures that were put on you. Describe what you felt and endured. Describe why and how you refused to become a tool of the police.

You'll be wise if you have a good lawyer on your side from the get-go. Our helpful attorney notes: "This is a good reason for 'lawyering up' in the first place. People make fun of lawyers, but there's a *reason* we exist. Of course, keep in mind that the prosecutor is a lawyer, too, so it's not necessarily all to the good."

What if your lawyer advises you to snitch?

Some lawyers in some circumstances will advise a client to go ahead and accept an offer to snitch in exchange for more lenient treatment. Sometimes there are practical reasons: you're guilty as hell, the cops have the evidence to prove it, and your lawyer thinks that cooperating would be the best way for you to avoid a long prison sentence. Sometimes, on the other hand, your lawyer's just a lazy SOB who doesn't give much of a damn and thinks turning snitch is the easiest resolution — for him.

If you are strongly opposed to snitches and snitching, tell your lawyer up front that, whatever else happens, you're not going to do that. Then if your lawyer pressures you to accept any agreement that

involves snitching, get a new lawyer.

And remember, it'll probably help your case a lot if you AVOID TALKING TO THE POLICE. AT ALL.

What happens if you become a snitch — and regret it?

If you are reasonably cautious in your real-world dealings and if you have prepared yourself NOT TO TALK TO GOVERNMENT AGENTS, the chances are good that nobody will successfully arm-twist or sweet-talk you into becoming a snitch. Even if you get busted, you'll handle yourself in a way that will make you less vulnerable to manipulation. (NOT TALKING may also help you in other ways, but here we're just talking about avoiding being pressured into snitching.)

But the simple fact is that *anybody* can break under the right kind of pressure — and government agents are trained in sophisticated terror and manipulation tactics. Once you fall into their clutches, you may simply be in over your head. So what if, under pressure, you agree to become a snitch — and regret it later? What if you agree to do it, then before you actually snitch on anybody, you realize you don't want to, can't, and won't betray other people?

If you become a snitch and *don't* regret it enough to stop, then to hell with you.

But having agreed to snitch, then changed your mind, you've got a tough dilemma and you could use some assistance getting out of it. You are going to have to be careful, brave, and more than a little bit lucky to handle the situation well.

First, you need a GOOD lawyer. You should have had one before you agreed to snitch, but definitely get one to advise you now.

Consider going public with your situation. Tell your associates what happened to you. Blog about it. Put your story out on social media. Explain the kind of pressures that were put on you. Describe what you felt and endured while being pushed into agreeing to snitch. Then state in the strongest terms

why you realized you would not and could not do it.

Be prepared to lose some friends. You may *gain* friends and supporters by openly revealing how the cops treated you and how you ultimately resisted. But some people will distrust you; that's just reality.

What happens to you if you snitch and your friends find out?

Chances are, if you're a non-violent political activist or small-time dealer of "college type" drugs who got busted and turned, your friends will hate you but won't beat you up or kill you if they learn you snitched on them.

However, your reputation will be ruined and good luck earning it back.

If you snitch and get caught, at the very least be ready to humbly accept whatever those you betrayed dish out to you; you only make things worse by making excuses.

If your snitching has gotten others into legal trouble, you should accept that, at the very least, you owe them restitution. This may be difficult to do, especially since you may be facing serious criminal charges and huge expenses yourself. But it's your responsibility and you'll have to do it if you ever expect to be taken seriously again.

If you are part of a violent group or you deal hard drugs, don't be surprised if you get killed. Or as our helpful attorney says (with a nod to Captain Mal Reynolds of *Firefly*), "Prepare to be surprised very briefly. Or perhaps not so briefly; torture may be involved first."

The rest of your life if you do snitch

If you agree to snitch on your friends or associates, know in advance that you're going to have a big price to pay.

At best, snitches have to spend the rest of their lives looking over their shoulders.

Your "friends" in the police department or any federal agency that you snitch for will turn out not to be your real friends. They will toss you aside like a piece of maggoty meat when you no longer serve their purposes. Those promises they made to protect your anonymity? *Maybe* they'll keep them, but they're just as likely to leak your name or "accidentally" put your name into a public document. They may even force you into life-threatening situations and not give one bit of a damn what happens to you. After all, you're just a snitch. Snitches are a dime a dozen — and even the cops know they're scum.

Want to see how much "love" cops give their snitches? Read this *New Yorker* article about young, naive — and now DEAD — snitches. (The Throwaways [1].)

Your snitching will probably not be important enough to earn you a spot in the Witness Protection Program, not even if you put your life in danger for your cop-handlers' sake.

You will be on your own and in peril.

You will have to live with yourself and if you have any self-awareness at all, every time you look in a mirror, a person you don't want to be will stare back at you.

If you snitch on friends or otherwise-harmless people, you should and (if you have any decency) you will feel an obligation to make things right by paying restitution or

[1] http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/09/03/120903fa_fact_stillman

campaigning to get them out of prison. This obligation, which you might never be able to fulfill, could haunt you the rest of your life.

On the other hand, things could be resolved very easily. Your betrayed associates may kill you and you won't have to worry about any of this.

APPENDIX 1

The Reid Interrogation Technique (TM)
By "Just Waiting"

Okay, so you find yourself under arrest because of a snitch. Hopefully you've listened to the advice earlier in this booklet. You've cleaned up your act and your surroundings once you knew there was a snitch in your midst, and the only thing you were arrested for is information given by the snitch.

First thing to understand: Once you are arrested, ALL of the rights you had as a US citizen are gone except for two: the right to remain silent and the right to have an attorney present during questioning. USE THEM!!!

No one in law enforcement (LE) is your friend, and NO ONE wants to "help" you. They only want you to confess and do their will.

The police can and will lie to you. DO NOT LIE TO THEM!!! More on that later. They will tell you they have evidence/witnesses/tapes that don't exist. They'll poke, prod, and push every button they can to try to get you to respond. They'll tell you your friends are snitching on you in the other room. They'll tell you the only way to save yourself is to tell your side of the story. They'll threaten to call your boss. They'll tell you your kids are going to be taken away and raised by the state. They'll tell you how it will ruin your parents' reputation. They'll even tell you your dog is ugly. They'll make wild, baseless accusations — anything to get a response. Because once they get you to *start* talking, they're trained in how to *keep* you talking.

If you don't trust yourself to exercise your right to remain silent, exercise the second and ask for a lawyer. Remember, you can decide to remain silent or ask for a lawyer at any time during your questioning or interrogation.

You know the kinds of things you've been doing. If you are a high-value target, if you know or associate with high value targets, or if your activities rise to the level of interest that police want to question you, LE agencies employ an interrogation method known as the Reid Technique. It is a method of interview and interrogation (read: psychological manipulation) specifically designed to produce confessions.

That is one big reason you should heed the earlier advice and NOT TALK TO POLICE AT ALL. But I've interviewed/interrogated maybe 100 or more people and I've found, almost as a rule, that people have the hardest time keeping quiet. They want to defend themselves, to tell their story. I've yet to meet the person who can sit quiet for 10 minutes while someone else talks about them, even less when lies and untrue accusations start to fill the air. Even for someone who has regular, unfavorable contact with LE, even people like me who have been Reided, the hardest thing to do is to shut up. When someone makes a statement or allegation, its human nature to want to refute it.

So, if you find yourself being interrogated and you feel you *must* defend yourself, at least try to minimize the damage.

First: As I've said before, DO NOT LIE TO LE! You will get caught. Lies change with every telling, but the truth remains a constant. LE are trained in detecting the smallest, subtlest change in your story and ripping it wide open. Dante himself did not imagine a torture in hell like what you will experience from LE if you get caught lying to them. Plus, you are now subject to arrest for new charges, usually, Lying to LE or Obstruction, indictable crimes, and you've done so on tape. This is how some of LE's best snitches are made!

Second: If you can truthfully do so, DENY EVERYTHING. Do it simply and categorically. Don't ramble and make excuses. Just say, "I didn't do it," "I'm innocent," "That's false." As you'll see below, they'll do everything within their power to try to stop you from doing this. If you cannot honestly declare your innocence, then just say, "I want a lawyer."

Third: If you feel you have to answer an incriminating question, qualify your answer. “I don’t think I was at⋯," "I don’t recall seeing⋯," and "I may have met⋯” are all appropriate qualifiers to prevent telling an outright lie.

LE has studied the meaning of every move, every movement, every facial expression, every question, every answer. They identify and exploit weaknesses you didn’t know you had. They watch and hear everything you do and say for meaning.

Repeat the question before answering? That answer is a lie.

Little or no direct eye contact? You’re evasive.

Too much direct eye contact? You’re cocky and/or confrontational.

Change from “is" to “was" or “a” to “the”? You’re changing your story to hide something.

Sit up straight, slouch, fold your arms in your lap, fold them across your chest? You’re scared, you’re cocky, you’re defensive. Every movement, posture and expression has a meaning to LE.

The surest way to know the Reid Technique is about to be used is the room they put you in after you’re arrested. You’ll know it when they open the door. And once they open that door, the ONLY WAY TO SAVE YOURSELF IS TO ASK FOR A LAWYER! Once the interrogation begins, LE won’t stop until you ask for a lawyer or they’ve gotten what they want. Remember, you can ask for a lawyer at any time during the

interrogation, do not be afraid to do so!

Interrogation rooms are specially designed to make you as uncomfortable and out of your element as possible. Your chair is the hard one, in the corner, furthest from the door, and behind some type of barrier, like a desk. Your interrogators will take positions clearly letting you know that they are in total control, that you are in their world, and the only way out of the room is through them. You can't get to the lights or thermostat. They'll turn the heat up (I once knew an interrogator who wore a sweater and complained of a chill in a 90+ degree room, talk about psychological manipulation), brighten or darken the room, etc. They'll create a physically intimidating presence without ever touching you. For maybe the first time in your life, your freedom is completely stripped away and you are confined. Control of every aspect of your physical condition has been stolen from you. When you are at your most vulnerable, the interrogators are ready to begin.

Reid is broken down into three parts, **Factual Analysis**, the **Initial Behavioral Analysis Interview**, and the **Interrogation**.

Factual Analysis is just what it says, an analysis of the facts in a case. Prior to talking to you, the LE tries to learn everything there is to know about the event leading to your arrest. They've gotten a story from a snitch. They know the date, time, how many people were there, some names, some physical descriptions, the drugs dealt or the damages caused.

Today, LE is on your Facebook page learning everything they can about you while developing their interrogation strategy. They'll try to know as much about you as your best friend, and use it to try to be your friend. Your favorite band? The LEO saw them last tour. Have a cat, dog, fish? The cop is so sad, he just had to put down his 16-year-old catdogfish yesterday. His wife went to the same school as you, different years. Wow, so much in common, you two could be pals. Have a pic of you and your mom? Jackpot, he'll use her later, in his

interrogation.

The **Initial Behavioral Analysis** is supposed to weed out innocent suspects, but in reality this is where LE determines your susceptibility to further questioning and picks the strategy they will use against you. IBA starts the moment of your first contact with LE. The law-enforcement officer (LEO) asks simple, conversational, non-accusatory questions and listens to the way you frame your answers, watches your facial expressions, the way you stand. LEO has been trained in what every action and movement mean. Within the first 30 seconds, LEO knows whether you will be susceptible to questioning and if he'll be able to get you to talk. If LEO asks if you know the time, remember that that's a yes or no question. If you answer, "Yes, its 3:30," you've shown a willingness to please and to give more information than is asked. You're a perfect candidate for successful interrogation!

The official Reid **Interrogation** has nine steps, beginning with an accusation of guilt and ending with a confession. To LE, there are no other acceptable outcomes. If you were arrested as a result of a snitch, and took the advice of being arrested clean, LE has nothing more than the accusations the snitch has made. Remember, don't lie, but if you can't resist talking, at least DENY EVERYTHING! A good lawyer will rip a snitch apart and develop reasonable doubt in the eyes of a judge or jury. Snitching and witness credibility don't exactly go hand-in-hand.

LE will invariably offer you a chance to "tell your side." This is cop talk for "make a full confession." Cops brag at parties about how fast they have gotten suspects to do it.

If you don't start wailing and confess to everything, the next thing they'll try is shifting blame. They'll try to blame someone else and suggest that maybe you weren't involved but just got caught up in things. They'll give you scenarios in which to minimize your participation and guilt. They'll try to make it

somehow socially acceptable, suggesting it was a crime of passion rather than a premeditated event. LE calls it "developing a theme," what they're really doing is presenting options for you to pick from to confess to. React to *any one* of their scenarios or agree to anything they suggest here, and you're not getting away until you sign a confession and give them the names and information they want.

All throughout, LE will do everything they can to keep you from denying your "guilt." They will disrupt you mid-word, tell you to shut up, tell you it's not your turn to talk, anything just to keep you from denying your guilt. They will try to talk over any claim of innocence so that denials are never clear on the recordings.

Why? Because opposing what LEO is saying builds self-confidence, something they're working hard to strip from you.

And secondly (and maybe more importantly), if you continue to deny, dispute, deny for the first 1, 2, 3, or 4 hours of the interrogation, then confess to something in hour 5, a good lawyer will demonstrate coercive interrogation tactics were used and hopefully have your confession thrown out.

So qualify if you have to lie. Remember those "iffy" statements ("I don't recall ..."), but deny being there, deny any knowledge of events, deny knowing people, deny everything you honestly can.

If you haven't asked for a lawyer and haven't been denying, the interrogation moves on to the next steps. This is where a new LEO might come in. He understands your situation, he's sympathetic, he's your buddy, he doesn't agree with the other LEO's interrogation tactics, either. He'll tell you he's been watching and that to him, you don't seem to be the kind of person who could do something like what you're accused of. He'll tell you he wants to help you. You've seen good cop/bad cop on TV, well, this is it in real life.

Good cop will appear to be sincerely caring about your predicament. He'll talk quietly. He'll lay out a bunch of different scenarios that minimize your guilt, all the while looking for the clue you give him that he's hit on a winning theme to follow. And that clue is so subtle you don't even know you've given it. But he does.

Good cop will give you acceptable justifications. He'll give you two options, you planned what happened or it was just a one-time thing. With either option, you're still making a confession. Good cop always leaves out option #3, you can DENY that you're guilty at all!

Good cop wants to see your tears; he knows he has you when you cry.

Once you have been broken down and are ready to admit to anything (search on "Central Park Jogger case" for false confessions) LEO will attempt to get you to tell your story to his associates or write down and sign your story. All of your protest and denial has been for nothing once you confess.

So remember these three key points: 1) The police are not your friends and do not want to help you; 2) If you don't trust yourself to remain silent, demand a lawyer (you can do so at any time); and 3) if you feel you just have to talk — don't lie, qualify and especially if you're innocent, deny, deny, deny.

APPENDIX 2

Some Commonsense OpSec

These commonsense OpSec (operational security) tips are for any group or any individual whose activities might draw the attention of the state. Some will protect you against snitches. Some will just protect you, period. The author is MJR, who works in security.

If you wish to have a private conversation, leave your home and your office and go outside and take a walk or go somewhere public and notice who is near you. Don't say anything you don't want to hear repeated when there is any possibility of being recorded.

Never leave a copy of a document or list behind (unless you want it found) and take a minute to duplicate an irreplaceable document and keep the duplicate in a safe place. Back up and store important computer disks off site. Sensitive data and membership list should be kept under lock and key.

Keep your mailing lists, donor lists and personal phone books away from light-fingered people. Always maintain a duplicate off site in a safe place.

Know your printer if you are about to publish, your mailing house and anyone you are trusting to work on any part of a project that is sensitive.

Don't hire a stranger as a messenger.

Checks for electronic surveillance are only effective for the time they are being done, and are only effective as they are being done if you are sure of the person(s) doing the sweep.

Don't use code on the phone. If you are being tapped and the transcript is used against you in court, the coded conversation can be alleged to be anything. Don't say anything on the phone you don't want to hear in open court.

Don't gossip on the phone. Smut is valuable to anyone listening; it makes everyone vulnerable.

If you are being followed, get the license number and description of the car and people in the car. Photograph the person(s) following you or have a friend do so.

If you are followed or feel vulnerable, call a friend; don't "tough it out" alone. They are trying to frighten you.

Start a 'Facts, Acts and Circumstantial file.' After each incident write details down: facts are the time, date, occasion, incident, characteristics of the person(s). Acts are what they did; Circumstantial is the impressions and anything odd about the situation. Use the FAC file and keep notes from unsettling situations and see if a pattern emerges.

Do freedom of information requests for your file under the FOIA and pursue the agencies until they give you all the documents filed under your name.

Brief your group on known or suspected surveillance.

Report thefts of materials from your office or home to the police as criminal acts.

Assess your undertaking from a security point of view; understand your vulnerabilities; assess your allies and your adversaries as objectively as you can; don't underestimate the opposition and don't take chances.

Recognize your organizational and personal strengths and weaknesses.

Discuss incidents with cohorts, family and your group.

Call the press if you have hard information about surveillance or harassment. Discussion makes the dirty work of the snitches overt.

Addendum on note-taking (Facts, Acts, and Circumstantial)

Although some might consider the following to be overkill, MJR also has experience facing opponents in court and offers this brief primer on taking the kind of notes that can guide you through a very tough grilling by police or prosecutors. He writes:

When preparing a "Facts, Acts, and, Circumstantial" list you are going to have to take notes about what is going on. The notes should be written in a clear and concise way. Use professional language and be prepared to substantiate what you record. One never knows, you could be wrong and get sued or if you do get arrested this could be the basis for a defense from entrapment.

The notebook that you use should be lined with a margin on the left. Each page should be numbered.

What to put in the notebook to make it legal

First you should start with the date. Then on the next line write the weather conditions. The reason for the record of what the weather was like is that the usual first question from a prosecutor or the other side's lawyer usually is about the weather. This is an attempt to discredit your memory.

When you make your first entry, write the time an event happened in the left margin. Next write down what happened or what you found and write down the location (address or approximate location). Then write down the actions taken by those involved and the names and addresses of any witnesses. If you make a mistake draw one line through the word and write your initials next to it. Oh and don't leave any lines blank. If more things happen during the day they all go under the same date. If the date changes you should start a new date with the weather. When you finish the last entry of the day sign your name. This makes it a legal document. Write the notes as soon as possible after an incident. Last, but never least... If you are going to use this book in court under no circumstances should you rip out any of the pages, this will only give the other side ammo to use against you. The questions you will face will revolve around you hiding something.

Here is an example of what the notebook should look like

	2012-08-02
	Sunny with a few clouds, 73 deg.
09:23	I met with ***** ******** at the
	Duncan Donuts, 123 west St.
	AnyPlace, NY. He wanted to know if
	we were going to "Teach the man a
	lesson." I told him that I would let
	him know when later. I then set a
	date and time for the next meeting.
09:44	After he left I spoke with the server,
	Betty Lou Findley. I asked her if she
	had heard what Mr. *** Had said. She
	answered yes and said she thought he
	was a little weird.
09:51	I left the Duncan Donuts.
	John P Anybody
	2012-08-06
	Overcast with light rain, 69 deg.
17:52	I was talking with ***** *******, 23
	North Ave.. At 87 south crt. Any
	Place NY. He told me that he saw
	***** ******* the subject talking with
	an undercover police officer. I asked
	how he knew it was a cop, he said
	that he followed the cop to the
	police station. Mr. ******** told me
	that he saw the subject at a Denny's,
	989 Big Blvd, Anyplace NY.
18:12	Mr. ******* left and I went home.
	John P Anybody

APPENDIX 3

Line up a lawyer

I've adapted this from advice handed out by the helpful, anonymous lawyer whose tips have appeared throughout this booklet.

How to hire the *right* lawyer

1. Every person engaging in or planning to engage in illegal or controversial activities *needs* to have an attorney already on line. After you've been busted and are standing around at the police station is NOT a good time to be leafing through the yellow pages. At least not if you're serious about avoiding a long stay in custody.

2. You should also expect to drop some money up front on a consultation with a potential defense attorney. Again, calling from a police station is NOT a good moment to find out that the attorney whose number you've been carrying in your pocket hates your cause, doesn't take cases like yours, or has a conflict of interest. (In theory, even an attorney who hates you and everything you do should be able to give you a good defense; but that varies and is definitely not worth the risk. Make sure you and the attorney are comfortable with and have some reasonable basis for trusting each other, because if you get in trouble you are going to have to be seriously ready to open up to your attorney if you want a chance of winning.)

3. Former DAs and former public defenders are a good first choice. But bear in mind that DAs often are of the "lock-em-all-up" frame of mind, while public defenders are frequently used to just pleading their clients out to get the best deal possible, without concern for actual guilt or innocence. This is another reason you want to have consulted with the attorney BEFORE you need one. And yes, this may well mean you go through a couple interviews and pay a couple of fees before you find the "right one."

4. By interview I mean "find out how much the lawyer charges for

a half-hour of time on a consult then go in expecting to pay that." When you first interview an attorney, you don't have to lay out in detail what you're up to — perhaps just say that you're a free-speech advocate or a drug legalization advocate (or whatever the general truth is) and that you have been advised to have a good criminal defense attorney on tap because these days even innocent people are at peril from snitches and sloppy justice. Ask the attorney's thoughts on your general activities. His or her length of time working in criminal defense (generally longer is better, but not always). His or her experience with people who've been accused by snitches. His or her willingness to show up at 2:00 a.m. if that's when you get busted (not *per se* a deal killer, but be prepared to spend the night in jail otherwise).

5. If you already have an attorney you like and trust, but who doesn't do criminal law, you can ask who he or she would recommend. Again, you'd still want to do an advance consult/interview with your proposed attorney. Spending a few dollars on a consultation can save you a LOT of money and headaches down the road.

6. Never forget your right to remain silent, except for, "I'd like my attorney, please." Repeat as necessary.

APPENDIX 4

Other helpful resources

Dealing with snitches

Snitch — Transcript of a PBS/Frontline documentary on the whole dirty business of snitching.
www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/snitch/etc/script.html

Got the Hollow Tips for Snitches — How radical groups of the past have dealt with snitches and how contemporary groups can learn from the past.
http://news.infoshop.org/article.php?story=20090106144310830

How to Handle the Snitch at Trial —This guide, by lawyer Jeffrey W. Jensen, is written for defense attorneys. If you get in trouble because of a snitch, it might help your defense.
www.jensendefense.com/hereshow/handlesnitches.html

How cops deal with snitches

"The Throwaways"— A *New Yorker* article on young, naive snitches who were murdered because the cops they were pressured into working for didn't give a rat's butt about them.
www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/09/03/120903fa_fact_stillman

Online advice on dealing with police

Flex Your Rights —This organization has online videos, DVDs, and tons of advice on how to handle yourself during police encounters. Topics include "Don't get tricked," "When do I have to show ID?," "How to refuse searches," "10 Rules for dealing with the police," and much more.
www.flexyourrights.org/

Don't Talk to the Police — A law-school professor (former defense attorney) and a cop explain why you should never, ever talk to police even (and perhaps especially) if you're innocent, even if you're telling the 100% truth. This explains, in graphic detail, with examples, about how police will twist your words and/or lie about you if you say *anything at all* to them. www.youtube.com/watch?v=6wXkI4t7nuc

An online guide to interrogation techniques— This site contains an extract from TM 30-210 Dept. Army Technical Manual "Interrogation Procedures." Although designed to *teach* interrogation, it can also help victims of interrogation recognize and thwart typical intimidation and questioning techniques. www.uboatarchive.net/POWInterrogationArmyTechnicalManual.htm

Books

You & the Police! by Boston T. Party

Snitch Culture: How Citizens are Turned into the Eyes and Ears of the State by Jim Redden

Snitch: Informants, Cooperators, and the Corruption of Justice by Ethan Brown