

[Home \(/\)](#)

[About](#)

[The Association \(/The-Association\)](#)

[Code Of Ethics \(/Code-Of-Ethics\)](#)

[Our Partners \(/Our-Partners\)](#)

[Contact \(/Contact\)](#)

[Courses \(/Courses\)](#)

[News \(/News\)](#)

[MEMBERSHIP \(/MEMBERSHIP\)](#)

[12 April 2017 \(/news/2017/4/12/interview-with-the-director-general\)](#)

Interview with the Director General (/news/2017/4/12/interview-with-the-director-general)

April 2017 interview with Director General of the IBA, Jim Shortt by Nataša Gajski Kovačić, Executive Editor of Zaštita (Protection) Magazine Zagreb on the 60th Anniversary of the IBA's foundation.

Can you, please, compare the IBA organisation at the beginning of 1990 when you started to lead that organisation with nowadays?

I was willed control of the IBA by Lucien Ott in the final days of his terminal illness in February 1990 with the stipulation I continue his work. At a meeting on the 20th July 1989, that I attended in Paris Lucien laid a written blueprint for the IBA. The main areas addressed were

- IBA Membership (Individual & Corporate)
- National Offices
- Instructor programme and regulation
- Licensing of IBA Courses.

I had served as President of the IBA for 2 consecutive years in the mid 1980s while director of projects with Special Training Services of which Lucien was also a director under our chairman Vice Admiral Sir Peter Austin and Viscount John Slim. When I returned in February 1988 from Afghanistan Lucien appointed me in full time employment with IBA as both International Co-ordinator (Administration) and Director of Training (Technical), Following Lucien's death in February 1990 I rejected the title of President for my position but chose Director General to cover both my previous roles. On Lucien's business card he had called the IBA HQ – Direction Générale. From February 1990 I pursued the twin objectives of Organisation and Training in developing the IBA.

My primary mission was that the IBA should continue to develop as a protection brains trust and not like so many training bodies both government and corporate become simply a museum of past technique. To achieve this meant pursuing 'best practice' and 'bodyguard tradecraft' rather than the usual 'monkey see-monkey do' mentality found in most bodyguard 'kindergardens'. Since February 1990 the IBA has expanded globally on to 5 continents, registered with the United Nations as an INGO, with the Union of International Associations in Bruxelles, protected our logos with OHIM of the European Union and increased our membership 2000%.

Can you tell us some IBA figures, like number of associated members, network and training programs?

The International Bodyguard Register lists nearly 7000 graduates holding the '100 hours' internationally numbered badge with Lucien Ott's badge being 001. In addition we have 5500 probationer (less than 100 hrs training) graduates, 58 social (honourary) members and 634 Associate members.

The IBA programmes exist at 3 levels:

- Foundation (International Bodyguard Skills course—100 hrs)
- Specialist (intermediate)
- Advanced

Our instructors have to graduate as CIBG (Certified International Bodyguards) then achieve Moniteur grade and all instructors, both Instructeur and Professeur must renew their qualification every 2 years.

Courses are arranged under licence with annually appointed National Officers under a stipulated contract.

You lead the organisation from the London headquarters, but how much time you spend per year visiting other branches across the world?

I spend a minimum of 2 weeks of each month travelling and teaching abroad from Asia to Europe, Americas to Africa and as far south as Oceania. My work is very much 'hands-on'.

What has changed in training and skills that the IBA is practicing in the last two decades?

The fundamental skills remain the same but the detail changes and advances in the response to new threats and technology. By way of example; twenty, even thirty years ago we did not have hostile surveillance through drones. At the same time we are able to use drones to survey Residence and grounds, also to check routes and possible ambush and sniper sites. The internet, GPS/GSM have provided us with both tools and threat.

What are the main goals that is IBA trying to achieve with new people that are going through your trainings and education programmes?

What we are achieving is what we have always been achieving.

What is the main benefit that future bodyguards and security guards gain from IBA?

It has to be our experience and world networking. People should not be confused that licensing is Education, invariably it is not just a series of legal hoops placed as a barrier or extortion. One of the biggest challenges to bodyguard education in recent years has been state licensing. It does not exist to protect the public or clients or even to insure standards or regulate the profession. In many countries it is just another source of revenue, a means for tax authorities to add to the finances of the state. I have yet to see a licensing scheme that is 'fit for purpose'. Prior to the

London Olympics the British Government in October 2010 listed the SIA to be closed as an inefficient Quango that was failing. The story of the British SIA is a story of government incompetence, greed and stupidity*. The IBA is the only Bodyguards organisation registered with UIA and the UN dedicated to the education of bodyguards and one that successfully achieves this globally. The lie has always been that SIA is a UK Government body – it is not just another UK Quango.

* <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-11393581>

How successful are your bodyguard programmes when it comes to finding a security job after the training?

It is not the 'job' of IBA to find work for graduates of IBA anymore than it is the responsibility of the university to place their graduates. It is not ethical or logical to 'bait the hook' of potential students with the 'do our course and we will employ you and find employment for you'. In fact it has been proven as the height of dishonesty. From the training side if the student motivation is only 'give me a job' how does IBA know this stranger is either suitable or ethically equipped. Do we select other professionals like doctors or lawyers on a single criteria that they need some form of employment? From the students viewpoint, historically the promise of work usually doesn't materialise even after paying and completing the course. Recently a scandal on close protection social media has been a crook who claims to have been a Russian special forces officer teaching his own tactical courses. He claims to live in London (a lie), on his profile he claims to be 'boss of the SIA (total lie) and he had promised students who did his courses -work but the work never appeared and he cut contact with students he promised work to as soon as they complain. He is now focussing his scam on fools in Italy. It is not the first or last time such a scam has been used. We do not promise work but have successfully provided work to successful IBA students. In the labour market there always the unemployed and the unemployable. Suitability and opportunity should be the criteria for employment not simply a lure to part with ones money.

What is the position of IBA organisation on the Balkans and Adriatic area, especially Croatia and Slovenia?

IBA pioneered bodyguard training in the Balkans and in fact many of the individuals now offering 'courses' to individuals in the Balkans started their training with IBA and the majority of those were expelled from the IBA for code of ethics violations prior to setting up their pyramid schemes. They were not capable of meeting our standards and saw training as simply a money making opportunity. There is no doubt that every such scam makes our job harder, as we cannot co exist with dishonesty. The hard core of the IBA in the Balkans are well trained professionals their focus is the ongoing mentoring in best practice and bodyguard tradecraft for those in the Balkans wishing to train to be the professional bodyguard.

Where do you see room for further progress of IBA considering organisation, education, knowledge?

I believe it is self evident that IBA has developed and progressed and pioneered protection training for over 60 years and there is no genuine reason that this does not continue.

Although you are globally present, I assume that there's still parts of the world where you would like a stronger presence?

Training is determined by economics. Bodyguards in poor countries (3rd world nations) cannot afford training and rely on sponsors and patrons. These often do not care if a person is trained and erroneously see their personnel as just meat to be thrown into a grinder a la 'John Wick 2' Our job is as much to educate the bosses as the bodyguards. The last 10 years has seen the IBA formation pioneered in Africa, Asia and Hispanic America. That said I was teaching in the Caribbean, South Africa and places like Hong Kong 30 years ago as is shown by the news programmes on the IBAHQ channel of Vimeo.com.

Till when do you plan to lead the IBA, and do you have a successor?

Plans are in place.

At the end tell us something about yourself, personally and professionally!

What is there to tell? – I have kept the faith with the dream of Lucien Ott. I have stated who I am as opposed to the claims of anonymous cowardly trolls who hide in the dark recesses of the internet. International investigators such as L Burke Files in the USA have through due diligence vindicated my curriculum vitae, that is what I have claimed as opposed to what they have whispered of what they claim I have claimed. At the end of the day the real vindication lies in our teaching and the success of our practices.

In the Balkans many bodyguards have been fooled into parting with very large sums of money to take 'SIA' courses. But the SIA does not run any courses! Independent contractors register with diploma factories such as City & Guilds, BTEC and Highfield. If successful the candidate may be able to apply for an SIA CP3 licence by paying an additional fee. The SIA licence is only granted if there is a right to work in UK, even if the proposed work area is outside the UK (sic. Iraq/Afghanistan/Libya). In the UK there are about 1000 CP3 licence holders chasing every one job. Too few jobs and too many CP3 licence holders but no body tells you this when they are asking for your course money. The vast majority of quality firms employing in HEAT (Hostile environments) areas no longer ask or require a UK CP3 licence as it is now regarded as a false standard. Bad news for the many boys and girls that put themselves into debt trying to achieve this non-Balkan 'standard'.

INTERVIEW ENDS

Upcoming Courses



International
Bodyguard Skills
(/Courses/2021/6/7

7 Jun 2021

International
Bodyguard Skills
(/Courses/2021/6/7
N7tpe)

14 Jul 2021 – 22 Jul 2021

Counter Sniper
(/Courses/2021/3/
Xmcpd)

26 Jul 2021 – 27 Jul 2021

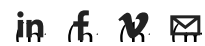
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