

How to Make Your Car Inconspicuous

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5/23/15 UPDATE: A paragraph has been added on the necessity for keeping your automobile clean in order to aid in its inconspicuousness, as well as inserted phrases and grammatical corrections throughout the original content, which has otherwise not been changed.

It is literally impossible today to avoid the government roads. The entire physical infrastructure has been built around the use of the automobile, thus increasing travel distances considerably than what they were a century ago. Once you factor in the [surveillance police state apparatus](#), then the traffic cameras and roving patrol cars suddenly take on a new importance.

As you travel from home to work and then back again during your daily commute, you are on public display for everyone to leer at. It matters not whether you have the latest in German automotive engineering under the hood, or a total lemon; what is important is what is aesthetically observable. Since quite a bit of the American population still values [conspicuous consumption](#), the more beautiful your car is, the more likely other drivers will look at you.



Don't Be This Guy!

If you've ever noticed, those cars that have bright, shiny colors attract a whole lot more attention than the ones that possess bland, dull color schemes. [Sport utility vehicles](#) and pickup trucks that sport ostentatious accessories such as winch bumpers, fender flares, and spoilers are just begging to be profiled. Needless to say, blaring loud music with the windows rolled down, or leaving designer label shopping bags in the back seat, might just attract the kind of attention you'd prefer to not have. Just as bad though, are those hippie looking cars laced with bumper stickers advertising whatever political dogma happens to be in vogue *this week* (to be fair though, bumper stickers are still valuable as culture jamming devices [if used as adhesives with homemade posters](#), or even as identifying markers on the backs of laptop screens).

The main idea here in transforming your car into an inconspicuous one is fundamentally rooted in the principle of [the gray man](#). Just as you would dress and behave in such a way that doesn't shout "sheepdog," similarly you don't want your car to shout "wealthy target" or "anti-[Establishment](#) troublemaker" either. Your ultimate goal is to blend into the surrounding human environment; in most locales, a Ferrari will get you noticed, yet in some suburban areas, a ratty looking pickup truck with the back cab window covered in duct tape, might be even more of an eye sore. Sedans, vans, and trucks are only a few of the types of cars that usually tend to be able to blend in just about everywhere.

To further elaborate on applying the gray man principle to your car, I'd also suggest making the effort to keep your car as clean as humanly possible. Regardless of the social environment you find yourself in, being dirty is a great way to get easily noticed, much like those [off-roading](#) hobbyists who just finished their weekend [mud bogging](#). By keeping both the interior and the exterior of your car fairly clean, you

reduce the possibility of not only garnering unwanted attention, but also from serving as a collection of potential evidence that could be used against you later in a court prosecution, such as with fingerprints or DNA samples. Make sure you stow away whatever is [easily observable](#), lest you be [unjustly profiled as an undesirable](#).

Since [approximately half of all police-citizen encounters are traffic stops](#), it would behoove you to prepare for such possibilities ahead of time, preferably with the goal of avoiding them altogether. Besides [role-playing police interrogations](#) with trusted friends, you can drastically lower the probability of being pulled over if you don't call attention to yourself in the first place when you are traveling, especially if you are in the middle of [violating *mala prohibita*](#), such as by practicing [civil disobedience](#). Even when you have parked, a temptation could likely exist for the local police to seize your car using [civil asset forfeiture](#).

At the end of the day though, if you choose to adopt the gray man persona at least in the context of "driving" on the government roads, you will be taking away the excuses that both the private and government criminals have to mess with you in the first place. The defensive measures I've outlined here will increase your privacy, thus giving *you* control over what malevolent, or even nosy, strangers happen to know about you. What better way to lower their guard than by keeping them guessing?