

# **Protect Your Family From Crime**

**(...and other life-saving tips)**



**By Thomas R. Harrier**

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# **A PERSONAL FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR**

Let me preface this book by stating the information contained within, is based upon my own opinions and experiences and does not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of any specific law enforcement agency or law enforcement official. What I have attempted to do in this book is to provide you with a practical guide that will teach you certain habits, which if followed will decrease your chances of becoming a crime statistic. Crime is unquestionably on the rise and it is imperative that you, the law-abiding citizen, be made aware of what the criminal is looking for and how you can minimize becoming his or her next target.

By reading my book, you will be enlightened as to what questions are most commonly asked of law enforcement officers and what this officer's responses have been and will continue to be, until a change is necessary. It is not enough to ingest what I have written here and then think this will be the gospel for the rest of time. Laws, social mores, weapons, technology and criminal's tactics are always subject to change; therefore, you must keep abreast of any changes. Not only will this keep you within the legal parameters of the law; it will also keep you one step ahead of the criminal element.

Throughout this book, I will be recommending various products that I believe will greatly assist you in making you and your family "Hard targets". There will be corresponding links that when clicked on, will take you to retailers of that product, where you may purchase the product online. If I have recommended a specific product or company, it is because I believe it is the best offered, in terms of quality, price and performance. Although I am compensated when you buy that product, it would not be in this book if I didn't believe it was the best product at the best price.

It is my most sincere hope that by you reading this book, you and your family will never become a crime statistic. After all, it is with you and your family in mind that I've written this book. Study this information and put it into practice. Never hesitate to ask questions of your law enforcement officers or to ask for their assistance. Law enforcement is one of the most honorable professions in this country and every officer I know takes pride in what they do. "To Serve and Protect" is more than a saying; it is a deeply ingrained belief that police officers have willingly laid their lives on the line for and in many cases, given their lives upholding that belief. But never forget, the safety of you and your family and your right to live your lives in peace and without fear, is the primary concern of every law enforcement agency in this country and it is for you and your loved ones they exist and serve.

## **About the Author**

Thomas Harrier is a thirty-three year veteran of law enforcement. His career started in the U.S. Army Military Police, where he was stationed at Ft. Benning, Ga. After completing his military obligation, he obtained his Associates degree in Criminal Justice from Valencia Community College and his Bachelors degrees in Criminal Justice from the University of Central Florida in Orlando. Then, he was hired by the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department where he worked from 1981-1982 as a deputy sheriff. Leaving Los Angeles, he returned to Orlando to work as a deputy for the Orange County Sheriff's Office. He worked full time there from 1982 through 1993, when he then chose early retirement to pursue other business ventures; however, he remained in law enforcement as a reserve deputy. While with Orange County Sheriff's Office, his assignments included Uniformed Patrol, the Tactical Unit, the Street Crimes Unit, Community Policing and Problem Oriented Policing. He has taught thousands of other law enforcement officers in a variety of subjects, including Survival Attitude, Building Entries and Searches, Defensive Tactics, Handcuffing Techniques and Side Handle Baton. He co-developed the Vehicle Felony Stop Maneuver, which is still being taught today. Mr. Harrier was responsible for developing a weapon retention system that proved to be highly effective. He was a member of the SWAT Team for ten years, serving as a sniper and also as a rapid entry specialist on High Risk Entries.

Currently, Mr. Harrier continues in law enforcement, as a reserve division chief with a central Florida law enforcement agency.

## **DEDICATION**

This book is dedicated to the memories of Arthur "Donnie" Brown and LaRue Beauchamp Hyde, and to my brothers and sisters in law enforcement, whom every day courageously fight the good fight in their never-ending battle against the elements of crime.

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## Chapter 1

# How to Minimize Receiving a Traffic Ticket

Just when you least expect it, it happens. You're in a hurry because you're late, you're driving 15 miles an hour over the speed limit and suddenly, your heart skips a beat. There, in your rear view mirror are the flashing red and blue lights of a police car. With a sickening realization, you know you've been caught. Your pulse increases, you start to sweat and as you pull over to the side of the road, you're praying that somehow you'll manage to get out of this fix.

Does this sound familiar? It does if you're one of those countless numbers of drivers who are stopped every day in this country for a variety of traffic infractions. If you're like the rest of these people, you're probably wondering if there is any way to minimize your chances of being issued a ticket. The answer to that question is yes. Although there are never any guarantees that any technique is going to work with 100% effectiveness, wouldn't you like to know that there are actions you can take that will maximize your chances of driving away from this scene with only a verbal warning? Of course you would and what I'm going to share with you is based on thirty years of law enforcement. It is derived from my own personal experiences and also from what I have observed of other officers, in both their accounts and actions. However, let me emphatically state here and now; this is NOT a primer on how to beat a traffic ticket once you've received it. Writing such an article would be a disservice to my brother and sister law enforcement officers. What this article does is create a less hostile situation, whereby the officer may choose to not issue you a citation, where they might have otherwise.

There are several important factors that must be considered here. First and foremost is the severity of the violation. Don't expect a break from any police officer if you've committed an extremely dangerous traffic violation. An example of this would be driving 25 miles an hour over the speed limit and weaving in and out of traffic during rush hour. That type of action certainly deserves a traffic ticket and if the officer is performing his job properly, you should not get a break. The types of actions or violations that this chapter is concerned with are the more routine, everyday violations. Often, whether or not this ticket is issued depends on *Attitude*. This is without question, the most important element in deciding if you're going to get a break or not. Therefore, let's discuss what you should and should not do from the moment you are first stopped.

When you initially see the emergency lights of the police car turned on, immediately and safely pull to the right side of the roadway, using your turn signal. The exception to this would be on a six-lane or greater, interstate highway with a large, paved median and you are in the left (inside) lane when the officer attempts to stop you. Trying to pull across three or more lanes of traffic can be extremely dangerous, so in that case, pull off to the left side of the highway, unless the officer indicates otherwise.

Next, shut off your engine and place both hands on the steering wheel, where they are plainly visible to the officer as he or she approaches your vehicle. The officer may ask you to step out of your car before he approaches you. This is for the safety of the officer. You know that you are not a dangerous criminal but he doesn't. Every year, law enforcement officers are killed during traffic stops that were based initially on a traffic violation. Therefore, to the police officer, every traffic stop has the potential for danger and there may be certain things you will be asked to do to maximize his safety. Understand this and maintain a positive *Attitude*. If the traffic stop is made at night, first shut off your

engine, turn on your interior light and then place both hands on the steering wheel in plain sight. From that point on, let the officer direct your actions. Smile and maintain a friendly and helpful *Attitude*. Always greet the officer or officers with a cheery "Good morning/afternoon/evening, officer." Don't let your positive *Attitude* change if the officer doesn't immediately reciprocate. The officer is trying to maintain a firm but professional image and is still uncertain about you. He may or may not be also trying to intimidate you by being somewhat unresponsive to your attempts at lightheartedness, but don't let this deter you from continuing your friendly responses.

The officer will then probably ask you for your driver's license, vehicle registration and insurance card. You should always have those three items readily available so as not to waste the officer's time and yours. Once he asks for these items, if you have a firearm in the car, it is **VERY** important that you let the officer know this *immediately* and then tell him where it is at. If you don't tell him, and for example, you keep it in your glove box along with your registration, the following may happen; You open your glove box and reach for your registration, where it's next to your gun and you suddenly find the barrel of the police officer's gun stuck in your ear and a very (pick one or more; 1) nervous 2) angry 3) scared 4) all of the previously mentioned) police officer. Once you've let him know *in advance* the presence of the firearm, he will then direct your actions, for his safety as well as yours

At this point, one of two things will happen. Either the officer will ask you if you know why you are being stopped or he will tell you why you are being stopped. Now here comes the most important factor after *Attitude*. Any idea what that may be? If you guessed *Honesty*, you're absolutely right! Keep in mind, the police officer already knows why he stopped you. In most cases, so do you. In almost all traffic stops where I haven't made up my mind as to whether or not I'm going to issue the citation, this is the deciding

factor. If the violator blatantly runs a red light or stop sign, or is obviously driving over the speed limit and I ask them if they know why I'm stopping them, I'm testing them. I'm testing them on their **Honesty**, their driving awareness and their **Attitude**. If their answer is something along the line of "No, officer, I haven't the slightest idea why you're stopping me", then this tells me one of several things. One, they're such poor drivers that they haven't any idea what they're doing and probably need a ticket just to make them more aware. Two, they're trying to lie their way out of the ticket, which isn't going to work and will only increase their chances of receiving the ticket. And finally, it's the old play dumb/innocent routine, which guarantees them getting the ticket. Now pay close attention to what I'm saying to you here. **Always, always, always** be honest when the officer asks you if you know why you're being stopped. Remember, HE knows why he stopped you, so don't try to insult his intelligence by saying that you don't know, if in fact you do know. Be respectful, polite and friendly. "Yes Sir, I'm afraid that I was in a hurry to get to work and I was speeding. I'm really sorry and I can assure you that I'll try to be more careful in the future but if you must write me a ticket, I'll understand." Ladies and gentlemen, friends and neighbors, if you would commit that phrase to memory (utilizing the appropriate traffic violation, of course) and be sincere and really try to mean it when you say it, this will get you out of the majority of traffic tickets. Prior to my entering law enforcement, when I was a longhaired teenager, I was stopped more times than I could count, from Florida to Michigan, for everything from speeding to running red lights and I never received the first traffic ticket. Why? I'm betting it was because I was always **Honest** and maintained that positive and respectful **Attitude**.

A major mistake some people will make is, arguing when the officer tells them what the violation is they are being stopped for. It never ceases to amaze me as to why people will try to argue this with me and deny it. I've witnessed this violation with my own

eyes; I've stopped them for it and now, in a manner of speaking, they're going to call me a liar! Folks, this is not the way to win friends in the law enforcement community nor is it going to get you a verbal warning. I can almost assure you this is probably the fastest way to get a ticket that I know of. The more appropriate response here would be "Yes Sir/Ma'am, you're right, I certainly can't deny it. I was in a hurry to get to work (or whatever the reason, be honest) and I was speeding. I'm really sorry and I'll try to be more careful in the future but if you must write me a ticket, I'll understand." (Sound familiar?) Once again, this is going to demonstrate your **Honesty** and **Attitude**.

Keep in mind that police officers are human, too. Most of them are just trying to make a positive difference in life. They're not out to punish you or take money out of your pockets. They know how tough it is for most decent folks out there to make an honest living. They're only trying to make the roadways safe for you, your family and theirs and if they think this can be accomplished without writing a traffic ticket, then most officers will be satisfied with issuing a verbal warning. And what are the factors that may convince them? **Honesty** and **Attitude**. However, nothing would please me more than for you to drive safely and responsibly and never need the advice of this chapter.

## Chapter 2

# How to Avoid Being Robbed

First of all, remember that the term "Robbery" applies to the taking of something from a person by force or threat. We will now discuss what the robber looks for and how you can minimize your chances of becoming his (or her) next victim.

Let's start with recognizing what characteristics a robber looks for in a potential victim. To put it simply, a robber looks for someone who looks like a victim! What do I mean by this? In a study conducted in New York City, numerous subjects with extensive criminal histories for robbing people were asked how they chose their victims. Their responses were overwhelmingly consistent in that they looked for people who looked like they were severely lacking in self-confidence and walked slowly with their heads down, seemingly afraid to make eye contact with anyone. Interestingly enough, in a nationwide survey of prison inmates who had been convicted of killing police officers, when asked what was typically the main characteristic that encouraged them to try to overpower the officer; the consistent answer was "an obvious and very visible display of inadequate self-confidence on the part of the police officer." Does this suggest then, that one can deter a potential robber simply by walking faster with one's head up, looking totally confident? Absolutely! Keep in mind that the majority of robbers want as little trouble as possible; therefore, it is only reasonable that they would choose their victims accordingly. In other words, the person who looks the meekest will be the first chosen. When you walk from your car to the office and back again, walk like you own the street, exuding confidence and power. Even the smallest person who appears to be completely unafraid of anyone will make the biggest robber wonder why this person is so confident. Any doubt created in the mind of the

robber, places considerable weight on your side he'll chose someone else for his victim.

The next element that sets you up or maximizes your odds of becoming a victim is where you choose to park your vehicle if you drive. Try not to park in dark, desolate, out-of-the way areas. These are fishing holes for robbers, since it conceals them and their activities. It also aids in their escape, since few people would pursue them into a darkened area. Instead, try to find parking lots that are open, yet well populated. If it is during hours of darkness, try to follow this same rule but also insure that the parking lot is brightly illuminated. Be wary of parking garages at night unless they are patrolled by security. Again, these are prime areas for robbers to seek their victims.

When you're walking from your car to your destination or back to your car again, don't create so much temptation for the robber that he'll take the risk in spite of everything else. What I mean by this is, if you have expensive, flashy jewelry or watches, carry them in your purse or pocket until you get to where you are going; then put them on for display. If you are carrying a large sum of cash, conceal the main portion of it in an unlikely place, then leave a small, reasonable portion in a likely place, such as a wallet. Why do I suggest a reasonable portion? If you're well dressed and your clothing suggests affluence, it would be unreasonable that you would only have five or ten dollars on you. This may provoke the robber. Fifty dollars would satisfy most robbers and they'll leave it at that, leaving you with the majority of the cash you've previously hidden elsewhere as I've suggested.

When possible, never use an outside ATM machine at night if you're by yourself. These machines are magnets for robbers who are looking for an easy target. There are enough convenience stores and grocery stores that now have ATM machines inside the premises, there is really no need for you to have to go to an

outside, desolate bank ATM at night. If you find yourself in a situation where you have to use a bank ATM at night, drive completely around the bank parking lot to make sure that there are no suspicious vehicles parked in the lot or suspicious persons hanging around. Pay special attention to possible hiding places near the ATM where a robber could hide. Even if you don't see anything out of the ordinary, if it just doesn't feel right, listen to your instinct and go somewhere else. Your instinct is your subconscious telling you that something was amiss you just didn't see.

Above all else, just use common sense and basic precautions and this will be your best guide. However, if the worst should happen, remember, you can always get more money or jewelry but you only have one life, so don't try to be a hero when confronted with an armed robber. Be polite and give him what he wants in a non-confrontational manner, without talking or threatening him. Don't let your ego get the best of you by saying something that may provoke or anger him. Even if you don't see any type of weapon, it is wise to assume that he has one and therefore, act accordingly. The best thing you can do is be a good witness. The more details you can provide to the police officer, the more you increase the chances of the bad guy being caught. No one can ask any more from you, so accept that and certainly don't be ashamed that you were a victim, because it can happen to anyone and you are no exception.

## Chapter 3

### Recommended Personal Defense Weapons

One of the most commonly asked questions I receive are "What can I carry to protect myself?" The most important aspect that I must stress here is to first check with existing local and state laws to find out what is legal and what is illegal. For example, in California, it is legal to carry a chemical agent for protection only if you become certified by successfully completing a state approved class. However, in Florida, there are no requirements for carrying a chemical agent, other than it cannot be concealed without a permit.

There are many different types of Personal Defense Weapons and there are probably more opinions on what is the best to carry. But, since you're reading my book, you get my opinion. Let's start with handguns. Certainly by far the most controversial, is it the best Personal Defense Weapon to carry? That depends on several factors. Among these are; is it legal in your state or locality? Do you need a permit? Can you afford one? Can you carry it concealed? Or, maybe you just don't like handguns. The handgun advocates will all say that a handgun is superior for personal protection but they're neglecting to tell you most robbery victims were confronted by the robbers so quickly, they didn't have the opportunity to safely get to the handgun. Then, what usually happens is the handgun falls into the hands of the bad guys and is used to commit more robberies and may even end up taking a human life. Here's another sobering fact: as many as 20% of law enforcement officers killed are killed with their own handguns! These are highly trained professionals, who constantly practice tactics, including weapon retention and yet, as many as one-fifth have their firearms taken from them and are killed! This does not include those who had their own firearms taken from them and survived. Of course, you don't hear that statistic from the handgun

enthusiasts. Am I then saying that I don't recommend handguns for protection? Not at all; I'm merely suggesting you consider all the possibilities and the options. However, I will go into more detail in a later chapter.

Another defensive weapon to consider is the electric stun gun. Although intimidating by its appearance and even more so by the spark and noise made when the trigger is pulled, it has the disadvantage of requiring the user to get in close to their intended target. This could result in the holder of the stun gun getting struck or overpowered and then having the stun gun used against them. Also, in many states, the stun gun is illegal or may not be carried concealed. I cannot overemphasize the importance of checking on your local laws, to see what applies in your state or jurisdiction. Nonetheless, there are many advantages to having a stun gun available to you. The primary advantage of the stun gun is if you can successfully get in close to the target and place it up against them while depressing the trigger for 3-5 seconds, you can incapacitate the subject for several seconds, allowing you to escape. Depending on the model that you select, the price range can vary from \$40.00-\$100.00.

Another device is the Taser. TASER INTERNATIONAL sells a personal TASER (TASER C2) that deploys a barb charged with 50,000 volts that can totally incapacitate an assailant up to 15 feet away! At about \$450, it's a great personal self-defense weapon at a great price.

And last but certainly not least are the various chemical agent devices on the market. These range from the tear gas type to those dispensing Tincture of Oleoresin Capsicum, which is a ten-dollar word for Cayenne Pepper in an aerosol form. Having been subjected to numerous types of these over the years, I am a very strong advocate of the type that uses the Cayenne Pepper base. This type affects the mucous membranes in just about any living,

breathing life form, from humans to grizzly bears to dogs and even sharks. When you are sprayed in the face with this spray, there is an immediate reaction that actually consists of several events. First, your eyes snap shut and cannot be pried open anywhere from five to twenty minutes. Then, your epiglottis, which covers your windpipe during swallowing, swells, allowing only life sustaining breathing. To the recipient, this causes a sensation similar to drowning. And finally, the reaction on the skin of the face can only be described as having your face burned off with a blowtorch! The amazing part about this substance is; even though it causes these symptoms, there is no first aid required. There are several brands of this chemical agent available, however, I recommend a type that has a minimum 5% solution of Tincture of Oleoresin Capsicum (if allowed in your state) and is dispensed in a stream and not a mist. A stream has a couple of advantages in that you can direct the spray with greater accuracy, delivering more spray on the target. More importantly, you decrease the chance of being affected by the spray yourself, as a result of blow back or any existing breeze. Many of these sprays also have a dye in them that can be detected by ultra violet lighting, which assists law enforcement in identifying the perpetrator. Another advantage of this weapon is it's easy to carry in your hand or on your key chain, so that it is readily and immediately available to you when you are walking. Then, because of its potency and effect, you'll have time to not only make your escape but also to notify the police. Probably one of the most important points in this type of defense is; it is non-lethal, compared to the potentially lethal effects of a firearm, not only to the perpetrator but also to innocent bystanders. These sprays come in a variety of sizes, from a large canister that can dispense a stream up to 25 feet, to a key chain type, that is always readily available to you and can be carried in the hand in a non-threatening manner along with your keys. However, should you ever have occasion to use the spray, make certain you immediately notify the police and have them respond to take a report. This will help protect you from criminal and civil

litigation. If you had to spray an attacker, make sure you immediately go to someplace safe first, with a lot of people around and then call the police. Don't hang around in the vicinity of the attacker and give him a chance to recover so that he gets a second chance, although I seriously doubt that he would, once he received a dose of the pepper spray. Nevertheless, never take any unnecessary chances. The potential consequences are just not worth it.

Whatever your choice should be, shop around for the best prices and as I have continuously stressed throughout, find out what your local laws are as they apply to these types of personal self-defense weapons. Finally, let your choice be determined by what you feel most comfortable with and what would be most convenient and safe for you.

## Chapter 4

# How to Minimize Your Home Being Burglarized

As Crime continues its dramatic upswing, unless you take certain precautions, there is a strong possibility of your house being the target of a burglar. While I'm on this subject, let me make one clarification. People get "robbed"; buildings get "burglarized". A minor point for sure, but one that will allow you to sound more knowledgeable to the responding police officer, should you ever have to make a report of a burglary. What does a burglar look for when he (or she) is deciding on his next target? How can he be discouraged from choosing your home and encouraged to find another, more likely victim? What can you do to make your home a "hard target"? That is the end goal; to make your home a "hard target" to the potential burglar.

To begin with, burglars strike at all hours of the day and night. Contrary to the popularized stereotype of the heavysset guy with the eye mask on and carrying a large cloth bag, the burglar can be anyone. Whether you live in an exclusive, up scale neighborhood or an economically deprived community, your home can still be a burglary target. With the increase of illicit drug dependency creating a large population of addicts, any house, anywhere, that might contain anything of value that can be traded for "Crack" Cocaine, becomes a potential target. But it's safe to say that the majority of these criminal types would prefer to avoid a confrontation. Subsequently, they look for the telltale signs of no one home, such as newspapers piled up on the doorstep, no lights on inside or outside, no cars in the driveway and high grass in the yard. To a burglar, these signs are an open invitation to target this house for their next job. Therefore, if you should decide to leave your house unattended for an extended period of time, while on

vacation or a business trip, make sure if you subscribe to a daily newspaper, cancel the paper while you're away. Invest in an inexpensive timer device that can be programmed to turn your lights on and off at various times. I would even have a stereo system hooked up to the timer so the radio will come on at different times of the day, creating the appearance of someone being home. Have an arrangement set up with a neighbor who will know when and for how long you're going to be gone. The neighbor can cut your grass and report any suspicious activity to the police. In return, you can reciprocate while your neighbors are away. If possible, leave a contact phone number with this neighbor or have a prearranged time that you will periodically call him and check the status of everything. Crime prevention is greatly enhanced by a well-organized Crime Watch program. Contact your local law enforcement agency to obtain information on how your community can start a Crime Watch program.

For the ultimate in home protection, I would highly recommend the following items and depending on your financial status, the more that you have, the more you discourage the burglar. The greatest deterrent, in my opinion, is a fenced yard with a large, aggressive dog inside. In thirty-three years of law enforcement, I can only recall one business that was burglarized with a dog inside and there were mitigating circumstances in that case that I'll choose not to go into. I can only recollect one residential burglary where there was a large dog present outside and the burglar sadly suffered several painful bites in that attempt, resulting in numerous stitches. Most burglars are criminals of opportunity and a big, mean dog snarling at you through the fence greatly limits that opportunity. However, if you live in an apartment, condominium or mobile home, a large dog may not be the answer. Not to worry, a small dog that makes a lot of noise can be just as effective as a larger one. The main point here is the deterrent effect that this can have on the burglar. Remember, he or she wants to be inconvenienced as little as possible, so very few burglars would

take a chance on entering with a barking, snarling dog behind the intended entry point.

The next item I would recommend is burglar bars, coupled with a barred entrance to your primary door and a barred door over any other doors in your residence. I have seen many homes with an elaborate barred security system over the windows of the house, but then I see a front door that a twelve-year old child could kick in. Additionally, with home invasions on the rise in this country, it's not safe to open your door to see who is knocking at your door or ringing your doorbell, when this allows the criminal immediate access to you and your home. By having a barred, enclosed entrance with a locking gate, you can open your door in safety to determine who has come to your home and for what purpose. Once again, our burglar, looking for that easy opportunity, sees the bars over all windows and doors and decides to find a less challenging target. Just make sure you have an interior safety release system in the event of a fire. You want to keep the bad guys out; not your family in, in the event of a fire or other emergency where the doors may be blocked.

Additionally, a home security alarm system has its advantages, along with its disadvantages. Depending on how elaborate of a system you purchase, there are a number of ways that this type of security system can protect you and your family and your home. There are types that when a door or window is opened or a beam is tripped, an audible alarm is activated, hopefully and usually scaring away the burglar before he can get anything. However, in that a police response is usually going to be several minutes, an efficient burglar can be in and out of the house in two minutes or less and gone from the area before the first police car arrives. Power outages can also affect alarms in different ways, including activating a signal to those that are monitored by companies who then call the police for you. In many places in the country, due to the extremely large number of false alarm calls that police agencies

handle on a daily basis, you are only allowed a certain number of false alarms before you are assessed a fine for every false alarm that the police respond to. From my experience, the most effective system is the type that has a listening device, whereupon the security company responsible for the home can actually listen to the activity occurring and usually determine if a police response is necessary. The choice is certainly yours, but in today's violent society, you, your family, your home and its contents are certainly worth the cost of providing some type of protection and taking the steps necessary to discourage the burglar from making your home his next target. A seemingly minor, yet very important point is, make sure you display the alarm company sign in a prominent location outside your home and company stickers in the windows. That alone will keep out the majority of burglars. Remember, their goal is to get in and get out without being caught and knowing or even thinking the home is protected by an alarm system will deter the majority of burglars.

Other considerations are; if you have a high wooden fence, keep in mind that if it conceals you from the neighbors, it also conceals the activities of the burglar. Whenever possible, opt for a heavy wrought iron fence, since that can still keep pets and children in, and also increases the chance of any intruders being seen by your neighbors.

Outside automatic lighting that is activated when a beam is tripped is also a good safety feature. At night, the darkness is the burglar's best friend; therefore the last thing that he needs or wants is to be suddenly illuminated by floodlights coming on. These types of lights are inexpensive and relatively easy to install. In terms of providing a safe haven for one's family, it is certainly a worthwhile cost.

All doors should have a good, strong deadbolt. However, if you have any windows or glass within 36-40 inches of the deadbolt,

make sure that you have break resistant glass. The best deadbolt in the world is worthless if the burglar can break a window, reach in and unlock the deadbolt. If you do have a deadbolt near glass, a very inexpensive fix is a double-keyed deadbolt. This way, the door cannot be opened without having a key. However, if you choose this route, make sure you have a key kept in the same place nearby, but out of reach of any would-be intruders. In the event of a fire or other emergency situation where you need to exit quickly, you don't want to lose time by looking for the key. Sliding glass doors should have a device called a "Charley Bar", which can be purchased from any Home Depot or Builders Square, for about ten dollars. This device is similar to the stick in the door, but a lot more effective and well worth the money. With a "Charley Bar" in place, the burglar is probably going to go somewhere else, since it is extremely difficult to defeat this device unless you smash out the glass. Windows should have a locking device that prevents them from being pried open.

I know that some of you out there like to hide a house key outside, in case you should ever lock yourself out of your house. The bad thing about this is; the places you choose to hide the key are going to be the same places where the burglar looks for a key. Keep in mind that this is his profession and he may have committed dozens of burglaries, so he's going to know about such things. If you want a spare key available, leave one with a neighbor and maybe you can even reciprocate the favor.

One of the most effective methods in reducing crime is simply maintaining your yard and home, making it appear to be lived in. As previously mentioned, newspapers piling up in the driveway or year will lure a burglar like bees to honey. Uncut grass, broken windows and other signs of low maintenance create a perception of an abandoned house or one that is rarely inhabited and will provide a sense of an easy target.

Finally, contact your local law enforcement agency and ask if they have a crime prevention program or specialist. Most agencies do and they're always happy to have someone come out to your house and conduct a security survey of your residence. The officer will then offer suggestions on what steps you can take to minimize your house being the next target of an unscrupulous burglar. This is usually a free service provided by law enforcement and one of the best programs offered. I would strongly advise you to take advantage of these programs since these crime prevention officers are real pros. They may provide suggestions that not only could protect your valuables but more importantly, save the lives of you and your loved ones, which of course are absolutely priceless and irreplaceable.

## Chapter 5

# How to Minimize Your Automobile From Being Burglarized or Stolen

If there is any other property crime that is handled more by the uniformed patrol officer than automobile burglaries or theft, I certainly haven't heard of it. Unquestionably, this is one of the most common of all crimes and could probably be narrowed down to two reasons: Opportunity and Target Temptation. What exactly do I mean by this? It's really quite simple. Unless you have your vehicle parked inside a locked (hint, hint) garage, there are just thousands of potential targets in any given city. Therefore, there is ample opportunity for the auto burglar to ply his (or her, since crime is certainly equal opportunity) trade. So now you're probably saying "Oh great, Tom, are you telling me to just throw up my hands and give up?" Definitely not! There are steps that you can take to minimize your vehicle from being a burglar's target.

First and foremost, *never* leave anything valuable in open, plain sight. Most burglars weigh the risk of getting caught against what their gain is. It doesn't necessarily have to be of great value, either. To a juvenile or "crack" addict, loose change visible in a console may be all it takes to quickly smash your window out, grab the money and be gone in a matter seconds. Cassette tapes, CDs or their respective cases are an open invitation to break in, either to obtain them for personal use or to sell them. Tools, expensive sunglasses and portable stereo players are also enticing items. And of course, in-dash stereo radios, cassette players and CD players are always in demand. So what's the solution? Always, when possible, lock these items in the trunk or at least hide them out of sight, even when you're in a store, since parking lots are prime

hunting grounds for car burglars. I highly recommend a removable stereo system or at least one that the faceplate can be removed.

And of course, I would be remiss if I didn't mention alarm systems. With automobile alarm systems being so reasonable now, there's simply no excuse for not having some type of alarm system in your vehicle. There are many different types and a wide variety of price ranges to fit anyone's budget, however, I would recommend one that, at minimum, is activated by the car door being opened and is audible. I would also suggest that the alarm has a reset device that automatically shuts it off after a minute or so and then rearms itself. Many alarms are so sensitive that a passing truck will set them off, which, if the alarm doesn't shut off, you may have some very unhappy neighbors. If you do install an alarm, advertise it, either through a flashing red light on or near the dash or stickers on the windows stating that the car is alarmed or preferably both. Remember, the burglar is an opportunist, not necessarily a complete fool. So, if there is nothing of value in plain sight and the vehicle is clearly alarmed, chances are that he's going to look for another target.

Oh yeah, one last thing that I almost forgot to mention. It seems so simple and yet is one of the top reasons for items being stolen in vehicles. Now pay close attention here. Always, always, always lock your vehicle doors. "But Tom, what if I'm just in a convenience store to pick up some milk?" Lock your doors! "But what if I'm just parked at my house with my car in my own yard?" Lock your doors! Ben Franklin must have been thinking of vehicle owners when he uttered his quote "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." I think ol' Ben must have had his carriage burglarized when he came up with that one. If a burglar is determined to break into our vehicles, let's at least make it as difficult as possible and minimize the temptation. As I found out the hard way, most insurance deductibles just happen to cost more than the broken window. Remember when I said not to leave

cassette tape or CD cases in plain view? Guess how I came up with that one? Okay, okay, even some cops have to learn the hard way. But at least you can learn from my mistake and not have it happen to you.

As far as significantly reducing the odds of having your vehicle stolen, again we go back to opportunity and temptation. I couldn't begin to tell you how many cases of auto theft I have personally handled over the years that resulted from some individual stopping at a convenience store and leaving the keys in the ignition with the engine running while they went into the store. Why not just put a large sign on the front and back windows that boldly states "STEAL ME!" Talk about opportunity and temptation together! And what was this hapless person's excuse? (Picture the person standing in front of the store, wringing their hands and whining) "Well golly, officer, I was just going to be in the store for a minute and I wanted to leave my (choose one) 1) air conditioning on." 2) heater on." Or my personal choice for Idiot of the Year, "My favorite song was playing and I didn't want to miss anymore of it than I had to!" I even had one case where a mother went into the store, leaving the engine running, with her two-year old son strapped into a child seat, in the back seat. When she came out, HEART ATTACK CITY!! NO CAR IN SIGHT!! Fortunately, the thief drove two blocks away, discovered his extra passenger and quickly abandoned the car, where I found it moments later, with her child still strapped into his car seat in the back seat. The bad guy was caught the next day and charged with auto theft AND kidnapping, which I'm sure is more than he ever bargained for. As for the mother, I don't think she'll ever repeat that mistake again. The main point here is; always take your keys with you when you get out of the car and also lock your doors! Sound familiar? Good, I'm getting through to you.

Another excellent preventive measure is a device that locks the steering wheel into a fixed position. I'm not endorsing any

particular brand, since there are several good devices out there, all serving the same basic intent. It takes all of about forty-five seconds to secure the device to your steering wheel, thereby severely limiting the opportunity to the car thief. I'm not going to say that any of these devices are 100% effective, because they're not, but such a device will substantially minimize the odds of your vehicle being the next prize of the car thief. And with the average cost being in the \$40.00 range, I would highly recommend one for each of your vehicles. You can also choose from an even better model, that locks the brake pedal in place. Whichever model you do choose, please understand that none of them will make your car completely theft-proof. It's just one more additional item to help to deter the car thief.

## Chapter 6

# How to Avoid Being Victimized By a Fake Police Officer

It is an unfortunate reflection upon our society that social conditions exist where you can no longer trust someone merely because they flash a badge or wear a uniform. Nowadays, one has to be especially wary of the supposed unmarked police car with grill or dash lights. Bad guys have taken a sacred institution, law enforcement, and adapted it's trappings for the purpose of preying on the unsuspecting, knowing that Americans have always, for the most part, trusted "the man with the badge". Have you ever given thought as to what action you would take if a stranger in plain clothes approached you, displayed an official looking badge or ID and asked to speak with you? Or, what if it's late at night and you're driving down a lonely, dark country road, when suddenly, the darkness is split by the bright flashing red or blue strobe light on the dash or in the grill of a vehicle which displays no markings of any law enforcement agency. What would you do? What should you do?

To answer these questions, let's examine some of the more common ruses where criminals will attempt to victimize someone by assuming the guise of a law enforcement officer. One of the most common is the bank examiner, bank investigator or police detective ruse. This is where the con man (or woman) usually approaches an elderly person, whom they've watched doing business at a bank. The con artist tells this person that they're investigating the criminal activities of a crooked bank teller and would they mind assisting the "officer" in apprehending this scoundrel. If they agree, they are then told to go into the bank and withdraw a substantial amount of their savings and bring it out to this "officer". The con artist tells the intended victim that the teller is being watched by another undercover officer to see if this teller

steals any of the money. Once the victim does this, he or she is then given a receipt for the money and either told the money is going to be placed into evidence or taken back into the bank. The con artist asks the victim to stand by while they go back into the bank and they then disappear with the victim's savings. These con artists have even been known to call the victims at their homes and ask for their assistance. So what's the solution here? To begin with, no real law enforcement officer is ever going to ask to use **your** money as bait. Law Enforcement agencies have their own investigative funds for just this purpose. Nor is it likely that any law enforcement agency would contact you for assistance, unless you had previously contacted that agency as a victim or a potential victim. However, if you are ever contacted by someone claiming to be a bank examiner or police officer, make sure that you get their name, the agency they work for and the division or department that they claim to work in. Then look in your phone book for that agency, call and ask to be transferred to that division or department and ask to speak with that individual. This should at least establish that this person is indeed who they claim to be. I would suggest that you then go one step further and ask to meet them at their office, to verify their position and satisfy any doubts you may have had.

The next area I will address here is what to do if an unmarked vehicle attempts to stop you using dash or grill lights. More and more, this is getting to be a favored technique by some of the criminal element. You probably have heard of the Hillside Stranglers that preyed on women in Los Angeles in the late seventies, but what you may not know is, their main technique for getting their female victims to stop was by using a red police dash light in their car. They would then flash fake police ID's, "arrest" the unsuspecting victim, handcuff her, then place her in their car, where she was eventually raped and killed. I'm sure these two despicable culprits were not the first to use this deception, but the greater problem is that reported incidents of this nature are on the

increase around the nation. There have been numerous cases of women being stopped by males in vehicles that were similar in appearance to police vehicles used by local law enforcement agencies. The negative consequences range from harassment to carjackings and even much worse. So what is the answer? Do you stop and take your chances and hope that it is indeed a police officer or do you keep going and run the risk of being put in jail for refusing to stop? There are a number of factors and circumstances involved pertaining to each response but I'll try to provide you with what I feel are the best courses of action. Whether it be day or night and an unmarked vehicle attempts to stop you, consider this; if you are near a business or some type of establishment that is well lit and has several people around it, try to pull in to the parking lot of this place, if reasonably and safely possible. If it is daytime and there is no such structure, go ahead and stop, but have your doors locked. If the officer that emerges from this unmarked vehicle is in full uniform that is recognizable to you as being a legitimate, local law enforcement agency, then you need to decide if you feel comfortable with the situation. If you do, then comply with the officer's instructions. If not, then I would suggest the following course of action for any type of traffic stop where, because of an unmarked vehicle, you are uncertain if the person is in fact a police officer. First, with your doors locked, open your driver's side window just enough to hand your driver's license to the officer if he asks for it. Now, at this point, if he asks you to step out of the vehicle, respond politely with "Yes sir, I will, but would you please have a marked police car respond here first?" If the officer asks why, then explain to him that you are aware of a number of cases where people have been victimized by assailants who used unmarked police cars to stop their victims. The officer should understand this very reasonable request and comply by requesting a marked unit to respond. If he doesn't, do not be intimidated if he becomes angry and threatens to put you in jail. Remain calm and repeat your request for the marked unit. If he refuses and continues to demand that you get out of the car, I

would become very concerned for your safety. Explain to the officer you are going to use your cell phone to call 911, then make the call and explain to the call-taker your situation and wait for directions.

Do nothing to jeopardize your safety; at the same time, take no action that could be misconstrued by the officer as an attack against him. One course of action here might be to tell the officer "Officer, you have my driver's license, would you please follow me to the nearest store that is open, where I can call and verify you are indeed an officer?" Then, carefully obeying all traffic laws, drive to the nearest open store, business, fire station or well-lit and well-populated area and call the respective agency. Let me caution you strongly here, this should only be a last resort, taken only because you are in fear of your safety, since you may find yourself having to justify your actions to a jury of your peers. But, as the saying goes "Better to be tried by twelve than carried by six."

A stop made in the hours of darkness would require the same type of response, with one notable exception. If you are out in the middle of nowhere or some remote place where there is no one else around, and an unmarked vehicle attempts to stop you, I would not stop until the arrival of a marked unit. **DO NOT** attempt to flee from the unmarked vehicle, just continue driving while strictly adhering to all traffic laws, with your turn signal indicator on (this lets the officer know you're acknowledging his presence) until either you find an open business to pull into or a marked police unit arrives. At the same time, if you have a cell phone, call 911 and explain to the call taker what is occurring. The dispatcher should be able to quickly verify if it is a legitimate stop. When you finally do stop, apologize to the officer and calmly explain your reasons for not stopping. The officers should understand, especially if you're a female.

I have to adamantly state here that at no time am I suggesting that you should ever disobey the law. What I am attempting to do is to provide you with a safe plan of action to take if you are ever put in a situation where you ***are in fear for your safety or your life*** and ***can reasonably justify your subsequent actions***, not only to the officers but in the event of the worst case scenario, a court of law. The bottom line is that you remain alive to go home to your loved ones and that is the most important aspect of all. Law enforcement officers understand and live by this concept also, so it should not be too difficult to find someone who will be receptive to your explanations. At the risk of being redundant, I'll say one last time; stay calm and polite at all times and continue obeying the laws. Once again, that's all anyone can ask of you.

## Chapter 7

# Pros and Cons of Owning a Firearm & Firearm Safety

Undoubtedly, this is always one of the main topics talked about, argued for and against, and never being resolved to everyone's satisfaction. If you're ever at a dull party that needs to be livened up, introduce the subject of gun control to the guests. I can almost certainly promise you that there may be a lot of things said later about the party, but one of them won't be that it was dull. I don't believe there is any sacred middle ground between the lines of those for gun control and those who are against it. You are either "fer it or agin it" but don't be caught sitting on the fence on this one, or you'll catch it from both sides. Now, at the risk of being a hated fence dweller, I'm not going to take a side here, but rather, present what I feel are important aspects to be considered, in whatever choice you make. However, if you choose to own a handgun, be absolutely sure that you check on both your state and local laws pertaining to handgun ownership.

Probably the greatest advantage of a handgun is that it provides a maximum level of force, which is portable, lightweight and relatively easy to use, in the sense it does not take a long time to learn the motor skill of squeezing a trigger. Handguns can be carried in a vehicle, on the person (with proper permits) or kept in the home for protection. And, in a life-threatening situation, where time permits you to actually get hold of the handgun, very few assailants are going to continue on with their attack, when faced with the prospect of acquiring acute "lead poisoning". But in order to increase the odds of your survival and simultaneously, decrease the chances of harming the wrong person, I feel it is imperative that anyone who is going to own a handgun should

receive the proper training from a qualified firearms instructor. The responsible handgun owner should then receive continuing training, at the very least, annually. This provides an opportunity for re-familiarization and also, an occasion to learn the latest laws pertaining to firearms.

Now, for those handgun owners who have children, PLEASE PAY CLOSE ATTENTION TO WHAT I AM ABOUT TO SAY! My friends, it just tears me apart every time I read in the newspaper or hear in the news about a child dying or being wounded as the result of being shot by a firearm in the hands of an unsuspecting child who didn't know the gun was real. Or, if they did know it was real, they had no concept of the destructive capability of the firearm. That's not so surprising, when you consider that children play with toy guns and they don't get hurt. Then they see actors on television and the movies getting shot and the hero stands there grinning and says "It's nothing; it's just a flesh wound!" And now, with video games so popular, by the time the average child reaches the age of 10 years old, he or she has probably "killed" hundreds, if not thousands of people or characters on video games. This has the effect of desensitizing the brain to the true killing potential of real firearms, so that when a small child finds mommy or daddy's gun, they think that it's not really going to hurt anyone. In fact, I remember a tragic case of a two-year old toddler in Ohio, who found his grandfathers .45 caliber handgun and began playing with it while on the floor behind his grandfather's chair. The gun fired, striking and killing the grandfather, who was sitting in the chair. Such a senseless tragedy could have been avoided, with the proper precautions.

Another tragedy occurred in Tennessee, where a police officer came home after his shift, took off his gun belt and placed his service weapon on the kitchen table, where his 3-year old son then picked it up, pulled the trigger and shot and killed his father. The officer's wife was expectant, with their second child. Not only was

a father and husband needlessly killed, his son will have to live the rest of his life, knowing he took the life of his father.

I feel it is of the utmost importance that if you have children and own a firearm, consider this: From the time that they're old enough to walk and talk and get into things, you should take your children to a firearms range with you and let them hear and see the destructiveness of firearms. Humans are born with only two fears; the fear of falling and the fear of loud noises. When a small child hears the sharp explosion of a firearm firing, a fear is created towards that firearm. When they can see with their own eyes, the damage the bullet causes to the target, they now realize what comes out of the barrel of that firearm and more importantly, what it does to the object it is pointed at. It is no longer a game, where they point a toy gun and say to their playmate "Bang, you're dead!" and then nothing happens to the playmate. Instead, it becomes reality, and the child now knows with no uncertainty, what happens when they point a real gun and pull the trigger. Children can and will learn the proper actions to do or not do with firearms, if properly taught, and then once taught, re-enforced periodically. Of course, as a parent first and handgun owner second, you still need to insure that the firearm is kept in a secure place, separated from the ammunition, where the child does not have access to it when you're not around or in actual possession of it. Okay, I hear you. You're saying to me; "Tom, let me get this straight. You're telling me that each night, before I go to bed, if I want my handgun nearby for protection, I should have to take it out of a lockbox, load it, then place it nearby for access, where my child still couldn't readily get to it. Then, in the morning, unload it and lock it back up in the lock box. Is that what you're telling me, Tom?" Yes, that's exactly what I'm advising you to do. The two minutes a day it takes you to complete those precautionary measures will allow you a lifetime of uninterrupted pleasure with your children. This saves you from the alternative, a lifetime of tragic memories of what should have been done and wasn't and subsequently, what

could have been and isn't. I have personally seen the weeping father, holding his dying, gunshot child in his arms, with the child looking up at their father, a trusting look in their eyes, knowing that daddy will make everything all right. And they still have that same look as the light goes out of their eyes forever. Are two measly minutes of precautionary measures a day worth it? Only you can answer that. There is simply no excuse for not locking your handguns in a safe and if speed is your concern, then consider a quick access gun safe. You can get to your weapons in literally seconds and still have the security your family needs.

The biggest disadvantages of owning a handgun is, in most situations when you would need it, you're not going to be provided with the opportunity to get to it. I personally don't know of a single case where someone who was carrying a concealed firearm, while being robbed at gunpoint, was able to successfully defeat his or her attacker. (The exception to this is, store owners who are armed). Usually what happens in this situation is the victim's firearm gets taken and more likely than not, winds up being used in the next robbery. This also applies to home burglaries when the homeowner is away. If the handgun is not locked up in a secure location, it becomes part of the burglar's loot and just like the preceding case, will probably be used in a future crime. This is another reason for always locking up your firearm in a lockbox.

Without question, the greatest downside of a firearm is the immense finality of its use. Once that trigger is pulled, sending a potentially lethal projectile speeding towards its intended target, there is no stopping and saying "Whoops, I made a mistake!" How many times over the last couple years have you read or heard in the news about someone being killed accidentally, as a result of mistaken identity? It happens and what greater tragedy can there be than a family member killing another family member because it was thought that they were an intruder? Recently in the northeast, a police officer shot and wounded his 17-year old daughter during

early morning hours, when she was sneaking back in through the basement window, after having snuck out earlier in the night to meet up with some friends. Please folks, keep this in mind and if the situation should ever occur where you are put in the position of possibly having to use a firearm, make sure that you will be able to justify your actions later to the authorities and the courts. Above all else, identify beyond all reasonable doubt, who it is you're about to shoot. When I use the term identify, that does not mean you have to personally know the person, just know that ***it's not the wrong person.*** If you should ever make this mistake, you'll have the rest of your life to regret it. You'll face the legal repercussions, the civil lawsuits and the emotional pain that can tear you and your family apart.

Handgun ownership is an awesome responsibility and should never be taken lightly. Always treat a firearm as if it were loaded and NEVER, EVER point a firearm at another person unless you intend to use it in defense of you, your family or another person's life.

## Chapter 8

# How to Prevent Carjackings

In an earlier chapter, I discussed the recent epidemic of carjackings in this country. According to the U.S. Department of Justice Bureau of Statistics, an average of 49,000 carjackings occur each year in the United States and there are those who think this may be conservative, as many are not reported because of drug activity or other illegal activities occurring at the time of the incident. A carjacking takes place in a very rapid and often violent mode, usually with armed criminals whose primary focus is on separating you from your vehicle by any means necessary. Victims of carjackings run the full gamut with what happens to them. Pistol-whipping is commonplace and even worse is the victims who are raped or murdered. Carjacking has become a major criminal enterprise, often run by highly organized rings due to the lucrative profits. The results are thugs with no concern for their victims or what happens to them. Many victims are so emotionally traumatized; they may never drive a car again.

Let's examine some of the primary methods used in carjackings.

- The "Accident" - This is one of the main methods used. The carjacker runs into the victim's car from the rear and when the victim gets out with the intent to check on the damage and exchange driver's license and insurance information, he or she is carjacked, usually with a weapon.
- The "Get your attention" method – This is where the carjacker will attempt to get you to pull over, by honking their horn or flashing their high beams at you, making you think there is a problem with your vehicle. Once you stop, you're immediately attacked and your vehicle taken.
- The "Broken down victim" method – The carjacker positions his car in the medium or the side of the road and stages the

car as if it is broken down. When some unsuspecting Good Samaritan stops to assist, their vehicle is taken by force.

- Following you to your place of business or home – Once you pull in, you'll find your vehicle blocked in, whereupon you're immediately confronted by the carjacker(s), who take your keys and more than likely, your valuables as well.
- Wrong place, wrong time – This is nothing more than the carjacker seeing you in a car that he suddenly decides he wants and seizes the moment (and your vehicle) by acting on the opportunity presented.

Carjackings can be avoided to a great degree, if certain precautionary measures are taken. You must condition you and your family to become "hard targets". By that, I mean you must implement practices that will make it more difficult for the carjacker to be successful. To begin with, always keep your doors locked when driving your vehicle. This is a great habit to get into. Does this mean all the time, no matter where you are or what time of the day it is? Yes, that's exactly what it means. Recently in Orlando, in what would be considered a "good area", a male driver pulled into the drive-through of a fast food restaurant to order some food, at around 9:00 P.M. Suddenly, one male ran up and jumped into his car from the driver's door, while another entered his car through the passenger door. A struggle ensued, in which the victim was shot twice. Fortunately, he survived. Had his doors been locked, more than likely, he would have had time to drive away. His chances would have even been better had he seen his attackers running towards him, which brings up the next point.

Try to always be aware of your surroundings, be cognizant of the person parked next to you and pay attention to whomever is walking nearby. Be aware of any sudden, threatening or menacing moves that are suddenly made in your direction. Then be prepared to take a defensive action. Are you parked at a stop light? What direction will you go? Are you blocked in by a car in front and a

car at the rear? A favorite technique of the carjacker is to wait until you pull in behind another vehicle at a stop light or stop sign and then box you in from behind with their vehicle. That's why you should always leave enough space between you and the vehicle in front of you so as to pull out and go around it if necessary. If you can see the entire rear tires of the vehicle in front of you, you have enough room to drive around it. Keeping your doors locked and being aware of your surroundings will usually provide you with enough time to react and take defensive action. And yet, I know of so many macho guys who refuse to do any of these things because they just know that it couldn't possibly happen to them. Of course, that's what almost all victims say later.

Always try to park near well-populated areas and well-lighted areas. Get in the habit of checking out any cars nearby that have someone in them. Do they appear to be acting normal or, do their actions create alarm or suspicion in you? Listen to your instincts! If you have that “feeling”, more than likely there is a good reason for it. As you’re walking back to your vehicle, make sure there is not someone circling the parking lot or following you. We’ve all see those folks who follow us back to our cars, so they can get our parking space, but you still need to pay very close attention. If it doesn’t feel right or, the occupants don’t look right, avoid going to your car by cutting between other parked cars and creating distance between yourself and the suspicious vehicle. Or, suddenly double back and head back to the building you left. Once the vehicle has left the area, you can return to your vehicle.

If the worst should occur and you become the target of armed carjacker, I’m not going to tell you not to resist. There are folks who complied passively, offering no resistance, and still wound up hurt or killed. It’s a decision only you can make, based on the existing circumstances. Much has to do with if you’re armed or not; if you have your family with you; if you’ve had prior military or law enforcement training; and many other factors. However,

what must be accepted is; your vehicle is replaceable; your life is not.

My intent here is not to make you so paranoid that you're afraid to drive anywhere, however, I want you to know that it CAN happen to you and by taking a few precautions, you can be one of the lucky ones who got away. Remember our old friend, Ben and his "Ounce of prevention" saying. Ben was one smart man.

## Chapter 9

# Eleven Items That Should Always Be In Your Vehicle

Police officers are often asked what citizens should carry in their personal vehicles. This is a very good question, because of the fact that we are such a highly mobile society and on any given day, there are millions of motor vehicles on our highways. There are any number of situations that could arise while we are in our cars and there are certain items that should always be present. While I won't say my list is all-inclusive, I will say that it contains the bare essentials.

**FIRE EXTINGUISHER.** Make sure that is a type that puts out most types of fires, to include petroleum based and chemical. Periodically, check and make sure that it is full or functioning properly.

**EXTRA WATER.** I would suggest that you use an empty antifreeze container. If your radiator springs a leak, this may allow you to get to a service station without burning your engine up.

**EXTRA OIL.** One to two quarts is sufficient. This can also help in the event of an oil system leak, and possibly allow you to get your vehicle to a service station.

**FIRST-AID KIT.** Nothing fancy needed here, since most people are not trained paramedics. However, anyone can wrap gauze around a wound to slow the bleeding down, so I would suggest a plastic tackle box, loaded with gauze rolls and 4" x 4" bandages, along with a pair of safety scissors.

**JUMPER CABLES.** This is a must. Why be stranded with a dead battery for hours, when this \$10-\$20 investment could have

you back on the road again in minutes. Most people will give you a jump, but most won't have jumper cables.

**CANNED FIX-A-FLAT.** This is possibly one of the greatest inventions, falling somewhere in between the cell phone and the microwave. This stuff is just fantastic for a puncture flat when it's raining, cold, hot, you're weak, you don't know how to change a tire, etc., etc. Prices range from 89 cents to \$3.00. Whatever the case, it's well worth the price and I recommend carrying two cans. If it's late at night and your wife, girlfriend or daughter has a flat tire, you'll be thankful that she had a can in the car. Otherwise, you never know who is going to stop and for what reasons. If you're in nice business clothes and you're on the way to an important meeting, it could save you a great deal of time and stress, not to mention the dry-cleaning savings.

**FLARES.** These could literally be lifesavers at an accident scene. Carry at least six to ten.

**FLASHLIGHT.** An extremely valuable item. A plug-in spotlight is optional, but still a good item to have.

**TOOLBOX.** Nothing elaborate, just a few basic tools, such as screwdrivers, pliers, a few wrenches and a good pair of channel lock pliers, as well as a pair of adjustable vice-grip pliers. These can be used to hold connecting parts together, in the event of a break.

**BLANKET.** This can be a very valuable item in an emergency situation. It can either be used to keep you warm if your car breaks down or it can be used as a first aid item.

**DUCT TAPE:** Duct tape can be used for a number of quick repairs, from taping up a cracked radiator hose, to wrapping an

exposed cable or wire which may be causing a short. It's a very, inexpensive item but an extremely valuable item to carry.

One item I have not mentioned here is a gas container. I think that's only necessary if your gas gauge is broken, but if you do carry one in your vehicle, never carry gas in it. Why? One gallon of gas is equivalent to fourteen sticks of TNT in explosive potential, which could literally turn your car into a bomb.

Again, feel free to carry other items. The ones I've mentioned are just what I feel are essential.

## Chapter 10

# What to Do (and not do) If You Are Wrongfully Arrested

One of the most unfortunate occurrences in law enforcement is, when a citizen is detained or even arrested for a crime that they had absolutely no involvement in. So how does this happen and what does one do, should it happen to them? I'll explain first how it could happen and then, how you should respond.

Whenever a crime occurs, in which there is an immediate police response and there are eyewitnesses to the crime, one of the first things that a responding officer does, is to get as much perpetrator information as possible. This would include a physical description of the suspect(s), their clothing, and any vehicle description. Also, if it was a crime in which the perpetrators were armed, what type of weapons were involved and how much money and/or what items were taken in the robbery. If it is a theft, an attempt is made to determine what items may have been stolen. Now keep in mind that the officer is usually dealing with a victim who may be angry, shaken up or just downright scared. The officer may also be dealing with multiple witnesses, all whom have an account of the incident from their own perspective. You recall the story of "The Blind Men and the Elephant?" If you've never read it, it involves three blind men who try to describe what an elephant is or looks like, based on how it feels to them. The problem is each blind man is located at a different place on the elephant. One is at the trunk, one at its side and the other at its tail. Of course, the individual perspective of what an elephant looks like greatly differs from blind man to blind man. If the elephant were to suddenly come up missing and an officer had to take a missing elephant report from each blind man, can you imagine what his report would look like? Well, maybe that's going to an extreme, but I'm telling you, sometimes it almost seems that bad when you interview multiple

witnesses. A short witness may tell you that the suspect was tall, whereas a tall witness may tell you that the suspect was short. If the suspect is of medium build, a heavy-set person may tell you that the suspect was skinny but a skinny witness may tell you that the suspect was on the heavy side. And, the differences continue to mount. Pity the poor officer who has to decipher all of this and then write a report that is required to be as accurate as possible. But first, he has to notify dispatch to broadcast this information to all area law enforcement agencies, so that their officers can be alerted and look for the perpetrators. This broadcast, called an **APB** (All Points Bulletin) or a **BOLO** (Be On Look Out), is only as useful as the information received from the victim or the witnesses. Because of the victim possibly being in a confused or frightened state and the individual perspectives of the witnesses, one can begin to understand how an officer may get information that is not completely accurate. However, he has an obligation to the community that he is sworn to protect, to act swiftly with the information he has and to effect the apprehension of the criminal, before they can prey on someone else. Therefore, he sorts out the information as well as he possibly can, under these less than desirable conditions. He then has that information broadcast as quickly as possible.

Now that we have an understanding of how this process works, let's see if we can relate it to a situation where you, an innocent passer-by, could get detained and even arrested, for a crime you weren't involved in. It's Saturday night at the local "Stop and Rob", your friendly, neighborhood convenience store. You decide to stop and pick up a six-pack of "Ol Belcher's Beer" and a pack of "Wheezers", your favorite smokes. It's a rather cool night, so you're wearing a dark blue nylon windbreaker. You're a white male, 6 feet tall, 170 lbs., medium length brown hair and you're 38 years old. You also have a mustache. As you pay the clerk, you notice another white male near the beer cooler, a little shorter than you, wearing a black jacket. You think to yourself that he needs a

shave, as he appears to be scruffy looking. You then go out to your car, a 2002 Ford LTD 4 door, black in color, with a tan vinyl top and get in. You sit for a minute, while you open up the pack of cigarettes and light one. Since you're occupied in this task, you fail to see the clerk in the store being robbed at gunpoint. Also, your car is parked at the side of the store. You don't see the clerk being made to lie down on the floor and then the robber running out the door and around the opposite side of the building. However, as you drive out of the parking lot, your car almost gets struck by another car with several teenagers in it. Angrily, you show them your middle digit, indicating what you think their IQ is, and you drive off. You don't see these young people walking into the store and finding a frightened store clerk, who tells them she's just been robbed. They ask her what the person looks like and she tells them that it's a white guy with dark hair, wearing a dark colored jacket. They excitedly tell her that they've just seen him drive off in a car, a black Ford LTD 4 door, with a tan vinyl top.

The clerk now calls the police to report this crime and the officer who receives the call will do several things in a rapid sequence. First, the emergency operator working the 911 phone lines will verify the name of the caller and her location. Since the store clerk dialed 911 to report the incident, her location, the name of the business, the business address and the phone number are all showing on the emergency operator's screen and will remain locked on the screen until he releases the information. This means that even if the clerk had been interrupted after dialing 911, the emergency operator would still know the origin of the call. Next, the emergency operator will determine what type of crime has occurred. He will then obtain as much perpetrator information as possible, including vehicle description and direction of travel the perpetrator took when he left the scene. This information is given to the dispatcher, who then assigns units to respond to the call and simultaneously, provides the available perpetrator description to all monitoring police units and local law enforcement agencies.

Two miles away, Deputy Goodguy, working the night shift, hears the broadcast go out over his radio, just in time to see you drive by. He sees that the vehicle matches perfectly and his heart starts pounding as he excitedly picks up his radio microphone and advises the dispatcher that he possibly has the vehicle in sight used in the armed robbery. Several other units converge on you and the next thing you know, four police cars stop you, using their red and blue lights and sirens. A police helicopter flies overhead, using its 3 million-candlepower spotlight to light you up. The police are pointing guns at you and telling you to get down on the pavement. You're terrified, not knowing what's going on. Then, you're handcuffed and told that you are a suspect in an armed robbery at the "Stop and Rob" convenience store. The victim is then brought to your location, where, fortunately for you, she states you are not the one that robbed her.

Now, you become angry and start talking lawsuits and attorneys and even questioning the ancestry of the officers. But hold on just a minute! You are angry with the officers but what would you have done differently in their place? You, as the officer, are given information that reasonably leads you to believe that 1) a crime has been committed, 2) based on the description given, you have the suspect in sight, 3) the suspect is armed and dangerous and 4) if you're not careful, you could be dead in a matter of seconds. That's right, folks, cops get killed by bad guys in situations just like this! How many of you, having the information that Deputy Goodguy had, would have casually strolled up to the car and politely asked the driver "Excuse me sir, did you just commit an armed robbery at the "Stop and Rob" store back on Elm Street?" I think I can safely say that very few of you would have. I think you'd take the same course of action as Deputy Goodguy. This increases the chances of a safe capture if it is the bad guy, but it also minimizes the danger to the person stopped if he or she is not the suspect. Deputy Goodguy gives specific commands throughout this traffic stop, directing the vehicle occupants to perform certain actions,

which if followed as instructed, cannot be mistaken for hostile or offensive actions. This prevents needless tragedy and also allows Deputy Goodguy and his fellow officers to go home to their families at the end of the shift. Certainly you will have questions and any professional officer will take the time to explain to you why they took the actions they did and hopefully, you will be understanding and accept the explanation.

Does this seem to be too far-fetched to really happen? Guess again! I have personally been involved in several stops like this during my law enforcement career, which is what prompted me to write this chapter.

At the risk of being long-winded, I chose to elaborate on this subject because of what I feel is a need to inform you, the public, on what can happen in situations such as this. The bottom line here is; even if you know you're innocent, NEVER resist the officers. Realize that there is a reason for their actions and just do as you're told. Once the situation is under control, you will then be given an opportunity to explain your side of the story. If the officers are at fault and acted in haste or without probable cause, then you may elect to pursue an action against them, including lodging a complaint against the officers to their superiors or the Internal Affairs division of the agency or even hiring a lawyer to file a lawsuit. That is certainly within your rights as a citizen. However, what you don't have the right to do is to resist a police officer engaged in the lawful performance of his or her duties. That's one battle you'll more than likely lose. Even when you know you're right, stay calm, listen to the officer, don't give them any reason to feel threatened by you and know that in the end, everything will be cleared up and you'll have a heck of a story to tell your buddies at work the next day.

## Chapter 11

# How to Be a Good Witness

As we learned in the previous chapter, being a witness is usually not enough. Being a good witness though, can often make the difference between a bad guy going to jail or being set free. With crime in this country on the increase, there is a strong possibility that you will eventually witness a crime of some sort. With just a little training, any one of you can be an excellent witness. What makes a good witness or better yet, what do you need to look for, so as to maximize your effectiveness as a witness?

To begin with, the primary objective is to be able to provide a complete description of the perpetrator to the responding officer, so that in the event of his capture, your description can place the perpetrator at the crime scene. This provides evidence that will assist the state in prosecuting him or her. Therefore, the better your description is, the stronger the case for the prosecuting attorney. Sometimes, you may only have a brief opportunity to see the perpetrator, but if you know what to look for, you'll be amazed at how much information you can recall when being questioned.

What we have to do is create a format to use when a situation occurs. In other words, we have to know what to look for and be able to prioritize what we're looking for. What follows here is a basic guide to use if you should ever be in a situation where you need to be a witness. Don't be overwhelmed by the amount of information that it seems would be required for you to notice. Take this format, become familiar with it and then start practicing whenever you're out in public. You'll be pleasantly surprised at how quickly you'll pick it up. It's also interesting to find that you will become much more observant in even your daily routine.

Here then, is what we look for in an order of priority:

## **PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS**

**GENDER:** Simply put, are they male or female?

**RACE:** What race or color is the person?

**HEIGHT:** How tall are they? A good way to determine this is to look at the top of their head and if they should walk by any object, be it a wall, tree, sign, window, etc., pick a point where the top of their head is level with that object, then make a mental note of it. This is a very good technique to gauge a person's approximate height, once the officer has arrived on the scene and can compare your point of reference with actual measurements.

**BUILD:** Look at the person's overall body structure and then, determine if they're slender, medium, stocky or fat. Anything else that stands out should also be noted, for example, if they're extremely muscular or have a protruding potbelly. If you have trouble deciding what category they belong in, when you talk to the officer, try to find someone else who has the same approximate build and point the person out to the officer. No one expects you to be perfect; they're just trying to get the general idea.

**HAIR:** What length is their hair, what is the color and style? Is it straight, curly, wavy or kinky? Or did they have a cap or hat covering it? Describe the hat's type and color.

**FACE:** Describe the shape of the face. Is it round? Oval? Flat? Broad? Narrow? Was there any facial hair, such as a mustache, beard, goatee, or sideburns? Were there any distinctive features like the eyebrows growing together? Anything you could see about his or her teeth? Were they rotten, missing, gold-capped or spaced? Can you see the color of his or her eyes? Look at the nose and ears. Is there anything different about these features? I was able to develop a lead one time, which eventually led to an

arrest in a robbery case, simply because the victim commented on how much the robber's ears stood out. That, along with the rest of the description, gave me a real good idea on who the perpetrator was.

Another robbery lead was developed when the victim noticed that the robber, who was wearing a ski mask, had a lazy right eye. Because of the area in which the robbery occurred, and this very crucial bit of information, we had a real good idea who the robber was. An arrest was made in this case, because our victim was a good witness.

**VOICE:** If the perpetrator speaks, listen to the voice. Is it deep, high, or what you would describe as average? Is there any accent? If there is a noticeable accent, try to pick out a word or two that is spoken and remember how the perpetrator said them. This can be very useful, too.

**HANDS:** Could you tell if they were right or left handed? If they had an object in their hand, what hand was it in? Were they wearing gloves? What color and what kind?

## **CLOTHES**

**TOP:** Look at the top (shirt or blouse) first. What is the color? Is it long sleeved or short sleeved? Does it have a collar or not? Is it button down or pull over?

**BOTTOM:** Now the bottom (skirt or pants). Again, what is the color? If the person is wearing pants, are the pants long or short? What is the type? Are they blue jeans, corduroy or dress type? If it is a skirt or dress, where was the hemline?

**SHOES:** What is the color of the shoes? What type are they? Are they athletic or dress? Are they sandals or boots? Or, were they barefooted?

## **VEHICLE**

**TYPE:** Is it a car, truck, motorcycle or bicycle?

**COLOR:** What is the color? Is the bottom the same color as the top and is any of the rest of the vehicle a different color?

**STYLE:** Is it a two-door or four-door? Small, medium or large sized?

**MAKE:** Try and determine who the manufacturer is. Is it a Ford? Chevrolet? Toyota? Nissan? Do the best you can in determining this.

**MODEL:** Can you see what the model is? Is it a Chevrolet Camaro or a Pontiac Firebird? No one expects you to be an automotive expert but if you're looking for the model, you probably will see it.

**OTHER:** Is there any body damage? Is there anything on the bumpers or windows, such as stickers or letters? Are there any objects hanging from the rear view mirror? Is the vehicle louder than normal? If the incident occurs at night, did you notice if any of the lights were out or broken. Did anything stand out about the tires or wheels? Were the tires wider than average, did they have raised white lettering? Were the rims custom or plain hubcaps?

Does this seem like a lot to learn? Maybe it does, but I can assure you that with just a little effort on your part, you'll be amazed at the powers of observation you can develop. And, should the day ever come when you have to be a witness, there's no doubt in my

mine as to what type of witness you'll be. You're going to be a GREAT witness.

## Chapter 12

# How to Minimize Becoming a Rape Victim

Currently, there are countless books, seminars and training programs in existence in this country, all having to do with how to prevent rape. I'm not going to attempt to offer an in-depth program here on rape prevention. Instead, I'm going to focus on some common sense areas that will greatly minimize you becoming a rape victim. None of these things require an exorbitant amount of money, training or worry. For the most part, it just requires forming some good habits. You've probably noticed by now that I tend not to use the term "prevent." This is because, in my opinion, prevent means "to stop"; which I believe could lead to a false sense of security, which is certainly not what I want to accomplish here. However, if one takes certain precautionary measures, it significantly minimizes the chances of becoming a victim.

First of all, understand that rape is not about sexual desire or how you dress. Rape, in most cases, is a crime of violence, a warped expression of power, one person's dominance over another. Rapists tend to have such low self-esteem as they cannot develop a normal, healthy relationship. However, the fear instilled in their victims gives them a sense of exaggerated power, a feeling of omnipotence. This then, raises their self-esteem. One only has to look at the rape victims who are in their 50's, 60's, 70's and even 80's to realize this. I recall a rape in the last area that I worked of a woman in her 70's, who was grossly overweight and bedridden. Her assailant was a strapping, physical specimen in his late 20's. Burglarizing her house was not enough of a demonstration of power for him. He had to further establish his dominance over her by raping her.

Then, on the other end of the spectrum, you have the child rapists and molesters. This is perhaps the lowest of the low self-esteemeds. Their self-esteem is so low they don't even have the courage to victimize adults at all, instead choosing helpless children. But again, the feeling of having power over their victims is the attraction here. Although I don't wish to become involved in a long dissertation here about rapists, I felt that an explanation, albeit brief, of what rape really is, was necessary. But now it's time to discuss what precautions can be taken to minimize you becoming a rape victim. There are three primary locations that I want to focus on here; those being the home, the workplace and the car.

To begin with, we'll discuss the home, but please take time to also review Chapter 4, "How to Minimize Your House Being Burglarized." There are some excellent suggestions there on how to better secure your home against intruders. Taking those factors into consideration, here are some additional do's and don'ts. Ladies, if you're single, please don't put your phone number in the phone book, with your name AND address showing. That is definitely asking for trouble. I have a friend who made that mistake when she first moved out on her own. Some nut picked her name out of the phone book and started calling her continuously. After several weeks of that, he started describing her house to her. That's when she borrowed a handgun from a friend. The next thing you know, she came home late one night and readied herself for bed. Now picture if you will, her bedroom closet being just past the foot of her bed. After she got into bed, she had trouble getting to sleep because she kept hearing noises. At first, she thought it was her imagination but the noises continued on for over an hour. Finally, she clearly heard a noise coming from the closet. She reached under her pillow, grabbed the gun and then turned the night stand light on, just in time to see a man throw open her closet door and step out. She pointed the gun at him and screamed "What do you want?" He saw the barrel of that 9mm semi-automatic pointing at him and screamed back "I

just want to get the hell out of here!” He then ran for the door in record breaking time. He was captured later that night, *after he called the victim back* and was then convinced by the victim to come back. Of course the police were waiting in hiding for him. The ensuing investigation found that he was on probation from another state for rape. This is a true story folks. I didn't get this from the movie of the week, although it sounds like one of those movies. You have to realize that there are lots of crazy people out there, just like this guy and a single woman's name in the phone book is an open invitation for a phone call or worse yet, a visit. So please, ladies, if your name is in the phone book, change your number and have it taken out. If someone you don't know calls you, never let them know that you are alone. If they should ask a question along those lines, tell them that your boyfriend or husband is in the next room or nearby. If the caller asks for the man of the house, tell them that he is not there at the moment but will be back soon. However, then tell them that you would prefer not to receive any telephone solicitation calls at your home.

Next, at nighttime, close your blinds and window shades. If you're by yourself and your window blinds aren't pulled down, a prowler who sees this may be prompted to break in and attack you. Many times I have answered prowler calls in someone's back yard, only to find that the prowler was in that particular yard for the purpose of viewing the scenery next door. This usually happened to be a single female, who was leaving her window shades up, not anticipating a prowler getting a free peep show.

Always make sure that when you're home, you keep your doors locked. Just because it's daytime or there's more than one person with you does not mean that a rape still can't happen. I've known of several incidences where the rapist went into the victim's home, overpowered a boyfriend or husband, and then raped the victim in front of her significant other. This really makes the rapist feel powerful. It's a shame that our society has come to this, but that's

the reality of it. If you want to increase your safety factor, lock your doors!

At the work place, if you work alone in an office that is isolated from other offices, it's a good idea to keep the doors locked, especially at night. If you have to leave the office at night, always try to have a security guard or male employee walk you out. At a minimum, have someone walk out with you, since an attack is less likely to occur with two or more people together. If you are in an isolated area, such as a garage or parking lot and you see someone that arouses your suspicions, immediately have your pepper spray in your hand, ready to use (You *have* bought pepper spray by now, haven't you?). Walk away and make at least two direction changes to see if he continues following you. If he does, don't waste any time. Kick off your high heels if you're wearing them and run like mad to the nearest populated area. At the first indication that he is going to run after you, start screaming at the top of your lungs as you run. When he starts getting close, start spraying one- second bursts of pepper gas behind you, while you continue running. All it should take is for him to get one good whiff of the pepper gas and he'll be out of the chase. Even if he stops pursuing, continue running until you get help and always report it immediately to the police.

When you are in your vehicle, always keep the doors locked. If you should break down at night or in a not-so-good area, turn on your emergency flashers and call 911 and ask for a police officer to stand by with you while you wait for assistance. If you don't have a cell phone, check your surroundings and if clear, go raise your hood, then get back in your car and lock the doors. If someone does stop to assist you, be very careful of whom you are dealing with before you get out of your car. Again, have your pepper spray in your hand, ready to use. If you're not sure of the person, stay in your car and ask them through a slightly opened window to call the police for you. Do not give them your home phone

number and ask them to call someone. That can cause some definite problems for you in the future if this person has ill intentions.

Always stay alert of your surroundings, including people and potential areas that an attacker could be hiding in or as a place to drag you to, for the purpose of concealing his attack. Be aware that a common place for rapists to hide is between cars and even under them. This is why it is of the utmost importance to park in well lighted areas, near the attendant booths in parking garages or close to where there is a heavy concentration of people.

You also have a built-in mechanism that can be a true lifesaver, if you listen to it. Known as instinct, intuition or “gut feeling”, it’s there for a reason and you should never discard it without trying to determine why you feel that way. So many times, I have heard the comment from victims that “I just knew something wasn’t right.” If only they would have listened to their instincts, they may have been able to avoid the rape.

One of the most common forms of rape is Date Rape. This usually happens when the date becomes increasingly aggressive to the point of ignoring any and all attempts at saying “no”. This is why it is so important for you to set the ground rules early on in the date and also to know in your own mind, at what point you’re going to say “enough”. Keep in mind, the further the date rapist is allowed to advance, the more he is going to feel he is entitled to have sex with you, even if it is against your will. Don’t be afraid to firmly say “No more” and if he persists, leave the area. If you’re in a car, get out of the car. If you’re in his place of residence, leave. If at any time he should attempt to stop you, keep your distance and tell him that you’ll scream if he comes any closer. If he does, follow through and start screaming at the top of your lungs. This will draw attention to you and your situation and also lets him know that other people are now probably aware of something wrong.

If he attempted to use any force on you, either by threat or physical actions, immediately report this to the police as soon as you are in a safe area. He may have raped before or if not reported, he may and probably will rape someone else in the future, since he not only does not respect women, but also displays violent tendencies. His other method is to drug your drink with any number of drugs sold on the street, designed to lessen your resistance or immobilize you. Never accept a drink from a stranger, unless you saw it come directly from the bartender and could see there was nothing put in the drink. By the same token, keep an eye on your drink at all times. Do not leave it for any reason, i.e. to go to the restroom, go dance, etc. This creates the perfect opportunity for the would-be rapist or his accomplice to slip something into your drink. If you have to leave your drink, get another one. It's a very small price to pay for your safety.

If the worst should ever happen, that is, you are the unfortunate victim of a rape, there are several things you should and should not do. All of these are of the utmost importance, so please read carefully. I understand that this is one of the most traumatic events that could ever happen to you and I truly wish there was an easier way to handle it, but regretfully, it's never easy. First and foremost, stay alive. Do whatever it takes to accomplish this but you must develop the mentality that you're going to make it through this ordeal, so you can live to see this scum put behind bars. I'm not going to tell you to kick him in the groin or use some other exotic technique that some person has taught you in the safe confines of a classroom. You're the one that suddenly has your life on the line and trying an aggressive technique that misses or fails to work, may only anger the rapist to the point where he becomes even more violent. Every rape is different and no one can or should tell you that there is a "best" technique to use. A self-defense technique that saves one victim may get another seriously hurt or even killed.

As difficult as it may seem, keep your wits about you and determine a plan of action. Force may be one option but establishing a rapport with the rapist may be another. The longer you can stay alive, the better your chances are of surviving the ordeal. Try to remember his features and as many distinguishing characteristics as you can (See Chapter 11, "How to be a Good Witness"). This is crucial for identification purposes. If he has a vehicle, try to remember as many things about the car as you possibly can. Also, look where you are and pick out as many identifying features as you can about the location. The crime scene is always an important link in the evidence chain. Once he has released you or left the area, immediately go to a place of safety and call the police.

Now please listen to what I am about to tell you because this is vitally important. I know that you feel violated, dirty and disgusting and want to wash all traces of this human vermin off of you as soon as possible but **you must not**. Don't shower, wash, douche or even change clothes, no matter how strong the urge is. Instead, get angry with this S.O.B. and concentrate on how you're going to make sure that he pays and pays dearly for what he did to you. All these instructions I've just given you are extremely important for preserving evidence; evidence that will be used to put him away. Grit your teeth and stay angry. The police will take you to the hospital for a rape examination, in which any blood, semen, hair, skin or any other evidence will be collected.

Don't **ever** feel like you did something wrong; no matter the circumstances. No one has the right to commit an act like this against you. Don't feel embarrassed or feel like you need to defend your actions. You have no reason to feel ashamed nor do you have any reason to justify any actions that you did or didn't do. The rapist is the wrongdoer here; not you. Be a good witness. Your ability to remember events and features and, your preserving evidence will be what is used to put this creep away for a long

time, preventing him from attacking other victims. Seeing him imprisoned may have the effect of being therapeutic, knowing that he won't be around to bother you again. The bottom line here is that you must stay alive, no matter what it takes.

For husbands and boyfriends, I have a special message for you. Remember who the victim is here and what she just gone through. She needs your support, your assurances and your love, more than anything else. What she doesn't need is your ego going off on a rampage, because you think **you** have been wronged. So often, I have seen the husband or boyfriend come into the room with the victim and demand angrily "Who was it? How did this happen? What did you do to provoke him?" Gentlemen, if you ever had to go through what a rape victim has went through, you'd understand why it is they need your love, your sympathy, your understanding and your assurances that you are there for them. Don't demand an account of what happened. Let her tell you when she is ready and never question her truthfulness. She has just endured an extremely traumatic incident that has left her feeling violated, angry, ashamed, unworthy and afraid. What you initially do can either speed up the healing process or, increase her emotional trauma even more. And, if she recoils from your touch, don't take it personal. Try to understand the ordeal she has just suffered and give her some time. The main thing is, be there for her, be supportive and be understanding.

Finally, for you, the rape victim, when everything is over and done with, I would urge you and those closest to you to find a support group that works with rape victims and their families. Recovering from the psychological trauma of rape can be a long, hard road and these groups are there to assist you in your recovery. There, you'll find trained counselors who can help you and also, other victims who will understand what you are feeling and can provide you with the strength and encouragement necessary to recover from your ordeal.

## Chapter 13

### How to Minimize a Home Invasion

As it appears that our legal system is becoming increasingly more liberal, criminals are becoming bolder in their attacks on society. This is probably best exemplified by the recent tremendous surge in home invasions. This is where one to several perpetrators, usually armed with firearms, force entry into a residence and rob the occupants. In most cases, they will be wearing some type of ski mask or stocking mask to disguise themselves. Anything of value may be taken and often, victims are pistol whipped, beaten and even shot. This has become a very frightening reality of life and those who have had to endure this ordeal are likely to be emotionally scarred for life. No longer do they feel secure in their own home. However, if certain steps are taken and religiously adhered to, one can certainly minimize the opportunity for this heinous crime to occur.

To begin with, a review again of Chapter 4 will certainly provide some excellent ideas on how to make the home more secure, including the barred windows and doors and having a large dog for a pet. But then, not everyone has the money to afford such items, so let's address what other steps can be taken to help prevent a home invasion.

First and foremost, lock your doors! I know by now that you must be getting tired of seeing this phrase, but it's such an important act that so often is neglected. Locking the doors of your home is the first line of defense against an intruder or intruders. If one of these misfits targets your home, at least make it as difficult as possible for them by not letting them just walk in. However, locking your door may not be enough if you have a flimsy door, anchored by a flimsier frame. It is imperative that you invest in a good, solid

door and re-enforce the doorframe. No matter how sturdy the door is, it's not going to do any good if it's anchored to a cheap frame. Check with your local Home Depot or Lowe's and the staff there will be more than happy to give you tips on how to accomplish this.

Next, never open the door if someone is there that you don't know. I don't care what their reason is or how innocent they appear to be, don't take any chances. And don't think that a chain is going to stop anyone. Use your peephole, preferably the type that has a wide-angle viewer. If you don't have a peephole, please, for your safety as well as the safety of your family, invest a few dollars of your money and the few minutes of your time to install one. Again, I highly recommend the type that has an extra wide angle view. The absolute best system is an outside security camera. These come with monitors and are fantastic devices to provide you with a complete view of who is at your door, without you having to announce or show your presence. These systems are now very affordable and easy to install.

Make sure that you have an outside light in working condition. It should be a minimum of 100 watts. This way you can see who is there at nighttime. If someone knocks or rings the doorbell and you don't know them, tell them through the closed door to leave and that you have someone calling the police right now. Make sure that you do have someone calling the police, don't just try and bluff them. The police would much rather respond to a suspicious person call, then a home invasion in which the occupants have been robbed and even injured. But whatever you do, don't ever let your curiosity get the best of you. By this, I mean where someone knocks at your door and when you look out through the peephole you don't see anyone, whereupon you open the door. That could turn out to be a real bad move. I know of one young woman who did that very thing and when she opened the door, the perpetrator stepped from around the corner and struck her in the face with his

fist, knocking her out momentarily. He then brutally raped and beat her and left her for dead. However, she miraculously recovered.

Never, ever, open the door to strangers unless you are absolutely certain beyond any reasonable doubt, you are in no danger. Even then, have them pass some legal form of identification through the mail slot or under the door. Then, compare the ID to the person. When I mention legal ID, I am referring to something issued by a state, government or municipal agency(s). There are some real bad people out there and the current economy is creating even more, so you have to take all the precautions you can. It's a sad state of affairs folks, but the "good ol' days" of the past are gone forever.

One final note, try not to have any shrubbery or other items near your primary entrance point, where an intruder could hide. Make sure that you have an unobstructed view, both when approaching the entrance and when looking out through your peephole. This is a very important step, which may remove the bad guy's temptation, if he knows he can be seen. It also provides a better opportunity for passing neighbors or police to observe the suspicious activity and take action. Take the time to conduct a security survey around your house to determine if you have places where a would-be assailant could hide if he should decide to target you as his next victim. Once again, this is a very large "ounce of prevention" that could save you or a family member's life.

## Chapter 14

### **How to Maximize Your Children's Safety**

Out of all the subjects that I've covered so far, this is probably the most important of all, and yet, strangely enough, it is the least asked about. I've never understood this, unless it is because parents feel that they are the experts on how best to protect their own children. It could also be that so many of today's parents just aren't aware of the number of existing dangers facing today's children. Whatever the case may be, I think that it is imperative to take as many precautions as one possibly can and never take anything for granted when it comes to children. Children are wonderfully curious and have an innate ability to find or get into things that they shouldn't. Unquestionably, being a good parent is one of the toughest jobs in the world and made even harder by what faces a child in modern society. Yet, by developing several positive habits, taking the necessary precautions and teaching your child the dangers lurking both in and outside the home, you can certainly maximize protecting your children.

Let's begin with the home. The very first thing you should do is to conduct a survey of your home and make a list of everything you see that could possibly be a potential hazard to your children. Start from the floor and work your way up, with both the interior as well as the exterior. Lie down on your stomach or hands and knees and see your home from the child's viewpoint. Insure that there are no objects lying around with sharp protrusions, such as boards with nails sticking out or tools left on the floor or ground. Floors and carpeting should be swept or vacuumed on a regular basis, since broken glass can be tracked in and deposited by shoe bottoms. Small children crawling around can cut themselves on the pieces of glass if left in the carpet or on the floor.

Next, if you don't have wall socket covers, spend the few dollars it will cost you to buy them. It's easy to install them and only takes a couple of minutes and a screwdriver. Unprotected wall sockets are an inviting target for children to insert objects into, such as forks, knives and screwdrivers or anything else that will fit into the slots. Also, along these same lines, if you have used an extension cord for anything, make sure that the two electrical cords are plugged securely together. If there is a gap, this also allows a child exposure to the current should they insert a metal object in between the plugs.

Then, make absolutely certain that any toxic liquids, such as cleaners, bug sprays, chemicals, etc., are locked in a cupboard or storage area. Leaving these items under a sink in a kitchen, where a child has access, or in a bathroom under a sink, is asking for serious trouble. Never, under any circumstances, leave any of these items unattended or where a child can reach them. A child with a toxic or poisonous chemical can prove to be a fatal combination.

In bathroom areas, check for any electrical items near the bathtub area that might attract a child, such as radios, cassette or CD players. If they are taking the bath, they might try to reach over and adjust the volume or something else and electrocute themselves. Never leave a small child or infant unattended in a bath. I've known of young children who were left alone for only a few minutes who drowned. Other tragic occurrences have been children who were scalded by turning on the hot water, not knowing any better or standing up and then slipping, seriously injuring themselves. If you feel like you may have to answer the phone, invest in a portable phone and keep it with you in the bathroom.

Secure all sharp objects, such as scissors, knives or tools, in areas not readily accessible to small children. Do not leave these items

lying around in plain, open view for a child to pick up and play with. Teach children to never run with any objects that could injure them should they fall. I have a friend whose three year old daughter was running with a ruler in her mouth and fell, impaling her throat with the ruler. Fortunately, the injury was not as serious as it could have been and the child recovered.

Any electrical fans should have blade guard covers that will not allow a small child's fingers to be inserted through them. Workshop areas should be kept locked at all times when not in use. Swimming pools should be covered with a secure, child resistant cover when not in use or unattended. Every year, in homes across this country, children will drown in pools. I'm sure that if you asked a pool owner why their pool isn't covered, they would respond that it is too expensive. Yet, I'm also just as sure if you were to ask the grieving parent of a drowned child if they would have spent the money to cover the pool, knowing their child was going to drown in it, they all would instantly and emphatically answer "yes". Then why take the chance? What price do you place on your child's life? If I were to ask you this, you would look at me like I'm crazy and tell me there isn't enough money in the world. I believe that you are sincere in saying this, but prove it also by your actions.

Another problem is small children leaving the house when no one is looking. Children can figure out door handle operations very quickly and before any one realizes it, they're out the door and gone, exploring the outside world. One of the best measures that can be taken to prevent this from occurring is a hinge lock that attaches to your doorframe. It should be mounted at a height too high for a child to reach. This lock costs less than five dollars and is an outstanding device to insure against your child getting outside. Another great device is a plastic door knob cover that can be picked up from Home Depot or Lowes for a few dollars. It snaps over the door knob and requires a button on each side to be

firmly squeezed simultaneously in order to open the door. Most children lack the hand size or strength to accomplish this. The bottom line to this is, once the child does get outside unattended, tragedy becomes a close companion. To a police officer, this type of call has a great deal of urgency to it, because of the wide range of potential dangers that a child could encounter. There is the likely chance of wandering out into traffic and being struck by a vehicle. There are swimming pools, canals, ponds, drainage ditches and lakes to fall into. A child could stray into a neighbor's yard and be attacked by a dog defending its territory.

Install protective gates at the bottom of stairs. These are also very inexpensive and can be purchased through most home improvement stores. Toddlers love to explore and nothing seems to attract them more than stairs. That can lead to tragedy, especially if you have open windows on upper floors. I'm constantly reading about children falling out of windows from second or higher floors and every one of these cases could have been prevented by applying protective measures. The cost is minimal. The end result is priceless!

If all this is not enough, there is a host of vicious, human vermin out there who prey on children for a number of reasons, most of which are too horrible to describe here. Many of you lead sheltered lives and either you haven't heard about these acts happening or refuse to believe them. People, I'm here to tell you that there are real monsters existing in this world and they're not some creation dreamed up by a Hollywood moviemaker. They are human in species and even look like us, but that's where the similarities end. These evil criminals commit acts against others that defy the human imagination and stretch the defining boundaries of cruelty and horror. Am I trying to scare you? Am I trying to force you to look at reality? You bet I am! Am I exaggerating? Absolutely not! Any cop that's been in law enforcement for a number of years, especially in larger cities, can

probably tell you a few stories of this nature that will have you shaking your head in disbelief. But don't think that these heinous acts are limited to big cities, because they're not. If we as responsible adults and parents don't remove the opportunities from these vile criminals, they will seize the opening and act upon it. This means never leaving your child out of your sight in public, too. Shopping malls, airports, train and bus stations and entertainment parks are all hunting grounds for the child molester. Small children should always be accompanied by an adult when they go into a public restroom. I know that you love your children, so please, don't take any chances with their safety or welfare. You'll spend a lifetime regretting it.

Teach your children to know their home address and phone number. Make sure that they know how to contact one of the parents at work, if both parents work away from the house. Train them to never, under any circumstances, accept rides from strangers. The only exception to this is a marked police car, which you should point out to them the different police cars and police uniforms in your area, so they'll know what their police officers look like and what they drive. While I'm on this subject, this brings up one of my all time greatest peeves. Never threaten your children with police. For example, you're out in a restaurant, your child is misbehaving and you see a couple of police officers nearby. You then turn to your child and say "See those policemen over there? If you don't start behaving, they're going to take you away!" That is a very bad practice and I'll tell you why. If your child ever does get lost or in trouble, guess what's going to happen at the first sight of a uniform? They're either going to run or hide. And that's not going to help them, you or us. Always point out the police in a positive way to your children. If you'll ask, most officers will gladly take the time to talk to your children and encourage them to do the right and safe things.

I've had parents ask me to talk to their children about wearing seatbelts and I'll always drop what I'm doing to speak to them on the danger of not wearing a "lifebelt", which I think is a more accurate name for a seatbelt. That's what it does; it saves lives. In a vehicular collision, a child, not wearing a seatbelt becomes a living projectile that will continue traveling at the same speed as the vehicle was previously moving, until stopped by the first stationary object encountered, more often than not, the windshield. My favorite argument from people who don't wear seatbelts is that there is just no need for seatbelts at lower speeds of 25-30 miles an hour. My response to them usually goes like this: ME: "So you don't think you need a seatbelt at 30 MPH, is that correct?" JOE SEAT BELTLESS: "Yeah, that's right, that's not fast enough to get hurt, so whenever I'm just going down the street to the store, I don't bother." ME: "Well, Joe, would you agree with me the average human being, running at full speed, is going somewhere between 10-12 MPH?" JOE SEAT BELTLESS: "Yeah, that sounds about right. So what's your point?" ME: "Joe, you understand if you're in a car that's moving at 20 MPH and it's involved in a head-on collision with another car, also moving at 20 MPH, there is now a combined impact speed of 40 MPH? Furthermore, anything or anyone in those cars will now be thrown with a force equal to that combined speed." JOE SEAT BELTLESS: "Yeah, yeah, so what?" ME: "Joe, you've agreed with me a human being runs at 12-14 MPH, yet you don't think a collision at 20-40 MPH will hurt you, so I'll admit that you're right and I'm wrong if you'll run full speed into that tree over there, face first!" JOE SEAT BELTLESS: "What, are you crazy? I'd smash my face in." About this time, a look of realization passes over JOE'S face and he says "Ahhh, now I see what you mean. And at 30 MPH, that would be at least twice as fast. Maybe I'll start wearing my seat belt after all, because I sure would hate to mess up this handsome face."

Folks, I just can't tell you how many people I've seen during my law enforcement career, seriously hurt or killed from not wearing

seat belts. Two personal friends of mine were killed within a year of each other, in both instances, from being thrown out and then the car rolling on them. Had they been wearing seatbelts, the worst they probably would have suffered would have been very minor injuries. So please, I implore you, always make sure that you and your children are securely buckled in. Seatbelts do save lives; it's not just hype and, it's the law!

If your children are approached by strangers in vehicles, tell them to walk away from the vehicle and if it continues to follow them, run from it and repeatedly scream "Stranger" as loud as they can. If there are homes nearby, run to the nearest house and tell them to call the police. If there is an open business, such as a store or office nearby, run inside there and tell them to call the police. Then remain there until the arrival of the police. Police officers would much rather take a suspicious person report from your child, then a missing child report from you, the parents.

Insure that your children know what to do in the event they should become separated from you while in a public place. Have a plan of action they know to follow if this occurs. Make sure they know their home address and phone number and at the same time, they know to never give this information out to strangers. If they are home alone when stranger calls and starts asking questions, they should never say their parents aren't home, but instead say their parents are busy at the moment. Then ask for the caller's name and phone number so their parents can call them back as soon as they're not busy. Have a notepad next to the phone and instruct the children on how to take messages and have the callers spell their names so they can write it down.

An extremely important item to have is an identification card for your child, containing such information as their name, height, weight, eye and hair color, home address, contact phone # for a parent or guardian, blood type and any medical conditions, scars

and/or birth marks, disabilities, a thumb print, parent's names and a recent color photo. Each parent should have one and the child should also have one, without the home address showing. Children like to show off items like this and you don't want your home address readily available to just anyone. Some kits even have storage bags for DNA hair samples. There are several companies online that sell these products. Just Google "Child ID Kits" and several of these companies' web sites will appear.

A big problem facing our children today in schools, are bullies. Too many parents simply view this as kids being kids. Nothing could be further from the truth. Bullying is a very serious problem that if not addressed, can lead to severe depression, acting out at home, skipping school, fits of anger, interference with social or emotional development, suicide or even committing acts of violence as a form of revenge. The following facts are taken from Parentingbookmark.com;

- **Fact:** It is estimated that 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation by other students. Source: National Education Association.
- **Fact:** A survey conducted by the American Association of University Women reported that 85% of girls and 76% of boys have been sexually harassed in some form and only 18% of those incidents were perpetrated by adults. Young bullies carry a one-in-four chance of having a criminal record by age 30. Study by Leonard Eron and Rowell Huesman.
- **Fact:** American schools harbor approximately 2.1 million bullies and 2.7 million of their victims. Dan Olweus, National School Safety Center.
- **Fact:** One in seven students is either a bully or victim.

- **Fact:** 56% of students have personally witnessed some type of bullying at school.
- **Fact:** 15% of all school absenteeism is directly related to fears of being bullied at school.
- **Fact:** 71% of students report incidents of bullying as a problem at their school.
- **Fact:** One out of 20 students has seen a student with a gun at school.
- **Fact:** Mean behavior among kids is a universal problem. In a poll of 232 kids in kindergarten through 8th grade at a Connecticut elementary school, every child claimed to have been the victim of at least one schoolmate's or sibling's meanness in the previous month.

If your child shows anxiety towards attending school, exhibits changes in his or her behavior, such as becoming withdrawn or constantly displays injuries they say they received from “playing around”, there’s a very strong possibility they are being bullied. Talk to your children. Let them know you care and that they are not at fault. See if they will open up to you and identify the bully. Speak with a school counselor, school law enforcement resource officer or other administrators at the school and let them know of the problem. Develop a method or system that will create a resolution. Continue to monitor your child’s behavior and emotional state and ask for updates on the situation, but always as a concerned, caring parent. Do so in a calm, even fashion versus confronting your child in a demanding manner. There is a much greater likelihood of your child communicating with you if they don’t feel as if they’re being chastised. The effects of bullying can be severe, lifelong and overwhelming, so don’t ever take it lightly.

Finally, the last issue that I'm going to discuss is matches and lighters. Flame draws children to it like moths and they're simply amazed by it. If you provide them with the opportunity to experiment with matches or lighters by leaving those items lying around, you're flirting with disaster and your children's lives. You've all seen numerous cases of unattended children and entire families being killed in fires started by children playing with matches. Where is a parent's mind at when they leave that dangerous of an item accessible to a child? Can a parent truly be that naive to think that a child won't try to play with a lighter? Children are fascinated by fire and eventually, if the opportunity presents itself enough times, they're going to light the matches or the lighter. When tragedy strikes in this situation, it's rarely minor. If the child lives, he or she will be experience pain beyond the human imagination. One has to be subjected to this type of pain to truly understand what it feels like. Should the child survive that ordeal, they may be faced with permanent, grotesquely disfiguring scarring that will be with them for life. Don't ever allow the opportunity to exist, which could lead to this tragedy. Always keep your matches and lighters in a secure location where your children cannot get to them. At the same time, teach them the dangers of playing with these items and explain to them the potential consequences if they do.

I could write twenty pages on this chapter and still not cover all the necessary information. What I've tried to accomplish here, in a condensed version, is to provide you with some of the most important aspects of how you can best protect your children from harm. Never take anything for granted, educate your children on a continuing basis and always play the mental game of "What if....."? This will keep you alert, aware and hopefully, keep you and your family healthy and safe.

## Chapter 15

### A FINAL WORD

First of all, let me take a moment to thank you for taking the time to read my book. I truly hope that the information contained within it will serve you well in your day-to-day living. Crime continues to increase and as law-abiding citizens, we must do everything within our power to thwart the criminal at his every move. By understanding and then following the principles outlined in this book, I feel you will significantly remove the opportunities to be victimized by criminals and most certainly, increase the safety factor for you and your family. However, you must develop these safety habits yourself and then teach them to your family members. You simply cannot take the approach of the ostrich burying its head in the sand by assuming that a criminal act will never happen to you or your family. No victim plans for it to happen to them, but it does and yet, so many of these crimes could have been prevented by taking the steps provided here. Don't let you or your family become a statistic, because you failed to practice safe living.

Don't delay. Start this very moment. Quiz your children and other family members to determine their awareness levels and what areas need to be emphasized. Take the time to do a safety survey of your home and surroundings and then, when you have finished, call your local police department and have a professional come out and conduct their own survey. You may be surprised at what you learn or find in the way of potentially dangerous conditions or hazards. We tend to overlook the obvious when it becomes so familiar to us. That is one of the main reasons it is best to let the trained professionals perform the final survey.

Knowledge, combined with practicing good habits, can lead to a safer and happier life. I have provided you with this knowledge; now it's up to you to supply the effort.