



SAFETY IN YOUR VEHICLE

In the fall of 1995 three young hoodlums jumped into the unlocked passenger side door of the vehicle of a woman stopped at a local ATM. They robbed her, threatened her, and forced her to drive them around a Grand Rapids neighborhood. She eventually jumped out of the vehicle taking her cell phone with her. Her frantic call to police resulted in three arrests.

Someone needs money for drugs. They are standing at an intersection and who should stop at the light but you, singing along with the oldies; your car door is unlocked, and the window down.

Before you know what is happening a hand reaches in and grabs your purse, or laptop computer, or briefcase right



off the seat. Intersections can be dangerous if you don't stay aware and alert.

Here are some tips that will help save you from trouble.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Lock car doors.
- Keep windows up.
- Keep car in gear at intersections.
- Stay alert to activity near you while stopped intersections.
- Leave room to maneuver between the car ahead of yours

when stopped at intersections.

- Drive to a police or fire station if being followed.
- Use a cell phone to call police in case of trouble.
- Keep purses or valuables on floor of car while driving.
- Don't stop for people who hail you from the street.
- Have your pepper spray within reach.
- Do a visual check of the street or parking area before walking to or from your vehicle.
- Don't fall for tricks while driving: Someone pointing as if you have a car problem to get you to pull over, or the "Bump and jump" where a vehicle bumps yours and when you get out to check, your car is stolen, you are robbed, or worse.
- Use your survival instinct. If a situation feels wrong or dangerous get away any way you can.



CELL PHONES AND 911

If you use your cell phone in Grand Rapids to call 911, you will reach the Rockford State Police. Say, "Connect me to the Grand Rapids Police," and you will be put through to the GRPD dispatcher immediately.

TRUST YOUR INSTINCT:

Recent books stress the importance of using our innate survival instincts. When the hair on the back of your neck stands up and every nerve is alive, don't push away your fear and think you are just being paranoid. Evolution has not totally dampened our "fight or flight instinct." It would be wise to take advantage of it when it kicks in and listen to what your mind and body is telling you.

"Fear is a signal that sounds when we are in the presence of danger."

Gavin De Becker,
The Gift of Fear
