

Money Talk

CONVICTED BURGLAR GIVES HOME SECURITY ADVICE

Thursday, August 31, 1989

By Stephen N. Blaising

Scanning the police reports elsewhere in this newspaper may well give some Park Cities property owners "cause for alarm," such as burglar alarms. There are, however, a number of simple and inexpensive ways to protect your home or apartment from thieves rather than resorting to elaborate and costly security systems.

Our advice is not from a leading burglar alarm company, but from the comments of an experienced burglar, and the suggestions just might surprise you. Locks and alarms did not intimidate him, he contended. The best deterrents may not be hardware, but rather psychological defenses - warning signs that make a burglar think twice before selecting a victim, particularly when there are so many easy targets.

The "expert" said he never touched houses with dog warnings, especially Doberman alerts. A sign like "extremely vicious Doberman" presented in a matter-of-fact manner tends to reinforce the adage, "Let sleeping dogs lie." Burglars don't need dogs to complicate their lifestyle.

Another sign he remembered: 'Attack dogs trained and sold here.' Giving the impression that vicious dogs are in your house may be more effective than a \$4,000 star wars alarm system with movement detectors from your favorite electronics firm. Reinforce your message with a few large steak bones, a bag of Gravy Train or a huge chewed up dog bowl at your back door.

I know of one family that has permanently posted a hasty-looking sign to their carpenter telling him not to come into the house, because their son's rattlesnakes are loose, and they've closed the house off. Assuming the crook can read, he may shake, rattle himself and roll on to another target.

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EDITORIALS



STEPHEN N. BLAISING

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Another sign that 95 percent of the burglars polled in prison said they would not fool with: "Attack dogs trained and sold here."

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I know of one family that has permanently posted a hasty-looking sign to their carpenter telling him not to come into the house, because their son's rattlesnakes are loose, and they've closed the house off. Assuming the crook can read, he may shake, rattle himself and roll on to another target.

If you are really paranoid about being alone at home, go buy an air horn, the kind that small boat owners or cheering fans often use. Over water, the horn can be heard for a mile. In a dark house or yard, a prowler or burglar gets the message more quickly, and your neighbors will be alerted to your concern or distress.

If the air horn sounds ridiculous, consider this. Our consulting burglar said that is how he got caught. He said an air horn would frighten him much more than an alarm or a suspected gun. (The number of family members killed and wounded by guns bought to protect property is a frightening statistic in itself.)

Deadbolt locks? Sure, they will deter the novices and the vandals and might prevent an item larger than a window from leaving the house. Lights and radios or televisions that come on at odd times of the day can also help.

Make sure your paper and mail are picked up, if not stopped altogether, and advise a trusted neighbor of your extended absence. Better yet, a nosy neighbor or even the police department for possibly a closer watch.

Don't expect the Rolls Royce, Porsche and Caddy in the circular drive out front to really convince a burglar you are home. It may only telegraph your wealth, and the cruising, observant scowllow may break into it as well.

Don't count on the electronic looky trap to protect your Oriental rugs, expensive furs, family silver and jewelry. Consider psychological warfare with a little sign about reptiles and carines prominently posted.

There may be old burglars and there may be bold burglars, but there aren't many old, bold burglars who ignore their own nervous inclinations.

Stephen N. Blaising, President of Financial Dynamics, Inc. of Dallas, is a private economist and financial planner. He is a registered investment advisor residing in Highland Park. (If you have financial a question for Mr. Blaising, submit it to this newspaper or contact him directly at 361-6291.)

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