

This article was prepared in 2009 by long term club member and supporter Lou Juricich who passed away in 2010. It was originally printed in a SVCC 2009 newsletter and is reprinted here due to its continued relevance for our members.

Thanks again Lou for all your support over the years.

PERSONAL SECURITY FOR THE NUMISMATIST

By Lou Juricich

THIS CAN HAPPEN TO YOU:

Effective personal security precautions require a continuous and conscious awareness of your environment. This is especially true when traveling to coin shows. There is an alarming increase of Burglaries and Robberies occurring at shows. Here are a few examples of reported crimes:

A dealer loaded all of his items into the trunk of his car and went back into the facility to sign out, came back out and found his car GONE. Earlier in the day a customer brought in a large container of coins for appraisal. Leaving the show he was followed to his car and was robbed of his collection. Another customer was walking to his car carrying a plastic bag of purchases. An individual, riding on a bicycle, zoomed past him grabbing the bag out of his hand. At another show, there were a number of robberies and burglaries. Four separate incidents were reported: One was a ski-masked gunman, with a shotgun, robbed a coin dealer, and the other three incidents involved car burglaries. One dealer told a story about what happen to him several years ago. He left the show, drove approximately 25 miles, stopped at a store, and returned to find the contents of his car were gone. A police investigation revealed that he was followed from the show. With this increase of crimes, so far no injuries have been reported but it's just a matter of time. Police are aware of the problem and can supply some protection but we need to do some prior planning.

MAKE LIFE HARDER FOR CRIMINALS:

This is not the best of times; our economic state of affairs leaves a lot to be desired. Unemployment is up; people are loosing their jobs and homes, a desperate few will try anything to get quick cash. This article is full of tips that can help you avoid becoming a victim of a crime. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself, and also discourage those who commit crime. The most effective means of protecting yourself and your property is the liberal use of common sense reinforced with a high state of security awareness. Do not give anyone the opportunity to exploit vulnerabilities. Stay alert and exercise good judgment. You need to educate yourself and get prepared.

Remember that we advertise our shows. Unscrupulous jerks read these advertisements as well as our good customers. If you see something that is unusual, report it to the proper authorities.

PRIOR TO THE COIN SHOW:

Charge your cell phone and add emergency numbers for the highway patrol and local police or sheriff department to your phone list. Also add the phone numbers to report any lost or stolen credit cards.

Don't be obvious, dress for the occasion. When traveling, dress casually; dress down where appropriate. Be aware of local customs. Don't wear excess jewelry.

Don't forget to "**gas up**" before the show -- not on the way home.

Whenever possible try to plan the trip with a friend.

Make an inventory list of the items that you plan to take to the show. Attach pictures.

Clean out your wallet or purse and only carry the most essential items needed. Inventory these contents and leave the list at home.

Personal property should be marked with your driver's license number (preceded with the letters CA).

Do not publicize your travel plans, but limit that knowledge to those who need to know.

Leave a full itinerary of your travel schedule with your family member or friend.

Do research on the area you will be traveling to before you go. Talk with friends and other business associates who have attended that show. They can usually give you some good tips for your trip.

Avoid leaving valuables or personal documents with your address in the glove compartment. **NOTE:** I always blank out the address on my car registration.

Load the large items in the trunk. Keep your valuables with you when you drive.

If you plan to use a valet service, take a separate set of keys for the valet, give only the basic keys. Very often, the valets are not employees of the hotel and work for contract firms.

Keep your remote garage door opener with you.

TRAVELING TO THE SHOW:

The most vulnerable part of your journey is traveling from your house to the show and returning. Do not linger or wander unnecessarily in the parking lot, indoor garage or public space around the show - be alert for suspicious persons and behavior. Watch for distractions that are intentionally staged to setup a pickpocket, luggage theft or purse snatch.

IN HOTELS:

Do not discuss your business or travel plans in public areas where they may be overheard. Selecting a hotel room on the third to fifth floor generally will keep you out of reach of criminal activity from the street but still within reach of most fire truck ladders. Do not entertain strangers in your hotel room. Be alert to overly friendly locals who may have criminal intentions. They may offer to take you to a "special" restaurant. Their ruse may be to offer drugged refreshments. Never leave valuables in your hotel room exposed or unattended, even in a locked suitcase. Place valuables--money, jewelry, airplane tickets, credit cards, and passport--in a hotel safe deposit box or room safe. Familiarize yourself with escape routes in case of fire or other catastrophe. Use the door chain or bolt lock whenever you are in your room. Use the door viewer (peephole) before opening the door to visitors. Do not discuss your room number while standing in the lobby or leave your room key on restaurant or bar tables. Keep your room neat so you will notice disturbed or missing items quickly.

ARRIVING AT THE SHOW:

Park in a well lighted area. Try to avoid parking around large bushes, trees or other objects that could provide cover for the criminal. Remove all property from the car interior and place it in the trunk. Always lock car doors after leaving your car and don't forget to set the alarm. Ask a friend for help when moving large quantities of materials especially your exhibit. Ask for an escort.

STREET PRECAUTIONS:

Be aware of locations and situations that would make you vulnerable to crime, such as alleys and dark parking lots. Avoid doorways, bushes and alleys where someone could hide.

Stay in well-lighted areas as much as possible.

Walk close to the curb and walk confidently and at a steady pace.

Make eye contact with people when walking.

Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street continue walking.

If you carry a purse, hold it securely between your arm and your body

ON THE BOURSE FLOOR:

We can help ourselves by becoming more aware of our surroundings, look for people who do more looking then buying or do not profile as a collector.

Don't flash cash. Make expensive transactions with some sort of confidentiality.

In any crowded situation like the bourse floor, be aware of jostling, even if it appears innocent. This is often a ploy by pickpockets to distract you. Check your purse or wallet if someone is jostling, crowding, or pushing you.

If you write a check use a gel pen with black ink. Gel ink has a pigment that cannot be chemically stripped. This prevents check washing by thieves. There are a number of inexpensive pens, out in the marketplaces that are especially designed for this purpose.

Secure all of your transactions and valuables prior to leaving the dealers table.

LEAVING THE SHOW:

Conduct your closing business and say your goodbyes before you load your car. Do not pack your car and re-enter the show to conduct closing business.

Have your car keys in your hand so you don't have to linger before entering your car. Keep your thumb on the alarm trigger for any emergency.

Check the back seat before entering your car.

Once you get into your car, lock the doors and do not make intermediate stops until you secure the valuables. Look at other vehicles in the parking lot, try to make a mental note, especially if someone is just sitting and looking.

If you suspect that you are being followed, drive to the nearest police station, fire station, or other public forum. You can also go to a friend's house and use your cell phone to alert them of what is transpiring.

Never lead the person back to your home or attempt to stop and get out of you vehicle. Note the license number, color, make and model of the vehicle, and any information printed on its sides that may be useful in tracing the vehicle or its occupant.

If you drive the streets of Sacramento or the roads of California, put the cell phone to your ear while driving and I guarantee you will get all the assistance you need.

IF A CRIME OCCURS – REPORT IT:

Everyone should consider it his/her responsibility to report crime. Many criminals target favorite areas and have predictable methods of operation. When you report all the facts about a crime, it helps the police assign officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur. At least one out of two crimes in the United States go unreported, either because people don't think law enforcement can do anything about it, or because people don't want to get involved. If you don't report crime, the criminal can continue to operate without interference.

In many cases, it is the information provided by victims and witnesses that leads to the arrest of a criminal. So tell law enforcement as much as you can, no fact is too trivial. They need the eyes and ears of all citizens.