



Security News

Burglar and Fire detection, Video Surveillance, Access Control, Gate Automation

TRENDS by Jim O'Donnell

We watch for trends in the many areas where we service because they are indicative of things to come. Here is what we are seeing in recent months in the Northwest in particular and the West in general that might affect your family or business:

- Increased daytime burglaries (generally residential intrusions)
- Increased night and weekend burglaries for commercial establishments
- Increased auto burglaries, up substantially
- Increased home invasion burglaries (high likelihood for violence to occupants)
- Increased auto thefts, as local "chop shops" find that high-dollar cars are worth more in parts than as a whole vehicle
- Robberies are beginning to spike (A robbery is when the suspect confronts a victim in person.)

We also expect that as there are more layoffs, we will begin to see more violent responses on the part of former employees who have been separated from their jobs. These attacks almost always involve supervisors and currently employed workers. These incidents are magnified as the economy declines and there is no immediate re-employment for the laid-off worker. Our observations in this area show that the disaffected employee can return and use violence two or more years after separating from the job.

- Kidnapping:

In general, this has been a little-used crime in the United States since the 1930's as the payoffs have been difficult to collect. Because of improved law enforcement operations, the kidnapers regularly get caught when they try to collect the ransom.

The trend has changed and Mexico City is now the kidnap capitol of the world. Second to Mexico City is Phoenix, Arizona. This is directly related to the in-

crease in drug cartel operations on American soil. **Phoenix had 366 kidnappings-for-ransom in 2008, and that's just for the crimes that were reported!** It is likely there were far more kidnappings that went unreported.

Several months back, a Phoenix P.D. SWAT team was staked out on a house in the suburbs and observed another law enforcement team preparing to make a raid on a house near them. The other group had not reported their enforcement intentions to Phoenix PD, so the SWAT officers assumed it was a Federal team making an arrest. When the "police officers", all armed in bullet proof vests, helmets and dark clothing with labels saying they were "Police", began using automatic weapons fire on the house from the front yard, the SWAT team officers realized that spraying a house with a machine gun fire was not the normal level of restraint that should be employed by professional officers in a warrant service or house search. A pursuit of the group resulted in capturing several Mexican drug cartel enforcers.

There are several lessons that we are taking to heart here:

1. We have a serious narcotics problem, particularly meth, meaning there are drug users and drug sellers in our area. The drugs often come from Mexico, or are produced locally.
2. Mexican hit squads are well equipped and seem to move within the U.S. without constraint, hundreds of miles from the border. They employ extreme violence on their targets and do not appear to be worried about collateral damage to the neighbors of their victims.
3. As the security situation in Mexico continues to decline and we watch the Mexican government losing control to the narcotics kingpins, Mexico will presumably act as a springboard to export more of this violence to the US. The violence is resulting in execution-style murders to police officers all along the bor-

der. Many weeks 5-10 officers are found beheaded. The last three Chiefs of Police in Tijuana have been executed with hand grenades and/or machine guns. The overall body count on the Mexican side of the border is 5,000 to 10,000 executed annually and that is just those who are found. It is now spilling over into the US as well.

4. The Pacific Northwest has seen a steady increase in methamphetamine drugs (meth) trafficking, so it seems logical that we may also see violent activity related to the drug trade coming our way.

5. For now, these crimes typically involve persons who are dealing or distributing drugs for the rival crime syndicates; kidnappings have targeted those involved or their family members. Families are often paying \$1 million or more to buy back those kidnapped. Few of us have a million dollars in cash available to pay off kidnappers so you can see that there are fantastic sums of money involved in the drug business.

6. We do not expect the Mexican hit-squads as an immediate threat to the Northwest US, except perhaps in the Yakima area, where there is a massive meth problem and high numbers of Mexican nationals. We will watch to see if this creeps its way here. Our clients in other Western states may have a different experience with drug related violence.

Such crimes will not remain isolated to the drug business. As "crews" are more successful, they will use kidnapping as a successful way to grow their business incomes. Somalia is the home base for pirates who board and kidnap foreign flagged ships and their staff with many held for ransom for months before being released. The rewards are very high and once a team has the take down and payoff format perfected, the risk to the kidnappers declines and they get bolder.

The concern we have is that our region will not be immune to expanding crime as funding to our local and national-level law enforcement agencies decreases due to budgetary challenges. All local law enforcement agencies are getting lowered fiscal allocations in their new budgets and that results in fewer officers on the streets. This is bad timing to lose police officers.

Jim O'Donnell
cell-206-510-9332
swidejimodonnell@aol.com

Pre-Planning YOUR Response:

You have pulled your car into the garage and you've put the gear shift into Park. You see a little movement out the side mirror, dismiss it as nothing and



turn off the motor, grab your things and get out of the car to face a very prepared intruder. He wants you to get back into the car or go inside the house. You could comply and meekly and timidly go with the intruder and hope for the best. Your decision here, particularly if you are female, will likely determine whether you are still alive in 24 hours. If you get yourself in this predicament where you are face-to-face with an intruder in your garage, you have few options; you probably do not have access to your pepper spray or a firearm. What to do?

1. Press the panic button on your car keychain and run away. Become unpredictable and non-compliant.
2. *Fight like your life depends on it because it probably does!* You ARE going to get hurt here, just expect it and keep going; swing your bag, find a weapon inside your garage as there are many. Rakes, hammers, saws and gardening tools are all weapons when you need them. Grab one, swing it with the intent to break some part of the intruder's body, make him fear you more than whatever he wanted from you when he entered your personal space.

Start planning for a variety of events and work through the layout of your specific home or business. Instead of business as usual as you enter your garage, start watching for anyone sneaking in just before the garage door closes. You will see him in your side mirrors if you are alert. If the door is now down and you are still in the car and have an intruder inside the garage, what do you do? You have insurance, you are in control of a 300 horsepower, 3,000 pound weapon which is an infinitely more powerful weapon than he has, *and you have the upper hand*. Put it in reverse and exit the garage through your closed door! If you are lucky you will snag the intruder and put an end to his criminal ways as you back out. The minimal outcome here is that your insurance company has to buy a new garage door and fix your car. The best outcome is that you and your family survive. Isn't your life worth \$5,000? The best defense is a good offense. **Get ready, trouble may be coming your way!**