

Statewide Security Security News

JANUARY 2008

DENIAL: by Jim O'Donnell

I have witnessed the phenomenon of denial many times in my adult life; generally when people were in great danger and either could not, or would not recognize the potential for the outcome of whatever they were facing at that moment. Often it was the possibility that they might die from an illness or a severe injury. I believe it is a coping mechanism to mentally exclude death from the likely outcomes of that particular emergency.

I have had several jobs in my life and among them have been: Sheriff's Deputy, Coroner's Deputy and security company owner for nearly 30 years. In each of these positions I've dealt with crime and criminals, victims, death, thefts, tragedy and loss. I am an optimist by nature but recognize that bad things happen to good people and that we ultimately take responsibility for our own and our family's safety.

In 1942 in Boston, the very popular down-town Coconut Grove night club was packed full of diners and dancers. It was difficult to get into this club because it was the "hip" place to be and it was crowded with staff and party-goers. The interior was dense with wall coverings, fabric, palm fronds and other decorations. No one wanted to leave because they were having fun and they didn't want their evening ruined since it had been so hard to get in to the club. An electrical fire in a corner quickly flashed to the ceiling and ignited flammable materials. Waiters and busboys attempted to extinguish the fire using water buckets and seltzer water. Most people who saw the fire didn't respond immediately, thinking it would be put out by management and was no threat to their well being. There was no effort by people to get out. The fire grew rapidly and the resulting smoke almost immediately made finding a way out visually impossible. 490 people died in the fire and hundreds more were injured. Patrons and employees all remarked that they didn't think this fire

could have fatal consequences.

In 2003 there was a fire in The Station night club in Rhode Island where the band Great White was performing. The club was very crowded with hundreds of people surrounding the front of the stage where pyrotechnics were used as part of the act. At one point they set off brilliant fireworks and the flying sparks reached upward towards the ceiling. Video and audio that was being recorded at the concert shows an interesting response of non-recognition from the concert attendees.



As the flames ignited flammable materials around the stage and spread to the ceiling, it was apparent that a major fire was brewing but it did not register with anyone inside the night club. Watching the attendees' responses showed that people just viewed it as a part of the act or as a minor problem. It was only when the fire started creating huge volumes of smoke that panic began as people finally recognized the problem and tried to get out. By then, the fire and smoke had rolled across the ceiling and was making its way downward into the breathing and visual space of the attendees and started obscuring the exit signs making it difficult for anyone to find the outside doors. 96 people died in this fire and dozens more were injured. Had the concert goers started moving away from the stage when they saw the fire begin and had there been a properly protected premise, everyone likely could have gotten out safely. Victims who were interviewed after the fire said that they simply could not believe that they personally could be involved in an event where there would be a loss of life.

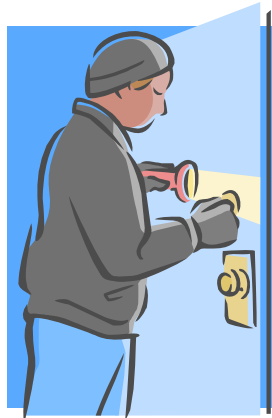
Last year one of our monitored client's teenage

Continued on Page 2



Denial Continued

sons was home alone. In the evening he heard a noise and saw two adult men try and open the front door. They then went around to the back door attempting to get inside the house. He was fearful and irrationally went to his bedroom and crawled under the covers. He did not call the police, didn't call his father or anyone else.



In the past several weeks a teenaged houseguest of one of our Seattle clients awoke at night to see a man peering into the house from an outside glass door panel. Trying the locked door knob, this potential intruder went around the house looking for another unsecured opening, rattling doors on the way. Again the observer's response was to pull the covers over his head and go back to sleep, hoping that the bad man would go away. Fortunately in these two local cases the intruders left and moved on to other places, likely breaking into someone else's house those nights.

I would have not predicted the behavior on the part of either the fire victims or the two teenagers who had the attempted intrusions. The common denominator here is that the recognition of consequences was absent for most of the victims and rather than exercise what we would all agree should be the expected response of calling for help, alerting adults or getting out of a burning building, the victims used denial to manage their disbelief that "this was really happening to me". Being passive in the face of danger rarely insulates the person from something bad happening. **DO SOMETHING!**

This is the third client in a year that has had an attempted or successful entry of their home while they were in-residence. This really concerns me as the potential for meeting a burglar/robber in your home is vastly higher now than I have ever seen it in the past 36 years. Night time burglars are a different breed of criminal and have a much higher potential for violent confrontation. It means that the first line of defense is to have your sys-

tem "Perimeter Armed" or "Armed-Home". Most residential burglaries are daytime crimes from 8:00AM to 5:00PM. Most commercial intrusions are at night. When we heard about this first report of attempted burglary, I considered it an anomaly as burglaries of occupied homes are statistically fairly rare. We are starting to see some trending data here and it is not a positive sign.

Planning: For years I have verbally asked families and business employees what they are going to do when "X" happens. The response varies and the most important answer for me is that they are actually going respond to the threat. Often the answer is "I don't know what to do" and in those cases, I give them several options that might apply to their specific incident or circumstance. I want them to talk about the prospective problem and what they might do. That has been the best way to have them start thinking about their own future and how they might have an influence on the outcome should they be faced with an unpleasant or dangerous situation.

My own experience is that proximity and distance are key in personal survival situations. The farther you are from a source of danger, the better your chances are. Think: "Get out quickly, get away, sound an alarm, call for help, move away from the sound of gunfire, don't follow the crowd, look around for other exits and threats and lastly, try to evaluate what is actually happening." Mindless response equates to hopeless outcomes. Try to get your wits about you, be in control rather than be locked into freezing-up or late-response mode. Talk to your kids and employees about how to respond in a variety of situations. What should we all do in a fire, in a burglary, a robbery, a school shooting or an earthquake? Talking about it now is a form of training. All persons devolve to their lowest level of training in an emergency. No training equates to poor or no response.

So far this past year most of our clients have been fortunate to have avoided injury or large losses from criminal activity. This run of luck isn't going to last forever. We currently have eight stalking cases that we are working or have been exposed to in the past 24 months. Our next newsletter will discuss this growing trend.

“Beyond Words” Part 2 of a 3 part series on Insights to Behavior

By Gerald (Gary) R. Brown

“My children wanted me. They needed me. And now I can’t help them.” (Susan Smith)

“They’re okay. They’re going to be home soon.” (David Smith)

The above phrases were spoken to the public a day after Susan Smith’s two young boys were allegedly kidnapped by an anonymous “Black” man. As it turned out, Susan, their mother, had drowned the two boys by pushing the car they were in into a lake in South Carolina. The boys’ father, David, didn’t know they were already dead, but Susan’s language pointed the finger of suspicion immediately on her.

Two detectives on the case had recently completed a “Content Analysis” course in which they had learned the mantra of content analysis that “A Change in Language reflects a Change in Reality” and that those skilled in interpreting those changes can “uncover” information about relationships and actions those speaking the words may be trying to keep secret but are subconsciously revealing. (Except for psychopathic liars, even crooks don’t like to direct lie, unless, of course, they are directly asked “did you do it?” or something similar.)

The arrow pointing at Susan Smith was her use of the past tense (wanted/needed) and the word “can’t” while the children’s father believing they were still alive employed the present tense. Susan, of course, knew they were already dead.

Forensic Linguistics is relatively new, in the United States, but is an increasingly active field of study in the US and in many other countries. In Germany, Content Analysis is required by courts in certain types of cases, such as child abuse allegations where it is a “he said, she said” type situation. In the US it is being taught at several federal investigative agencies (most popular course w/44 hrs and college credit at the FBI Academy) to thousands of law enforcement and corporate security personnel. Experts are now testifying in a few courts around the country, to include murder investigations. Careful attention to the exact words can help you better evaluate those responsible for your personal security and

help them evaluate all telephonic, letters and email communications from stalkers and/or others with a real or perceived grievance. A few such communications are of such a nature that they are usually handled by the police/FBI. Most of the harassing, and potentially threatening communications you receive will not, at least on the surface and to the untrained, rise to the level either you or your staff consider a serious potential threat or that law enforcement simply doesn’t have the time or manpower to pursue to insure you and your family’s safety is secured.

Many who receive what first appears to be a threatening communication find out from the experts that often the worse the language, the less threatening in reality and vice-versa. Of course, like all general principles, there are exceptions that only after considerable study can the “threat level” actually be determined.

There is good news, though. The significant percentage of those that are planning to take violent action against others, or their families, with a significant public exposure (such as CEO’s, high ranking public officials, major entertainers, etc) will likely not communicate prior to taking or attempting action. On the other hand, if one is not a high visibility target, most “stalkers” will communicate first. One of those exceptions is that attacks on public/high visibility officials are usually by psychotics and there will likely be no direct threat in communications if they are about to act violently. Attacks on private persons are usually committed by non-psychotics, both direct and camouflaged threats are common.

Tidbit: If you, or a family member, receive communications from someone with whom you have been intimate in the past, the threat level often goes up considerably and those communications should be taken very seriously and always professionally evaluated. Recent research is now showing that former intimates are the group most likely to commit a violent act towards you. Words give us insight into the speaker/writer’s reality. For example, on the next page are two phrases about the same activity:

Continued on Page 4

“Beyond Words” Continued

A. Last Sunday my wife Joan and I drove to Bellingham to visit Betty, my mother-in-law.”

B. “Last Sunday the wife and I drove to Bellingham to see the Mother-in Law.”

A lot more is revealed than just the fact they drove to Bellingham to see the mother-in-law (MIL). What is the relationship between the husband and wife, between the husband and the MIL and the likelihood the trip was enjoyed by the husband? In ‘A’ the relationships and trip appear to be good and enjoyed by all. However, in ‘B’ we “learn” that at least on that Sunday the husband wasn’t happy with the wife (he didn’t properly “introduce” her to the reader calling her “the” wife), the trip was more of a chore than a “visit” and we learn that the husband likely didn’t have the best of relationships with the MIL. Imagine what this could mean to a content analysis trained detective in a homicide case where either the wife, or the MIL, was murdered likely by someone they knew. When the husband was asked about his relationship with his wife and the MIL and about the trip on Sunday, he said the trip was enjoyed by all and I have never had a cross word with my wife or MIL.

Let’s apply a similar concept to an arson case. The following is a partial report by the owner of a house that burned and arson was suspected:

“On Saturday morning I left my house around 10AM and did some of my Christmas shopping at the Town Mall. I came back to my house around 1PM, had lunch and left my house again around 3PM to see a movie at the Mall. After the movie, I came back to my house. At about 7PM my best friend came over, we had pizza and then we left the house at 10PM to go to the Skip’s, a local bar near the house. Around 12:10AM we hear the fire engines going by and heard them stop nearby. We went over to see what was happening and found that the house was on fire and ended up being totally destroyed. I have since learned they suspect arson. I have no idea who would do such a thing.”

The content of the statements immediately focused the fire investigators on the owner. Why? If one is telling

the truth and recounting what happened it is like replaying the “movie” in your head. In this case, when he “replayed” the part around 10PM and 12:10AM, his phraseology in referring to his house changed from “my house,” a sign of ownership, to “the house,” a sign the status had changed. The problem, of course, is how did he know at 10PM the status had changed unless he knew in advance it was going to change at 12:10AM?

In the famous Kennedy “Blue Dot” sexual assault case in Florida, the alleged victim while “replaying” the incident for investigators, continued to use the term ‘we’ after the assault allegedly began. ‘We’ is a term of togetherness and would never be used by a true victim to describe the assailant and her activities after the assault. The investigators in those cases had just completed a course in “content analysis” and immediately recognized the language changes.

Should an employee or staff member be writing to you about an incident such as a theft or other matter you and your investigative staff are looking into, use the personal pronoun “I” and then suddenly leaves out the “I” when discussing a particular activity or situation, they may well be subconsciously disassociating themselves from that particular action/situation.

Caution: While the technique of content analysis/forensic linguistics is being taught to law enforcement around the world and it has been accepted as evidence in a few courts including murder cases, and has some very promising research, it is still too new to fully rely on it. The techniques will almost always yield investigative insight, but should only be employed as an investigative tool and generally not as a tool for administrative or legal action.

Gerald Brown is the principal of G. Brown & Associates, specializing in Behavioral Profiling, employing personality evaluation based on the handwriting of a person, Form Variance Analysis™ and Content Analysis in providing insight into the writers of anonymous letters and in evaluating the truthfulness of statements of victims, suspects and key witnesses. He operates out of Beaverton, OR, and can be contacted at 503-524-4613/800-835-1148.

Glass Protection— *Security/Safety Window Films*

Security and Safety window films are made with layers of polyester film bonded by special adhesives. Easily installed to the interior of new or existing glass, the film forms an invisible shield that holds glass shards intact when a pane breaks. This can effectively reduce flying glass related injuries that can result from forced break-ins, earthquakes, or even a terrorist attack.



Bringing the advantages of security film to your home or business is easy. Professional installation is quick, essentially mess free, and offers you a lasting solution. Our top of the line Llummar Magnum films offer the highest durability in the industry, and a patented scratch-resistant coating which makes maintenance very simple. All our security films can be cleaned and maintained by using conventional cleaning methods.

Note: *Statewide Security had all the glass in the office filmed recently and I am doing so in much of my home, given the disturbing trend of window smash for the entry method - Jim O'Donnell.*

Home Invasion

While little can be done to thwart a determined and well-equipped thief, much can be done to reduce the likelihood of successful forced-entry attempts in your home or business. The most likely entry point for illegal intrusion is the home or businesses weakest barrier: the windows and glass doors. Security films help protect what you value the most, your family and possessions. Security films are extremely effective at slowing down the intruder to the point where he simply decides to go elsewhere before the police arrive.

Business and Residential Smash & Grab

Llummar Magnum films are a powerful deterrent to smash-and-grab thieves who rely on fast access through your broken glass to gain entry into the premise. The films form a ***strong but virtually invisible shield*** that holds broken glass in place – delaying and deterring perpetrators whose goal is generally a quick entry and exit.

Commercial Graffiti Damage and Vandalism

Virtually any high-traffic area with windows or other surfaces is vulnerable to costly graffiti and vandalism. Security films offer a surface protection system that helps prevent scribing and other defacing. If vandals leave their mark by scratching the glass, the security film can be peeled off and replaced easily. If vandals use the popular method of acid etching, the acid can be cleaned away with no need to replace the film, therefore eliminating graffiti and the need for costly glass replacement. The films can be simply installed on virtually any flat surface: showcase windows, display cases, bathroom mirrors, elevator, and building interiors.

In today's ever changing world, safety and security has become an everyday concern for people and their property. When planning and building a security system for your home or business, glass breakage protection should be high on your priority list.

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The office phone number is (425) 558-4640, the staffed hours are 8:00am to 5:00pm Pacific Time, Monday through Friday (excluding major holidays). When calling after-hours, press 5 to be auto-routed to the Central station who will have the on-call technician return your call promptly. Additionally, Statewide Security's president Jim O'Donnell is available on his cell phone (206) 510-9332 or by leaving a message at the office.

Did You Know?

Statewide Security has trained staff to provide a variety of services. Below are a few of the services that we provide.

- We install video surveillance systems that can be monitored at our central station for alarm and intrusion verification. Additionally, you can securely connect to the video imaging from other locations.
- We have a ground penetrating radar for looking through grass, dirt, concrete and floors before digging. This would help you locate conduits, pipes, wiring and other objects that would have to be repaired if damaged during the excavation process.
- We install access control systems for use with biometric sensors (normally fingers are used for identification).
- We have designed and installed fire alarm systems for buildings over a million square feet in size.
- We do MESH radio systems for high speed wireless communications of up to 300 Mbps for VOIP, data, radio and video.
- We install thermal cameras to permit viewing activity without requiring visible or infrared lighting.

Please call the office if you would like more information on any thing listed above.