



How Criminals Operate

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Protective Service & Training

Creating a Safe World

Risks Incorporated is a progressive, European - owned and managed specialist security and training company that has proven itself many times on international operations. We have compiled this document to help people identify potential problems they may encounter and to take preventive action to protect themselves, their families, and their assets.

Risks Incorporated's clients can be assured they are getting the best training and services available from experienced professionals! I personally have over 27 years experience working in the international security industry, what we teach is based on reality, not what someone with no real operational experience thinks would work in a hostile situation. I am a published author and have been interviewed by numerous international TV and media outlets ranging from the New York Times to Soldier of Fortune Magazine on topics ranging from kidnapping, organized crime to maritime piracy.

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Stay Safe,

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"Stay Low & Keep Moving"

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How Criminals Operate

You need to be aware of how criminals and terrorists operate and what they look for in their victims; if you know this, you can hopefully avoid becoming a victim yourself. Criminals and terrorists are generally business people; they commit crimes to make money or achieve a goal- some are good at it and some are not. At all levels of the crime business, criminals, to some degree, plan and organize their jobs, whether it is stealing someone's watch or assassinating someone.

In this chapter we will refer to the bad guys as criminals and will not differentiate between criminals and terrorist, they are the same. You must remember that terrorists largely fund their terror campaigns from the proceeds of crime be it street crime, providing protection for criminal groups, smuggling drugs/people, protection rackets, kidnapping etc.

I tell my clients that the three golden rules to personal security are think like a criminal, keep a low profile and always have an escape route.

- Think like a criminal: Put yourself in the criminal's shoes and think how you would rob or kidnap yourself, how would you break into your home or hotel room.
- Keep a low profile: Do not draw attention to yourself, consider what you wear and drive, don't be loud and rowdy. And don't tell strangers too much about yourself, especially anything to do with your personal security. If you are trying to impress someone use a cover story.
- Always have an escape route: Make sure you know how and have the means to get out of your location to a safe area. Know how to get out of the hotel and have the means to get out of the city, then possibly the country and you know how to get to a safe location.

Be assured there is nothing listed here that criminals don't already know.

Street Crime

In general, the type of criminal most people will come into contact with will be from the lower echelon of the criminal world, such as muggers, car thieves, burglars and other petty criminals.

Think about if you were a mugger and you were going to rob yourself what three questions would you ask yourself about the target. Muggers will generally ask themselves three questions when choosing their victims: do they have valuables on them worth taking, will the target put up a fight and can they escape after committing the crime? The criminal has just done a basic threat assessment.

Wherever you go, you need to blend in with the environment and the people around you, so don't make a common mistake and wear expensive jewelry or clothing. Look online for some photos of street scenes from the location you'll be visiting and see how people dress.

It also makes sense that if you are dressed to blend in with your environment, so your luggage should blend in as well. If you are a criminal taxi driver at an airport looking for targets for an express kidnapping who will you want to pick up, the local with the sports bag or the foreigner in the tweed sports coat with the designer leather luggage.

Luggage theft is also big business, in the early 1990's there were crews of Latin American's who use to go to London during the summers and just steal luggage from the lobbies of 5 star hotels. Think what valuables people keep in their suit cases; jewelry, computers, cameras designer clothes etc. Whenever you check into a hotel keep your luggage with you and look around at others luggage and see how easy it would be to walk away with.

Luggage security is also something most do not consider, but consider this; you arrive at your hotel in a developing country and let the bell boy take your bags to your room for you while you complete your check in. You then proceed to your room and start to unpack, then there is a knock on your door. When you answer it there is the hotel manager and two police officers who ask to search your room, are you going to say no, can you say no? When they search your bags they find a small package of drugs, now are you going to pay the fine or go to a 3rd world prison? Do you think anyone will believe the drugs were not yours; there are 3 witnesses who were present when they were found in your bags. Never leave luggage unattended, in some places you need to be more concerned about things being put in your bags rather than taken!

If you are traveling to another country, it makes a lot sense not to advertise the fact that you are foreigner. There are many police forces that supplement their salaries by stopping and shaking down foreign visitors. In the late 90's I had an associate go to Moscow with a client who was dressed as he would in London, camelhair overcoat etc. The Moscow polices spotted him and called over and asked for his wallet, they took \$100.00 and gave him his wallet back. A simple a painless lesion, which I hope, but doubt he learned from.

Another way to signal that you are a foreigner- and a potential target- is the language you speak on the streets. If you are in a high crime area and don't speak the local language, try not to talk whilst on the streets and if you must, keep it low. Criminals always look for people who are soft targets because they don't want a confrontation, thus drawing attention, which is bad for business. You always want to act like you know where you are going and what you are doing and not to look and act like a victim.

When traveling, it is important that you plan your trip in detail from start to finish. For example, when planning the trip from the airport to your hotel, make sure that you use a reputable taxi company, such as one which is recommended or supplied by the hotel. Then, when being picked up make sure to verify it is the real taxi that has been sent by the hotel. Airports such as Simon Bolivar Airport in Caracas, Venezuela are very dangerous places and the starting point for many express kidnappings.

Think about it: would you let close family members or friends get into a car with a complete stranger where you live now? So, why does it in a foreign country, carrying a suitcase full of valuables? In many countries, the taxi business is unregulated and often associated with criminal activity- taxi fares are a source of hard cash and as long as someone can drive, they are qualified to be cab drivers. Licenses can be bought or copied. The taxi business is also a good corporate front for organized criminal groups as it is a cash business and can be used for laundering Narco money and the like.

Many tourists have found themselves left on the side of the road, in the middle of nowhere watching their luggage, passport and traveler's checks being driven off into the night. The lucky ones just get robbed and not raped, beaten senseless or murdered.

You should make sure you are staying in a reputable hotel that has good CCTV and professional 24-hour security personnel (we will cover this more in depth in a later chapter). You also want to make sure that the restaurants, clubs and bars you go to are reputable. Criminals like to go to restaurants or other tourist hangouts just as much as everyone else. In some places organized criminals are the only ones with the money to set up and frequent upscale restaurants and clubs. Incidentally, criminal venues can be very peaceful places to go but there is always the potential for problems and are therefore best avoided. Criminals will pay waiters or bar staff to tip them off when a suitable victim is noticed at their venue; the foreigner with the Rolex, designer cloths and the wallet full of cash and credit cards. When the victim leaves the venue they can be robbed on the street or steered into a criminal taxi.

You also need to be careful that when you are in a club or a bar you do not leave your drink unattended. Think about how many times when you have been at a hotel bar or club and left your drink unattended or with someone you have just met who seemed like a nice person. How easy would it have been for someone to spike you drink with drugs such as Rohypnol/Flunitrazepam. This commonly thought of as the "Date Rape" drug but is also used in robberies.

There was one nightclub in Riga, Latvia where it was common knowledge that visitors who flashed their money and Rolex's around could end up drugged and robbed, they would wake up in the morning somewhere missing their valuables. When they reported the robberies to the police they would not take the victims seriously, what was to prove they did not drink themselves unconscious, the victim could not remember what they were doing, so they could have given their valuables away etc. As long as no-one got hurt the police in Riga weren't concerned. At this time while writing this chapter the police in West Palm Beach and Broward Counties in South Florida are looking for a gang of females who have been drugging men in bars and nightclubs and robbing them.

You don't have to go to nightclubs to be exposed to the risk of being drugged, one Gypsy tactic in Europe is to get their small children to go out and sell glasses of tea or soft drinks to tourist, who would expect a little girl to give you a spiked drink. The children are accompanied by teenagers who then watch and follow the victim until they passed out or go and help them when they start to stumble at which time they rob them.

Rohypnol/Flunitrazepam is a tasteless and odorless drug; Flunitrazepam takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes to take effect and usually lasts four to six hours, depending on dosage. The drug makes individuals unable to remember what happened while under the influence of the drug. Flunitrazepam is commonly used in sexual assaults; victims may not be able to recall the assault, the assailant and be uncertain about the facts surrounding the assault.

Even street criminals can plan and organize their crimes to a very high standard. This is best illustrated by something I witnessed in Central London in the mid-1990s. After working for a while on a surveillance job you get to know who is who in an area. Central London, like most, cities has a constant stream of people coming and going but it does not take time to identify the locals. We identified a group of teenage boys who were obviously living off streets. Their favorite hangout was around a Dunkin Doughnut shop and there was usually at least three of the group in the vicinity. It was not unusual for members of the group to leave the area with older men and then be followed by other members of their group in what could be classed as a classic formal foot surveillance formation. I was clear to us they were "Rent Boys", or male

prostitutes. Later on, when we mentioned this to the local police and they knew how these kids were operating but could do little to stop them.

How these kids operated was that when one had picked up a client they took them to a quiet local parking garage, the other members of their crew would follow. When the client and the "Rent Boy" were engaged in a sexual act, the others would appear, rough up the client and take his wallet and whatever other valuables he had on him.

The local police regularly got men, usually tourists or from outside of London, putting in reports that they were mugged in the car park where these kids took their clients. Before the police took things further they informed the men that they know this area was frequented by male prostitutes and then asked if they wanted to continue with this report- they usually did not.

These street kids knew there was a very high chance that the victim would not take things further with the police and press charges as they would have to explain why they were in a car park which was frequented by male prostitutes. The street kids' defense would be to let it be known that the victim had in fact solicited them for sex, which is illegal. So, if the victim pressed charges, it would be very likely that he would ruin his reputation, career, marriage and then be open to having charges pressed against him for solicitation, sex with a minor and public indecency. As you see from this story when apparently law-abiding people, who think they know what they are doing, cross the line into the criminal world, they are asking for trouble and many rightfully get it.

These street kids were at the lowest level of the criminal world. They managed to repeatedly and successfully rob outwardly respectable, professional men and then avoid prosecution from the law because they planned their operation properly. So, how do you think the professionals will do things when there are hundreds of thousands of dollars at stake?

It is a fact of life that people have vices and I do not judge people on what they do in private, as long as it is between consenting adults. I have been asked quite a few times why I discuss prostitution etc. on my courses. I discuss these issues as they are areas where unwary people can and do get themselves into a lot of trouble. A consideration when hiring bodyguards is whether they are mature and streetwise, many are not. I was once talking to someone who I know was working in the celebrity security business in Miami and they told me in detail about the one time they had gotten drunk in their life, this concerned me. At this time, I was used to dealing with the emerging markets of the 90's Eastern Europe where everyone drank alcohol and business meetings

took place or usually ended up in strip bars and nightclubs. My concern with using this guy was what if he had to work with a client in an environment where drinking a little alcohol and going to clubs is expected. Would he be focused, alert and protecting his client, or getting drunk, falling in love with a stripper or just joining the party, I have seen this happen. Criminals will target your bodyguards first, remove the bodyguards, one way or another and you can then do what you want to their client.

In most places prostitution is illegal but in some places it is a licensed business. Even where it's illegal, you will not have to look far to find sex for sale, I am sure there are sex ads online and escort agencies in the yellow pages for the area that you're in now.

In some places you will get girls phoning your hotel room offering their services; your details having been supplied by their associates working in the hotel or the concierge can arrange girls for you, everyone is making a percentage of any deals that the prostitutes makes.

The main problems that come with prostitution are of course disease but also robbery and blackmail. If the prostitutes can get your hotel room details, I am confident that for a few dollars more those that manage them can get your hotel registration details, which will more than likely include your home address, business address and credit card details. How much would most businessman pay to stop the photos or video from their hotels security cameras showing him and a young lady getting cozy in the hotel bar and then going to his room being sent to his wife? Get the picture?

Another criminal tactic which involves sex is the "honey trap". This is where, let's say a female (The Bait) will approach and start a conversation with a male (Target), who may be a pre-planned target or just a businessman who looks like he has money. The aim of the female is to get the male to go with them to a hotel room or apartment for sex. If the male goes with her then the trap can develop in several ways. A crude honey trap would be where the target is drugged or beaten and then robbed. A more intricate honey trap would involve the target being videoed having sex with the bait, the more deviant the better and then blackmailed for business favors or hard currency. Some honey traps can go on for an extended period of time and can form into what the target believes is a relationship; this will continue until the controllers behind the bait get the information or results they are after. Another criminal tactic is to use a mature looking but underage girl or boy as bait, that way they have a lot of leverage on the target how has without knowing committed a serious criminal act, sex with a minor.

I have used the example of a female approaching a male but it can work all ways, male to female, male to male, female to female etc. During the Cold War the East German "Stasi" successfully used male gigolos to target female secretaries working in influential posts in the West German government. It's believed the Stasi sex-spies managed penetrated all levels of the West German government, intelligence agencies and NATO command.

A contemporary and imaginative honey trap happened to a French businessman in 2002. This gentleman had met and had been exchanging messages with an attractive Russian female over the internet and agreed to go to Moscow to meet her in real life and spend some time with her. She met him at Sheremetyevo airport and took him to a waiting car where he was kidnapped- she had been working with a criminal gang! The first thing the Frenchman's wife knew about him going to Moscow was when she received a ransom demand for three million dollars. Luckily, the criminals were not that professional or brutal and Frenchman was rescued by the Moscow police. This case made the international media, now think about the damage it done to this Frenchman's personal and business credibility, not to mention how he would explain the situation to his wife.

A more common and accepted side of the sex industry are the strip bars. They can be found in most places some are respectable and well-run businesses but others are not. If you must go to a strip bar do your research and go to one of the higher profile ones. One type of scam which is often used in smaller strip bars or clip joints is to vastly overcharge on drinks. For example, a man may go into one of these places and order a drink, say a Coke, and then possibly buy a drink for one of the hostesses. When he is presented with the bill, however, he finds it to be for a few hundred dollars. When he protests he is confronted by a

couple of thugs who shows him the price list for drinks, which is well-hidden behind the bar. It is not unusual for a glass of Coke to be 3 to 4 hundred dollars. How things develop will depend on the club and the victim. In most cases the victim will have his wallet emptied and may be escorted to an ATM machine and instructed to draw out more money or just beaten and robbed. If there is more than one victim, one may be held in the venue while the other is sent to get more money. These operations rely on the fact that the people going into these places will not report these incidents to the police as they would not want people, such as their wives and bosses to know that they were in a sleazy strip bar in the first place.

In most countries, recreational drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, are illegal. Drugs mean problems- full stop! Being caught with illegal substances will land you in a lot of trouble and the fact that you are a foreigner could make things even worse for you. I am sure in most places the local authorities would love to make an example of you. To buy the drugs, you must first associate with street criminals, which opens you up to the threats of robbery and blackmail. Why should the dealer only take \$40 off of you for a bag of drugs, when he can take everything you have on you and still keep the drugs? If this happens, what are you going to do? Tell the police the guy you were buying drugs off robbed you? The only people who benefit from drugs deals are the dealers. I have never understood why people take drugs, some people are fussy about what they eat but will put unidentified chemicals in their body they bought from a scummy street criminal.

In most countries, alcohol is legal and is regularly available. Alcohol is the oldest and most extensively used drug in the world and the amount of alcohol-related problems are vast. If you must drink know your limitations and never overdo it, especially in an unfamiliar environment. Street criminals look for easy targets; people who have drunk too much are easy targets. Even though drunks may believe that they can take on the world, they can't. Alcohol makes you unsteady on your feet and slows your reactions; these are two of the main things you need to defend yourself. The street term, "Rolling Drunks", comes from the fact that to rob a drunk you just have to give them a push and roll them over to take their wallet.

Alcohol also lowers people's inhibitions and can cause the usually responsible businessman to accept the offer of company from a young lady calling their hotel room after they return from celebrating a successful business meeting, then the fun can commence but it may be short lived for the businessman!

Kidnappings & Assassinations

I have linked kidnapping and assassination together, because the initial planning for both of these crimes is the same. We will talk more about kidnappings in a later chapter; here you will learn how criminals would plan such crimes.

If you are working in any of the emerging markets of Africa, Latin America or Eastern Europe, you need to be aware of the threat of kidnapping. The fact that you are a foreigner is enough to make you a target, as does the fact you are wearing expensive clothing and jewelry. In some places, if the criminals can make a few hundred dollars off you, they will be happy. The days are gone when only wealthy and high profile people were targeted for kidnapping.

Most people should never be faced with the threat of being targeted for assassination. In some of the emerging markets assassination is the unofficial way of solving business disputes, assassins are cheaper to hire than lawyers! I tell my clients that I place the threat from blackmail and kidnapping a lot higher

than that of assassination. Think about it, if someone is executed what use are they, none! They have just been removed from the equation. If someone can be entrapped, blackmailed and manipulated they can provide the criminals with an ongoing source of funds or information etc. If someone is kidnapped they are a valuable asset which can be sold for a ransom. You must take all this into consideration when faced with business problems in the emerging markets, even if the disputes are over a minor amount of funds or assets.

Now we will talk about the main points of how a criminal group plans a kidnapping or assassination. If a criminal group is looking for sporadic targets of opportunity for an express kidnapping, they would have been looking for nearly the same characteristics in their victim as a mugger. The criminals will watch you to see if you look like you are worth kidnapping, listen to which languages you speak to shop keepers or waiters, what is your level of personal security, and can you defend yourself? The easiest way to assess someone's personal security is to go up to them and ask them a question, like what's the time. The criminals will be able to assess from your reaction and body language if you are security aware or not. Always be suspicious of strangers, male or female, who approach and talk to you, even if they seem nice. You must always be aware of your surroundings and watch for anyone following or watching you, if you see the same person several times in different locations start to take precautions and be ready for a problem.

If a criminal group is specifically targeting you for a kidnapping or assassination, they will need to select a time, place and method to carry out their plans. To do so, they will need to build a picture of your routine and lifestyle. They will be looking for a pattern in your daily schedule, so that they can predict when you will be at a certain place, at a certain time so, they can then kidnap or assassinate you.

It is difficult for people not to form predictable routines; humans are creatures of habit. The most common places for kidnappings or assassinations to take place are at the victim's place of business, their residence or when they are in or around their vehicles. Almost every day you will be at least one of these locations- if not all three. The criminals will want to assess your standard of personal security; for instance, are you armed, do you use security personnel and are they competent, does your home have alarms or watch dogs?

The primary way to get this type of information on someone is to put them under surveillance. Methods of surveillance vary and can include getting people to watch and follow the targets or using remote listening devices and cameras in their place of business, home or vehicle. With today's technology, surveillance techniques can also include hacking a target's computer and intercepting their e-mails. Think about it: if you were going to a foreign country on business and a criminal intercepted your e-mails for a week or so before you left, they would probably have a very good idea of your whole itinerary.

These days most people have at least one computer and when traveling take a laptop. Think about how many people can access your computer, for example colleagues at the office. If you leave you leave your computer at the office overnight can maintenance, security or cleaning staff get access to it. There have been cases of corporate espionage where private detective companies have placed agents in the cleaning and security staff working at their targets offices, so they can access the target company's computers and trash after work hours. Most people would not consider the threat from fat and bumbling night shift security guard downloading business data from their PC and copying papers, but you should! When you're

traveling do you leave your laptop in your hotel room and is it password protected? You cannot carry your computers around with you all the time so, one thing to do is to keep minimum information on it, keep all your sensitive information on a thumb drive, which you can always keep on your person. Then if someone accesses your computer or it's lost or stolen the criminals won't get any worthwhile information.

Another common way to gain information on someone, a technique which is used by criminal, intelligence and law enforcement agencies alike, is to go through their targets garbage. These days a lot of people shred sensitive papers to prevent identity theft but do they shred their grocery store receipts, which have time, date and location on them? For example, if over a three-week period, the criminals were able to find receipts from a local grocery store in your garbage, which show a checkout time between 10 am and 11 am for the past three Saturday mornings, they would have identified a potential routine. On the next Saturday, it would make sense for the criminals to send someone to the grocery store at nine o'clock in the morning to wait and see if you turned up, who were you with, and where you parked your car and if you paying attention to the environment. They could also use this opportunity to test your security by getting a young lady to ask you for help carrying her bags to her car.

All sensitive paperwork needs to be destroyed; shredded papers can be put back together, so you need to ensure they are burned. Another method is to soak the papers in water until the ink runs and the paper turns to mush.

Criminals will also look to recruit or blackmail your employees to give them your itinerary and information on your business- that's why you must insure that all you employees are vetted out, supervised by trusted personnel and all sensitive information is kept on a need to know basis. I do not blame people that are forced by criminals to provide information on their employers, in the emerging markets a lot of times they have little choice but to comply with the criminal's demands. The initial approach usually offers the employee cash or favors if they assist the criminals, if they reject the offers then family members will be contacted directly and threatened with violence or sexual assault. What's the employee to do, go to the police, who in many places are scared of, or working with the criminals. Consider what you would do if you are working in a volatile Latin American country and you find out that one of your employee's daughters has been threatened with being gang raped if the employee does not give the criminals your travel schedule. This is not a joke, consider what you would do!

If the threat is coming from, say, a known business rival, or if you frequently meet personally with new clients the criminal will just have to arrange a meeting with you at a place suitable for the kidnapping or assassination. Meetings should be considered high risk as people know where you will be at a specific time; we will discuss this more in a later chapter. When the criminals have identified your routine and have chosen a place to kidnap or assassinate you, they will then have to choose a method. If your threat is from professional criminals, and you do not identify that you are being targeted before the criminals strike, the chances are you will be successfully kidnapped or assassinated. You must learn to identify and avoid potential problems, forget martial arts and Hollywood fight scenes; if it gets to the stage where you having to fight the chances are you have screwed up somewhere or are somewhere you shouldn't be. There are usually two outcomes of fights, someone goes to prison and someone goes to hospital, in the 3rd world you defiantly don't want to go to prison but if you don't, there is a very good chance you'll be going to the morgue.

Creating a Safe World

We hope the information in this document has been of use to you. Please remember this is basic information, if you have any questions then please feel free to contact us.

We supply corporate investigations, maritime security services, executive protection, tactical firearms training, kidnap and ransom services, tactical training, travel security, kidnapping prevention, community security group, SWAT, and bodyguard training. Our clients range from entrepreneurs to corporate law firms and from trainee bodyguards to specialist tactical police units and government agencies actively engaged in counter narco terrorism and counter insurgency operations. We have training location in US, Europe and The Middle East, our instructors are also available to travel to your locations.

Stay Safe,

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