

Good Morning Mr. Curson,

Three suspects have been arrested in connection with the burglaries in our west Houston neighborhoods. The Precinct 5 Constable's Office helped break the case with the arrest of one of the suspects on August 20, 2010. They were alerted by a concerned resident, about a suspicious person in the neighborhood. Subsequent investigations resulted from that arrest and were conducted by officers assigned to the Houston Police Westside Division and an officer assigned to the Robbery Division. As a result, two additional suspects were arrested and charged and subsequently confessed to conducting a number of the burglaries. Some of the cases cleared included homes in the area of:

- 10800 Sugar Hill
- 11500 Wickersham
- 11400 Overbrook
- 10600 Longmont
- 11600 Cedar Creek
- 11600 Trailmont
- 11100 Holly Springs

The investigation continues and I am certain that many more cases will be cleared. I wanted to pass on home protection information to you and the wonderful people living in your neighborhoods. We took advantage of the suspects' willingness to talk in order to better understand how they operate and what they look for when burglarizing homes. One of the young men arrested drove us through the neighborhoods and would point out "flags" he used to target a home:

- **Open Garage Door.** If they were looking for a quick steal, especially a car, they would target homes with an open garage door. It was an invitation to these guys to help themselves. Unfortunately, we keep so much of our property in plain view and easy access to the criminal. A lot of us are leaving our keys in the ignition of our vehicles thinking, it is safe in our own garage. But it is not. The guys were in and out in a matter of seconds.

- **Porch Lights.** The suspects would drive around the neighborhoods and look for homes which had the porch lights on during the middle of the day. This indicated that no one was home because we leave our lights on in anticipation of arriving home after dark. I would recommend motion sensors for those of us who routinely arrive home at night. It will save you money on electricity, provide a deterrent for when someone is peaking into your home, and it removes this particular "flag" from your home.

- **Mail and Papers.** We all pay the price for convenience. A paper in the driveway in the mid afternoon signals to these guys that the home owner leaves early and isn't home yet. Further, when they saw the paper or the porch light,

they always checked the mail box to see if the mail was still there. This was another indication that no one was home. It is difficult to control the mail scenario, but we can protect ourselves from the newspaper flag.

- **Answer the door knock.** I cannot stress enough the importance of answering the door knock in the middle of the day. These guys knew that if no one answered the door when they knocked, chances are they were not home and it was ok to make entry into the home. I do not recommend opening your door and speaking to strangers. However, it is imperative that you acknowledge them by speaking to them through your locked door.

- **Garage Side Doors.** When the guys decided which home to target and performed the "knock test", they would jump the fence to the home and check the side door to the garage. We were told, "no one locks their side garage door". Once inside the garage, they typically had access to the home or at the very least, the car.

- **Alarms.** I was very surprised to learn that the alarms were not a deterrent to the guys. They knew they could be in and out of the house long before anyone could respond to the alarm. If they knew the home had an alarm, they would cut the power to the home via the breaker box. Even if this set off the alarm, it did not matter to them. Again, they would be in and out in a matter of minutes.

- **Dogs.** This was the best deterrent. However, one of the home owners burglarized had a dog. Unfortunately, his dog is extremely loving. We did see though, that they were more mindful of homes with loud barking dogs.

- **Routine.** The most troubling fact I think we learned, was ***how much time these guys spent conducting surveillance on the neighborhoods*** and how well they paid attention to our daily lives. They learned our patterns and routines. They knew when we left to take our kids to school, what day of the week we went grocery shopping, how we park our cars in the driveway if our husband or wife was not home, how long does it take us to work out at the gym, and so on. We are victims of human nature. We carry on day after day, living our lives in systematic routine patterns, and never giving a thought to how our comfortable and convenient existence is an open book to the predators walking amongst us. **SPICE UP YOUR LIVES.** Do the unexpected. Indulge in the unplanned. Live your life and embrace the unforeseen obstacles, because only through changes in our routine lifestyles will we break the cycle of predictability that allows us to be preyed upon.

The officers I work with spent a lot of time on this case. It was probably one of the most labor intensive investigations the Westside Tactical Unit and Westside Gang Unit has ever done. I saw the men and women on those units sacrifice a lot of their family time to get these people charged and these cases closed. I thank

them from the bottom of my heart for their service. I would also like to thank the Houston Police patrol officers out of Westside. Although they are a bit short handed, they do remarkable things with the resources they have. I am equally impressed with the Precinct 5 Constable's Office. The Deputies in your neighborhoods work tirelessly day and night to keep you safe. I have never worked with a more professional and caring organization in my entire career. They make many outstanding arrests out there day in and day out. They are one of the best sources of information we have to work the cases from out there and arrest the perpetrators. When we went to arrest one of the suspects Wednesday morning, the Constables had a "situation" near Kirkwood and Briar Forest. I have never seen so many police cars and such a quick response time in my life. Precinct 5 has placed a lot of resources in your area to help arrest these guys. Please make the effort to thank them. They will always have my respect. I hope this information helps you. If we can prevent one home burglary, it is truly worth it. Please express my sincere thankfulness to all of your residents as well. Your vigilance is paying off. It is a direct result of this vigilance that this case was broken.

Good job to all of you.

Randy

Randal Jeansonne, Sr. Police Officer

Westside Tactical Unit

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An additional note from HOA Board Member Josh Thompson: This is a letter forwarded to me by my boss, who lives close by (Dairy Ashford and Briar Forest Area). She organized a meeting a couple of weeks ago in her neighborhood (with a police officer attending) to proactively address the drastic increase in crime in her neighborhood. In the past week or two--criminals have been caught as a direct result of neighbors watching each other and reporting suspicious activity.

- Her neighbors actually had a compiled **list of suspicious vehicle license plate numbers** to reference when they were observing suspicious behaviors and calling them in.
- One of these vehicles was pulled over and was full of stolen items from houses.
- Not mentioned in the attached report (which I found very creepy) was that the **girlfriends of these criminals would/do walk neighborhoods** with cell phones in hand --texting to boyfriends on the current status of homes.

Board Member Paul Panus also reminds us all to **lock our backyard gates** as well. With the close construction of our houses and concealed courtyards many of us have—it can allow a burglar more time to go unnoticed.