

## **Threat Behaviors**

Aside from the obvious “bum”, be on the look-out for behavior such as a shuffling, uncoordinated gait; a vacant, “thousand-yard stare”; incoherent mumbling; talking to himself or unseen associates; and other bizarre behavior.

With anyone you suspect to be mentally disturbed, try these tips to avoid or de-escalate a contact:

1. Remember his personal space, and don't invade it.
2. Do not try to touch him, unless you are prepared to fight him.
3. Do not make sudden, rapid, or startling movements.
4. Speak quietly and slowly. Do not shout.
5. Try to increase distance, and get an obstacle (parked car, fence, etc.) between you; as if he is armed it is probably with an edged weapon.

### **PLAIN OLD CRIMINALS**

Criminals must go through certain specific stages of activity before they can assault/rob/abduct/rape/etc. These stages will differ slightly in different types of crimes, but will generally fall into these categories.

1. SELECTION- The criminal views you as a prospective victim. He looks at your “victim potential”, on two separate bases. First, do you have the type of car he wants, are you wearing expensive watches and jewelry, have you flashed a roll of cash, do you fit his rape victim profile? We think of this as, “Do you have what I want?”. If the answer is, “Yes.”, he moves to the next question.

Then he evaluates you as a threat to him. First and foremost, are you paying attention to your surroundings? Are you aware of his presence? Do you look like you might be a physical problem? Do you look like you might be armed? I assure you he goes through these questions. We think of this as, “Can I get what I want from you, safely?”.

If the answer to either question, “Do you have what I want, and can I get it from you, safely?” , is “NO”, then off he goes, in search of easier prey. Thugs are not looking for a fight. What they're looking for is the easy mark. Someone they can get to, get what they want from, and get away from, without being hurt and without being caught.

Several years ago, a fascinating study was conducted by some psychology students. They took photos of ordinary people as they came and went from a downtown business area. They then planned to show these to criminals and ask them to identify the people they would choose as victims, and identify the people they would choose to bypass. In the preliminary write-up, they said that they expected to see a 10-15% correlation among the “victim” and “non-victim” groups.

They then went to a state prison and got a very large number of career violent offenders (rapists, muggers, etc.) to enter a room one at a time and view these photos. Time after time, the thugs said “I want that one”, and pointed to others and said, “But I don’t want that one!”. When it was over, the psychologists were shocked. There was a 95% correlation rate! Ninety-five times out of a hundred, individual thugs, with no communication among them, picked the same people to be victims, or to bypass. How did they do that? Body language. The only thing available from these photos was body language, but that was enough for the thugs to instantly identify the true victims as well as the people they would not risk a confrontation with.

Whom did they choose as victims? Gender, size, and age were surprisingly not the keys. Instead, they looked for people who shuffled along, head down, avoiding eye contact, unaware of their surroundings (Condition White). In contrast, they avoided choosing people, even small females, if they were alert, confident, head up, and looked like they knew what was going on around them (Condition Yellow). Remember what he really wants. He wants to get to you, get what he wants from you, and get away from you, without being hurt or caught.

There are signs that you are being evaluated by a potential attacker. They include:

1. Anyone who appears to be watching you should be viewed with mild alarm. If every time you look up, the same guy is looking at you, ask yourself, “Why?”.
2. Anyone who is inactive until you approach, then tries to look busy;
3. Anyone whose activity is geared to yours. You speed up, he speeds up, etc.

## **POSITIONING-**

Once a criminal selects a victim, he must move into a position from which

an attack is possible. Always remember that to assault, rob, or rape you, he must be close enough to talk to you. He will attempt to maneuver into this position by stealth (which is defeated by being alert), or by ruse. He may ask you for the time, for change, for directions, anything to distract you and preferably cause you to look away from him. When you look away, here comes the blow! The best course of action is to politely refuse any request, no matter what it is. Keep your eye on him and say, "No". Anything you agree to is the springboard for the next request, which then escalates to demands. Just say "No".

Positioning prior to the assault is vital to him, as he relies almost totally on surprise for success. If you avoid his attempts to properly position himself, you forestall the attack. Be alert and watchful for these cues:

1. Anyone who falls in behind you after you walk by;
2. Two or more people who are together, but split up as you approach;
3. Anyone staying in one place, observing, but begins to move toward you;
4. Two or more people lined up along a wall or fence; or
5. Anyone who moves to block an exit after you enter a confined space.

If you see one of these cues, cross the street, change directions, turn a corner. If he alters his course to match yours, he has tipped his hand. Go to Orange and start planning an escape or response.

### **3. THE ATTACK**

The attack phase can only come after the evaluation phase and the positioning phase. It is simply not possible to attack you until these first two stages have been completed. The very best defense, therefore, is to circumvent the attack by not allowing the Evaluation Phase and the Positioning Phase to be fruitfully completed. Every single attack you avoid is a battle won! In every attack you fail to prevent, you are at enormous risk! A one-eyed, three fingered jackass can miss you by ten feet with a handgun, and ricochet a round off the pavement and into your femoral artery. Although you are "accidentally" dead, you're still dead. Be alert and use your head and you won't have to use your pistol nearly as often.

## **BEHAVIORAL CUES TO IMPENDING AGGRESSION**

With the exception of the true sociopath (more on him later), there will normally be cues, principally body language, which will assist you in forecasting aggressive activity by an individual you are observing. Being aware of these cues is vital to your accurate threat assessment.

Of course, verbalization by the offender is a critical cue. Someone cursing, shouting epithets, and generally being aggressive verbally is a likely candidate for physical aggression. Bear in mind, however, that 80% of human communication is non-verbal, and you must be aware of and watchful for these sometimes subtle indicators.

One of the most reliable indicators of an impending assault occurs when you are in a position of authority and the offender fails to comply with or contemptuously ignores your commands. If, for instance, you encounter an intruder in your home, and he does not immediately comply with your commands, you are in for a fight!

Other definitive indicators can include these, alone or in combination:

1. hands on hips;
2. cocked head
3. arms folded across the chest
4. fists clenched, or clenched and flexed alternately
5. jaw clenched
6. spitting
7. deliberate avoidance of eye contact
8. continuously looking around
9. sustained verbal rationalizations
10. continuous yawning and stretching
11. target glancing.

“Target glancing” refers to brief, repeated shifting of the offender’s eyes to your chin, your nose, or your weapon. Repeated target glances to your chin or nose means he is gauging the distance for a punch. Target glances at your weapon indicate a gun snatch may be imminent.

Always, when the pre-attack indicators are present, shift to the highest level of mental readiness (Condition Red) and be geared up. If at all possible,

extend the distance between the two of you. Unless you are a Marine, you don't have to die for the piece of ground you're standing on!

Sociopaths: These ANIMALS are born without or fail to develop (because of abuse) any sort of empathy for their fellow man, they not only feel nothing when inflicting pain, IF it brings them sexual pleasure they may do so anytime or anywhere. There will be no "cues." The serial killer may be a sociopath, but likely his other symptoms are not such as would inhibit him from interacting with "normal" folks socially....like in a daily work situation. Some are so disconnected from reality they can't hold a job at any level. Society quickly detects these. But folks like the infamous and now deceased serial killer Ted Bundy are winsome and charming and you may like hanging out with a guy like this, at first. But most folks will eventually get a clue that there is something.....just WRONG. It may be too late at that point, especially if you belong to the target group. But there will be no attack indicators with a sociopath. What this means of course is that for folks you don't know very well...be polite, be professional but have a plan to kill everybody you meet. Be prepared to implement such plan instantly. If you run into a sociopath (highly unlikely unless you're a part of a target population) and he goes for you, you'll be behind the power curve from the start. But reaction as if you'd been caught in a near ambush with an immediate action drill....EXTREME violence in instant response may well put this sort of wolf off balance and allow you to either escape or finish him.

You're a Sheepdog. Fight back!

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