



HALL COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

CRIME PREVENTION UNIT



CRIME PREVENTION BULLETIN

DATE: December 16, 2010
SUBJECT: PERSONAL SAFETY

In light of yesterday's stabbing incident, where the victim opened the door to an apparent stranger (see the press release [HERE](#)), let's take the opportunity to reiterate a few points regarding personal safety around the home.

- Don't lock your home only when you leave, but keep your doors locked while you're at home as well. In the past, citizens have reported total strangers simply walking into their home through an unlocked door.
- There is some debate as to whether or not you should answer the door to a stranger. Some people argue that you should simply stay out of sight and not even go to the door; others say you should answer it. There are advantages and disadvantages to both. Depending on what the criminal is after and what his method is, he may simply leave if he receives no answer. He may also believe the house is unoccupied and commit a burglary so he can steal property. However, once inside and a person is discovered, the situation becomes much more dynamic. Will the perpetrator flee or attack because he knows he's been seen? Worse yet, if he is a true predator will he suddenly see the opportunity for an even more heinous crime against a person? One final point on not answering the door: cowering in your own home behind locked doors and pulled blinds fosters a victim mentality. We encourage citizens to have an anti-victim mindset and take a proactive role in their own personal safety. Let no criminal make you a prisoner in your own home.
- Our recommendation is this: if someone knocks at your door that you don't know, DO NOT open the door for them, but rather speak to them *through* the locked door, and have a phone in hand. In a firm voice, ask them what their business is, and proceed with caution from there. If they don't seem legitimate, *tell them* (don't ask them) to leave, and let them know you're calling law enforcement.
- It's sometimes recommended to ladies that if confronted by someone at their door when they are home alone that they should shout over their shoulder or down the hallway to an imaginary male figure in the house (husband, boyfriend, etc.), asking them to come and deal with this person. Know that if you attempt this ruse, and the person at the door calls your bluff by waiting for the man of the house (who isn't really present) to show up, you've just given them a vital piece of information.
- Under no circumstances should you let a stranger inside your home. The ploys they can use to gain your trust are limited only to the imagination, and that moment's trust is all the opportunity they may need to victimize you. Offer to make a phone call for them if you feel you must help, but do not let them in.
- If the presence of someone at your home cannot be logically explained, or if they seem suspicious or hesitant to leave, call 9-1-1 and provide a good description of the person and / or vehicle to the dispatcher.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact:

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