

What Do Bodyguards Know That You Don't? Jerry MacCauley PPS,CST

Whether you still call them bodyguards or have jumped on the PC bandwagon and are now using the term, "Personal Protection Specialist or Executive Protection Specialist," their role is the same. Mainly they are hired to provide a service for their clients who need, or just want, some additional piece of mind as they go about their business.

Usually, an incident has caused a sudden concern for their safety but just as often, a third party has determined the need for protection. The question often is asked how the bodyguard will assure such protection without unduly interfering with the protectee lifestyle. No one wants to be a prisoner in their own home or office and few want a team of armed guards surrounding them constantly. So how does the bodyguard carry out his duties without creating disruption in the client's life?

To begin with, anyone who takes on the responsibility for the safety of others is required to become thoroughly familiar with the 5 W's of the assignment. As we know from middle school writing classes, that means Who, What, Where, When and Why. Following that formula, a protection specialist can form a strategy to provide protection from known or unknown threats. Perhaps the most common threat is one from a known source.

A threat has been made and the client wants protection. Dealing with that threat is a somewhat straight forward proposition. Other times, there may be just a general paranoia on the protectee part, or a fear from the company board of directors that any harm that befalls their CEO will adversely affect the bottom line. This may seem cold hearted, but stock holders can be a cold hearted bunch.

In order to assess the resources needed to provide a security blanket, the professional begins by doing a threat assessment and a risk analysis. Rather than create some mathematical formula for these assessments, a Personal Protection Specialist does a background investigation and gathers as much data as possible. Known threats, general crime trends, access to the protectee by the public, risky behaviors of the client and on and on.

Assigning one bodyguard who moonlights as an offensive lineman on Sundays may give the appearance of protection, but if that is all that is available, it simply does not take much to tie up the bodyguard with an assailant and leave the protectee vulnerable to a second attacker. Unfortunately, that's what many short sighted clients will want.

They get a false sense of security when there appears to be security present. That's also why attacks can be successful. Just as crime prevention techniques are employed *after* a crime is committed, many businesses and individuals drop their guard when nothing else occurs. Somehow the thinking is that the world is safe now, so we don't need to be on high alert. Its human nature and we see it all the time.

Personal Protection Specialists know that security is a full time responsibility, but often is thought of as a temporary solution to a problem. When someone is paying for a service, it's understandable to watch the ROI (return on investment), but the reason for the investment may get lost without constant reminders.

The world has not gotten safer merely because there has not been another World Trade Center attack in 8 years. Those who are tasked with protecting others are aware that vigilance cannot be reduced, unless they wish to fight the battle again. The source of the threat may be the only thing that changes, and for that we need to constantly reassess, re-evaluate and re-tool.

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