

Self Defense for Women:

DIRTY TRICKS

FOR SAVVY
CHICKS



*How to
Stay Safe
in a Violent
World*

by J J Luna

Self-Defense For Women: Dirty Tricks for Savvy Chicks:

By J. J. Luna

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www.CanaryIslandsPress.com
CanaryIslandsPress@swissinfo.org

1.

Your First Line of Defense

The final weapon is the brain. All else
is supplemental. — John Steinbeck

On May 23, 1972, 16-year-old Kathy Miller searched the classified ads in the evening edition of the *Seattle Times* and came across an ad that read “Service Station Help Wanted” and listed a local phone number. She thought it might be an ideal job for her boyfriend, so the next morning she called the phone number in the ad. The man who answered told her that she herself might like to take the job, to which she answered, “Oh . . . you take *girls*?” Her mother, Mary, was in the next room listening. The account that follows is from best-selling author Ann Rule’s book, *The Want-Ad Killer* (New American Library, 1983):

[Mary] heard Kathy give her telephone number and address, and she frowned a little. She would have preferred that Kathy not give out specific information to a perfect stranger.

After about ten minutes, Kathy burst into the room. “Mom, he asked me all those questions. He practically interviewed me right on the phone!”

“What kind of a job is it?”

“A job in a gas station. He’s going to pick me up in front of Sears after school at two-thirty and take me out to the station to fill out an application.”

“Kathy, you don’t know anything about cars or pumping gas, and I don’t like you meeting a stranger. That isn’t right. If you apply for a job, you should go yourself to the place of business. It might be dangerous getting in a car with a man you don’t know anything about.”

Kathy's reaction was that of a typical teenager, "*Mom, you don't trust anybody.*"

Mary then told her daughter specifically that she was *not* to meet with this man, and Kathy replied, "Okay. I won't—but it sounds like it would be a good job."

Nevertheless, Kathy let the man pick her up after school. Thirty days later, two 16-year-old boys discovered her nude body in some brush on the Tulalip Indian Reservation north of Everett, Washington.

A message for girls and young women

Do you think that you know more than your mom about whom to trust and whom not to? If you have even the most minuscule doubt about a job offer, a new boyfriend, a camping trip, a forthcoming party or whatever, get a second opinion! Talk to your mother or father. Or, if you are unable or unwilling to do that, at least consult with someone *age 30 or older*. Do not ask any of your peers, who have no more experience in life than you do.

If you pay close attention to what older person says, you just might save yourself a mass of grief and heartache.

Marjorie French and the truck driver

A classic example of the power of fighting back—no matter what—comes from the book *HER WITS ABOUT HER: Self-Defense Success Stories by Women* by Caignon and Groves (Harper & Row, 1987). The incident described below occurred back in 1942, during the transportation shortage in World War II. Marjorie French often caught rides with other women but one day she took a chance on a truck driver. This is her account of what happened.

Without any warning, he simply pulled off the road at some deserted stretch of highway and stopped the truck. I said, “What are you doing?” He didn’t say what he was doing, but it was clear.

I refused to get out, so this big burly guy lifted me bodily out of the truck and took me fifty feet into the bushes. . . . I was screaming and hollering even though there was nobody to hear. I knew he was going to rape me; that was perfectly apparent. He got his pants down and tried to take my clothes off. I yelled, “Get your hands off me and leave me alone!” I resisted in every possible way I knew how. I kicked and screamed and hollered. By that time I was crying as well, but I was also doing everything I knew physically to ward him off. He finally just said it wasn’t worth the effort, and decided to hell with it. He was utterly disgusted and nasty. He walked out to the truck, threw my suitcase out, and drove off.

Marjorie’s advice today is never to hitchhike, but in whatever situation you find yourself, she says “fight back in any way you know how, whatever comes naturally to you; just make your position *unmistakably clear* and have the determination to resist.”

I can’t say it any better than that.

What image do you project?

Muggers and rapists, when interviewed in prison, consistently agree that victims often transmit their vulnerability. They insist that it takes them no more than 10 seconds to size up potential victims, based upon their bodily movements. In his book, *Never Be a Victim*, author Edward N. Ross suggests that you “walk with a purpose, at a steady pace, back straight, head erect, and appear as if you know where you are going. Walk on the side of the street that faces traffic, no matter where you are going.” (This is so that your purse cannot be snatched by someone in a car that comes up behind you.) Should a stranger attempt to stop you with a question, answer “Sorry but I’m late” and keep on walking.

How often are you truly aware?

Although both men and women should be constantly aware, women are the ones who are in the greater danger. Let's assume that you are a young mother who is heading out to shop at the mall while the kids are in school. When you back out of the garage, do you note other cars parked along the street? How many do you recognize as belonging to your neighbors? As you blend into traffic, do your eyes flick back and forth between the traffic ahead and your side view and rear-view mirrors? Can you identify at least the first two vehicles behind you? Do they turn when you do? When you look for a parking space, do you observe anyone standing or walking nearby? Is anyone watching you as you take out your purse and lock your car? Is there anyone behind you as you enter the mall?

Does it occur to you that on previous trips you have not been aware at all?

When you are home, you feel comfortable because you are in your natural habitat. To a degree, you have a similar feeling when you are inside your car. The time when you should *not* feel comfortable is when you walk to or from your vehicle. (That was why John Hinckley, Jr. was waiting on the sidewalk near the bulletproof limousine outside the Washington Hilton on the afternoon of March 30, 1981. Only at that point of transition could he get close enough to cry out, "*President Reagan! President Reagan!*" and then open fire when the president hesitated.)

From this moment onward, be especially aware when you leave your home for your car, when you stop at a traffic light, when you park your car, and when you enter a building. Above all, watch out for anything out of the ordinary.

The old bicycle ambush

Old or not, it still works. Suppose you are a single woman who works away from home. You keep your Honda Civic in a closed garage. Your car keys are attached to a

defensive weapon (of which more will be said later). When you enter your car each morning, you lock the doors before triggering the garage door opener. In your purse is a Beretta .380. A 115-decibel air horn is within easy reach and your fully charged cell phone is clipped to the dash. Are you safe? Not necessarily.

Let's assume your ex-boyfriend, the one you dumped when he started to get too possessive, has just gotten back on the street after doing some time for his third DUI. He knows you have a sophisticated alarm system. He knows you never answer the door without knowing who's out there. He knows you carry a handgun, have been trained in its use, and that you have the mental attitude to kill without hesitation. He also knows that you leave for work every morning at exactly 8:30.

What he does, therefore, is stuff a knife, handcuffs, and a roll of duct tape into a small zipper bag, and take it with him as he pedals an old bike over to your address. He arrives at 8:25 a.m., lays the bike in the center of your driveway, and then hides around the corner of your house.

When you open your garage door and start backing out, one of two things will happen. Either you will see the bicycle and stop, or else you will hit it. In either case, will you open the door and get out, leaving your keys in the ignition and your purse on the seat? If you do, you may be raped and then killed with your own gun.

Normally, of course, no one is going to target you, but I mention this because if ever you suspect you *are* being stalked, you need to be aware of your surroundings every minute of the day. If, therefore, you spot a bike out there some morning—or a tricycle, a scooter, or some big plastic toy—think very carefully before you get out! Perhaps you can drive around the obstacle, or perhaps right over it. In any case, stay alert and have a plan.

No garage for your car, no gun in your purse?

When I sent an e-mail to a friend and included the above example of an ambush, she answered, “Jack, what about women who don’t have garages and don’t carry guns? Can’t you add something for them, as well?”

Normally, of course, your main danger in life comes from being hit by a reckless or drunken driver on the way to or from work. Nevertheless, it pays to make security a habit. When you leave your apartment, have your keys in your hand, preferably attached to a Kubotan (an aluminum cylinder about five inches long, with a key ring at one end.). Be alert and aware as you approach your vehicle. Make it a habit to glance in the back seat to make sure no one is hiding there. Then unlock the driver’s door, slip into the seat, and *immediately lock all the doors*. This single act—keeping all doors locked until you reach your destination—will give you more protection against carjackers than just carrying a gun ever would.

Additional precautions for when you travel

- If you check into a hotel or motel late at night, leave your car right in front while you check in. Then ask to have someone accompany you while you park your car. The same applies if you are uneasy when it’s time to check out. An ideal tip for this service is a crisp new \$2 bill. (I like \$2 bills because they are a novelty that people remember. You can buy a stack of them around Christmas time from any bank, because many customers order them for gifts.)
- When you are in for the night, it only takes a moment to brace a chair under the knob on the door, or slip a wedge under the door. (Check the Internet for “Door Stop Alarm.”)
- Never open your room door to anyone unless you know it to be the maid coming to clean. If anyone says “maintenance,” or “delivery,” call the front desk to verify the visit before you open the door.

- *Alternative lodging:* In many areas you may be able to stay in a bed and breakfast, perhaps one that is run by an elderly couple. One young woman had an even better idea. She wrote, “I often stay at one of the many convents and monasteries that offer lodging for ‘religious retreats.’ The rooms are typically quiet, well-kept, and inexpensive. You don’t have to be Catholic to use these facilities—in fact, I am about the furthest from being a Catholic that you can imagine!”
- If the law in your state allows it, tint all the windows other than the windshield. Otherwise, at least pick up an old cowboy hat, preferably black and well-worn. Park it on the passenger side of the dash, or on the ledge next to the back window, to give the impression that you’re traveling with a man.
- In an extreme case, travel with an inflatable male. At one time, “Safe-T-Man” (a life-size, simulated male that appeared to be 180 lbs. and 6 feet tall) was sold on the Internet. A check on Google may bring up something similar, today. Figure cost at \$100 to \$150, plus whatever clothing, hat and sunglasses you choose to add to the unclothed figure. Or, an alternative might be to pick up a manikin, the kind you see in department stores. Don’t use a fake passenger in the carpool lane, however, as some traffic cops lack a sense of humor.



Safe-T-Man

- When in heavy traffic, never allow yourself to get boxed in. Even when stopped at a traffic light, leave a 3/4 car-length space ahead of you and keep an eye out for a way to escape—perhaps an open lane next to you, or a sidewalk to your right.
- Carry the bulk of your cash in a bra with removable demi-pads. Remove the pads and slip the money inside the pockets. Depending upon your architecture, you may even be able to carry your passport there. Alternative locations might be inside shoulder pads, inside the lining of your coat, or in an old-fashioned money belt.
- Never travel without a cell phone. If some man on the highway tries to flag you down by tooting his horn and pointing to a tire as if it were going flat (a common ruse), get out your cell phone and at least pretend to make a call. He will think you are calling the police. (If for any reason you do not have a cell phone with you, carry something that at least *looks* like one, and go through the motions of making a call.)
- Avoid roadside rest stops—they are *not* safe places for women traveling alone. If you need to pull over and sleep, do so at some place where others are around, such as in the parking area for an upscale restaurant. Or, if all else fails, try a gas station, but first go in to speak with the attendant. If he or she passes your intuition test, ask for permission to park off to one side and sleep for a few minutes. (Otherwise, buy some little item and then leave. Try the next station down the road.)
- Dissuade unwanted attention. If you are on an airport shuttle bus or on a train or subway, sit in the outside seat. Lay your belongings on the window seat. If you are at a table in a bar or lounge, place your coat on the back of the seat opposite, to make it look as if you have company. (True confession—I have an acute dislike to sitting close to anyone I don't know, so in addition to using the aforementioned ruses, on the rare occasion when I go a movie, I take *two* coats. One goes into the seat on the left, the other into the seat on the right. Works every time.)

Summary

With the exception of obtaining Safe-T-Man or a manikin, nothing suggested in this section will cost you any serious money. Your first line of defense is, and always will be, your brain. Use it wisely and well, especially when it comes to answering—or not answering—a knock on your door. Do not overlook a single suggestion in the following chapter. Any one of them may someday save you or your children from a brutal rape and possible murder!

Suggested reading

Be Alert, Be Aware, Have a Plan, by Neal Rawls (The Lyons Press, 2002). Rawls, a veteran police sergeant and a former director of security for a major corporation, shows how to avoid being followed, how to prevent a mugging, how to avoid being carjacked, and goes on to discuss natural disasters and acts of terrorism. This book makes an ideal gift for those who travel on a regular basis.

DEFEND YOURSELF! Every Woman's Guide to Safeguarding Her Life, by Matt Thomas, Denise Loveday & Larry Strauss (Avon Books, 1995). Matt Thomas is the man who founded the famous Model Mugging program (www.modelmugging.org) over 34 years ago. Although he is a world class martial artist, he says, “About ninety percent of what the martial arts teach assumes a vertical position. How many women are raped standing up?” This book, although no substitute for the actual model mugging program, gives you some excellent pointers about how to break loose when you are pinned down on the ground.

ATTITUDE: Commonsense Defense for Women, by Lisa Sliwa (Crown Publishers, Inc., 1986). If you are young, live in a mega-city such as New York, and both drive a car and ride the subways, read this book. Otherwise, it may be a bit much, but Lisa Evers (which is now her name) was at one time a top fashion model for publications such as *Elle* and *Vogue*. She went on to become a director of the Guardian Angels, well known

for “patrolling” New York City subways, and is one tough and savvy chick. Lisa’s specialty is to inflict pain quickly in order to make an escape, and she includes tips for safety in parking lots, transit stations, shopping malls, pay phones, and ATMs. One of these gems is from page 52: “You should convince yourself *before* a crime situation occurs that you’ll fight the criminal, and be committed to battle *regardless of the consequences*. This is the only attitude that’s going to make you win. If you wait to decide whether to fight when the criminal accosts you, you’re greatly increasing your chances of defeat.”

Street Sense for Women: How to Stay Safe in a Violent World, by Louis R. Mizell, Jr. (The Berkley Publishing Group, 1993.) Although no longer in print, used copies are available at Amazon .com for \$.01 plus \$3.49 shipping. Order this book today. Mizell tells more scary stories and gives more good advice in a single chapter than any other author gives in an entire book.

Safety and Security for Women Who Travel, by Sheila Swan and Peter Laufer (Travelers' Tales Guides, 1998.) This book is primarily for women who travel to foreign lands, but some tips, such as this one, are applicable anywhere: “Practice screaming before you leave home. A healthy scream can scare an assailant, draw attention to your predicament, and bring help.” [*Note*: If you live in an apartment with thin walls, alert the neighbors beforehand or practice elsewhere!]

This is the end of the eBook preview.

To read the full report, please visit

www.CanaryIslandsPress.com

and purchase the full eBook!

Other important educational chapters included in the full eBook are:

- 2. How to Avoid Danger From a Stranger at the Door*
- 3. Handguns versus Shotguns*
- 4. Alternate Weapons At Your Command*