

## **Burglary Tips...from Maria Gray**

If there was ever a time to evaluate your home and modernize it in terms of security and lighting, it's now. I don't have to tell you that crime is up in Los Angeles. And for areas like Brentwood, property crime is our Achilles' heel. This is particularly true if your home has an alley running behind it and/or your home is in relative close proximity to a major thoroughfare – such as Sunset Blvd, Bundy, Wilshire, the 405 freeway, etc.

So take the time to give your home a hard 'once over' through the eyes of a bad guy (or gal). Would you find it relatively easy to access your side yards or gates? How easy is it to get to the back of your home or to a window where no one can see what's going on? Are those privacy bushes/fences actually affording a hiding place for burglars to break into your windows? Is their signage letting people know they are under surveillance? (even if they actually aren't, it serves as a deterrent).

And look at it during different times of the day and night. Does it have sufficient lighting? Sensor lights should click on the moment someone steps onto your property and stay on for a sufficient amount of time. They should also be situated in such a way that does not allow for any dark areas for criminals to hide.

I would also want to know the minute anyone steps onto my property. There are simple and affordable camera systems nowadays that can do just that and alert your Smart phone immediately whenever anyone is on your lawn, walkway, porch, etc. It will also give you surveillance footage of whoever triggered the camera. Ring.com is an example of one. If they actually ring your doorbell in an attempt to use the 'knock knock' method of burglary, you can answer immediately, even if you're not at home. And FYI, it also helps in finding out who in the neighborhood is letting their dog poop on your lawn!

When you're gone, can they hear anything that would indicate someone is home? I'll say it again and again, I never had an issue living in a relatively high crime area when I left a stereo or TV on in my home each and every time I left.

Look at the cars parked on your street every time you step out. Are you familiar with them as your neighbor's cars? Or is one perhaps a rental car (as evidenced by the license plate frame and/or bar code stickers in the windows?) Rental cars are commonly used by burglars to 'fit in' to a neighborhood and attract less suspicion. Jot down a license plate number and description. Pay attention.

When you leave your home, do you look to see if anyone is sitting in a parked car near your home? If you see a stranger in your neighborhood watching you as you're leaving, feel free to wave back at the house, or holler a goodbye along with a "Don't forget to feed the dogs" even if no one is home. If you do see someone suspicious in the neighborhood that may be a good time to get the hose and water

your lawn and simply watch (abiding by restrictions, of course). Feel free to stare, to look, TO WATCH!

Have you taught your children and home staff what to do? What not to do? Is there a regular routine of going around the house closing and locking windows and doors each and every time before leaving—even if it's just a quick trip to the market?

Do you know your neighbors and vice versa? You don't necessarily have to like them. But since we're all in this together it helps to have some sort of relationship with your neighbors in order to look out for each other. It benefits us all to be cohesive and connected. Let's buckle down.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

All the best,

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