

True Stories

It Can Happen to You

According to the most recent statistics from the National Safety Council, there were 57 violent crimes committed against real estate practitioners in 2001. Six of them were fatal. The dangers we face are real, and both men and women are at risk.

Maria

Maria was showing a house in Brentwood, New York, a community on Long Island about 45 minutes west of New York City. A paroled convict with a history of mental illness approached her and told her he was interested in listing his house for sale. She went alone to his house where he slit her throat with a knife.

Norberto

Four months following Maria's murder, in spite of heightened awareness of safety issues there, another agent was attacked in the same general area of Long Island. Norberto met a man alone in a foreclosed property, and when he made the mistake of leading the prospect into the basement the man put a gun to his head, handcuffed him to a pipe, and robbed him. Thankfully, he was rescued several hours later by a neighbor.

Michael

Michael was a Bellevue, Washington based real estate agent who was showing a house in Woodinville when he was brutally killed in a knife attack. Although he fought back, he died of multiple stab wounds.

Joan

When Joan first met her attacker he was accompanied by two women he identified as his girlfriend and his mother. He was interesting in seeing homes in the Dallas suburb of Coppell. He was clean cut and acted like a typical buyer on visits to several homes over a two-month period. Then he stole a knife in one home and attacked her in the next one. He punched her, choked her, tried to steal her jewelry, and attempted a sexual assault before stabbing her in twice in the side and in the throat. He drove away in her car, leaving her alone to die. Joan survived to pick her attacker out of a photo lineup. When arrested, he said that he thought he had killed her.

Paula

Paula, a Southern California agent, tried using a "glamour shot" to draw attention to her listings in a magazine. Her photo caught the attention of a Michigan man on a cross-country crime spree. Paula agreed to ride in his Jeep Cherokee because the air conditioning was already running. After showing the man seven properties over a two-hour period, the man pulled a gun on her, tied her up, and placed her bound body in his Jeep filled with real estate magazines from across the country. Paula was his seventh rape victim. He released her two horrifying days later in another state. Her attacker was eventually caught and convicted, but Paula was so shaken by the experience that she left the career she loved.

Sources: REALTOR® Magazine, REALTOR® Magazine Online, Washington Real Estate Safety Council, New York State Association of REALTORS®.

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