

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

LEARN FROM OTHERS' EXPERIENCES

Every year, REALTORS® around the country are threatened, robbed, or physically or sexually assaulted while fulfilling the everyday requirements of their jobs. Some even lose their lives. By learning from these unfortunate and sometimes tragic incidents, we REALTORS® can make adjustments to the way we do business and avoid violent crimes.

We've gathered a few examples from across North America.

FLORIDA

In March 2006, a female real estate agent in Saint Petersburg, FL, was attacked while showing a home. She had shown several properties to a man, and they were in a house together when the man attacked. He beat her and broke her arm, robbed her, and then tied her up and shoved her inside a closet. The agent was able to escape, climbing out the window and running to a neighbor's house. The man was caught by police after a surveillance video camera caught him using the victim's ATM card in South Tampa, and was subsequently arrested while trying to cash in on stolen property.

Source: ABC Action News, Tampa-St. Petersburg

COLORADO

A female real estate agent was showing a home located in rural southeastern Weld County in Colorado. The man she was with was posing as a potential buyer, but when they were alone inside the house, he proceeded to rape her. He was later apprehended by police and is in jail.

Source: The Denver Channel

GEORGIA

In April 2006, a man who falsely identified himself as Mike Smith, a former player for the Seattle Mariners, entered a Keller Williams office and pulled a gun. He threatened to kill everyone in the office if a particular female real estate agent did not leave with him. The woman went with him and was held against her will for three hours. During that time, the man took her jewelry, cash and car and made her purchase a \$7,500 watch.

Several days later, another Keller Williams office received a phone call from a man using the same name and information. When asked to first come into the office to be pre-qualified, "Mike Smith" hung up. Two days later the same man appeared in a third local Keller Williams office. When assigned a male agent there, he said he was no longer interested in seeing properties and left.

Source: The Atlanta Board of REALTORS®

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NORTH CAROLINA

A female sales associate in Fayetteville, NC, was shot three times in the back during a routine call to meet a potential client. A 21-year-old man called the REALTOR® about 8:30 a.m. claiming that he lived with his mother, had been approved for a loan and wanted to buy a foreclosed property so he could get a place of his own.

When the assailant told her to drive to a remote spot, the agent realized something was wrong. One of the things that saved the agent's life was that she carried a Bluetooth phone with an earpiece. She tried to escape from the car and was shot in the back. She collapsed but was able to use her earpiece to call 911 and provide police with her location. The agent reported from her hospital bed that she'd done all the things she'd been taught to do when confronted with a dangerous situation.

Law enforcement authorities believe the man had talked to numerous real estate agents in the past and knew what to say to sound legitimate. Authorities suspect him of attempting to lure other female real estate agents to his home in the past. As this case illustrates, REALTORS® need to be always diligent about safety awareness and the dangers that come with the profession.

Source: News 14 Carolina, June 17, 2005