

It Takes A Thief

by CROSS in Crossroads

IS YOUR DOOR LOCKED...
SO WHAT!!!

At last, you're caught up in your work, it's the end of the week, and you say to yourself, "I've got to get away for awhile". So you pack your bags, jump in the car and head for the ferry terminal, with the intention of having a nice enjoyable weekend. You arrive at your motel room, exhausted from the long drive, but anxious to take in a little shopping and sightseeing.

To make this story short, you've enjoyed your holiday and it's now time to head back home. Okay, what's so bad about all this?

Well, you've arrived home and just finished unpacking, only to realize that several articles, including some expensive camera equipment, are missing.

"Oh great!" you exclaim in despair. "Could I have forgotten some of this stuff in the motel room or left it lying somewhere. No! Impossible. You double-checked everything once it was packed in the car.

"Well then, where could -- wait a minute!" You stopped at a large shopping mall on your way home. But you never took anything out of the car and you made sure both doors were locked. Out of curiosity, you inspect the doors of the car and come across some scratch-marks on the paint and a rip in the rubber lining on the window of the passengers door.

"These marks weren't here before" you say to yourself. At this point in time, it becomes very obvious what has happened: Using a coathanger or stiff wire, a thief had managed to unlock your door and make off with a considerable amount of money. The worst part of it is, you aren't covered by insurance and have no means of tracking down the thief. So terrific, your weekend has turned from enjoyable to heartbreaking and who's to blame -- the lock of course!

A lock is defined as being a mechanical closing or fastening device having a bolt or combination

of bolts secured or released by a key, dial etc., and used to prevent unauthorized entry, access or operation. But does a lock actually prevent such entry or is it merely an obstacle. Something which complicates the work of a thief?

Granted, we all use locks and would be foolish not to. But sometimes I wonder if we place our trust too heavily on them. How often do we lock our car doors, thinking that all is protected and safe within? How many times do we lock the door to our house, with the belief that everything inside will be there when we return?

Yet, what are we to do to prevent our possessions from being stolen while we're away from our car or our home? A determined thief will not be stopped by any metal gadgetry. And the item(s) being stolen don't necessarily have to be of extreme rarity. For example, the robbing of car batteries, liquor, stereos, cigarettes and money are a common occurrence. And, in many cases, these items are never found again and the thieves never caught.

Even in Junior High School, lockers are broken into by young vandals and the contents are looted. How are we to ensure that what we trust is safe beyond the protection of a lock really is safe? After

all, like many other things in life, the capabilities of a lock are limited.

Perhaps the future will bring an answer to relieve this dependency on locks. One solution might be that we carry "signal claims" with us which would be triggered by the tampering of locks by unauthorized individuals. Of course, there are complications accompanying this as well. But until an answer is found, we can only follow certain steps which might decrease the likelihood of being robbed:

1. don't leave valuables in plain sight in a car or home.
2. If going on a trip, leave the outside light of your home on, and have a friend, neighbour, or relative periodically check the house.
3. Never leave your house or car unlocked, even if it means you'll only be gone a second.
4. Don't leave windows partly open. It just makes the thief's job that much easier.
5. Identify all valuable possessions by having them engraved with your initials (last summer, the RCMP's "Project Identification" provided this service) And the next time you fall victim to a thief, don't blame him! It's not his fault the lock is so easy to open!!!

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