

# Extracts from a Residential Robbery Research

## Dr. Zinn's findings from his research are as follows:

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- Eight out of 10 residential robberies are committed with the help of information from maids, gardeners and former employees.
- Robbers will monitor the home for as long as two weeks.
- Gangs research armed response firms' response times.
- Most attacks occur between 7pm and midnight as people are relaxed, cooking or watching TV.
- 97% of robbers are armed.
- On average an armed robbery gang has four members.
- 50% of residential robberies in SA take place in Gauteng
- It is a complete myth that only white people are victims of robberies – anyone displaying any form of wealth (double story homes, expensive jewellery and fancy cars) is a target.
- The average age of a house robber is between 19 and 26 years.
- An average of 30% of all house robbers have either committed murder, or won't hesitate to commit murder.
- Only 17% of house robbers are foreigners.
- Of all arrested robbers, 90% had no matric or were unemployed. The 10% who had been employed, gave up their jobs when confirming how much they could "earn" from a robbery.
- Most victims or targets are affluent persons who openly display their wealth, e.g. expensive cars, jewellery, up market homes.
- Most attacks occur between 19:00 and midnight as people are relaxed, busy cooking or watching TV, and the security systems and beams are not activated. But robberies continue until 04:00 in the morning.
- The average robber commits 103 robberies over seven years before being caught.

- Most attackers' homes or bases are a 10 to 30 minute drive from the target address.
- Women are more often tortured or hurt during house robberies.
- The conviction rate for house robberies in South Africa is only 7.67%. In the USA it is 53%.

## Robbers are NOT deterred by the following:

- Alarms and armed reaction services.

## Security measures that robbers DO consider to be deterrents:

- Electric fences
- Detection beams
- CCTV
- Small dogs that sleep inside the house – robbers consider this to be the biggest deterrent of all.

## Recommendations that came from the research:

- Make sure all shrubs and trees are trimmed back so they do not allow a burglar to conceal himself while attempting to open a window or door. If possible, plant bushes with prickly thorns around these locations. They are a cheap deterrent.
- Don't stop your security awareness at the outside walls of your house. Your yard areas (if any) also deserve attention. In general, don't leave anything around the yard that might help a burglar get into your house. Ladders, stackable boxes or any garden tools should be put away, preferably in a locked cabinet. Many burglars have used the property owner's own tools to break into a home. Don't place outdoor furniture tables nearby the house. These could become an easy stepladder to the roof. To discourage potential climbers, spread grease on any metal drainpipes if they are close to windows. Use Vaseline or clear automotive grease, depending on the color of the pipe (or replace them with plastic pipe). Yes, criminals do climb up drainpipes. Think about it, most second story windows are left un-secure and make a house easy to gain entry to.
- A barking dog, changing your daily routine and the presence of closed-circuit TV (CCTV) could make your home a less attractive target to criminals.

- Given that robbers tend to case-out a property and the residents' comings and goings for as long as two weeks, it is highly-recommended that you deviate from your usual routine regularly. Change your patterns every week by leaving and returning home at different times, using different routes and visiting different shops to what you typically do.
- In South Africa, the importance of employing extreme caution when hiring domestic workers and other service providers cannot be underestimated. Be careful who you let into your home.