

Teach Your Children How To be #StreetSmart Especially Around Holidays

By Syndicated Columnist, Cathy Harris

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I want to tell everyone to be safe out there this holiday season. It broke my heart when I read on the internet that the oldest son of a person on my timeline was left for dead after exiting a 'check-cashing' business. I don't know if he survived.

Those Thanksgiving dinners should have been the place where some serious conversations about safety should have taken place. We raise our kids to the age of 18 then set them loose but have we really taught them everything they need to know to survive?

Remember many children are **#BookSmart** or **#StreetSmart** -- but many times, not both. Anyone can study and be **#BookSmart**. All you have to do is apply yourself.

Being **#StreetSmart** is simply knowing how to survive once you leave the comfort of your parent's home and many kids are still not sure about how to handle themselves -- so stop throwing your children, even your male children, out of your home at the age of 18.

Many make mistakes like not looking around especially when dealing with banks or check-cashing businesses. This includes pay-day and title loan businesses -- businesses where it is obvious that you are going to be walking out the door with **CASH IN YOUR POCKET**.

Never ever go to an ATM in a sketchy neighborhood especially after dark. Wait until the bank is opened and just go inside. There are probably one or more persons out there scouting out these businesses especially around holidays. Many have figured this is the only way and the easiest way for them to gain extra funds.

And don't forget that many believe --- not to leave any witnesses so if you go into these businesses by yourself, especially if you are a female or small frame male -- they might even follow you home or to another area and rob you or even kidnap you or your children later on.

In some malls because of 'loud noise' complaints -- teenagers under the age of 16 can't be in certain malls by themselves without parents or another adult. This should be a rule everywhere so stop just dropping off your children at malls and other places. You are probably being watched and whether you know it or not -- you are setting up your children as easy targets for crime especially for Sex or Human Trafficking and Child Pedophilia Rings.

When you are in malls or other stores, don't walk from store to store by yourself buying gifts after gifts by yourself. Criminals will radio (use a walkie-talkie) or use a phone to inform their friends outside and describe you. When you exit the store, they will grab you or just steal your packets, money, and credit cards or they will kidnap you or your children for other sinister purposes such as **Sex or Human Trafficking** or **Child Pedophilia Rings**.

Try not to be out after dark unless you are working on the 2nd or 3rd shift. Women and Seniors especially know they should never get gas after dark, but men also need to think about what they are doing too. Especially try to stay away from stores, restaurants, car washes, laundromats, and other businesses -- especially if they are not in a populated or well-lit area. Do these things during the day.

If you don't feel comfortable being somewhere then leave but make sure you are not being watched. If you are anywhere like a club, a mall, or anywhere where you don't feel safe - - call someone. If you have to call a family member, friend, or an uber and leave your car behind -- then do it. Always park in the light and look for video cameras because criminals will also be looking for video cameras.

I am from Atlanta I heard and seen it all. They had the 'blue-jean' bandits who would break in stores and only steal 'blue-jeans'. Also, the ATM bandits, who were experts at robbing and hauling off ATMs especially from drug stores after breaking down the wall and criminals love hitting Waffles House restaurants because they have easy access to jump on the freeway and get away.

Atlanta is number one in car thefts and the number one car they steal is a HONDA. If you drive through Atlanta in a brand new HONDA, you might as well just stop and hand over your keys because they will get you before you get out of the city.

They have '**car-stripping**' **businesses** all over the place including at people's homes and I do believe the police is in on these unethical businesses too, which means you got to be even extra careful when you are approached by the police. Have all your documents in order (driver's license, insurance card, registration, and/or bill of sale). Don't ride around with your music blasting and don't speed. Don't give them a reason to stop you.

If they want your car in Atlanta -- they will just bump you at a red light. Then when you get out to check for damages, you will have a gun or knife in your face -- just that quick.

Men should volunteer to patrol their communities and look out especially for Seniors, Single Mothers, and children. Put alarms on your cars and in your homes. Everyone including children should take a self-defense or gun shooting course.

Criminals will be using all types of tricks in the book -- so please -- be on guard and look out for yourself, your family, and your entire community. Remember we are in an '**uncharted territory**' and millions of people are out of work. Many people are too lazy to file for unemployment or use the correct way to obtain funds...like working for it. Therefore, they will rob you blind.

For those living a **#NomadicLifestyle** or **#CampingOut** -- also, check out "**Keep Safe While Camping Tips**" (<https://cathyharrisinternational.com/campingsafetytips/>).

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