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What Burglars Can Teach You

The following insights come from police interviews with convicted burglars.

- Of course I look familiar, I was here just last week cleaning your carpets, painting your shutters or delivering your new TV.
- Thanks for letting me use the bathroom when I was working in your yard last week. While I was in there, I unlatched the back window to make my return a little easier.
- Those nice yard toys your kids leave out make me wonder what type of gaming system they have.
- I might leave a pizza flyer on your front door to see how long it takes you to remove it.
- If glass is part of your front entrance, don't let your alarm company install the control pad where I can see if the alarm is set.
- If you don't alarm your windows, install motion detectors in the rooms I might enter, including the master bedroom where you usually keep your jewelry and home safe.
- Don't forget to lock your doors and turn on your alarm when you go out in bad weather. I work on those days, too.
- I don't understand why you would you pay all that money for a fancy alarm system and leave your house without setting it.
- I always knock first. If you answer, I'll ask for directions or offer to clean your windows. Don't open the door or take me up on it. But if you don't answer verbally, I'll try the door. Occasionally I hit the jackpot and walk right in.
- Do you really think I won't look in your sock drawer? I always check dresser drawers, the bedside table and the medicine cabinet. But I almost never go into kids' rooms.
- I won't have enough time to break into that safe where you keep your valuables. But I'll take it with me if it's not bolted down.
- A loud TV or radio can be a better deterrent than the best alarm system. If you don't want to leave one on while you're out of town, use a timer that turns it on when you usually watch or listen to it.
- Sometimes I carry a clipboard. Sometimes I dress like a lawn guy. I do my best not to look like a burglar.
- The two things I hate most are loud dogs and nosy neighbors.
- I'll break a window to get in even if it makes a little noise. If your neighbor hears a loud sound he'll stop what he's doing and wait to hear it again. If he doesn't hear it again he'll just go back to what he was doing. It's human nature.
- I love looking in your windows. I'm looking for signs that you're home and for flat screen TVs or gaming systems I'd like. I'll drive or walk through your neighborhood at night before you close the blinds just to pick my targets.
- A window open a little to let in fresh air during the day is an invitation for me to come in. If you do that, put something in the track that prevents me from opening it wide enough to get through.