

Self-Defense News, 2006-1

From: www.your-martial-arts-resources.com

Postal worker jailed for fatal knife attack:

From: <http://www.theage.com.au>

(January 20, 2006):

A former postal worker who fatally stabbed a colleague and wounded his victim's son was jailed yesterday for seven years.

Celso Cuenco, 44, of Frankston North, used a fishing knife to kill co-worker Celso Mayor and seriously injure his son, Christopher Mayor, after they attacked him with belts in the car park of their workplace, an Australia Post delivery centre in Dandenong South.

Justice Bernard Teague, in the Supreme Court, said Cuenco and Celso Mayor, who was 49, had been friends but relations soured in the months leading up to the attack early on November 13, 2003.

Mr Mayor and his son Christopher, then 26, hit Cuenco about three hours after the two older men exchanged insulting words at work, Justice Teague said.

He said Cuenco grabbed the knife from a fishing tackle box in his vehicle and stabbed Mr Mayor in the chest. The first blow could have been seen as self-defence but Cuenco stabbed Mr Mayor three more times in the chest while he was on the ground.

"You acted in an excessively violent way after defending yourself against both victims," Justice Teague said.

Cuenco also stabbed Mr Mayor once in the foot, as he raised it to defend himself. He then chased Christopher Mayor, stabbing him in the shoulder and chest.

Justice Teague took account of Cuenco's remorse and lack of a previous conviction in fixing a five-year non-parole period.

He said statements by Mr Mayor's wife and three sons showed the enormous personal tragedy of his death and the continuing problems caused by Christopher Mayor's injuries.

Cuenco was found guilty of the manslaughter of Celso Mayor and intentionally causing serious injury to Christopher Mayor.

Italy approves self-defence law:

From: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4645228.stm>

(January 24, 2006):

The Italian parliament has passed legislation allowing people to shoot robbers in self-defence.

The law permits the use of guns and knives by people in homes or workplaces to protect lives or belongings.

The reform was introduced by the Northern League party, a right-wing member of the ruling coalition with a strong anti-crime platform.

The opposition voted against the bill, which critics say will encourage people to take the law into their own hands.

The new law will allow people to use legally registered weapons to protect themselves or others, and their property and the property of others, from harm.

It applies if there is a danger of aggression and the attacker does not desist.

Justice Minister Roberto Castelli backed the new law.

"Today criminals will have more to fear while there will be fewer problems for honest people," said Mr Castelli, who belongs to the Northern League.

However, the centre-left opposition expressed concern that it would encourage violence and lead to increased use of firearms.

"This is a... measure that delegates the use of force to citizens with the sole certain result of increasing the risks for people's safety," said Paolo Cento of the Greens party.

A criminal lawyers' group also criticized the law, saying it amounted to allowing "legitimate offence".

Learning basic self-defense techniques can empower women:

From: <http://www.news-leader.com>
(January 25, 2006):

Violent crimes happen. And a predator seeking a victim is likely to look for a woman or a girl who is alone. A woman who may seem shy or weak may translate to an easy target for a criminal.

Basic knowledge of self-defense techniques can be very important to help empower women and increase their safety.

That's why it's good to see a program at Pleasant View Middle School providing a night of self-defense classes for the participants. The monthly Girls Night Out program has provided several activities for girls and their moms. This month's, though, was probably the most important.

Retired Springfield police officer Val Hewett taught the girls basic self-defense techniques. Knowledge and preparation means that girls will keep themselves safe, and when they find themselves in dangerous they will be confident, not afraid.

Other schools and girls' groups and organizations should consider contacting someone to provide instructions for their students. As Hewett told the students, if they practice basic self-defense techniques, they will develop muscle memory and be more prepared if they ever find themselves in a dangerous situation.

It's good to see schools proactively providing information that can be put to good use and can keep girls safe.

Awareness is best defense:

From: <http://www.theeveningleader.com>
(January 25, 2006):

CELINA — National Personal Self-Defense Awareness Month began as an outreach effort by the National Self-Defense Institute directed toward women and teens. Today, it's not only spread nationwide, it targets every person.

Locally, experts on self-defense teach several times weekly at the Auglaize-Mercer Counties Family YMCA.

Dave Weaver is a first dan (black belt) in Chung Do Kwan Taekwondo and an expert in other forms, including Moo Duk Kwan and Moo Do Kwan Taekwondo and Okinawan Shorei Gojo Ryu. Along with Darrell Etgen, a Mercer County sheriff's deputy and third dan in Chung Do Kwan Taekwondo, and Master Larry Delaney, a sixth-degree black belt and retired police officer, he teaches Taekwondo and self-defense to students at the YMCA.

Weaver noted that many people in this area believe they don't need to worry about self-defense. "It's proven that, for the most part, people may have one incident in their life where they're accosted," he said.

However, the way they react during that one incident may save them.

Weaver and Etgen said that it's not necessary to know any martial arts or even to have any physical skills in order to act defensively.

"I think the mental skills are the first line of defense," Weaver said. "We try to teach people to look confident. It's proven that people who have their head down when they're walking and who look unconfident, they're the ones who are preyed upon the most."

"Be aware of your surroundings. Keep your head up and look around," Etgen said.

They advised people to practice preventive self-defense in other ways, too, such as by parking in well-lit areas and having their keys ready when they go out to their vehicles.

Etgen noted that if someone is involved in a verbal altercation that threatens to turn physical, discretion is the better part of valor.

"If you have an altercation with that person, sidestep that person or avoid that person. Let that person cool down," he said. He said that it's wise to stay around other people after any sort of confrontation.

"A bully typically doesn't attack when people are watching," he said.

A locked vehicle will also provide a safe haven. And he advised the victim to call 9-1-1 and tell the attacker so he'll realize his actions are being recorded.

"If it goes past the talking stage, you need to call the police," he added.

Etgen said that there are physical cues that tend to calm a violent person. He said that not only may this avert a physical altercation, it also protects the face and body if someone does attack.

"If I put my hands up and avoid eye contact, it's a universal sign," he said. "Bring your hands up. Protect your face. It doesn't take any training to do."

"People don't need to be taught how to block," Weaver added. "The main thing is be confident. What we try to do (in class) is train people to be confident in themselves."

Of course, there are many self-defense techniques that are taught in both types of classes. All three men practice ryuku kenpo, a technique that uses pressure points to disable.

"You don't have to be super highly skilled to use the pressure points," Weaver said.

He noted that he's been rendered unconscious by blows directed at pressure points. He also noted that joint manipulation can also redirect an attack or disable an attacker.

"If it gets to the physical aspect, you have no choice but to defend yourself," Etgen said.

Weaver said that Delaney's Tuesday morning self-defense classes tend to be more relaxed and less traditional than the Taekwondo class.

"That's geared a lot toward self-defense. An elderly person or a college student could go to that class and get some self-defense knowledge," Etgen said.

Man guilty of kebab shop killing:

From: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/kent/4652486.stm>
(January 26, 2006):

A man has been jailed for four-and-a-half years for killing another man with a single punch.

Nowbahar Bahar, of Harmer Street, Gravesend, Kent, was convicted at Maidstone Crown Court on Thursday of the manslaughter of David Henkel, 32.

Mr Henkel hit his head on the ground or a wall after being punched outside a kebab shop in Chatham on 23 July 2005.

Bahar, who arrived in the UK from Afghanistan in 2001, claimed he acted in self-defence.

But the court was told by two teenage witnesses that Bahar was the only person to throw a punch during the incident on a Saturday night.

The 15-year-old girls were at the scene in Bank Street when Mr Henkel approached Bahar.

The court heard he asked the defendant if he knew of an off-licence that would be open and where he could get some cannabis from.

Bahar took £10 from Mr Henkel but returned saying he had lost the money.

David Jeremy, prosecuting, said: "They argued and there was some pushing.

"The defendant took the argument one stage further by punching Mr Henkel in the face. "

"It knocked him straight to the ground, causing him to hit his head either against a wall or on the ground."

Mr Henkel died from a fractured skull.

Judge Andrew Patience QC said he believed Bahar "could not have anticipated that these terrible consequences could result from you punching him as hard as you did".

Women attack intruders with knives:

From: <http://www.dmregister.com>
(January 31, 2006):

Two men who police say broke into an apartment got more than they expected: They were stabbed by the women who lived there, officials said.

"These women gave them a beating," said Scott County Attorney Bill Davis. "It's certainly self-defense."

One of men, Juan Dontae Shelton, 22, was stabbed in the upper body and legs. He was in critical condition at a local hospital, a hospital spokesman said.

The other man, Shawn Michael Davis, 24, was treated for his injuries and released to police. He was being held on \$130,000 bond.

Davis was charged with first-degree burglary and first-degree robbery.

Shelton also will be charged when he is released from the hospital, police said.

Police said the two men entered the apartment about 5:20 a.m. Monday and claimed to have a gun, but didn't display it.

The county attorney said the women grabbed kitchen knives and fought back. They didn't do anything wrong, he said.

"You're in your own home and you don't have the option to retreat," he said. "They didn't have any other choice. You have to stand your ground."

But Davis said he would be reluctant to tell people to react the same way "because I don't want to get anyone hurt."

The fight for FAIRNESS:

From: http://bangkokpost.com/020206_Outlook/02Feb2006_outo1.php
(February 2, 2006):

Thailand: Three lawyers are determined to make the legal system more gender-friendly. But will they succeed?

One of their female clients was raped. She fought back and stabbed the man with an iron rod. She was arrested and charged for attempted murder.

The case has gender prejudice written all over it. When "Mukda" (not her real name) pressed charges against the rapist, the police refused to take up the case, saying that since Mukda and the defendant knew each other then it must have been consensual sex.

It so happened that the rapist is an uncle of the owner of the hairdressing salon she was working for. And the owner's husband is a police officer.

The police also refused to send Mukda to the hospital for a medical examination, which is required by the court in rape cases. But when the attacker pressed charges against her for trying to kill him, the police immediately arrested her.

During her legal battle, Mukda was repeatedly humiliated by rude questioning from legal personnel at all levels who tried to paint her as a sexually loose woman in order to weaken her contention that she had stabbed the rapist in self-defence.

"Our legal system certainly needs to be more gender sensitive," says Siriwan. "Questioning should be conducted in a secret session to avoid humiliating the woman. The investigation should be handled by policewomen who have been properly trained in gender issues."

Mukda was finally acquitted of the murder charge because the attacker failed to give the court the weapon that he claimed Mukda had used to stab him. Yet she was ordered to be detained in jail while the attacker appeals.

The trio have also experienced defeat. As part of the lawyers' team under the Lawyers Council of Thailand, they worked on the Pakaporn-Sombat case, which involved a rape allegation against a powerful politician. The court ruled that it was sexual

blackmail, not a rape case. The court ruled that Pakaporn Santhanulai, as a young woman, could have stopped the sexual assault had she really wanted to. She was given a seven-year jail sentence and ordered to pay politician Sombat Uthaisang 10 million baht for the damage done to his career.

The case is being appealed.

"We want to set a standard that in a sexual violence case, a woman's past should not be used as evidence to discredit her because it has nothing to do with the matter at hand," explains Siriwan.

Kindy teachers offered self-defence to combat feisty kids:

From: <http://www.stuff.co.nz/stuff/0,2106,3561087a11,00.html>
(February 2, 2006):

Kindergarten teachers are being offered self-defence training in a bid to combat biting, hitting and hair-pulling youngsters.

The programme, funded by the Ministry of Education, trains teachers to deal with "crisis situations", the Manawatu Standard reported today.

Josh Couperus, one of four people from the ministry's Group Special Education which runs the course, said it covers "how to stop a punch, a kick, choking, biting, hair-pulling, and they also learn restraint techniques".

"Kindy teachers certainly get bitten and certainly get hit."

The course teaches how to identify and manage potentially dangerous situations and prevent them from turning violent.

"The purpose of this course is to provide the best care, welfare, safety and security of everybody involved in a crisis," Mr Couperus says.

A website promoting the course said it was designed to target the special needs of caregivers, particularly with the rising level of violence in society.

Rangitikei National MP Simon Power has slammed the course as an example of skewed educational priorities.

"It's a sad indictment when people that just want to teach our children are being required to learn restraint methods and take self-defence courses," he said.

"I feel sorry for the teachers because I'm sure they'd rather spend their time on professional development that will help them better educate our kids.

"I think the public would be astounded that the teachers, who do a great job, are required to do a course like this."

Exclusive Look at Flight Attendants' Self-Defense Training:

From: <http://abclocal.go.com/wtvd/story?section=central&id=3870396>
(February 2, 2006):

DALLAS - One of the nation's biggest airlines is allowing Eyewitness News inside a new program, designed to teach flight attendants how to defend aircraft against attackers.

Since the 9/11 attacks, American Airlines has developed a specialized self-defense class for its flight attendants. Terrorists attacked flight attendants on two American Airlines flights, prompting the company to make self-defense training part of annual training.

Eyewitness News anchor Steve Daniels went to Dallas to learn more about this story that has never been told. American Airlines granted Eyewitness News exclusive access to its academy, showing us some of the training. Other classes were too sensitive to show.

Raleigh's Diane Earp has become an expert in hand-to-hand combat. She works as a purser on American Airlines' flights between RDU and London.

"We are trained in security to investigate and try to determine if there's a threat," Earp said.

She is in charge of safety and security inside the cabin.

"Security is No. 1," Earp said. "The No. 1 concern on the airplane is security and protecting the cockpit from any intrusion."

"Having the self-defense class has given me a feeling of empowerment," Earp said. "I know if somebody tries to hurt me, I can defend myself."

We watched as Earp got her annual training, focusing on 15 different techniques to fight back. In the days after 9/11, Earp and her husband, a Raleigh police detective, recruited instructors from the city's police academy. They taught Earp and other RDU-based American attendants some valuable lessons, just in case they ever needed them.

"They tailored their self-defense class for the interior of an airplane cabin," Earp said. "It was a fabulous class that the police put on."

Nanette Terbush is American Airlines' director of security training. She says a big part of the attendants' training focuses on lessons learned from 9/11.

"We've gotten so much information from the crew members because they reacted so wisely in such a horrible situation, that we were able to change the procedures," Terbush said.

She says the flight attendants who died on 9/11 are heroes - - people like Betty Ong, who placed a call from Flight 11 to the American reservations center in Cary, providing important clues.

That was a horrible day for all of us," Terbush said. "It was day that really changed life as we know it. It's something that could've happened to any of us. Any of us could've been on those flights."

Richard Reid also forced the airline to create new security procedures after he tried to ignite explosives in his shoes during a flight from Paris to Miami. Flight attendants stopped him.

"They realized that there was something out of the ordinary. They smelled something out of the ordinary," Terbush said. "They recognized that this individual was not acting like a normal passenger -- so they paid attention to what was going on and they reacted to what he was doing, and they saved the lives of everybody on that plane."

Flight attendants are the first line of defense for passengers in a cabin. Working as firefighters, rescuers, medics and now as law-enforcement officers, they are working to get used to their new roles. But unlike first responders on the ground, flight attendants cannot call for back-up. That's why they spend a lot of time planning for almost every imaginable scenario.

"Anything that you want to use, can use as a weapon. A wine bottle," said trainer Amanda Searight. "You can actually crack it on the side of a table or counter, and it becomes a sharp weapon. You can bang them on the head. I mean, at this point, you're trying to save your life, save the plane."

Earp points out that almost anything can be used as a weapon. A soda can inside a pillow case can be a deadly weapon.

Even with their advanced training, the flight attendants say passengers share a responsibility on aircraft.

"We want the passengers to get involved. If you see a problem, if you see a flight attendant who needs help, you need to get up and help," Earp said. "It's just the way the world is today."

Scratch, spit and kick below the belt - all in self defense:

From: <http://www.radio.cz/en/article/75409>
(February 2, 2006):

In the first eleven months of 2005, police in the Czech capital Prague, reported about eighty-five attacks on women of different ages. Seventy of them were of a sexual character, in short rape or attempted rape. To prevent this from happening in future the city hall has, hand in hand with police, started a campaign to make women aware of the danger.

"A girl or a woman can't assume it is not going to happen. She has to bear in mind that it is possible and that she is the one who has to do everything to stop it, simply to prevent it. It is impossible for police to be everywhere therefore women have to be able to recognize a danger and respond to it."

Says Jan Chodera from the city hall. The campaign called 'Self defense' carries a clear message "Women: be alert and don't put your lives at risk."

Advice? Pretty straightforward - don't take dark short cuts instead of safer routes home and watch out for anything or anyone suspicious. In case of need don't hesitate to hit back below the belt.

"If the campaign is successful, crime should decline. If people do foresee an attack, there will be fewer opportunities for attackers. Potential assailants might be put off and change their mind if they see an alert person. If it doesn't help and a person is attacked anyway, the campaign will definitely help them to know what to do."

The campaign definitely drew my attention. Metro carriages, trams and bus stops are plastered with posters warning of the danger. Not that I had been careless before, but now I pay even more attention. The poster hit the right spot with me. I still remember the very first time I spotted one of them.

Its message is more than clear and rather shocking - a path in a forest leading to a girl's naked legs sticking out from a bush. The slogan reads 'Hide-and-peek or a tragic end of a young life?' Jan Chodera again.

"We discussed at length whether the campaign should be so aggressive and we came to the conclusion that this way it would be much more powerful. This poster shows the worst that can happen and warns of the tragic consequences."

The campaign is going to last the whole year. After a series of workshops in schools with mainly female students, it is now concentrating on the general public.

"All of a sudden I felt someone pulling my handbag from behind. It was hanging from my shoulder but he pulled it. I turned round and saw a young man running away from me. He was much taller than me."

Says a seventy-seven-year-old lady who sat next to me at the very first public self defense workshop.

"I started running after him but to be honest I had no chance of catching up. I guess he was seventeen maybe eighteen years old. So I gave up and let it be."

As we giggled at various instructions on how to get rid of an attacker, I had to doubt whether I myself or the old lady would be able to defend ourselves.

Every time I walk from a bus stop I look around to check who is behind me. If there is someone suspicious walking behind me I usually stop and wait until there are more people around. I have been robbed three times. Once it happened in the block of flats where I live. I doubt I will be able to do anything to defend myself. I am weak and my reactions are rather bad."

Admits this eighty-year-old lady and shrugs her shoulders.

Zdenek Nachodsky specializes in self defense. He has been called in as an expert to many difficult cases to assess the behavior of a suspect.

Years of experience have taught him a few good tricks which he now passes on to students at a police school and - currently - also via this campaign to audiences in Prague.

First of all, you should avoid your enemy, Zdenek Nachodsky advises. Cross a street when you see a suspicious person. Don't fight a lost battle, trust your instincts and don't hesitate to fight unfairly, just like children. It is the best way to gain precious seconds. Bite, scratch, pull hair, kick and scream 'fire', not 'help'. As statistics show people are much more likely to help you to put out a fire than if you are being attacked.

"The most common mistake is that people think that all people are polite and honest. Secondly people are not used to these situations when they are likely to be attacked. People usually aren't able to react."

Zdenek Nachodsky answers my questions about the most common mistakes we make when faced with danger.

"Some people would defend themselves, but they are worried about the law. Everybody should know at least a little bit about it. People don't know where the line between self-defense and assault lies, and it holds them back. They are scared to hurt an aggressor."

Sometimes unnecessarily. According to Czech law you can fight as long as an attack continues and, even if you kill, it is still in self defense. However stabbing an escaping thief to death would get you into huge trouble.

And here is the last handy piece of advice from Zdenek Nachodsky. Get a small purse with a small amount of money and if a thief asks you 'Your money or your life?' give it to him. He will certainly be too pressed for time to search your handbag and won't find the second "money-stuffed" purse.

Area women attend self-defense class to get down the basics:

From: <http://holmencourier.com/articles/2006/02/03/news/05training.txt>
(February 3, 2006):

Christina Dietrich has made the customary preparations for a trip to Scotland. She has studied the language, read up on the customs and has made living arrangements for her semester abroad. She has also taken a self-defense class.

"We just want her to be aware of where she's at and have some way of defending herself," said her mother, Linda Dietrich.

The two women learned some self-defense techniques together in a class Sunday at the Holmen YMCA.

Christina Dietrich said she wanted to take the class because she's unfamiliar with Scotland and wants to be prepared for anything that could happen.

It's that line of thinking that likely encouraged many other women to attend the class in which they learned ways to fight back and escape from an attacker as well as advice on how to avoid getting into a dangerous situation.

The seminar was conducted by Joe Nordie who holds a fifth-degree black belt in the American Kyuki-Do Federation.

Nordie teaches martial arts classes through the YMCA and AKF Martial Arts.

Nordie said he thinks it's as important for women to know how to defend themselves as it is to know about anything else in life.

“Why is it important to breathe?” Nordie asked. “It's important to survive.”

“You've got to get the basics to have a chance,” said Jen Jostad, who assisted Nordie at the seminar.

The two agreed that some people are born predators who will take advantage of anyone and are just looking for people to prey on.

“Guys are guys,” Nordie said. “There are two things on their mind: football and women.”

They also pointed out that most victims are assaulted by people they already know.

Their biggest piece of advice to women is that they should always listen to their gut.

“It's better to be safe than get hurt,” said Jostad.

They also recommended women check under their car as they walk up to it and check the backseat before getting in it, hold their keys in between their fingers as a weapon as they walk to the car and yell “fire” if in need of help.

They also advised women take any kind of self-defense classes when they're offered and spend time becoming aware of their surroundings.

Store owner wrestles gun from would-be robber:

From: <http://www.thewmurchannel.com/news/6791113/detail.html>
(February 6, 2006):

Police say couple tried robbing store to pay for apartment

MANCHESTER, N.H. -- Two people were arrested in connection with an armed robbery at a Manchester market in which the store's owner wrestled a gun away from a man who was pointing the weapon at his wife.

Police said that Patrick Shiner, 22, of Deerfield, N.H., pointed a gun at Zohra Lakkari, who was working as a clerk at the Orange Street Market, during a robbery attempt on Friday.

Police said Lakbiri's husband, Matti Kenzou, was able to sneak up behind Shiner and grab the shotgun, pointing it toward the ceiling. The two wrestled while police were called. Two friends entered the store and helped Kenzou subdue the man.

"I couldn't think, especially when I saw my 4-year-old son yelling, 'Don't kill my daddy. Don't kill my mommy,'" Kenzou said. "That was it, and beside that, I was lucky."

Investigators said that Shiner and his girlfriend, Dorothy Collins, were going to use the money from the robbery to get an apartment.

The two were staying at a Manchester motel. Police said that Collins was supposed to be Shiner's getaway driver, but she fled when she realized that something was going wrong.

Police tracked Collins down to the Manchester Inn and recovered a second shotgun under the bed. Both of the weapons had the serial numbers removed, and police said that Collins told them she was planning on selling them after the robbery.

"When something like this happens, you don't know how someone is going to respond," Sgt. Mark Fowke said. "It's a miracle no one was injured. We don't want to see anyone get hurt."

Huge knife amnesty to launch:

From: <http://www.manchesteronline.co.uk>
(February 8, 2006):

A MAJOR new nationwide amnesty in a bid to cut knife crime is expected to be announced.

Such an amnesty would be the first for 10 years, when tens of thousands of knives and other weapons were handed into police stations following the stabbing of a headteacher.

Labour had indicated before the last election that it intended to launch another amnesty and ministers hope a huge national call to hand in knives will save lives.

However, one prominent campaigner has already said that a new amnesty would merely be a "headline grabbing" scheme that would have little effect on actual street crime.

The last national amnesty - which lasted from December 1995 to January 1996 - netted around 40,000 potentially lethal weapons.

It was launched in the wake of the lethal stabbing of headmaster Philip Lawrence, who was attacked outside St George's Roman Catholic school in Maida Vale, London, after intervening to protect a pupil from a gang of youths.

The month-long drive allowed people to dump knives and other bladed weapons in 3,000 collection bins at police stations across England and Wales without facing any questions.

Norman Brennan, director of the Victims of Crime Trust, urged chief constables not to support a new national knives amnesty.

"The types of people who hand in knives during an amnesty are law-abiding members of the public, not those that carry knives for criminal activities, self-defence or as a fashion accessory," he said.

Mr Brennan said minimum mandatory sentences should be introduced for those caught on the streets with a knife along the lines of those already in place for firearms offences.

He said anyone caught with a blade longer than three inches should face a jail term of five years, while smaller knives should lead to a mandatory sentence of up to six months.

"A child is stabbed to death in Britain every two weeks and knife homicide outnumbers gun homicide by three to one. Knife crime is out of control on the streets of Britain," he said.

Mr Brennan also called for 50,000 new police officers and six new prisons to be built in a bid to tackle the problem.

"I would ask the Government, what is more important to you, saving money or making the streets of Britain safer?"

"If it is the safety of the British public then introduce mandatory sentences, recruit more officers and build new prisons and send out a strong message that knife crime will no longer be tolerated on the streets of Britain."

"An amnesty is a headline-grabbing initiative which will do nothing to reduce knife crime on the streets of Britain and I urge the Government to listen to the experts."

Today's expected announcement comes after figures released last year showed that the number of people being locked up for carrying a knife had more than doubled since 1997.

The figures, which related to England and Wales, showed that, in 1997, 372 people were given custodial sentences for having an article with a blade in a public place. By 2004, the figure had leaped to 803.

In 1997, a total of 3,341 people were sentenced for the offence, compared with 5,802 seven years later.

Statistics for possession of an offensive weapon without lawful authority also showed an increase.

In 1997, 4,130 people were sentenced with 509 given custodial terms, while in 2004, the figures were 5,758 and 817 respectively.

Trial experts debate time needed to kill by choking:

From: <http://www.baltimoresun.com>
(February 8, 2006):

A forensic expert attempted to cast doubt yesterday on prosecution claims that a Columbia woman charged with murder choked her friend for minutes before the other woman died, testifying in Howard County Circuit Court that it's nearly impossible to determine how long someone must be choked before death occurs.

The testimony of Dr. Barbara Wolf, an associate medical examiner in Fort Myers, Fla., contradicts an earlier prosecution witness who said that it would take about three to four minutes of continuous choking to cause death.

"There is no way to study that," said Wolf, the first defense witness in the trial of Melissa Burch Harton, 26, accused of first-degree murder in the death of a fellow Loyola College doctoral student, Natasha Bacchus Magee, 31, of Stewartstown, Pa. "We can't choke someone to death and time it."

Prosecutors maintain that Harton, of the 5600 block of Columbia Road, intentionally choked Magee during a drunken fight and left her body in an Ellicott City parking lot on March 9.

Dr. Theodore King, an assistant state medical examiner, testified last week that Magee died of strangulation. He said a person being strangled would lose consciousness within 20 to 30 seconds and would be dead if constant pressure were applied for an additional 2 1/2 to 3 1/2 minutes.

However, Wolf, citing the book *The Essentials of Forensic Medicine* by Cyril John Polson, yesterday read a passage that said it is "rarely, if ever, possible to give an accurate estimate" of the length of time someone would have to be choked to die.

Wolf said that although she has heard other pathologists offer opinions ranging from two to five minutes, she has never been aware of medical literature that supports those claims. She said that a number of factors -- including a person's sex, size and whether alcohol or drugs were ingested -- can cause variations on how long death would take.

The defense claims that Harton choked Magee in self-defense after Magee attacked her, and yesterday presented witnesses who testified about injuries they saw on Harton.

Janette DeBoissiere, an assistant public defender who was Harton's initial lawyer, testified that when she talked to Harton after her arrest she immediately saw that her neck was injured.

When the defense showed DeBoissiere photographs of Harton's injuries -- which included bruises on her legs, neck and arms -- DeBoissiere said, "They looked worse in real life."

Iran to hang teenage girl attacked by rapists:

From: <http://www.iranfocus.com/modules/news/article.php?storyid=5184>
(January 7, 2006):

Tehran, Iran, Jan. 07 – An Iranian court has sentenced a teenage rape victim to death by hanging after she weepingly confessed that she had unintentionally killed a man who had tried to rape both her and her niece.

The state-run daily Etemaad reported on Saturday that 18-year-old Nazanin confessed to stabbing one of three men who had attacked the pair along with their boyfriends while they were spending some time in a park west of the Iranian capital in March 2005.

Nazanin, who was 17 years old at the time of the incident, said that after the three men started to throw stones at them, the two girls' boyfriends quickly escaped on their motorbikes leaving the pair helpless.

She described how the three men pushed her and her 16-year-old niece Somayeh onto the ground and tried to rape them, and said that she took out a knife from her pocket and stabbed one of the men in the hand.

As the girls tried to escape, the men once again attacked them, and at this point, Nazanin said, she stabbed one of the men in the chest. The teenage girl, however, broke down in tears in court as she explained that she had no intention of killing the man but was merely defending herself and her younger niece from rape, the report said.

The court, however, issued on Tuesday a sentence for Nazanin to be hanged to death.

Last week, a court in the city of Rasht, northern Iran, sentenced Delara Darabi to death by hanging charged with murder when she was 17 years old. Darabi has denied the charges.

In August 2004, Iran's Islamic penal system sentenced a 16-year-old girl, Atefeh Rajabi, to death after a sham trial, in which she was accused of committing "acts incompatible with chastity".

The teenage victim had no access to a lawyer at any stage and efforts by her family to retain one were to no avail. Atefeh personally defended herself and told the religious judge that he should punish those who force women into adultery, not the victims. She was eventually hanged in public in the northern town of Neka.

Date rape detractor, RapeX condom, at top of list of female safety methods:

From: <http://gsusignal.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2006/02/14/43f358cb3c955>
(February 14, 2006):

As the lions and lambs of March get ready to march on through and spring starts to provide tantalizing glimpses of warmth, the heart (or, at least, the sex drive) begins to take the reigns. In pursuit of that ever elusive romance, blind dates, random hook-ups, and first and only dates abound. Most end up alright, though do not lead to love. But what about those that end negatively? What protections can be carried in a purse or pocket?

Perhaps the most controversial palm-sized protector is the soon to be released Anti-Rape or RapeX Condom from Sonette Ehlers of South Africa. This device is designed to be used by women who for whatever reason feel they need to protect themselves from rape. The condom is inserted like a tampon and is neither visible nor dangerous to the user. But, it is very dangerous for any man who tries to go too far with the user. The device will clamp onto the man's member with hook-like claws, causing extreme pain and requiring medical attention to be removed. Thus, alerting the authorities and keeping the female user safe from rape. It is expected to retail for about the same cost as an ordinary condom.

This device has received much criticism as a barbaric device that reinforces the notion that women are responsible for rape. The inventor responds to such criticism on her web-site: "As with everything in life there will be negative attitudes and I can't be responsible for people who refuse to educate men and feel the device is medieval. A medieval device for a medieval deed." (www.rapestop.net and the New York Times).

JPJ officers have self-defence training:

From: http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v3/news_lite.php?id=181824
(February 22, 2006):

MELAKA, (Bernama) -- Beware! Officers from the Road Transport Department (JPJ) will not hesitate to strike back in self-defence in case they are assaulted.

The warning came from Malaysia Road Transport Academy director Wan Idrus Wan Sariff to anyone who tries to interfere with JPJ enforcement officers doing their duty.

Self-defence is part of the training for new JPJ enforcement officers at the academy at Tiang Dua near here.

The training, which is compulsory for all trainees, was introduced in 2004.

The academy, surrounded by orchards as well as rubber and oil palm plantations, opened in 2001. It also conducts induction and skills courses for JPJ officers.

Assaults and threats on RTD officers on duty are not new and are becoming frequent lately.

In one such incident involved five men, armed with machetes, who attacked four JPJ officers who were checking a lorry, suspected of over-loading, which was left by the roadside at Pusing near Ipoh early this month.

However, the officers managed to escape by running to the Pusing police station, about two kilometres away.

There have also been cases of JPJ officers being rammed into by moving vehicles.

Wan Idrus told Bernama that the module on self-defence did not include use of weapons but was based on the art of karate and silat.

"Trainees are taught to ward off and tackle attacks without causing serious injury, unless in extenuating circumstances," he added.

He said trainees were taught how to use their hands and legs to ward off attacks.

"So don't think it easy to assault a JPJ officer...they may strike back in self-defence," he added.

He said some of the trainers at the academy were black-belt holders and also silat coaches for Sukma (Malaysia Games) athletes.

Since 2004, a total of 904 JPJ enforcement officials in their 20s had been trained in self-defence at the academy, besides being taught various skills, he added.

Creative Self Defense:

From: <http://www.kidktv.com/x69256.xml>
(February 23, 2006):

Idaho Falls - A woman fights off a possible burglar, all thanks to a can of oven cleaner.

The victim came home yesterday, finding a man inside.

He attacked her, and the woman was able to distract the suspect by spraying oven cleaner in his eyes.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office encourages people to use any kind of self defense when attacked.

"Basically, the gloves are off. Whatever you need to do to make sure your life is safe is what you can do. In her case, she had oven cleaner in the perimeter that she was able to use that," says Sgt. Doug Metcalf.

When this 9-1-1 call came in, the dispatchers worked as a team to help the victim.

"We had a 9-1-1 Call about an assault victim and while one person is on the phone, our law dispatcher, dispatching law enforcement, our ambulance dispatcher, dispatches the ambulance," says Sherry Glick.

The Bonneville County Sheriff's Office is looking for a male suspect, either hispanic or Native American.

About 5 foot 9, 190 pounds, with long dark hair, possibly in a pony tail.

GPs find way out from patient rage:

From: <http://www.theaustralian.news.com.au>
(March 1, 2006):

VIOLENT patients are proving such a threat in doctors' surgeries that some GPs have resorted to buying fake guns or taking martial arts lessons.

Many doctors cope by insulating themselves from the dangers by refusing house calls to dangerous areas or at night, or by blacklisting patients with a history of trouble.

But a study of violence in Australian surgeries, conducted by researchers at the University of Newcastle in NSW, shows some GPs feel compelled to go further - devising escape routes in their surgeries so they can flee an attacker, or fitting alarm systems connected to the local police stations.

And a handful of GPs took more unorthodox measures - such as one doctor who bought a fake gun to brandish at any would-be assailant, and another who took up taekwon do as a form of self-defence.

Another GP interviewed by the researchers had a novel approach. If confronted by a violent patient, he would "fake a faint or heart attack or something, and I would hope the person would feel they had caused a heart attack or in some way harmed me and then leave".

The study - the first to look at violence towards GPs in cities across the nation - gathered information from 18 NSW GPs in focus groups, and information from a further 154 GPs who filled in detailed questionnaires. It was published in the British journal Family Practice.

The study said many GPs "perceived themselves as being at significant risk of occupational violence", and concluded the issue had been ignored by policymakers wrestling with the shortage of GPs who were prepared to work after normal hours.

Solving the security concerns "may attenuate these fears and improve GP participation in after-hours care", it said.

Lead researcher Parker Magin, senior lecturer in general practice at the University of Newcastle, said the findings stemmed from the same research as a study last year that found more than 60 per cent of GPs had been subjected to verbal or physical violence in the previous year.

Gear Junkie: Some downright handy new equipment:

From: <http://seattlepi.nwsourc.com>
(March 2, 2006):

Princeton Tec Genesis

Princeton Tec's trade show debut was not a fancy new headlamp. Instead, the company introduced a small black flashlight that will cost a pricey \$85 when it ships in June.

But the Genesis is a super-bright model, with a company rating of 47 lumens.

This intense light, which comes from a 3-watt LED, can be used as a self-defense tool, temporarily blinding or disorienting a bad guy. In the outdoors, the light could be used to scout climbing routes in the dark or chase off unwanted campground wildlife (<http://www.princetontec.com>).

Woman cleared of injuring her husband:

From: <http://www.di-ve.com/dive/portal/portal.jhtml?id=222077&pid=1>
(March 8, 2006):

VALLETTA, Malta (di-ve news) -- Marica Cerniglio, 29, of Bugibba, was cleared of injuring her estranged husband, Mourad Mekhoukhe, in the leg with a knife after that magistrate Miriam Hayman ruled she had acted in self-defence.

Cerniglio was originally charged with assaulting and seriously injuring her husband in their home on June 11, 2004.

Magistrate Hayman heard how on the day of the incident, Mr Mekhouke refused to let his wife in and after that she made her way in, he assaulted her. During a scuffle, he grabbed a knife which however fell and landed on his leg.

The magistrate noted that it did not result that the injuries he suffered were of a grievous nature and ruled that Ms Cerniglio had acted in self-defence, thus clearing her of all charges.

Police Inspector Joseph Mercieca prosecuted while lawyer Stefano Filletti represented Ms Cerniglio.

Self Defense: Top 5 Ways to Avoid Danger:

From: <http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,187519,00.html>
(March 10, 2006):

How safe are you? If government statistics are any indication, there's reason to feel somewhat secure.

The latest U.S. Department of Justice crime figures show personal crimes -- which include rape, sexual assault, robbery, and aggravated and simple assault -- are at their lowest levels on record.

Property crimes -- which include burglary, car theft, and theft -- have stabilized after years of decline.

Yet this is no time to be complacent. Many criminals prey on people who are off guard, say crime and self-defense specialists who talked with WebMD. Criminals look for people who are not paying attention to their surroundings, and then use the element of surprise to their advantage.

Victims From All Walks of Life

“Criminals don’t want to get caught,” says Tony Farrenkopf, PhD, a clinical and forensic psychologist in private practice in Portland. “They ask themselves, ‘Does this person look attackable? Does this person look vulnerable? Can I get away with something here?’”

In the U.S., criminals were able to carry out 24 million crimes in 2004. For every 1,000 people age 12 and older, there occurred:

- One rape or sexual assault
- Two assaults with injury
- Two robberies

Regardless of the improved crime rate, crime still affects everyone in all types of neighborhoods; it crosses economic and racial lines, says Larry Jordan, author of "The Dirty Dozen: 12 Nasty Fighting Techniques for Any Self-Defense Situation." He is a former member of the U.S. Army Rangers and Special Forces and is a master-level instructor in several forms of martial arts.

Taking Charge of Your Safety

“It is a reality,” Jordan says of crime. “People are being victimized or are being targeted to be victims each and every day.”

To avoid becoming a victim, you need to take charge of your own safety. There are no guarantees, but actively tuning your thoughts and actions toward crime prevention and self-defense can help lower chances of becoming a casualty.

“There’s a saying in the martial arts world that the best form of self-defense is not putting yourself in a position where you have to defend yourself,” says Bill Nelson, a sixth-degree black belt master instructor in Soo Bahk Do Karate, and author of "Your Weapon Within: How to Lower the Risk of Sexual Assault."

“We all have a responsibility to be safe,” he said.

WebMD has compiled expert advice to show you how to avoid dangerous situations and how to defend yourself once you’re in them. If you regularly practice the recommended ways of thinking and acting, there is hope that you will not become a victim, but rather, an active defender of your life and property.

Habitual Security

Preventing crime from happening requires an active mind and body. It is more than just a few martial arts moves. It means paying attention to your instincts, to other

people, and to your surroundings. It means constantly training your brain and limbs to act defensively. It is a way of life.

“Security has to be habitual,” says Jordan. “If you allow yourself to get into a lax way of thinking when it pertains to your security, it is very difficult to change that pattern when you find yourself [in not-so-safe situations].”

To clarify his point, Jordan points to security alarms that people have in their homes but do not turn on. The hardware does nothing to thwart burglars if it is not used.

People have an internal alarm as well. It usually tells them they are walking into a bad situation. Yet many ignore it because they have a false sense of security or are in denial that crime can happen to them.

Five Ways to Avoid Danger

To fine-tune your personal alarm, crime experts make the following suggestions:

1. Trust yourself. Many times, your eyes, ears, nose, skin, and tongue will give clues indicating that something threatening is ahead. Another powerful indicator, widely known as a sixth sense, can also hint at danger. “Trust when something doesn’t seem right,” advises Nelson.

2. Be aware of your surroundings. No matter how safe you think a neighborhood might be, it’s still not a good idea to leave the front door open, your valuables in the car, your purse on top of your office desk, or to flaunt all of your expensive jewelry and other belongings. These actions simply provide temptation and opportunity for offenders, says David Silber, PhD, a consultant psychologist in Washington, D.C. who has worked with police.

Silber also advises against walking through dark, isolated alleys, fields or parking lots. Bad things happen in “safe” areas all the time. In fact, would-be attackers lurk around places where they can have the opportunity to catch people off guard, and remain anonymous. Again, they usually don’t want to get caught.

3. Pay attention to the people around you. This advice is part of both listening to your instincts and being aware of your surroundings. You can often sense peoples’ intentions just by the way they look at you. Heed warning signs even when you are with people you know and trust.

In 2004, U.S. Department of Justice statistics show seven in 10 female rape or sexual assault victims stated the offender was an intimate, a relative, a friend, or an acquaintance. Officer Jason Lee, a spokesman for the Los Angeles Police Department, says questionable looks from people you know can gradually advance to touching or words that may make you feel uncomfortable.

“Tell someone else about the warning signs, someone who can help you, so we can prevent this,” urges Lee.

4. Act confident and focused. Just as you can sense people's feelings, others can sense yours as well. Predators look for people who are meek, mild, weak, unfocused, and distracted.

"Criminals are looking for easy pickings. They're looking for someone who they can take by surprise and will likely not resist," says Jean O'Neil, director of research and evaluation for the National Crime Prevention Council. She suggests presenting yourself in an assertive manner. When walking down the street, make eye contact with people who look at you. O'Neil says that signals the would-be offender that you are in charge and aware that they are there.

5. Understand that alcohol or drugs can cloud judgment. Certain substances can certainly dull your senses and slow down your reaction time to danger. They can also lower other people's inhibitions and make them more aggressive or belligerent. It is for this reason that Silber says certain places like bars and pubs may present some danger, particularly if they're crowded. He also says mutual drinking can increase chances of rape or sexual assault among people who know each other.

Students learn self defense:

From: http://capitalnews9.com/content/living/9_on_education/?ArID=171614
(March 10, 2006):

It may look like just another gym class, but it's actually a new self defense program at Saratoga Springs High School, where 2,200 students learn about personal safety.

Susan Hoffman of the Physical Education Dept. said, "This is a response to provide an educational piece so we can empower our students to have options if they find themselves in a rough situation."

That message is right on the teaching staff's shirts -- G.A.R.A., which stands for "getting away, right away." It's the first step in self defense. Other topics include mental awareness, risk reduction and escape techniques. Then, it's on to the physical side.

Student Teacher Matt McMahon said, "Just basic moves -- punching, kicking, pinches, just anything they can do to get out of a situation that could cause them harm."

The safety program was developed by the Saratoga Springs Board of Education, and this self defense class can help anyone at any level learn to protect themselves.

Student Tom Kirkpatrick said, "It shows how you can help yourself, what to be aware of, what to do, what not to do."

Student Marisa Balletto said, "A lot of kids including myself don't know the correct way how to get away, how to help yourself in that kind of situation, and things that have happened on campus. It will definitely make Saratoga Springs High School a better place."

One of those things include an attempted abduction of a high school student last October. This prompted the school district to create what's known as the "Three Prong Approach."

Hoffman also said, "The first part is that we increased our lighting and our security cameras, the second piece is that the Board of Education has approved the hiring of a security officer that will be here after hours."

And the the third piece is, of course, self defense. The school is even considering making the program a requirement.

"I think it's definitely going to happen, and I think it's going to spread to other districts as well," added McMahon.

Giving new meaning to "safety in numbers."

Armed and elderly:

From: <http://www.heraldextra.com/content/view/169739/>
(March 12, 2006):

A swift cane to the groin keeps thugs at bay.

A couple dozen residents of the Seville retirement home in Orem gathered for an hour-long "Combat Cane" self-defense class Saturday afternoon.

It is important for seniors to remember they can defend themselves, said Cheryl Nyman, who manages the Seville with her husband, Greg.

"We thought it was a great idea to bring this to our residents," she said. "These are all vital seniors. A lot of them still drive their own cars and we have an active walking group and I worry about them."

Any senior with a cane also has a weapon against thugs and muggers, said Rod Carmichael, physical therapist and self-defense enthusiast who teaches Combat Cane classes across Utah.

The key is to strike decisively the first time.

"If you have to defend yourself with a cane, do as much damage as you can do because it may be your only chance," he said.

A sturdy cane with a shepherd's crook is preferable because it can be used not only to strike but to grapple, pulling a neck or a knee to throw an assailant off balance, he said.

"I can use any part of this for self defense," he said, holding up such a cane. "If you have a straight cane, a staff, you have two poking ends. If it's got a flat end, it's a striking cane."

Holding a cane in two hands, "you can redirect or block a punch," he said, demonstrating. "The assailant now knows I'm not going to take whatever he gives me."

Over and over, Carmichael told those gathered that a strike to the groin is their best defense.

"There are vital targets on the body that are easily damaged," he said. "The groin is one. Strike the groin whenever you can with whatever you can -- your cane, your knee or your fist."

The side of the knee, trachea and solar plexus are also good targets when trying to quickly debilitate an attacker, he said.

"What is another delicate area?" Carmichael called out to the audience. "Eyes," shouted a resident without missing a beat.

"Very good," said Carmichael. "Martial artist Bruce Lee was once asked if he could only do one punch in a fight, what would it be, and he said poke out the eyes."

At this suggestion of violence, there were disapproving murmurs from a couple of residents.

When an attacker tries to choke you, the natural response is to try to pull their hands away -- a mistake, Carmichael said. Instead, "make two claws and pluck," he said, demonstrating a swift yanking motion using sharply cupped fingers to knock an assailant's hands away.

"Have you ever had to do all this?" called out one resident in a determined but wobbly voice.

"With a cane? No," he said. "But some of my students have."

One 60-year-old dentist at an ATM grew nervous when a young man began acting strangely behind him, he said. "He felt threatened," Carmichael said. "He hit him in the groin. The kid went away. Now the kid may not have threatened him but he knew he wasn't going to take that."

A woman walking on the street was twice touched inappropriately by a stranger and when she turned around, the man grabbed her throat, Carmichael said. "She plucked and kneed him until he went to the ground," he said. "She broke two of his ribs and his nose. There was a policeman across the street who was not able to get there fast enough. She took care of herself."

When Carmichael asked for a volunteer from the audience to practice cane combat, a staffer put her hands on the shoulders of 90-year-old Mae Hickman.

"I've got one," said the staffer. "For what?" said an alarmed Hickman from her chair. "We'll take up a collection for you," jested one man in the audience.

When Carmichael explained he wanted Hickman to demonstrate a block with a cane, Hickman smiled, straightened up to her full height and got in Carmichael's face.

"I want you to tell me how to remember all this stuff," she said to laughs and applause. "We're old folks."

Carmichael instructed Hickman to block him as he pretended to strike her.

"I don't have two good arms," she said jovially. "How high can you lift the cane?" Carmichael asked.

With a wide smile, Hickman held the cane up to her lower chest. When Carmichael pretended to strike her, Hickman blocked and the room erupted in cheers.

High court ponders automatism defence in sensational Quebec murder case:

From: http://news.yahoo.com/s/cpress/20060313/ca_pr_on_na/scoc_automatism (March 13, 2006):

OTTAWA (CP) - A Quebec woman who shot her husband dead while he slept is hoping the Supreme Court of Canada will uphold her acquittal by a lower court, partly on the grounds that she was in a robotic state when she pulled the trigger.

Lawyers for Rita Graveline argue that the judge in her original trial was correct to tell the jury they could consider the defence of "automatism" in deciding her guilt or innocence. Graveline, now 57, of Luskville, Que., was acquitted of second-degree murder after she killed her alcoholic husband Michael in 1999.

The two had been married for 31 years, but Rita Graveline had spent many of those years being beaten and abused.

Two psychiatrists testified at her trial that when she killed her husband, Graveline was in a trance-like state known as automatism, brought on by suppressed rage caused by the abuse.

The Quebec Court of Appeal, in a 2-1 ruling, overturned her acquittal and ordered a new trial, saying the judge had made mistakes in his instructions to the jury.

Graveline's lawyer, Isabelle Doray, will argue Tuesday that the original acquittal should stand because there was nothing wrong with the instruction.

"I am going on the dissent part of the court of appeal, whose judge says there was an air of reality and the (trial) judge made no mistake in opening the defence to the jury," Doray said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

"The verdict was well done by the jury and the acquittal should be maintained."

The Supreme Court's eventual ruling could set a precedent for other cases, and may help clarify when a jury should be allowed to consider such a controversial defence strategy.

Some analysts believe, however, that it's equally possible the high court could ignore the automatism defence altogether.

That's because another issue in the case is whether Graveline suffered from battered wife syndrome, and thus could be acquitted on grounds of self-defence.

"Usually, when the battered wife syndrome is brought before the court, it's relating to self-defence," noted Doray.

"You have to show that the criteria of self-defence applies to your case, but the help of the battered wife syndrome is that it could explain the reaction of a battered woman."

Canadians, in general, have a hard time understanding arguments of self-defence based on battered wife syndrome or automatism, Doray acknowledged.

However, she's not sure that educating people about such issues will promote more understanding, because most people can't visualize themselves being in such circumstances.

"I think that the Canadian community at large will have difficulty still to understand how a battered woman can stay in a harmful relationship," she said.

"Sometimes you have to be in the situation to completely understand, not only with your head but understand with your heart as well."

Sellers on edge after real estate agent attacked:

From: <http://www.wesh.com/news/8003813/detail.html?rss=orl&psp=news>
(March 14, 2006):

DaytonaBeach, Fla. -- An attack on a real estate agent in Volusia County has the local association reminding agents to be smart and safe.

Police said when Janice Flasscheon showed a home on Elizabeth Place in South Daytona on Monday a man posing as a homebuyer pulled out a hammer and attacked her, WESH 2 News reported.

After Flasschoen was attacked, she turned the tables on the suspect. She was alone showing the property, and many agents, particularly women, do the same thing day in and day out. Real estate can be profitable, but it can sometimes be scary and risky business.

"I carry my cell phone and I have my pepper spray," said realtor Michele Lenharr.

They are unusual tools of the trade, but Lenharr said she wouldn't be without them. A lone woman who makes her living meeting strangers, Lenharr has a game plan.

"I keep the back door open so I have an escape route, and I park my car in front of the house, not in the driveway, so I have an escape route if I should feel threatened in anyway," she said.

Flasschoen was attacked while showing a home in South Daytona. After she was hit in the head with a hammer, Flasschoen knew it was either suspect Balazs Gombos or her. She got the upper hand.

"And I just reached out and I just kicked him between the legs and I just kept kicking, and he threw the gun aside and that's when I realized the gun wasn't real," Flasschoen said.

In 1992, a real weapon was used to kill Deborah Snowden in South Daytona as she worked a model home open house. No one has ever been arrested. Three years ago, police say Richard Pate robbed and threatened realtors in Volusia and Flagler counties while posing as a buyer. Flasschoen survived with the help of some construction workers who held the suspect for police.

After the incident, Lenharr said she is that much more wary as she shows homes and she never turns her back on a client.

"I let them go ahead of me so that I'm never in a room with them behind me and feeling trapped," Lenharr said.

Various realtor associations said they hold safety training programs and will likely put more emphasis on them now. Some of the realtors also take self-defense classes, just in case.

Pink Ladies:

From: <http://www.textually.org/textually/archives/2006/03/011829.htm>
(March 15, 2006):

Pink Ladies is the UK's first women-only private car hire franchise - geared towards women who feel safer taking a taxi driven by a woman.

"Passengers sign up as members, and fares are either pre-paid, paid by credit card or with a 'pink account', which is both convenient for members and safe for drivers.

Booking is done over the phone, and a text message is sent to the customer to let her know the vehicle is approaching, which means she doesn't have to wait outside.

Drivers are trained in self-defense and will wait outside a customer's home after a drop-off to ensure she gets in.

Warrior Sonia scares off wannabe mugger:

From: <http://www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk>
(March 15, 2006):

A 'warrior woman' fought off a knife-wielding attacker using only a personal alarm and skills learnt on a self-defence course.

Sonia Petrone, a 48-year-old Italian, was confronted by a man with a knife in the backstreets of Arnold Circus, off Bethnal Green Road.

She kept her head, and, whipping out the personal alarm given to her as part of the course, the deafening noise scared of her assailant, who left empty handed.

She said she had realised he was following her: "We had been taught to notice our surroundings on the course and I realised it was important to take control of the situation.

"It was very frightening but I am so pleased I had the alarm and knew what to do," she recalled of the incident which happened a couple of weeks ago.

The six-week course, called Warrior Women, was put on by the council as part of its Cleaner, Safer campaign. With robbery and sexual attacks on women on the rise, a self-defence course seemed an obvious choice, and was well attended.

Sonia decided to attend the course after being attacked by a flasher in November last year.

But despite her run-ins, Sonia enjoys living in the East End. "I have lived here since 2003, and in Hackney before that. I like the multicultural aspects, the art, and the creative people living alongside professionals.

Top cop condemns level of force used by Palace bouncers:

From: <http://iclanarkshire.icnetwork.co.uk>
(March 16, 2006):

Police this week condemned the degree of force used by bouncers to eject a troublesome customer from Hamilton Palace.

The man was punched and kicked after he allegedly bit two stewards.

Police detailed the incident on Monday in a submission to Hamilton Licensing Board.

Board members were considering an application from Catchchase Ltd and Annette Hunter for regular drinks extensions at the Keith Street complex.

The board's chairman May Smith was told that the licence bid had attracted an observation from the Chief Constable of Strathclyde, William Rae.

Outlining grounds for the observation, Superintendent David Thomson of Hamilton Police said there had been an incident at the Palace last year in which stewards ejected a man and woman.

Mr Thomson said that as the customers were being escorted from the premises, the male began struggling and allegedly bit two of the stewards.

The police officer added: "An altercation took place where it is alleged that two stewards assaulted this male by punching and kicking him to the head and body several times causing facial bruising and swelling."

Mr Thomson said that following police inquiries, both stewards and the man were reported to the procurator fiscal.

A trial linked to the incident will take place this year.

Mr Thomson continued: "The chief constable accepts that the stewards faced substantial provocation and initially acted in self defence, however, their subsequent retaliatory actions allegedly went far beyond acceptable levels of reasonable force. This was particularly the case in respect of the first steward."

Mr Thomson said the Palace was to be commended for immediately terminating the employment of that steward.

Robin Morton, lawyer for the applicants, declined to comment on the incident because of the pending court case.

He added, however, that the Palace had co-operated with police probing the altercation.

Mr Morton said the sacked steward had worked for the Palace for six months without any problems.

He added: "The second steward is still in place and my clients have no difficulty backing his position in this case."

Mr Morton said both stewards had received tetanus injections as a result of the incident.

Licensing Board members agreed to the firm's application for regular extensions from 11pm to 3am Monday to Sunday and also 2.30pm to 6.30pm Sunday.

Councillor Smith - who was told that the Palace had improved training for bouncers - added: "I would like to commend the police for bringing this matter to our attention, and I also commend the applicant for handling the matter in the proper manner."

"We would ask that steps are taken to ensure that stewards at this complex have the proper training."

Oil attack chef freed:

From: <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk>
(March 18, 2006):

A chef who poured hot oil over a job's face after he threatened to torch his shop was yesterday cleared of assault.

Mohammed Sadiq, 55, told the High Court in Glasgow that he thought 25-year-old Andrew Richford, of Fernhill, Rutherglen, near Glasgow, was going to attack him.

The jury accepted Sadiq's claim of self-defence and gave a not proven verdict.

Since the incident in November 2004 at the Bombay Five Star takeaway in Rutherglen, the shop has been burned down.

Japanese children learn self-defense:

From: <http://www.manilatimes.net>
(March 28, 2006):

Six-year-old Shino Katagiri does not start primary school until April, but her mother is already putting her into classes—on how to defend herself against violent attackers. As an adult self-defense instructor plays the bad guy, the terrified little girl huddles into a chair and refuses to take part in the lesson her mother has brought her to.

It is nearly one hour before Shino musters the courage to try to do as she is asked: kick her skin-headed instructor. After tossing up her foot, which only reaches the instructor's leg, she breaks into tears.

“I felt tense,” Shino says as she returns to sulking.

But her mother, Yumi Katagiri, has no regrets about putting her daughter into the frightening Sunday-afternoon session.

“Recent crimes have reminded me that things are not the same as in my childhood,” she says.

Japan is one of the safest countries in the world, but this season of cherry blossoms—in which hopeful young people graduate from school—brings back painful memories for some.

Seven girls among the 116 pupils who left Ikeda Elementary School in Osaka this month made no reply when their names were called in the graduation ceremony. They could not because they are all dead.

Japanese media widely reported about the ceremony and its poignant calling of the dead pupils' names, reminding the nation of the 2001 massacre at the school by a former psychiatric patient who stabbed to death eight children.

As Japan witnesses a steady series of grisly crimes against children, local governments are taking measures ranging from electronic monitoring systems to the distribution of metal pitchforks to teachers for catching assailants.

But some parents are looking for their own ways to protect their children.

Eighteen children including Shino, the youngest, are taking part in the two-hour lesson in Tokyo.

“Kick the shin! It hurts. If you still can’t free your arms from him, kick right in the middle,” instructor Rumiko Yagi says, telling children to smash the assailant in the crotch.

Yagi of the nonprofit organization Impact Tokyo teaches a form of self-defense that originated in the United States in which a teacher, clad in protective gear, plays the bad guy and grabs the arms of children.

In Japan, however, there are cultural issues, too. Yagi says she has to break down mental barriers in Japanese children who are reluctant to yell or use force against other people.

Koji Ogawa, who plays the bad guy, says he tries to teach children “how they can escape, rather than showing difficult counter-attack techniques, as they are physically feeble, after all.”

One parent who has turned to the classes, Yumiko Takagawa, says her own daughter narrowly escaped a kidnapping attempt by a pair of men armed with a knife four years ago.

Her daughter, Yukiho, now 13, returned home wailing and in panic.

“Child murder isn’t just something that happens to other people,” the mother says.

Police sponsor self defense training for girls:

From: <http://abclocal.go.com/kfsn/story?section=local&id=4043044>
(March 31, 2006):

It's a lesson that proved effective for one Fresno girl, and now police want to make sure other students learn how to fight off a would-be attacker.

Girls from the Funston Boys and Girls Club got a lesson in self defense from karate students Thursday afternoon at Edison Computec.

The event was sponsored by the Fresno Police Activities League in hopes of some self defense and common sense child safety.

"Besides learning self defense today, I want them to be a part of this class and learn some discipline and learn some tradition and be part of the art," said reserve officer Vincent Santana.

Santana said Thursday night's class was a follow-up to one he conducted with the girls back in December. One of the participants in the past session used the lessons she learned in the class to fight off and run away from a would-be attacker.