

Safe Travels During Dangerous Times: Combating Fear

International business travel is the most dangerous travel in the world.

-- Forget the iPhone --

Arm yourself with knowledge and preparation.

Have you ever been sick – *really sick* – on a business trip? Remember how debilitating that was? Fear of criminal or terrorist threat can be just as debilitating to the business traveler. Here are 3 easy strategies to combat fear when traveling:

(1) GET SMART & PREPARE: Step 1 – Download and follow [Dr. Culture's International Travel Checklist](#) – it includes great recommendations for safe travel. **Step 2** -- Learn what the serious criminal or terrorist threats are at your destinations. For instance, is pick pocketing a serious risk? Do you know contenders for the title of *Pick Pocketing Capital of the World* are Prague, Buenos Aires, Barcelona, and Seville? London, however, is experiencing *The Blitz II* as teams of sticky-fingered Bulgarian women lift hundreds of wallets and purses weekly. **Step 3** -- Make copies of your passport and all credit cards then and leave them in the hotel safe. Don't put them in your wallet or purse...*duh!* Copy the front as well as the back of the card because you'll need the number on the back to call and report the stolen card. **Step 4** -- Only carry enough money for the day. No money belts! Instead, use a Magellan's ["Secret-Waist Wallet"](#) which hangs from your belt into the front of your pants or pinned to your skirt. In our programs we also recommend a "throw-down" wallet containing about ten \$1.00 bills and several bogus credit cards (from credit card offers). If confronted with a robbery situation, throw it down, -- *and run*. The bad guy will snatch it up and most likely give it a quick look before escaping – and it looks good.

(2) BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS: DEA and others teach a simple color code awareness system breaking down levels of awareness into four colors: White, Yellow, Orange and Red. **Condition White** is the "auto-pilot" mode. In this state, you are lost in thought, jet-lagged and/or otherwise inattentive. The bad guys can spot this a block away. Chances are good that when you are in this state, they can rob you and be gone before you know it! **Condition Yellow** -- you are paying attention; looking around and generally aware of movement and activities around you – particularly when getting in and out of vehicles, pulling out credit cards, etc. This is a good thing because many of the bad guys will look elsewhere preferring a Condition White target. Next is **Condition Orange** -- you move to this state usually in response to a perceived threat or event. Unlike men, women are especially good at this – they just know something is not right. That "gift of fear" says to act; move – *right now*. Finally, **Condition Red** -- a criminal act is executed against you and you are in the fight or flight mode.

(3) TRAIN YOURSELF TO BE DIFFICULT: Travel in Condition Yellow; paying attention to your bags, wallet, purse, etc., and particularly, what is going on around you. Don't think you are immune to a criminal event. Don't say "the odds are slim that..." If it happens to you, the odds

just went to 100% certainty. The bad guys are looking for easy targets. By making yourself a difficult target "the odds *are good*" they will look elsewhere.

One more thing: Understand the bad guy's thinking. **Q:** Why target business travelers? **A:** There are several reasons but here are a few: (1) They know you have no weapon which decreases their chance of injury and, if *they* are armed, increases their opportunity to "score" well (2) they know if they are successful in robbing you, etc., you would rarely report it. Even if you did and they apprehended the bad guy, are you *really* going to travel back to testify – often several times? Who is paying for your air travel, hotels, meals, lawyers, etc?

The bad guys are calculating professionals; many started as children hustling travelers out of their money, watches, etc. and perfected their skills through years of practice. Now, they are waiting for you to clear customs -- exhausted and jet-lagged as you enter the foreign-airport chaos. The bad guys are masters of this environment and prowl at the edges of the crowd looking for the Condition White traveler; inattentive, distracted, and a perfect target. But now you already know they are there and looking for the traveler who *is not thinking about them*.

With these simple steps, you minimize your threat profile. You're not paranoid, just prepared.

Safe travels.

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