

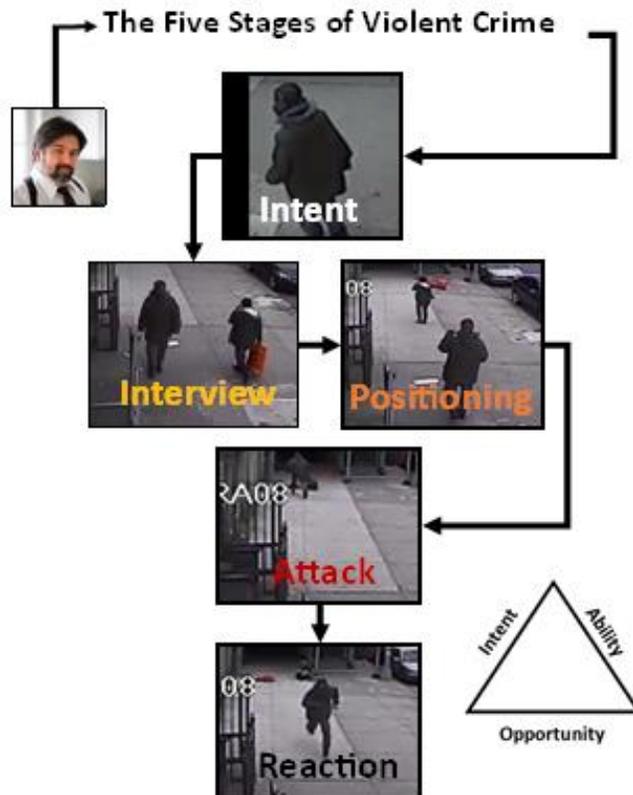
CRGI Five Stages of Violent Crime Digital Digest



Marc MacYoung

Growing up on the gang-infested streets of Los Angeles not only gave Marc MacYoung his street name “Animal,” but also extensive firsthand experience about what does and does not work for self-defense. What he teaches is based on experience and has proven reliability for surviving violence. If it didn’t work, he wouldn’t be alive to talk about it.

He is considered by many to be one of the most analytical thinkers on the subject of surviving violence and personal safety today. He has taught police, military, martial artists and civilians around the world. His message is always the same: Hand-to-hand combat is a last-ditch effort when other, more effective, preventive measures have failed.



Crime is a Process

“What you think you know ... will kill you” – An old survival maxim

The above quote is common among safety experts. But it applies in spades to avoiding crime and violence. The problem is, most of what you think you know about crime is probably wrong. Or to quote Will Rogers “It ain’t that people are ignorant, it’s just they know so much that ain’t so.”

And, when it comes to violence, the biggest source of what ‘ain’t so’ is Hollywood.

What you see in the movies about crime and violence is one of the biggest reasons why you are vulnerable to it. What you see on the screen gives you an utterly false impression about how it occurs. It is this fantasy version that you will be looking for while the real thing walks right up to you. Hollywood’s one-dimensional portrayal of ‘bad guys’ are what most people are looking for — not the actual danger signals.

Most intelligent people respond to this idea by asserting that they can tell the difference between movies and real life. Unfortunately, in the deepest parts of your brain (often referred to as your lizard or monkey brain) that distinction isn’t quite as clear as we’d like it to be. To demonstrate this all we need to do is point towards your reaction to movies. If some part of you didn’t ‘believe’ what you see you wouldn’t get excited, scared, moved or saddened by movies.

Unfortunately, the part of your brain that believes what it sees on the screen is the same one that is looking for danger signals of an impending attack. It’s not hyperbole to say that because they’re looking for the cartoon version of danger, the real thing walks right up to them. A whole lot of people who have been mugged would have said “I know what danger looks like” before they discovered the hard way that they were looking for the wrong things. They’re shocked when the real thing pops up in front of them demanding their wallet, keys ... or worse.

The good news is that once you know them, the real signals are as obvious as Hollywood’s.

The Pretense of Innocence

Another contributing factor why it can be difficult to spot a developing crime is deception. It may come as a shock to you, but criminals lie. Deception is not only a way of life with them, but it is an essential component of crime. They act innocent so as not to give you warning what they are up to. It’s not too smart for a bank robber to walk into a bank and declare “I’ll be back in a half hour to rob this bank” — and then shows up a half hour later — is it?

Hiding what he is up to is major component of any kind of crime. It’s only with violent crime that the pretense is dropped early in the process. But even then, it’s dropped only after he has engaged in deception long enough to develop what he needs to successfully attack you.

It makes sense when you think about it. What are the odds of a robber or rapist announcing his intentions before he has gained control of you or the situation? You’d run away. Or to slowly approach you like a movie bad guy does the hero, oozing evil intent and dripping menace? That would give you time to ready your defenses. (Besides, look how well that approach works out for action movie bad guys. They lose every time.) As it’s a hungry lioness that roars to announce that she’s setting off on the hunt, it’s an unsuccessful criminal that lets you know you’re in danger too soon.

Pretending that the situation is something else (all the while developing the components to attack successfully) is pro forma to crime.

Somewhere in the process the criminal is going to pretend that he is innocently going about his business. The most common robbery strategy is the robber to engage you while posing as an innocent (until he attacks). For personal robberies, he engages you by asking mundane questions like the time or for directions. For establishment robberies, he's acting like a 'customer.'

Although the victim may sense that something is wrong, this pretense of innocence combined with the criminal not acting like a 'movie bad guy' is usually enough to let the criminal achieve his goals. The mixed messages he is 'broadcasting' creates confusion among people who don't know what developing crime looks like. That confusion creates the inaction by his victim that he needs to successfully develop the attack.

Process Development

Until now it probably seems that all the odds are with the criminal. Nothing can be further from the truth. In fact, because of the criminal's goals he is at a disadvantage. The reason we say this is no matter what form of deception he may attempt; his goals ultimately make him more predictable.

And it is that predictability that you can turn against him and ensure your safety.

Imagine if you will, driving to a friend's home. At first there are probably many different routes you can take. But the closer to your goal that you get, the more you have to turn down this street, go this far and go to this address. If you don't, you don't arrive where you want to go.

The same idea can be applied to crime. The closer to the commission of the crime, the more predictable the criminal becomes. He has to do certain things in order to achieve his goal.

This is why we say that crime is a process. Certain component parts must be developed in order for a crime to occur. If one is not achieved, the crime will not occur. These components are not only necessary for the crime to occur, but they work together. Affect one and you affect all ... and the crime itself.

One further point must be made about the development of these components. While each of them may exist individually, they don't exist together in the same situation except for the commission of a crime. When you see them all together (or someone trying to assemble them), it's NEVER innocent. And this in spite of any pretense of innocent to cover his actions. The presence (or attempt to develop) these components is the litmus test for danger — not his deception.

The necessity of these components is what makes the criminal predictable. No matter what your decision on use of force, you can use that predictability against him. Once you know the significance of his actions you can derail the process before it turns violent.

The Importance of Pre-emptive Action

It is often the very normalcy and familiarity of our surrounding that blinds us to significance of signals that pending danger broadcasts. To the victim, it just seems like the violence “came out of nowhere.”

In fact, there was plenty of warning, plenty of opportunity to recognize danger signals, dangerous circumstances, but the victim either ignored them, didn't see them or didn't recognize their significance. This is where what you “think” you know about crime and violence will blind you to these danger signals.

We have developed the *Five Stages of Violent Crime* model to help you identify the actual danger signals of an impending crime (see StreetSafe). Not Hollywood's version. Not a limited model based on fights you might have seen in school, but a broad spectrum of behaviors that tell you someone is developing their attack.

The beauty of the Five Stages system, it gives you an external set of standards to check against someone's behavior. If the collective behavior is present, you are, indeed, in danger and need to take steps to ensure your safety. And you need to do this no matter *what* the person is saying — since his actions speak louder than his words.

There is no one thing that will tell you, you are in danger. This is why the collective checklist is so reliable. A single element might be misconstrued or explained away. However, you will never get the collective presence accidentally. If they are all there, it is intentional.

Once you are aware of these stages they are easily countered by the *Pyramid of Personal Safety*.

The Five Stages of Violent Crime

The Five Stages of Violent Crime is an internationally recognized system to identify if -- and determine when and if -- you are being set up for a crime or violence. It is used by police, military and firearms instructors around the world as a training and teaching tool. Also the system is taught internationally in self-defense and crime prevention courses.

While we strongly advocate awareness and avoidance as a primary means for personal safety sometimes that isn't enough. The Five Stages of Violent Crime has been tested in court as an easily explainable standard by which individuals determined if they were legally justified to use self-defense tactics. Remember, when it comes to violence there are usually legal repercussions. Therefore, we strongly advocate you know when you are justified to use force.

The Five Stages of Violent Crime:

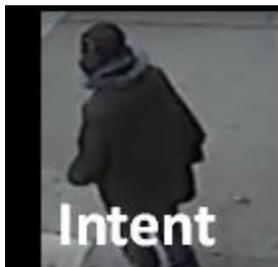
Crime and violence are processes that take time to develop. The attack is not the first step, the preliminary triangle must be built.

There are five distinct stages that are easily identified:

- 1) *Intent*
- 2) *Interview*
- 3) *Positioning*
- 4) *Attack*
- 5) *Reaction*

During the first three stages, you can prevent an attack without the use of violence. These are where the criminal (or violent person) decides whether or not he can get away with it. He may want to (Intent), but if he doesn't have the opportunity (Positioning) he cannot succeed. The Interview is his way to double check if you are safe for him to attack. If these conditions are not met, he will not attack!

What we are about to say is not hyperbole. Selecting a safe victim is a matter of life or death for the criminal. If he picks the wrong target, he's the one who is going to die. Therefore, he's going to make sure he can successfully use violence against you (Interview and Positioning) before he commits himself to act. Once he is sure of his ability to succeed -- and has put you in a position where he can quickly overwhelm you -- he will attack.



Intent

By intent, we don't mean that you are a psychic. You cannot read someone's mind. Although the word 'intent' has often been replaced in court with Jeopardy (acting in a way that is consistent with known pre-attack behaviors) we still use the term 'intent' for a simple reason. With this system, intent is not what is going on inside of the person's head.

It's the visible and discernable physiological manifestations that, a person ready to commit violence, will display. This isn't you being psychic. This is his body displaying these signs, no matter how hard he tries to hide it.

Intent

This is where the person crosses a normal mental boundary. From this point, the person is mentally prepared to commit violence in order to get what he wants – whatever that may be. Often a person who has decided to commit a physical assault is either looking for an excuse to attack or is trying to hide his intentions until he is in position. The individual comes to a situation with the agenda of using violence to achieve his ends.

In other words, he's ready, willing and able to become violent. If you are willing to spend the time to learn the body's cues such a person is incredibly easy to spot. They will literally stand out like lighthouse on a dark night -- and once identified, you don't want to stay around.

Intent can be a preplanned decision or an emotional reaction to the circumstances. Which is to say that it can either be a calculated act (as in a criminal assault) or something else. It is the something else that is the most confusing to the untrained person. However, even then it does follow a predictable pattern. The trick is to not get caught up in the current yourself so you don't realize what is happening until too late.

Violence is both a psychological and physiological extreme. Before someone is ready to commit it, he has to have moved into this mental or emotional state. Violence doesn't "just happen out of nowhere." Even a habitually violent person will have to mentally prepare himself. It may happen very quickly, but it is not instantaneous. Only in cases of severe mental instability will a person be able to instantly "flash" into violence and such a person would almost certainly be locked up in a mental ward.

If you don't see this buildup, it will appear that the violence suddenly have come from nowhere. But that is not the case. It did come from somewhere. It was just a matter of you not recognizing the danger signals. This can be far easier to do than you might think, especially if you are emotionally upset yourself.

How long did this buildup take? It is arguable that, from the very beginning when the person made a conscious decision to put a weapon in his pocket, violence was his intention all along. Whereas consumption of alcohol is often used by angry people to remove inhibitions against violence. In other words, drinking can be -- and often is -- used as an excuse to become violent. They set up the circumstances where they could do what they wanted to do. Opponents to this idea claim that this is too simplistic an answer and that human motivation is not always that clear or conscious.

We admit that. We also would like to point out however, that unconscious motivators can direct one's actions; and in such a way that what the person wants to happen happens "accidentally." At least it appears accidental to them. However, for such an "accident" to occur a long series of specific circumstance have to have been put in place. And when they are in place, violence occurs. As stated, acts such as getting drunk or angry are used as an "excuse" for committing violence. In truth though, he was 90 percent there already. His ensuing actions may very well have been motivated by these emotional urges and, by the same mechanics, himself blinded towards their significance.

Knowing about these mental processes serves as an early warning system. Just because he is fooling himself, doesn't mean you have to be fooled too. If someone shows up in the wrong place, the wrong time and in the wrong state of mind, something is amiss. It is suspect, right off the bat. If a normal situation begins to spin out control, start looking for the danger signs.

A person has to undergo certain physiological changes for the body to be ready to attack or defend. These are reflected in the person's body language. While they are subtle, they are recognizable to an observer, either consciously or unconsciously.

His own body will tell you he's about to attack -- even if his words are deceptively calm and normal.

Fortunately, despite the surface appearances many times there is enough "nonverbal leakage" coming from an attacker to warn you that something is amiss. Learn to trust your feelings. Often it is your subconscious recognizing the physiological danger signals he displays. When your alarms go off, even if the situation looks normal, start looking for the next two stages to develop.

A book that I highly recommend to acquaint yourself with various non-verbal cues is [Dr Desmond Morris' Manwatching.](#)



Interview

With all violence, the assailant's safety is a critical factor in deciding whether or not to attack. While in interpersonal violence, the deciding factor may be anger, strong emotion or pride. However, with criminal violence it is more of a conscious decision. This leads us to the interview, where the criminal decides upon your suitability as a victim. There are several kinds of interviews common to criminal attacks.

Interview

This is where the criminal decides if you are safe to attack.

Yes, with all violence, the assailant's safety is a critical factor in deciding whether or not to attack. If a criminal was truly mentally ill, he would feel compelled to act, even if there was no chance whatsoever of success. If someone is so emotionally outraged that he were truly "out of control" he would not hesitate to physically assault ten Hells Angels. The fact that he doesn't indicates that there is still a part of them that is calculating risk to themselves.

"Can I get away with it?" is a major motivation for what people decide to do -- or not do. Hence, the interview.

This is one interview you want to fail. If you fail, the assailant decides that he cannot successfully, or easily, attack you. Then if he is a criminal, he will proceed to seek easier prey. In the case of an emotionally upset individual, he will change tactics. For example instead of physically assaulting you he will proceed to stand back and proceed to verbally abuse you. This allows him to 'win' without putting himself at physical risk.

There are five basic types of interviews. The one a criminal uses depends more on his personal style than anything else.

Regular - This is the most common form of interview for muggers. The criminal will approach you under the guise of normalcy, i.e., needing information or small item (e.g. matches). This is a distraction. While he is talking, he is not only getting in position to attack, but a) checking your awareness about what he is doing and b) your commitment to defending yourself.

This is why you should always be careful when someone approaches you in a fringe area and asks for something. Your answer should always be "no" and insist on him keeping his distance. Both muggers and stranger rapists often use this technique.

Hot – Hot interviews are sudden and unexpected emotional blitzkriegs against you. They just "pop out of nowhere." You are minding your own business one minute, and the next you have a threatening, obscenity-spouting, screaming person charging down on you. The success of this strategy relies on you not being accustomed to dealing with extreme emotional violence and reacting in a stunned and confused manner. You must be willing to immediately shift into an extreme of physical violence to fail such interviews. Paradoxically, if you can immediately display this commitment, the attacker will often abort.

Escalating - Unlike a hot interview, which starts out immediately hostile, an escalating interview starts out normally but it rapidly turns hostile. The person or people test(s) your boundaries by escalating outrageous behavior. Every time he is not slapped down (i.e., he is successful), his behavior becomes more and more extreme until finally he attacks. This is very common interview for date rapists. It is also common when you walk into the middle of a group of loitering young thugs, what "supposedly" starts out with them "jes messin' witcha" escalates into a robbery or assault. Sometimes both.

Silent – A silent interview is when a criminal puts himself in a position to observe you. He may never speak until the attack, but he has been watching all along. He may position himself out of sight in a parking structure and follow you. Or he may make his presence known and decide to attack if you show fear of his presence

Prolonged - An interview can take anywhere from mere moments (hot) to weeks (prolonged). Prolonged interviews are often combined with other types Being stalked is prolonged escalation. A serial rapist can silently watch a victim for days. Whereas a bunko scam would be prolonged regular interview while the con artist attempts to win your trust. With prolonged interviews, the intent is seldom obvious from the beginning, therefore having the first four levels of the *Pyramid of Personal Safety* in place becomes of critical importance.

Video Links:

- The [Regular Interview](#) occur before this robbery.
- A form of [Escalating Interview](#) in this assault.
- The [Silent Interview](#) in this attempted bag snatch
- The [Silent Interview](#) in this purse snatch.



Positioning

This is the criminal putting himself in a place where he can successfully attack you. A criminal (or even a violent person) doesn't want to fight you; he wants to overwhelm you. To do this, he has to put himself in a position where he can do it quickly and effectively.

An attempt to develop positioning is the final proof of ill intent. Someone trying to position himself to attack removes all doubt that the situation is innocent. Like the Interview, there are several kinds of *Positioning*.

Positioning

A key point of positioning is "fringe areas." You will seldom, if ever, be robbed or raped in the middle of a crowd. A fringe area is where you are close to people, but out of range of immediate help. You won't be mugged in the mall, but will be in the parking lot or bathrooms. ATMs, parking lots, stairwells, public bathrooms and sidewalks should be considered potential danger areas. Even a separate room in a crowded house can constitute a fringe area, as many women who were raped at parties can attest. Being alone with someone in a fringe area is a major part of the opportunity element of the triangle.

Closing – The most basic form of positioning is simply walking up to the victim. The closer a criminal gets, the greater his ability to overwhelm and control. Five feet is the closest you should allow someone you don't trust to approach in a fringe area – whether you know him or not. If the person insists on coming closer after you have warned him away, he has clearly announced that his intentions are not good.

Cornering/trapping - This is the second most basic form of positioning and the most common. He approaches you from a direction that traps you between himself and a large object, like a car or wall. This also entails his putting himself between you and an exit.

Surprise – This is your classic jump-out-of-the-bushes type of position. The criminal puts himself in a place where you don't see him (or if you do, it is at the last minute). From this position, he can easily step out and attack. Once you know these locations, this kind of positioning is easy to foil

Pincer – Professional criminals often work in packs, so you will not face just one. The most common maneuver for two criminals is the pincer. One criminal circles around while the other distracts you. You should always be aware of individuals splitting up when they approach you. Another trap is when two characters face each other in a narrow walkway in such a way that you must pass between them. A third trick is to spread out along a way, when you pass one he starts following you, while the other waits down the way.

Surrounding – This is the most common ploy of a pack (three or more). Again, one will distract you while the others surround. They can swarm around you, but most often they will casually drift. A serious danger sign is when a group is spaced out along the wall in a walkway. When you are at midpoint, it is simple for the wings to fold in.

Video Links:

- The [Surprise positioning](#) tactic to ambush this couple.
- The [Surrounding positioning](#) tactic to mug this woman on the sidewalk.
- The [Surrounding positioning](#) tactic to mug this school boy.
- The [Pincer positioning](#) tactic to rob this man at a gas station.
- The [Cornering/Trapping](#) positioning tactic to assault this woman
- The ambush style [Closing positioning](#) tactic to rob this woman.



Attack

The attack is when the criminal/violent person commits himself to using force -- or the threat of force -- to get what he wants. Like the other stages there are important distinctions to be made about the kind of attack you will face.

The first three stages have been achieved, and there is no reason for the criminal *not* to use violence to get what he wants. But, this is not as cut and dried as you might think it is ...

Before we continue, we need to clarify something: In extremis, we deal in life and death. It is not hyperbole to say the information on this page, when taken to extremes, can result in either your death or the death of someone else. This is what we are talking about when we say 'attack.' While not all attacks lead to death (in fact, a majority don't), a lot of them do. We have reached a point where someone dying is a distinct possibility. As such, that consideration must be factored in.

Although fear, anger and issues that will affect your concept of self are very much at play here, they are not the end all. In fact, they are merely factors that can -- and will -- contribute to reaching these extremes. In short, while they are important to you, what we are talking about here are the extremes that lays on the other side of them.

This is where people start dying. And that's why it's important to make these distinctions, because once the trigger is pulled, there's no calling the bullet back.

Understanding the Difference

Robbery is defined by the US department of Justice as: The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody or control from a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear.

We provide you with this definition because it shows two very important elements for actions to be an attack.

1) *The use of or the threat of violence to achieve a goal.*

2) *That goal is physical in manifestation.*

That last point is what differentiates an attack from bullying (manipulation through intimidation). Even though they look a lot alike, those are two separate animals.

There is a physical manifestation of an attack's goal. Even if a physical assault does not occur, the threat, achieves this physical manifestation (e.g. getting your wallet, forcing sex, assault, etc.). That is what takes it from intimidation into an attack. The damages of an attack are demonstrable.

Whereas, the goals of bullying is entirely for the psychological gain of the aggressor. Neither the damages or the gains exist physically. They are instead subjective, both to the individual offering the violence and others (e.g. self-esteem, social status, dominance, etc.). And that, to use a colloquialism, makes it "a whole lot more squishy."

This is a small, but very important detail. The reason it is important is that since the damages of an attack are physically demonstrable, so too can be your countermeasures. This includes action against the threat of violence for a physical end (e.g. "give me your money or I will hurt you" makes your actions self-defense). If the threat of damage is real, so too can be your response.

Intimidation for social or psychological gain (bullying, manipulation, etc.) is less actionable. Until the immediate threat of violence is present, extreme responses on your part are not justified. What are you going to do, have him thrown in prison for looking at you mean? How about shooting him for hurting your self-esteem and pride?

This does not mean that you are helpless. As the goals of bullying, intimidation and manipulation are not physically obvious, so too needs to be your countermeasures. The good news about this is that there are a lot of countermeasures you can use to keep it from going violent.

Mercurial Nature of Attacks

Many robberies and rapes are committed with the simple threat of or display of violence. A violent, emotional outburst, won't physically harm the victim, but clearly indicates that unless he/she cooperates with the tantrum thrower, the victim will be hurt. Except for the physically damaging outcome that would be bullying.

Or weapons can be displayed to convince you to cooperate. But again, it is both the damaging physical goal and the threat of that weapon's immediate use (if you do not cooperate) that makes it an 'attack.'

Other attacks are indeed outright physical assaults. Such attacks can come both with and without warning. In the most extreme it means the criminal simply walking up to someone, pointing a weapon and pulling the trigger. Then if robbery was the intent, he will grab your wallet/purse and leave.

And that brings up another complicating factor, the degree of the attack. As we said earlier, not all attacks are lethal. In fact, most 'physical assaults' are more of a continuation of threat displays than intending to do damage. Unfortunately, until you know the difference between a threat display and an assault you can be in danger of legal action because of your over reaction. This is why it is important to know the difference between fighting and self-defense.

Unfortunately, there is no way to determine which of these levels you will encounter. And faster than a snake striking, an attack can turn from the threat of physical damage to physical damage. What was a threat a second before, can explode into deadly violence.

1) *This of course within reasonable and legal limits on how much force you use.*

Video Links:

- Attack in the form of a weaponless [Threat Display](#).
- [Surprise](#) Attack used to take this man's wallet.
- Foiled use of a shotgun as [Threat Display](#)



Reaction

Reaction is how the criminal feels about what he has done. However, this is made more complicated by the fact that your reaction is an important contributing factor.

In the aftermath of robbing someone, the criminal decides, on a whim, to shoot the person -- despite the fact that the person has cooperated utterly and offered no resistance. This also can be where a robber suddenly decides to rape his victim. Of all the reactions, one of the most consistently dangerous occurs among rapists. If the rapist feels that the rape did not empower him as he thought it would, he often turns violent. Nearly 80 percent of women seriously harmed by rapists are hurt after the actual sexual assault.

In any circumstance, until the criminal is completely out of your sight, you are at risk of his reaction *even* if you have totally cooperated. The unpredictability of the criminal's reaction is another reason why it is far easier to avoid violence than it is to try to safely extract yourself from the middle of it.

Video Links:

- Man [flees](#) after robbing woman of her phone.
- Man [shot](#) as a result of failed robbery attempt
- Man [gathers his possessions](#) and runs after assault.
- Man [continues his assault](#) after his initial attack.



Intent-Ability-Opportunity

What follows is a parallel system to the *Five Stages of Violent Crime*. AOI stands for *Ability, Opportunity and Intent*. Although not as complete as the Five Stages, it will give you a quick-rule-of-thumb set of standards to determine whether or not you are in danger.

While the Five Stages is more complete, for people who are not particularly interested in self-defense, AOI is a nice set of fast and easy guidelines. We present both models for you to select which works best for you.

There is a concept called the triangle among firefighters. Along each side is an element that a fire needs in order to burn. If you take away one of these elements, the triangle collapses and the fire goes out. Crime is the same: In order for it to occur, there must be three basic elements.

This is easily remembered as A.O.I. (Ability, Opportunity and Intent). Take away any one of these elements and the triangle collapses. In other words, the crime does not have what it needs to occur.

Ability: *Does the person have the ability to attack you? Could this person successfully assault you, whether through physical prowess, a weapon or numerical superiority? Many women underestimate male upper-body strength and how vulnerable they are to being physically overwhelmed.*

Opportunity: *Does this person have the opportunity to attack you? Are you alone with him or even in an area beyond immediate help? Could anyone come to your assistance within twenty seconds or less? As many victims have found, you can be robbed in plain view or raped with people in the next room.*

Intent: *Is he in a mental place where using violence to get what he wants makes sense to him?*

Of the three, intent is the most nebulous, yet it is vital for determining who is a threat. It is the literally the difference between going off with someone to talk and being raped.

Acquainting yourself with the criminal mindset is also highly recommended.

The fastest way to figure out if you are in potential danger is to look for these three elements. If you see one, look for the others. If you see two out of three stop whatever else you are doing and pay close attention for a moment. If you see him trying to develop the third, withdraw from the situation to a safer area. This is easier than using physical violence.

As you will soon see, opportunity often means staying in an area where someone could effectively use physical violence against you. If you do not see these elements then odds are you are safe. There is no triangle.

If you wish to adhere to a more legally sanctioned idea, you can exchange the I of Intent for a K of Known (for known dangerous behavior = jeopardy). This turns it into the acronym A-OK. Which might be easier for someone to remember.

Conclusion

Knowing the five stages is a standardized guide by which you can assess the potential threat of a situation. These five stages are inherent within crime and violence. What is important to realize is that the first three stages might not occur in that particular order. A violent and selfish person may suddenly find himself with the perfect opportunity/ability to commit a rape, and suddenly the intent appears. There was no conscious initial decision, but the circumstances developed.

Due to an intrinsic flaw in his personality, he can decide to act in a violent manner. This is why you always need to check for ability, opportunity and intent (AOI).

