



MIDTOWN PONCE SECURITY ALLIANCE

Eye on Midtown – 3/02/ 2008

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ROBBERIES

Recap of previous MPSA alert - at 4am on the morning of February 27th a resident on Greenwood was robbed at gunpoint as she came home at 4am. A sedan like a Buick or Oldsmobile drove off onto Lakeview Avenue as she approached her house in her vehicle. As she got out of the car to go into the house, two subjects appeared from Lakeview Avenue and put a gun to her face. She was robbed of two tote bags containing important schoolwork. The culprits then ran back to a car on Lakeview and sped off.

New information - in response to our alert, we found out that a similar robbery occurred in Virginia Highland just a few hours before. The victim parked his car and headed into his apartment building when two subjects appeared from behind the bushes and robbed him at gunpoint.

We received another tip with a description and home address of someone matching a similar description to both the Greenwood and Virginia Highland robberies. It is unknown at this point whether police have been able to confirm or dismiss this tip.

VEDADO BURGLARY

The victim of a recent burglary gave us an update on the investigation:
It turns out that the vehicle used to burglarize our house was in fact a Jeep Cherokee that was stolen from Midtown 2 days before our house was burglarized. This vehicle was just recovered by the APD. Unfortunately an exhaustive effort to get fingerprints or any of our property in the vehicle came to naught.

However, a fairly unique bottle of perfume (Paris Hilton perfume) found just outside our house was actually the property of the owner of the stolen car. The APD thinks that it just happened to fall out of the car when the thieves opened the back to load all our stuff. This pretty well links this particular car to the burglary that occurred at our house. In addition, the car was dumped about two blocks away from a known Asian teen linked to a series of burglaries in this area. The APD has a person who can ID this teen for at least one of these burglaries, but they are waiting to make sure that when they do the line-up, it occurs very by the book.

According to the APD, line-ups are tossed out of court frequently for lack of age/racial consistency across the group. Although, we will likely never recover our property, we already feel somewhat comforted by even this level of knowledge about who may be responsible for what happened.

We owe a big thanks to all of you for all your help, and assistance in this whole sordid affair. I want to say a special thanks to one neighbor for her help in the immediate aftermath of this burglary, which was pretty devastating when it occurred. As always my sister and her husband have given us immeasurable love and support.

I also want to say a special thanks to another neighbor for stepping out on the porch and giving us the Jeep Cherokee description - that got things moving with the police. After mentioning that he saw that car, my brother-in-law immediately looked up the wheelbase of Jeep Cherokee's on the internet, and then I measured the tire track on the side of our house.

When the tire tracks matched perfectly with that of a Jeep Cherokee, I called our APD officer. They told me of two Jeep Cherokee's that had been stolen from Midtown. I continued to ask them about those vehicles until yesterday when one was recovered. This just goes to show you that decent police work combined, with vigilant neighbors and a persistent homeowner can make things happen. I will continue to keep you posted as I learn more.

The Virginia Highland safety report quoted APD Major Propes as telling them (after a car chase): *The 911 caller was the key to us zeroing in on them. We had just taken a report of the Jeep they were driving as having been stolen on Ponce De Leon Place. We had shared the information with Zone 5 so all the units were already looking for the Jeep. The pattern has been to steal a Jeep then break into houses. The Officers were already in the area when the 911 call came about the prowlers who were looking at a house and fled when confronted. They all got there swiftly, spotted them, and they all fled leading to foot pursuits. All 3 were apprehended. All 3 of the perpetrators are juveniles though and we know how that goes!*

VAGRANT ACTIVITY

An MPSA member alerted us to a vagrant nest at a house on a corner lot, behind thick shrubbery along the side of the house. Sgt. Cooper, investigated pointed this out to some tenants in the building, and advised them to have their landlord trim up the shrubbery so as to prevent concealment of persons.

MPSA Patrol and Atlanta Police continue to monitor the burned-out house at 292 9th Street. No new signs of vagrant activity since last week's write-up in *Eye on Midtown*, except for a jug of water found Saturday morning. It appeared that

someone left it for the vagrants - “homeless” outreach volunteers will sometimes leave things in places known to be frequented by vagrants. As a matter of standard procedure, food, beverages, and bedding are routinely removed, dumped, or destroyed during these walk-throughs.

Spring is coming, and more vagrants will be camping on the streets of our city. They will scout for concealed places to hide and set up camp. Shrubbery should be trimmed from the bottom in order to give visibility to anyone standing or lying behind them. Thick shrubbery especially against a house also conceals a burglar as he breaks into your home. Windows and doors should always be visible off of the property.

If you find signs of vagrant activity on your property:

1. Please alert us, and take pictures of the spot.
2. Food, water, and bedding should be discarded (empty out beverage jugs). As much as possible dispose of these things at a remote location and not near the site (local businesses will sometimes let you use their dumpsters for small amounts).
3. Drugs, weapons, and other illegal items should be left where they are and reported immediately to the police.
4. Watch for hypodermic needles and other sharp objects when cleaning these spots. Also beware of lice in clothing and bedding.
5. If you are later confronted by a vagrant looking for these things tell them that “the patrol did it” after someone else called them. Report menacing encounters to the police, and then tell us about it at first convenience.

Again, contact us for assistance as needed.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CALLING 911

Virginia Highland also has a block watch program in development, and their efforts are already paying off! Just the other day a resident noticed a suspicious white pickup truck parked a few doors down from her home. According to her report she noticed him initially because the driver had his lights on and had been parked there for at least two hours. Upon closer look, she noticed the driver slumped over the seat. In response to her 911 call, the driver sped off when the responding officer tapped on the window.

A police chase ensued, and the driver was apprehended at North Avenue and Highland. The drugged-out driver was armed, threatened the officer, and a shot was fired. The lady making the initial 911 call went on to say:

I have to say that I might not have paid any attention to the truck if I hadn't been reading all the postings about being vigilant about anything out of the ordinary. My husband and I both assumed the truck was in some way

associated with all the sewer work that's going on in our area. It was a rather institutional looking truck after all. It just stuck in my mind as something to keep an eye on just in case. I'm so glad I peeked inside and called right away. Just after I called 911 I was looking out my window to see when the police would arrive and I saw several people walk right by the truck without noticing anything, including a young mother strolling her baby. It gives me chills to think what could have happened, knowing now that he was armed and perhaps drug impaired.

COURT WATCH TRAINING

The Fulton County DA's Office will conduct court watch training on March 8th, from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm. Sharla wrote further,

The purpose of this program is to encourage citizens to take an active role in our criminal justice system by educating citizens about the criminal justice process; and to get citizens involved when necessary in criminal cases. By involving citizens in the court process, we can send the message to criminals that crime will not be tolerated in our communities.

To date, with the support of your fellow community members, a number of repeat criminals, have been convicted, sentenced to significant prison time and banished from our community. With your help, we can be even more successful in making our community safer in 2008.

I look forward to seeing you on March 8th; please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. If you would like to pre register, please contact Pierre Russell at 404-624-0612 or by email at Navarro.Russell@fultoncountyga.gov.

SAFETY MEETING

The next safety meeting will be held at 7pm on Monday, March 10th, at Mary Mac's. Sgt. Schierbaum will be on hand to discuss burglary trends in Midtown, and his work with the street people in area. As always, Sgt. Cooper will be on hand to give an MPSA Patrol update. We encourage you to come early to have dinner and socialize with your fellow Midtowners.

BE SAFE! Please encourage your fellow Midtowners to join the MPSA!

- Your Neighbors at the Midtown Ponce Security Alliance