

## Bill Rea ? We were robbed

There are times when you get a dreadful feeling right in the pit of your stomach, and I have learned from experience there are few things worse.

There was the day about a month ago when I returned to my home shortly after noon. I happened to be passing by and since I hadn't had lunch yet, I figured I'd consume some food that had already been paid for.

The front door was hanging open about a foot. Very odd. My wife was the last one out that morning, and she's generally very meticulous about making sure things are locked up (so am I). I entered the house, fearing the unlikely event that Ella the cat had got out, although that was not very likely (Ella's not the type to bolt).

I quickly looked around in a couple of rooms, and that's when the sick feeling hit. I felt for all the world like I had been sucker-punched in the gut. Our home had been entered.

This was not the first time this had ever happened to me. And I'm sure there are many reading this who have been through the same experience. It's not fun.

There was damage done, some ransacking took place and items were stolen. Since this is still a police investigation, I'm going to be careful about how far I go in elaborating. Suffice to say we were ripped off.

It's been said that a man's home is his castle, and my castle had been violated. I was frightened that the security that I had confidently (and probably naively) placed so much trust in had been compromised. I was upset that people had entered my home without authorization and removed items that did not belong to them. I don't go around taking things from other people. Why should they consider themselves entitled to do that to me? And more than all of that, I was angry.

And there are people angrier than me, including my brother, who I brought up to speed later in the day. I think he's still peeved. Since one never really plans for such an experience, I don't think one is ever really sure how to react.

I called the authorities, which I guess was automatic. Then I waited for them to arrive. I guess the wait wasn't that long, but it certainly seemed long to me because I literally did not know what to do next. A person wants to act, but what action is appropriate? I did a lot of pacing, tried to keep in mind that I should touch as little in the house as possible. I belatedly realized that pacing on the living room carpet might have been obscuring the foot prints of the uninvited guests we had just had.

Ella appeared while I was on the phone to summon the police. She seemed uninjured, although less than pleased with what had gone on.

I thought of my wife, wondering how I was going to tell her. I wondered if I should call her at work, fearing her possible state of mind when she was driving home, or should I wait to tell her when she got home that evening. Since I figured I had to be around for the police, the idea of driving to pick up Beth at work was sort of out of the question. I soon decided that it was Beth's home too, that she had every right to know its status and that I had no business keeping that from her.

She drove home without too much trouble. We got through the day. Actually, because of the all the feeling and emotions of the aftermath, it was a rough week. Indeed, as months go, May kind of sucked.

A lot of us have had the misfortune of being ripped off by scum like the person or people who invaded my home last month. And as I stated above, it was not the first time it has happened me.

There was the time when I was about 11 or 12 when a trio of louts ripped me off for my Halloween candy. My father, brother and I caught the culprits about two miles away, and my brother, who was a high school half back at the time, I think appreciated the opportunity to practice a flying tackle on one of the thieves as he tried to run away.

There have been more serious situations.

One Monday morning in November more than 25 years ago, I was dressed in my best suit and approaching my car in the underground parking garage of the building in which I living, already upset because I was to attend the funeral of a good friend. I was soon even more upset when I realized that my car had been broken into during the night. Nothing had been stolen, but I had a hefty bill to deal with to get the window in the passenger door replaced. And I had to prevail on a fellow mourner to give me a lift to the funeral.

About 20 years ago, while I was wor



king in Toronto, I dashed back to my apartment one summer evening, ready to get a quick swim in the pool (I never lived in an apartment building that didn't have one), grab something quick to eat and go out to get some pictures for the sports section. I spent most of that time making statements to the cops because someone used a pair of vice grips to get into my unit.

They never caught who ever was responsible for breaking into my car, or my apartment.

I'm hopeful that they might catch the scum who invaded the home of my wife and myself. Maybe we will be able to retrieve the articles that were stolen from us. Maybe we will even be able to get restitution for the expense we were put to repairing the damage they caused.

Will we ever get back the peace of mind we thought we had when we believed our home was secure?