

2. Don't drive right next to vans, SUVs or trucks; speed ahead or fall back so you are not in their visuals. Don't drive bumper to bumper. Leave distance between your car and other cars to exit away from your position if you need to. When you stop at a street light or stop sign, do not pull right up to the car in front of you; leave room to move away if you need to. When driving down business streets or residential streets look for driveways, alleys, open areas or sidewalks you can drive to if you need to move fast. When following another vehicle keep your escape distance; drive a bit more left in the lane than the car in front of you so you can see a bit ahead of the vehicle in front of you. This offers a view of what's happening in front of the vehicle you are behind so you can respond better.

3. There's an increase in women being followed home, forced into their homes, taken hostage, robbed and raped. If you think a car is following you confirm this by making a few right turns around a block to see if the car follows. Do not speed up and try to out run them. Drive normally and directly to a police station, active fire station, or ER of a hospital; anywhere there are people who can help you with a potential road rage individual or potential home invasion thief. Call 911 on your way so police can take action to help you. Most robbers, hold-ups and shootings take place within three to seven feet on a street. In cases when a criminal has to shoot more than 25-30 feet, the majority miss the target due to the high stress they're under in a crisis moment. Experienced professional police and military combat shooters have the ability to stay strong, secure and focused in a shoot-out or fire-fight. If your neighborhood is not secure, create a neighborhood watch program to keep an eye out for any suspicious vehicles parked on your street. If you are suspicious someone may be following you or is parked on your street call a neighbor or family member to meet you at your driveway, and escort you into your house. Call 911 on your way home for the police to meet you there.

ST: Most of us can't imagine getting caught up in a sniper situation in an open arena event or inside a seated venue. What can we do?

TOM: Most people don't believe they could be involved in a sniper situation, and don't have a plan. It's a programmed habit of humans to look ahead or at the ground wherever they walk; the majority rarely look up when they walk down the sidewalk. It's vital that people look up and around; be aware of your surroundings at all times. Going to an open area venue one must assume it could turn into a shooting event. As you look around think where a sniper could be in order to see the majority of event goers. Position yourself/family as much out of view as possible. Find a place to hide in an emergency. A place with a solid cover bullets can't penetrate, stone wall, under a stage, etc. If you have to run for cover, run in a fast zig zag movement to avoid being an easy target with a scope. Snipers try to acquire a high position with a wide visual of the event, or position themselves in a corner of the room where there is an escape route. Sit in a back row by the edge, or in corners of a seating area. Consider the shortest distance where to escape. If the worse happens hit the floor face down, and behind something, under the seats where the sniper cannot see you. Wait for a break in the shooting and then run for the escape place in a zig zag motion.

ST: Your companies offer training by former special forces operatives, SEALS and SWAT team members focusing on rape prevention, harassment training, martial arts, evasive driving tactics, provisions to combat terrorist threats, trauma management, security preparedness, restraining techniques and others. I think everyone should be prepared for the unexpected. Your Peak Performance seminars

teach achieving greater focus and mastering inner-strength using visualization with mind and body fortitude which can point us to greater awareness of ourselves and others. What is the best advice you can offer for personal safety?

TOM: In this day and age everyone needs to think like a bodyguard for themselves and their family. We must be aware of our surroundings; stop focusing on our cell phones; look for suspicious behavior of others. We have to be careful talking with strangers and what information we offer about ourselves. We have to be aware of where we park our cars, where we walk, how we drive; assume anything can happen anytime, any place, anywhere. This prepares us mentally and physically for a plan of action; how to escape and survive. We don't have to be upset, we have to have a logical, workable plan to protect ourselves. This concept is based on military and martial art thinking strategy. Remembering all of this seems like a lot of work to stay conscious and always be aware of our surroundings. But keep in mind that you have everything to gain and nothing to lose. As you begin to think like this you gain great mental awareness practice that will network over to all avenues of your life.

"There is an old saying: An ordinary person is ready for the expected, an extraordinary person is ready for the unexpected. What can you do in the first two seconds of a surprise attack that will save your life and the life of another? Having a proactive plan is the difference between life and death."

ST: What about people who think they need to carry a gun to protect themselves?

TOM: Individuals who want guns to protect themselves must keep in mind they have to obey the laws of their state. People carrying guns on their person is illegal. People carrying guns they aren't trained to shoot, or don't know the guns safety features cause harm and death to themselves and others. The majority of these people have the guns taken away, and used on them by the person initiating an attack. People forget a bullet goes a long distance if something doesn't stop it. Bullets go through walls and parts of cars killing or disabling people for the rest of their lives. Most gun owners are unaware of laws surrounding shooting someone under the guise of 'self-protection'. Shooting someone legally requires a person to be face-to-face with deadly force. Meaning you shoot the person to prevent him/her from shooting you or mortally wounding a person next to you. If someone shoots at you, misses, turns to run and you shoot that person and kill him, you can be charged with manslaughter, or murder because you didn't shoot to protect yourself when they were shooting at you—when you were faced with deadly force. If someone runs, it's no longer threat of deadly force. Gun shot wounds are not like in the movies. They are painful and can permanently disable a person. Just because you buy a gun doesn't mean you can use it, or can prevent yourself from being killed or injured by it. We greatly enhance the mental capacities of those who take our classes. We extinguish mental, physical, emotional resistances that keeps us from achieving our potential. Get your mind to accept abundance and it will create it. Act boldly and unseen forces come to your aide. Strike like thunder and move like lightning with learned strategic expertise. ■
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Alex Rodriguez Continued

Shanken: At the University of Miami, there is a baseball stadium that has your name on it. What caused you to do that?

Rodriguez: When I was a young man I grew up loving Ron Frazier, who was the legendary [baseball] coach there. Of course, I didn't; have money to go to games. They had these really old ushers. They were pretty slow and they couldn't see very well. My friends, we had a strategy—we would jump over the fence in the right field corner. Once we were in by four o'clock we were there until midnight, watching Hurricanes baseball. I did this for a long time, so what I figured was... [Shanken laughs... you owe them...] I had a lot of debt I had to pay, so I said the first time I get a chance to give a nice donation, I wanted to give what I give to name the field Alex Rodriguez.

Shanken: What was life like growing up, first in New York, then Dominican Republic, in Miami with your mother.

Rodriguez: New York was a great place to be a young boy. I remember my brother out playing with rubber balls and stick ball. I was kind of sad when we headed to the Dominican Republic. My mother wanted me in a safer environment and I had a great time there. My father was happy and my mother was happy. And a lot of my baseball, my DNA, came in those four years. It made me gritty, it made me appreciate a lot of things. When we landed here, at the age of 8 or 9, one of the first things I did was join the Boys & Girls Club [in Miami]. I thought I had walked into Princeton campus or Harvard. They had new balls, great aluminum bats. I was just so happy, so grateful. And that was kind of the start of my formal baseball life.

Shanken: Tell me about Eddie Rodriguez.

Rodriguez: Eddie Rodriguez was the director of the Boys & Girls Clubs [of Miami], and still is. He was the first coach I had in Miami. They call him, The Rooster, in Spanish El Grillo because he was feisty. He wanted to fight everyone. He was tough love from day one. In many ways he was like Lou Piniella, my first manager in pro sports. Eddie is a hero, he's dedicated his life to Boys & Girls Clubs. And I would say we've had over 25 Major League Baseball players come out of his program. I think I had two or three father figures. Eddie Rodriguez is No 1. I love him.

Shanken: How would you like to be remembered?

Rodriguez: I think, someone that has been through a lot. Has accomplished a lot. Has made great mistakes, but he refused to be defined by those mistakes. ■

For more on Alex Rodriguez see his front cover story in Cigar Aficionado including video clips. Launched in 1992, Cigar Aficionado is the definitive lifestyle magazine for men. Visit: CigarAficionado.com, Watch, Shanken News