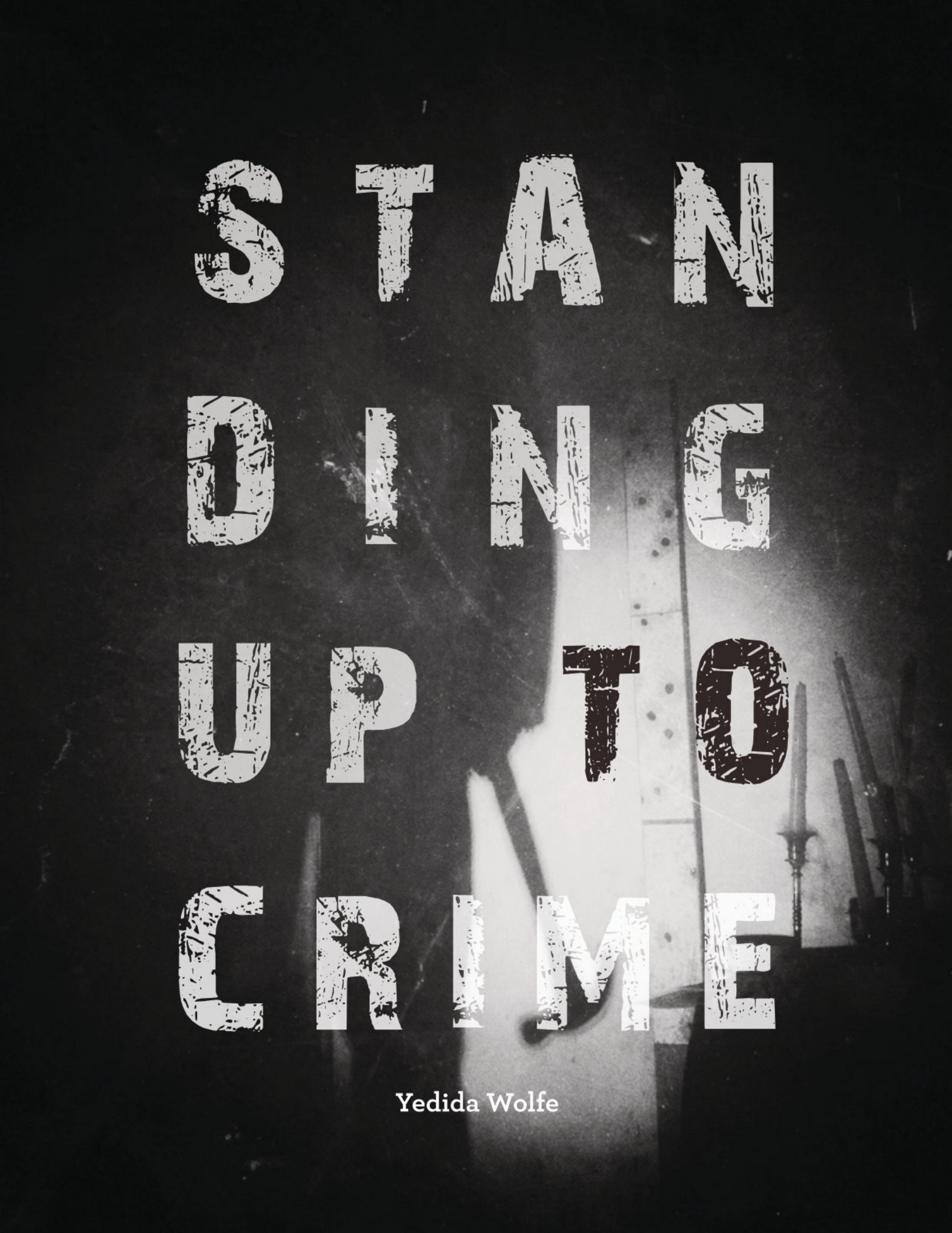

STANDING UP TO CRIME
Yedida Wolfe

STREET CRIME MEMORIES



I did everything wrong that day on my way home from work. A young boy, who looked about ten, walked towards me and asked for the time. Initially I shook my head no, and ignored him with the glassy, vacant stare reserved for New York City streets. But when his sweet brown eyes met mine, he looked genuinely worried. I reached for my cell phone tucked in my coat pocket. The boy swiped for the phone, but missed, and ran away. My knees were shaking. I called the police who came immediately and urged me into the back seat of their sedan as we scanned the streets for any sign of the boy. Nothing. I had to meet my kids' bus and chose not to file a report at the police station. When I told my neighbor what happened, she shook her head sympathetically, gave me a hug, and said, "Asking for the time is a classic trick."

My stomach still clenches when I approach that block, which is embarrassing since my good friend moved there recently and feels insulted because I rarely visit.

I'm not a native New Yorker (I moved to Manhattan in 1994 and Crown Heights in 2005). I chided myself for not overcoming my fear and toughening up, until I heard the following story from a friend:

When I was 25 years old, in the Crown Heights of 1984, at 10 a.m. on a sunny weekday morning, I was followed, and then when we got a few blocks from Kingston this guy reached under my chin and pulled off my gold chain, bought for me by my mother-in-law for $100. I stood there and let him. I was terrified and just wanted him to go away. He walked away slowly, not even the least bit afraid of me. My husband came home from work and we told the police about it, but as far as I know nothing was done and the guy got off scot free.

For about a year following this incident, I had a physical reaction every

IN THE ENSUING YEARS, I THOUGHT LONG AND HARD ABOUT MY BEHAVIOR THAT DAY, HOW QUIET AND AFRAID I HAD BEEN

time I got to the area where the crime had occurred. My heart would start to race. I would start to sweat. I now recognize this as a panic attack. But I had to pass that area in order to get home from work every day. So I would do things that were and still are very unusual for me, such as knocking on car windows and asking Lubavitchers who were complete strangers to drive me home. One time I rapped on the window of a squad car.

"Excuse me, Officer, but may I please have a ride home?"

"Where do you live?"

"Right down there, two blocks away."

"Why would we give you a ride? We're not a car service, you know."

"But I'm afraid..."

"Sorry, ma'am."

I felt that the police owed me! But I knew that wouldn't make sense to them.

All morning I could barely focus on my job because I was busy dreading the treacherous walk home at 1 p.m. A few times I took car services even though the weather was good and I really preferred to walk. Between the babysitter and the unnecessary car services, I came home with very little profit.

I am happy to say that after about a year, maybe less, the panic attacks subsided. In the ensuing years, I thought long and hard about my behavior that day, how quiet and afraid I had been. I realized that the criminal was following me, yes, but when I crossed the street he hung back because he didn't want to be seen. Since realizing that, if I have any reason at all to suspect that someone might be following me or about to accost me, I leave the sidewalk and walk in the street.

After discussing what happened with a policeman (years later), he told me two further instructions: "Walk briskly and with your head held high, so that every step you take, plus the expression on your face, says, 'Don't mess with me.' Criminals look for people who appear easy to intimidate, who won't put up any fuss or make any noise."

The policeman also told me, "If anything like this ever happens again, it's okay to hand over your necklace; this isn't the hill you want to die on. But don't scurry back into your hole like a timid mouse. Criminals hate screamers, so scream. And then, do take the time to press charges."

THE OLD DAYS

Rabbi Yisroel Shemtov, long-time, well-known, and beloved community icon and activist, says Crown Heights was a "war zone" back then. From the 1960s through the 1980s, the city deteriorated under Mayors Abe Beame, Ed Koch and David Dinkins. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani took office January 1, 1994, turning the city around during the eight years he stayed in office. But the years before Giuliani were extremely tough.

"You couldn't walk down the street without getting rocks thrown at you," Rabbi Shemtov tells me in a phone interview. "People got mugged going into their houses."

So Rabbi Shemtov created a community patrol in 1973. "We look to protect Jews and blacks, anyone who walks the streets in peace," he told the *New York Times*. This patrol was the precursor to today's community patrol groups.

"There are two methods to deal with crime," says Rabbi Shemtov. "You call the police or you deal with it yourself."

While Rabbi Shemtov's efforts gave him the nickname Red Devil and landed him 20 arrests for his "zealous pursuit of assorted bad guys," as the *New York Times* put it, Rabbi Shemtov told the *Times* reporter the same thing he told me: "The only one who never gets a cut is the one who doesn't step into the kitchen."

One anecdote Rabbi Shemtov shares about his days fighting

CRIME VICTIMS RECOVER FROM TRAUMA

Emotional scars can take time to heal. I spoke to Dr. Deb Hirschhorn, marriage and family therapist, about how to move past the trauma of being a crime victim. *[See Dr. Deb's article on a related topic in this issue's Chinuch Section.—Ed.]*

Dr. Deb divided the recovery process into three steps.

1. When something throws you for a loop, it's important to **get grounded,** to remember what we know to be true.

"We don't operate in a world of chaos, it only feels that way after trauma," Dr. Deb explains. "We can't allow upsetting, even traumatic, events to cause us to lose a sense of how the world works." We may not see it immediately, but in the end justice reigns. Hashem makes sure of it. Recent convictions of Germans holding Jewish art provide a powerful example of retribution for crimes coming decades late, says Dr. Deb.

It's important to find our way back to our belief in hashgachah protis. By taking a bird's eye view, we can understand there's order in the bigger picture, even if we may not see it while we're in it. It is helpful to remember that our own reaction to events beyond our control *is* within our control, and that it matters: "The role we've played," says Dr. Deb, "will be important."

Learning and davening is something that is especially meaningful to help us refocus on the fact that Hashem created a world of order, even if it's not clear now.

2. Each person has the ability to **tap into a time** when they overcame adversity. Even if you where a child the last time you drew on these resources, you have the ability to overcome this recent trauma too. The knowledge that you've done this before can help you, the victim, face leaving the house again. Dr. Deb celebrates when her clients do what they "say they couldn't do."

3. Distract yourself. Dr. Deb says, "**Do meaningful stuff** to occupy your mind." Dealing with the grief and trauma is important. Reliving it is natural. But then, there is a time and place for actively taking your mind off what has happened, in healthy ways.



But all these methods the cops, street vigilantism, surveillance cameras are bandaids on an infected wound

crime is when he saw a guy walking down the street with a car radio. The alleged thief reassured Rabbi Shemtov, "Don't worry; it's not from one of your people."

"But all these methods, the cops, street vigilantism, surveillance cameras, are bandaids on an infected wound," says Rabbi Shemtov. The long-term solutions are elusive, with prisons overfilled and ineffective at stopping repeat offenders.

"The cops also suffer," he adds. "Their hands are tied. Guys serve time and end up back on the streets."

Rabbi Shemtov advocates surveillance cameras to secure the perimeter of homes as well as the neighborhood. Posting signs telling passersby that there is video surveillance helps drive crime away from the neighborhood. He estimates the cost to outfit each street corner with four cameras is $300,000 to $400,000 for the entire neighborhood.

"It's a small price to pay," he says, "for safe streets."

"Should I take a self-defense class?" I ask him, admitting I'm from out of town originally.

Rabbi Shemtov warns that self-defense classes teach people what to do theoretically, but don't necessarily give the confidence or instinct to use those skills in the moment. If I can't defend myself, Rabbi Shemtov tells me, I should at least try to look tough and not show fear.

"Always be on the phone," advises Rabbi Shemtov. "Even if the phone is taken, you have time to shout your location to the person you're talking to."

"What about reporting crimes?" I ask. "People told me I should have taken the time to go to the station and file a report."

"It is essential to report a crime," Rabbi Shemtov affirms. "It increases the police presence and coverage in the neighborhood."

Rabbi Yisroel Shemtov has a long history of getting involved even at great risk to himself, yet he gives



The Red Devil has turned white, but he's just as commited, dynamic and energetic as ever when it comes to doing someone a favor.

those of us who are not as brave the benefit of the doubt.

Rabbi Shemtov told the *New York Times*: "People have a right [to stay away when there's a crime]; they don't want to get involved. But sometimes, they take it a little too far. Sometimes [just by speaking up] you can let someone feel there is someone who wants to help."

One now-middle-aged woman told me, "I was a young girl in the 70s, and I was terrified to walk anywhere in Crown Heights, having been attacked twice. Yisroel Shemtov would drive around in his car at night, giving rides to anyone he saw on the street. He cannot imagine how relieved my friends and I would be to see his car driving slowly down the street."

I have one more question for this New York legend. "What gave you the ability, the toughness and the courage to stand up against criminals?" "At one point [in the mid-70s] there were some hoodlums looking to get even with me," Rabbi Shemtov tells me. "So I wrote into the Rebbe, asking for a blessing for myself and everyone participating in the patrols."

The Rebbe answered, *"Teshuas chein b'tshuas chein al habesuros tovos. Gadol z'chuso b'yoser v'zchus harabim misayato."* (Loosely translated, the Rebbe said, "My reply is very favorable... extremely great is his [Yisroel's] merit... and the merit of the public will protect him.")

From then on, Rabbi Shemtov says, "I felt no fear."

And then he hands the call over to Dr. Robert Feldman, a Crown Heights physician.

"I've treated Jews of all ages who were beaten up for no reason," Dr. Feldman tells me. "Rabbi Shemtov told you about how he's risked his life chasing criminals, instilling fear in the bad guys, trying to protect our community from *ganavim*. I'm going to tell you about something the Rebbe told us to do, that can help..."

FIGHTING CRIME FROM THE SOURCE

MOMENT OF SILENCE

Observing a Moment of Silence (30-60 seconds) in public schools (it is assumed religious schools already provide time for prayer and reflection) "has been proven to decrease violence from the foundation by re-educating the minds of children," explains Dr. Feldman.

The Moment of Silence program encourages children to discuss with their parents what they should think about during the allotted time, strengthening the parent-child bond. Principals and social scientists report that the quiet focus period sets the tone for the school day, as practicing thoughtful silence promotes self-control.

"And it costs nothing to implement. The Moment of Silence is a preventive measure," says Dr. Feldman. "It's been shown to reduce bullying and crime."

Rabbi Avraham Frank is running a campaign to introduce the Moment of Silence into public schools. He has already brought it into 50 public schools, and counting. There's a beautiful DVD about the program put out by Living Torah on momentofsilence.info. On 10 Shvat 5743 (Jan. 24, 1983), the Rebbe said, "If at the beginning of the school day children are given a moment to reflect on the moral values which their parents instruct them, they will come to understand that the knowledge they are taught in school is for the sake of benefiting others, even before themselves. And 'the children will bring their parents back...'"

"The Rebbe really pushed for this," Dr. Feldman underscores, and Rabbi Frank passionately says the same.

"The Lubavitcher Rebbe," New York State Senator Simcha Felder told me on the phone, "understood how important it is to make sure every child feels significant and worthy."

Senator Felder chairs the Committee on Children and Families, as well as the New York Education Sub-committee. His Director of Communications, Allison Witty, is on the call along with Retired Detective Michael Gregorio.

"Kids who find themselves in trouble – as either the perpetrator or the victim – are statistically more likely to come from troubled homes," explains Felder.

Though there is a certain population that is sick or disturbed, most kids who commit crimes, especially if they post videos of themselves committing crimes, are looking for attention and a quick high. A good education and a solid home life help prevent kids from seeking negative attention or unhealthy forms of validation.

"The foundation of reducing crime is a good education," explains Senator Felder, "... so kids can go out and make a difference in their communities."

Statistics support the Senator's emphasis on schooling. Each year of education reduces the likelihood for a person to commit a crime by 20%. Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank, finds "high crime neighborhoods are characterized by high concentrations of families abandoned by fathers." Heritage reports the best buffers against a life of crime are the mother's strong affectionate attachment and the father's authority and involvement in raising his children. The study finds religious observance also helps. Kids need a sense of purpose, strong values, and skills, so they can lead productive lives.

The recent knockout "game" in New York, where African-American teens have been assaulting Jews and trying to knock them unconscious with one blow (and then putting the



Rabbi Avraham Frank and New York public school student.



VIEW FROM THE DA'S OFFICE

A source at the Brooklyn District Attorney's office agreed to speak to the *N'shei Chabad Newsletter* off the record about some of the reasons it can feel like justice is elusive and crimes go unpunished.

First, she explained, the legal system is complicated, but it does work for the most part. Perhaps not as quickly as city residents would like it to, but the District Attorney's office does remove from the streets people who are hurting other people. Most of the complications stem from the fact that the system follows laws passed by councilmen and assemblymen, not necessarily logic. So cops can bring in a suspect, but without enough proof that that person committed the crime –like an eyewitness—the suspect must be released.

Let's say someone breaks into a basement of a bakery and even leaves his ID and his fingerprints where the crime occurred. If no one saw him commit the crime, there may not be enough evidence to prosecute him. Even if the guy is caught with tools in his hand, he can be let off by a grand jury because this is considered merely circumstantial evidence.

Felonies, such as robbery, must pass through a grand jury. This country relies on a panel of peers – people in the street – to decide the validity of a case. The outcome of the grand jury is unpredictable. In this case, when the bakery burglar described his homelessness, the grand jury dismissed the case.

For hate crimes, the suspect has to say the racial or ethnic slur out loud to be tried. So citizens might feel that what happened was a hate crime, but if the act of violence doesn't fit the legal criteria, it won't be counted as such.

"While the system isn't perfect, it's the only system we have," the source told me, "and it does work."

Oftentimes victims don't come forward to testify against a suspect. This puts everyone in a bind, because without a victim it's difficult or impossible to prove someone committed a crime. The source reassured me that the DA does its "best to protect victims." If a crime victim feels she is in danger, or is being intimidated, the DA's office will follow through on those fears to keep her and her family safe.

Coming forward to report and testify at a grand jury will prevent future crimes, protecting future innocent people from becoming crime victims. For the most part, people who steal once continue to do it. To ensure the criminal doesn't walk free, victims have to show up to the trial.

The process can take years, the source told me. But the DA's office tries hard to respect people's time and limitations. If a mother with small children has to testify they try to respect her schedule as best they can.

whole scene online for others to watch), stands out particularly because the city is safer than it was decades ago. Murders have fallen 550%, down from 2,262 in 1990 to 414 in 2012.

Senator Felder points to political factors in the uptick of violent incidents like Knockout in the past several months.

"During the recent New York City mayoral elections, the no-nonsense policies of Police Commissioner Ray Kelly fell under heavy criticism by the candidates and media," Felder explains. Crime numbers have dropped under Kelly, yet during the election police behavior was condemned. "Candidates were competing to degrade cops, calling on officers to be more sensitive and complaining about unfair treatment of minority communities."

Felder hopes newly appointed Police Commissioner Bill Bratton will continue methods put in place by Kelly to ensure that New York City stays safe.

Senator Felder points out a law he's passed to increase safety in New York: advertisers must respect the poster many homes now display that says "Do Not Place Unsolicited Advertising Materials on This Property." I'd seen the sign around, but hadn't considered the safety ramifications. In the summer when people are in the country for weeks at a time, circulars, menus and other urban detritus can collect on the porch or in the yard signaling no one is at home to attend to the litter. In addition to posting the sign in the window, Senator Felder urges people who are away from home for any period of time to put their lights on timers – and even their air conditioning, in the summer months. To save electricity, Felder recommends setting the air on fan mode. All this serves to make it look like someone's home.

Additionally, Felder encourages neighbors to do acts of kindness for each other by bringing in garbage cans left out past the pickup date.



New York State Senator Simcha Felder

Retired Detective Michael Gregorio adds, "Burglary is mostly a crime of opportunity."

IT'S NOT EASY BEING AN NYC COP.

The New York City Police Department (NYPD), led by Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and then Mayor Michael Bloomberg, has done a great job of turning the Big Apple around from its crime epidemic in the '60s and '70s when drug abuse and gangs led to a crime surge that plagued the city for decades. These have all helped to decrease crime in the city: computer programs to track all crimes, Stop, Question, and Frisk, Broken Window Theory (addressing minor crimes will thwart major ones) and a larger police force. For the most part, people don't walk around fearing they'll be burglarized, mugged or assaulted.

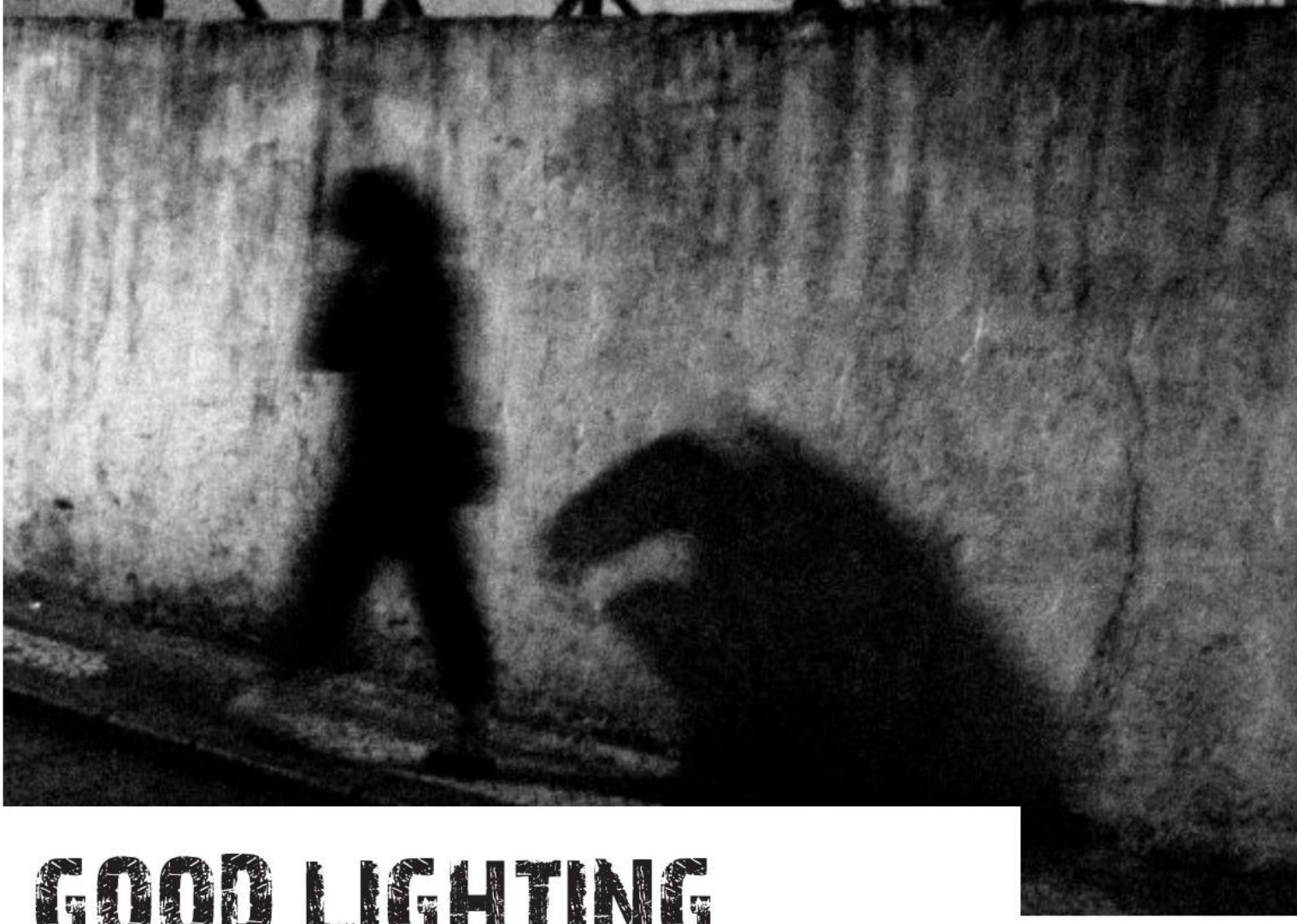
Yet there are glitches in the justice system. Retired Detective Michael Gregorio explains a few reasons why it can feel – to both cops and city residents – that criminals are let off scot free to terrorize, burglarize or assault the next unsuspecting victim.

Gregorio explains that the burden of proof to prosecute a suspect is much higher than to make an arrest. A cop can legally arrest someone for a crime and then when the case appears in front of the District Attorney, there's not enough proof to go to trial. The alleged criminal is released, without facing charges. One reason this happens is that the complainant – the victim or person who accused the suspect – doesn't want to press charges. Once the victim realizes how much paperwork there is or that they'll have to appear in court, they change their mind about pursuing the case.

Even when the complainant agrees to go forward, a judge can be lenient, letting the suspect out on bail or his own recognizance. Police officers can feel frustrated; they risked their lives to capture and arrest the suspect, only to find he or she was let off, found innocent, even with a prior record. Career criminals sometimes commit additional offenses while out on bail. It's especially upsetting for the officers and the victims to see the suspect smirking at them on the street.

Gregorio also explains why response times to house burglaries or muggings feel slow. A crime in the past is assigned a lower priority in the 911 system than a crime taking place in that very moment where someone might get hurt and it can still be prevented. He told me the officers came right away after the boy tried to mug me because he was likely in the area still. Once the crime or accident has taken place and some time has passed, it will not be dealt with as quickly as an unfolding emergency.

"Reporting crimes is essential," Gregorio says. "If you don't report it, it's as if the crime never happened."



GOOD LIGHTING DRIVES OUT CRIME

"The most important and effective deterrent to crime is good lighting for the outside of the house," says Ayal Sapan, Sales Director of Andora Systems. Andora installs camera systems in both commercial and residential properties in the New York area, monitoring several apartment buildings in Crown Heights. "And we don't sell lighting," Sapan adds.

"What about burglar alarms?" I ask.

"Alarms scare away would-be thieves," Sapan explains, "and the companies will let you know right away if there's a break-in. But the police response time could sometimes be a couple of hours later, so it is imperative to have a person notified who can quickly check on your house."

How do camera surveillance systems work?

"It's very helpful to see who's ringing the bell before you answer," explains Sapan. "With cameras in front and back, as well as at the side door if the house is semi-detached, you won't open the door [and be surprised], a good first step in reducing forced or unwanted entries into your home." Also, criminals will not spend time working on your lock if they are being filmed.

Landlords contact Andora, often after a neighboring building installs camera systems. Cameras and proper lighting chase away crime, but then, when the criminals migrate next door, the next landlords call, furious about the situation, and then install better lighting and cameras. Neighborhoods become safer, building by building.

And the technology is improving. Sapan says, "Over the last year, high-resolution IP cameras have become much more affordable. A clearer picture can make a huge difference in

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identifying suspects."

Yet Sapan concedes surveillance is often just one piece of the puzzle in solving a crime. If someone burglarizes a car across the street from a house where cameras are installed, it's not always clear from which direction the perpetrator came or which way he went.

Andora receives up to five requests per month to review a client's footage from the Crown Heights police force.

"We don't charge to review the footage of our customers in Crown Heights," says Sapan. "We want to help and it's a service for the community."

Bars on windows? Well, some say they cannot live behind bars. Others find them very helpful and say they provide peace of mind. Make sure the bars are easily opened from the inside in case of fire.

One thing everyone agrees on is the need for good, strong locks on both windows and doors.

"That doesn't always work," the police officer on the corner of Crown and Schenectady tells me. I don't understand, and ask him to explain. The officer smiles. "Locks are only as good as the owner who remembers to use them. You wouldn't believe how many people leave their doors and windows unlocked!"

Which reminds me... don't forget to check mezuzos regularly, too!

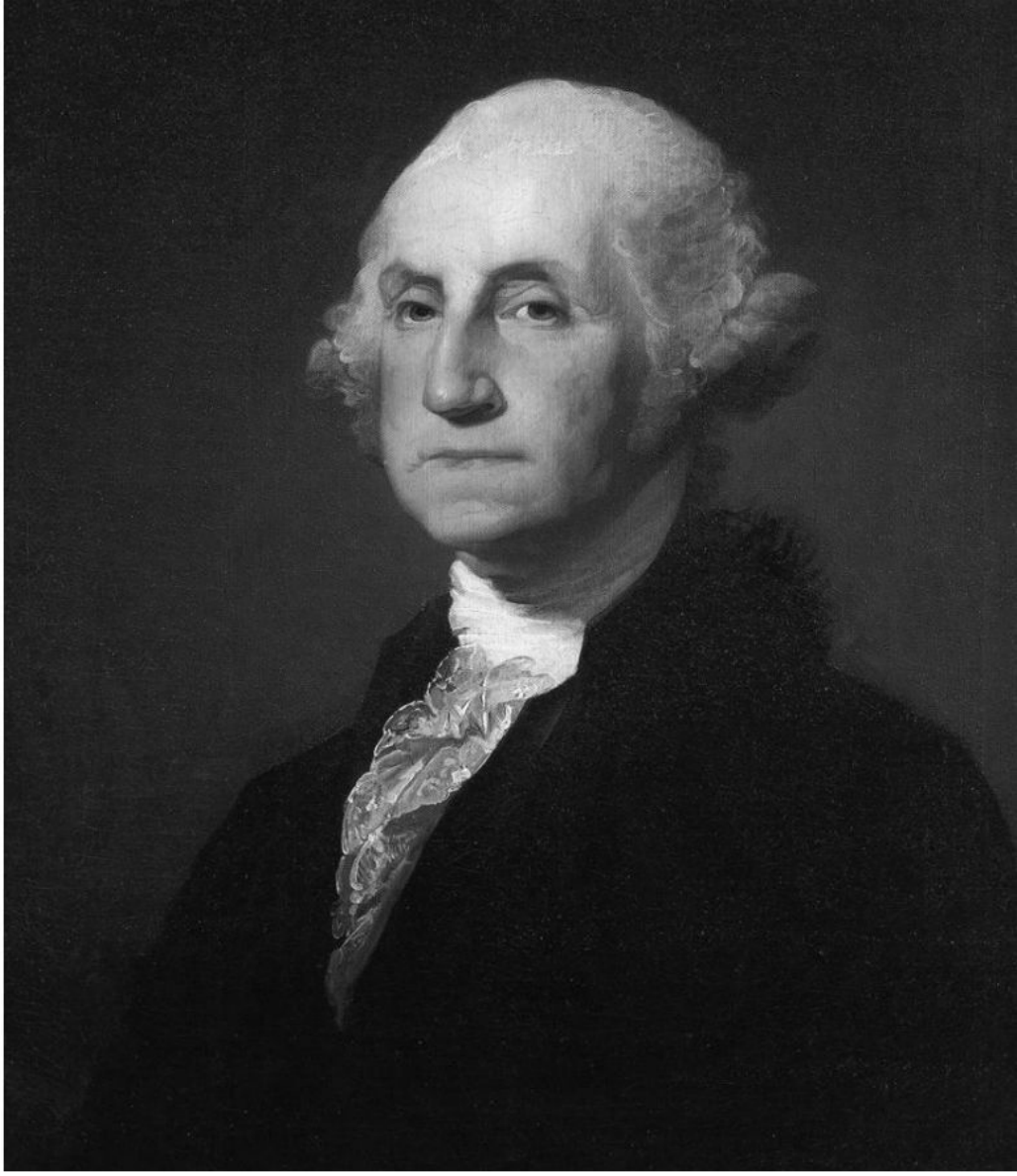
PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

- Talk on your cell phone when walking alone. (Rabbi Shemtov)
- Listening to music is dangerous because you can't hear if there's anyone approaching from behind. (Detective Gregorio)
- Allow space between other people walking on the sidewalk and yourself. (Crown Heights askan)
- Walk near the curb, not near the buildings. (Detective Gregorio)
- Cross the street if you feel someone following you. (Detective Gregorio)
- Walk against traffic so you're more visible to drivers in case of emergency and can't be followed by car. (Crown Heights askan)
- Keep your pocketbook tightly closed. (Detective Gregorio)
- Wear your pocketbook inside your coat. (Teen who was mugged)
- Carry hairspray and use it instead of mace to surprise an attacker. (Older woman who was mugged)
- Use GPS tracker for children walking home from school. (Shloime Rapoport and Detective Gregorio)

JEWS IN THESE UNITED STATES



RABBI MORDECHAI LIPSKIER
thebeismedrash.com



What is the Jewish response to the hideous "knockout game" that has been plaguing the East Coast in recent months?

As Jews we know that even a small amount of light can overpower darkness; that physical might is no match for spiritual light.

When Jews are under attack our immediate response is to turn to Hashem. Daven harder, give more tzedakah, study more Torah. We recognize that we can't rely on our own might to survive; we need Hashem's help.

But there's more.

WASHINGTON'S MIRACLE

In late August of 1776, General George Washington assembled 12,000 men of the Continental Army on Long Island. In an attempt to attack them by surprise, four British generals, one German major general and 24,000 of their men took up positions to march towards the East River to trap Washington's men. All night Washington desperately ferried his troops to Manhattan but by dawn, only a fraction had crossed. Then, G-d answered their prayers and a heavy fog rolled in, allowing the safe escape of all Washington's men, ultimately leading to victory and independence.

Washington wrote:

"The man must be bad indeed who can look upon the events of the American Revolution without feeling the warmest gratitude towards the great Author of the Universe Whose divine interposition was so frequently manifested in our behalf....In war He directed the sword, and in peace, He has ruled in our councils."

And in 1789, in his first Thanksgiving Day Proclamation:

"Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty G-d, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor... Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November ... to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being ... to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue..."

Although many liberal and "enlightened" minds may like to deny it, it is clear the founding fathers of the United States were deeply religious men who saw Divine providence in all that happened to them. Likewise, they made it clear that the only way to preserve a free, prosperous and upright country is through a

strong belief in G-d and adherence to His Word. As Thomas Jefferson, the least religious of the founding fathers, said:

"Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people that these liberties are of the gift of G-d? That they are not to be violated but with His wrath?"

An increase in police presence in our neighborhood, an emphasis on diversity and teaching children to respect other cultures, and new laws about what is and isn't a hate crime, may be necessary to suppress the symptoms of the immediate problem, but these are not the solution. What's the Torah's solution? Giving all children the opportunity, the ability, to connect with Hashem.

The founding fathers would probably cringe at the "separation of church and state." And even under current law we can at least offer a Moment of Silence in schools. A time for children to reflect on a Higher Being Who watches their every action. Likewise, education in the seven Noahide laws would promote peace and righteousness.

In 1798 Dr. Benjamin Rush wrote:

"I beg leave to remark, that the only foundation for a useful education in a republic is to be laid in Religion. Without this there can be no virtue, and without virtue there can be no liberty, and liberty is the object and life of all republican governments."

As Jews, the lesson is that we must always remain strong in our faith, and teach our children the power of serving Hashem. As the Lubavitcher Rebbe told Mr. Elliot Laskey (then a hippie):

"The essence of the black man is to be what he is as a black man. The essence of the Indian is to be what he is as an Indian. And the essence of a Jew is tied to G-d Al-mighty through Torah and mitzvos."

As American Jews, it's our responsibility to challenge our secular society by promoting awareness of G-d to all Americans, so that they too can live meaningfully and morally.

THE NEW KNOCKOUT GAME

If violent thugs can change the life an innocent person in a matter of a single moment, we can surely do the same. Reach out to someone in need, say a cheerful good morning to a stranger, invite someone to your Purim seudah who otherwise won't have one, or engage your non-Jewish acquaintances in matters of G-d and His moral code.

Go ahead, knock someone out with your kindness and consideration! You never know, maybe yours will be the final blow that will bring the world to ultimate peace with the coming of Moshiach.

This essay is based on talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe on 10 Shvat 5735 - 1975, 19 Kislev 5747 - 1986 and other occasions. ■

TIPS FROM AN EX BURGLAR



- Install good locks on windows and better than just cylinder locks on doors; bars; outdoor lighting; an alarm system.
- Don't let in strangers offering to fix your roof or clean your gutters. It gives them a chance to see what there is to steal and where you keep the keys to your garage or back door.
- "Neighborhood Watch" and "Beware of Dog" and "We Are Armed" stickers deter thieves.
- Remove graffiti immediately and call the police. It's often a tag to gang members that a house is vulnerable.
- Don't rely on secret hiding places to keep your money; thieves will search your kids' room, look in cereal boxes and even the fridge. The mess such a search causes is no problem for them.
- Plant spiky plants beneath windows to scare burglars from trying to enter. Trim large, overflowing bushes and trees as they provide excellent hiding places for burglars at work.
- Cage your mail slot to make sure crooks can't reach keys or other items from the hall table.
- Lock up your tools to make sure burglars can't access your garden spade to pry your door open or break your window.
- Don't leave valuables in your car such as GPS, professional tools, or musical instruments. Keep tzedakah boxes well hidden from view, and empty them frequently.
- Keep your house number easily visible from as many angles as possible, even from a helicopter, if possible!

These tips are from Detective Gregorio, Crown Heights askanim, and the Reader's Digest.