

Street Smarts

Copyright Sandy Long

Being street smart is one of the most important things you can learn as a woman in trucking. Knowing how to conduct yourself can protect you from not only making terrible mistakes in judgment but also protect you from others who may view you as prey. Street smarts cannot really be taught unless one has good common sense, they go hand in hand.

This spring, the FBI released notification of the making of a new division to search for serial killers who may be truckers. According to the media reports, 500 women's bodies have been found along highways, in truck stops, motels and other places that truckers conduct business. The FBI estimates, according to media reports, that there may be as many as 200 truckers acting as serial killers.

Because of the sensationalism of these media reports, people have overlooked a couple of things. The 500 bodies are over a 30 year period as are the 200 truckers for the first thing. The second thing overlooked is that the vast majority of the victims were prostitutes or hitch hikers. Finally, the FBI is not only looking at truckers, but is also looking at anyone who travels for business including construction workers, salespeople, and the military.

The FBI release as reported in the media has caused much concern among some women truck drivers. Many have bought mace or guns to carry with them, while others are just panicking. This is a terrible waste of energy, time, and money if one has some common sense and street smarts.

As the majority of the victims were prostitutes or hitch hikers, one should not hitch hike or conduct one's self as a prostitute; simple is it not? Most women drivers do not need to hitch hike or are smart enough not to do so. However, with warm weather, short shorts, halter tops, and other skimpy apparel have appeared in the driver's seats of trucks and on truck stop parking lots. Some women even go so far as to wear bikini tops at truck stops or while driving. It is difficult in the warmer months to differentiate between lot lizards and some women truck drivers, they both dress the same. Furthermore, sandals and flip flops abound on the feet of women truckers in warm months; hard to run from a threat or an attack in those types of footwear.

Women drivers are seen all of the time getting into male drivers' trucks. It may be another driver for their company in some cases, but most of the time it is not. One hears all sorts of excuses from the women for this activity, usually after the male driver propositions them or tries to supposedly rape them. You might hear, "well, I ran with him for hours talking on the CB" or "he just wanted to talk to me privately" from these non-street smart women. Getting into a male driver's truck is like going to see a man's etchings in his apartment; it shows a willingness to get intimate in many men's minds.

Of course, there are the women who happen to drive truck that conduct after hours work as lot lizards too. Though fairly rare, one does hear these types of females on the CB around truck stops from time to time. Definitely not street smart women at all and gives all of us women truckers a bad name to boot.

So what can you do to protect yourself while on the road and develop street smarts? It is simple.

Always be aware of your surroundings

Wear clothing appropriate to the job

Wear shoes that you can run in or at least move quickly in without slipping

Never get into anyone else's truck for any reason unless instructed to do so by dispatch

Never allow anyone other than a mechanic or law enforcement in your truck

Never hitch hike, even getting a ride with another driver

If you are not making enough money driving truck, find another job or change companies

Never advertise where you are on the CB

Never conduct yourself in a provocative manner on the CB or anywhere else while on the road or in a truck stop

Do not wander around the truck stop or anywhere else after dark

Always watch for suspicious activity both while parked and while driving

Serial killers have been around for millennia, nothing is new under the sun, and you are more apt to become a victim of a serial killer while at home than while on the road, statistics point that out if you look for them and do not fall into only seeing the sensationalism rampant against male truckers. Develop your street smarts using plain old common sense and calm down; you cannot pay attention to what is going on around you if you are panicking about serial killers coming to get you.

Ya'll be safe!