

Ten Four (10-4) means Everything is Good. Everything is Alright.

By David Brown

Remember those words, remember that feeling because on June 23rd Donald James Woods of Athens, Ontario wasn't able to say it any more BECAUSE HE WAS DEAD.

Left for dead in Pickering, Ontario.

Shot and left to die in his truck.

The criminals, responsible, shot him and stole his load of air-chilled chicken.

Does this bother you? Well, it should.

Don't make yourself a victim.

I said Pickering, Ontario, not New York City. Pickering is here, right here in our own neighborhood, right here where maybe some of our family lives or shops near by, I know I do. After his murder several other violent occurrences took place across Ontario where truck drivers were robbed, beaten, their load stolen and had hand guns pointed at their face. I know this because I use to investigate these kinds of occurrences while being a Detective Constable with the Ontario Provincial Police. In 1997 I left the police service and entered the trucking industry as a driver. I wanted to drive "Big Trucks." I traveled in Canada and all over the states crossing most of the Borders, having my own experiences then I went into Safety & Compliance and now I recruit drivers for Rosedale Transport. I've driven in most states in the U.S. driving vans and flatbed trailers and have first hand witnessed the violence that takes place against truckers and I am here to tell you that you need to be informed and protect yourself against these criminals that if you don't plan your "run" accordingly you may or will become a victim yourself.

This is one of many stories that you read or hear about, now more than ever, on a regular basis in newspapers, magazines, radio or television about truckers being hurt while doing their job. You've heard that saying during Driver Appreciation week in September "If you bought something a truck brought it." Criminals out there will steal anything if they know they can sell it on the street. Don't be fooled that just because it's a load of nuts & bolts or a load of diamonds it can be a target.

I first met Ellen Voie at a conference in Toronto recently and listened to her speak to a group of people who listened to her talk about Women in Trucking. I saw a woman who had a real "mission" a real passion to help all women who were considering a trucking career or who are already in a driving position to be safe while doing their job. She also had the challenge of changing the trucking industry perspective about trucking. I wanted to help so I introduced myself to Ellen and offered my knowledge and experience about trucking and investigating these kinds of crimes and how all women in trucking could be safe.

It's not hard to protect yourself out there just as you protect yourself in your home you have to protect yourself while trucking. Isn't the truck you are driving your home for a day a night, a week or longer? So why would you open your door to a total stranger while in your truck which you would never do with a stranger at your own home? Even a Boxer knows that if he drops his guard he is going to get hit in the face. You have to become very aware of how not to make yourself become a victim. Criminals plan their crimes, stalk their victims, look for prey, look for the opportunity or just randomly act because of information they received and can't pass on the opportunity to attack. If a bad guy is going to strike we want to make sure he selects

another victim and not you. I know this sounds very bad but crime will happen somewhere, some way, some how, so why not let it happen to someone else. On the road you are alone, vulnerable and a target for any would be criminal to make you his victim. A simple step that you could take to prevent becoming a victim is do not act like a victim. Every time you leave your truck weather it's a coffee break, a bathroom break or truck stop, take whatever you need with you to survive getting home. I am talking about identification, enough money for a bus ticket, phone numbers and change for the phone itself already in hand. Say to your self "if I came back to my truck, and it was gone, could I get home?" The next simple step is "mind your own business," don't talk about your personal business to anybody because bad guys have ears and now you just gave him an opportunity to strike and become his victim. Don't have all your belongings in one place on your personal body, spread it out, house key in a separate pocket, money in three or four places, two set of ids, never use your real name to a stranger, everyone is a "Joe Anne." Most people you meet on the road you will never see again. Make sure you have a contact person that you speak with daily, once or twice, and make sure they know your route. Travel in two, three or four other trucks or use the buddy system throughout your trip.

These are only a few ideas to help you in your travel. You have to pretend your run is like a baseball game with seven bases, Home, You, Truck & Trailer, Load, Customer, Return Trip and Home. I am working Ellen and Women In Trucking to define all these seven bases and to offer more tips in being safe out there and place it on your website.

If you give a criminal the opportunity and ability to affect his purpose you will become a victim.