

Listen to this interview with a couple who have been the victims of repeated crime and a police officer.

Optional exercise (The answers are at the bottom of the page).

Are the following statements True or False according to the interview?

1. The Saunders have been burgled eight times.
 2. They bought the house for its views.
 3. They thought they might have problems when they bought the house.
 4. They think they know who the burglars are.
 5. The burglars haven't stolen anything valuable from the Saunders.
 6. They do not lock the door.
 7. The Crime Prevention Officer doesn't think there is anything they can do to stop the burglars.
 8. The Saunders do not have a burglar alarm.
 9. The Crime Prevention Officer thinks it's always the same burglars who break into the Saunders' house.
 10. Burglars like to steal things which have been bought recently.
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Interviewer: Good afternoon. Today on Crime Check we are going to talk about "repeat victims", - people who are victims of crime more than once. First of all we bring you the sad story of Ruth and Harold Saunders from Hull, who have had their house burgled no fewer than eight times in the last 3 years. Worth an entry in the Guinness Book of Records you might think, but for Ruth and Harold, it's no joke. Ruth, why do you think you've been burgled so many times?

Ruth: I wish I knew. It's a nightmare. We bought this house because it looks out onto the playing fields and we thought it was the perfect house for our retirement.

Interviewer: When were you first burgled?

Ruth: Oh, three years ago, just a week after we had moved in. It was as if the burglars were waiting for us.

Interviewer: Do you feel sorry that you moved there now?

Ruth: Oh definitely. If we had known we were going to have this sort of trouble, we wouldn't be living here - we would have chosen somewhere safer. But now we can't even sell the house because everyone knows the burglars like it! No one will buy it. We can't escape from this neighbourhood. We're just waiting for the next break-in.

Interviewer: Do you know who the burglars are?

Ruth: We think so, but we can never prove anything. You see, people can watch the house from the playing fields, and there are a number of youths who we see watching the house. They hang around there smoking in the afternoons. I'm frightened to go to the shops in case they break in while I'm away.

Interviewer: Have you tried calling the police?

Ruth: Yeah, several times, but these youths always get away by running into the woods on the other side of the playing fields, and the police don't bother to go after them.

Interviewer: And what have you had stolen?

Ruth: Oh all sorts of things on different occasions. They never take much, but they always seem to come back. They've taken the television twice. If we'd known they were going to come back, we wouldn't have bought a new television after the first burglary, but a week after we bought it, the burglars broke in again.

Interviewer: What else have they taken?

Ruth: Oh, apart from the television and the video, nothing very valuable, but then we don't have anything else which is very valuable. It's annoying really, and they do a lot of damage when they break in. I sometimes think we should leave a door open. If we left the door open, at least they could come in without doing any damage!

Interviewer: So what are you going to do about this situation?

Ruth: What can we do about it? We'd be happier if we'd stayed in our old house. If we still lived there, I'm sure we wouldn't have been burgled once. We were there for forty years without a single problem.

Interviewer: Marylyn Brookes, you are Chief Crime Prevention Officer for South Yorkshire police. Is there really nothing they can do?

CPO: No, there are things they can do - though I must say first that I do feel sorry for them.

Interviewer: Well, what can they do?

CPO: If I were them, I'd have had a burglar alarm put in straightaway. In fact, I'm surprised the insurance company hasn't insisted on that already.

Ruth: Well, they have said that but we can't afford one of those! We only have our pension, and burglar alarms cost thousands of pounds.

CPO: Well, have you thought of putting a burglar alarm box on the wall? That puts some thieves off. Also, you should talk to the neighbours and ask them to keep an eye on your home when you're out.

Interviewer: But why do the burglars keep coming back to the Saunders' house? I mean eight times is a lot, isn't it?

CPO: Well, there are several things here. Obviously it is easy to watch the house from the playing fields, and also burglars tend to talk amongst themselves. They tell each other which houses are easy to break into, and what things the houses still have in them. Also they wait a few months until they think the owners have replaced the things that were stolen. After all, burglars prefer to steal something that's brand new. And another thing you have to consider is...

Answers: 1T, 2T, 3F, 4T, 5 F, 6F, 7F, 8T, 9F, 10T

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