

# Making Life Safer

## Part 2

*by*

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In Part 1 we discussed some realistic reasons for owning firearms and actions that you need to take if you own a firearm or plan on using another type of weapon to protect yourself and your loved ones. In this part we will discuss how you can gain time to react to an intruder who is intent on harming you, your family, and community.

In order to gain time to react two things must happen.

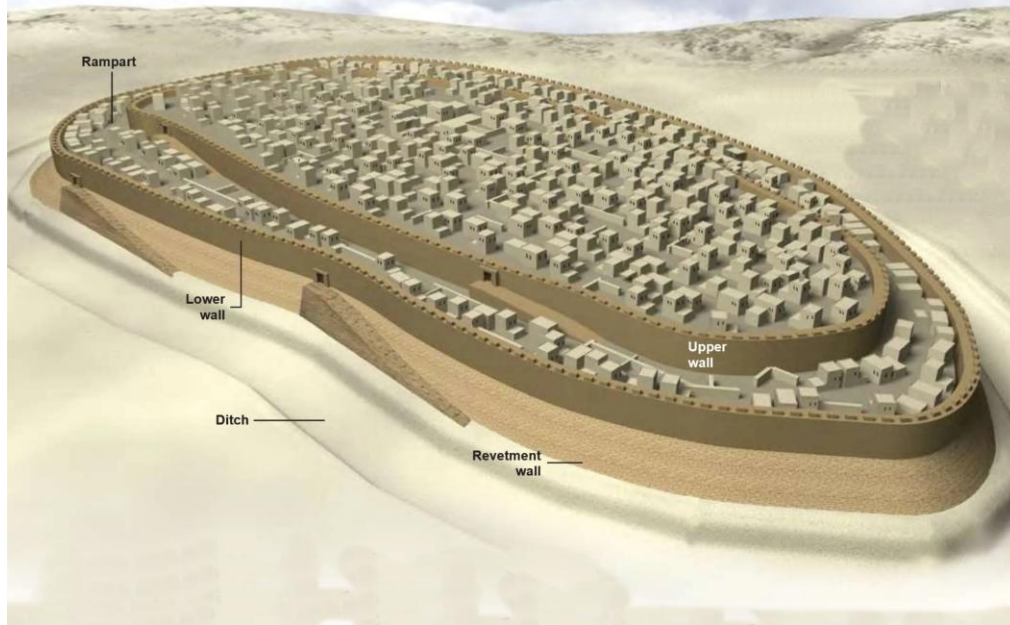
- You need to be able to recognize the threat.
- You need to create an environment that slows the attacker(s) down.

In the physical security industry, the ability to recognize a threat is often referred to as “intruder detection.” Similarly the process of slowing down an intruder is called “perimeter defense.” To have a good protection plan both detection and perimeter defense have to be intertwined.

While the concept of physical security is centuries old, technology has improved how the process is carried out. Let’s consider the castles and forts of ancient times.

When people started forming communities, they often built walls for protection. If the area was in turmoil, the community government would send out “patrols,” outriders, or rely on the peasants to inform the community of any dangers. As the communities grew, the “government” cleared away trees, created barriers to force outsiders to approach from selected directions, and expanded the walls outward with ditches surrounding the walls. If water was available, moats were often constructed outside the walls.

The following illustration depicts a typical security approach for ancient to the middle century cities. This drawing is the ancient city of Jericho which had three walls and a ditch surrounding it.



The defense concept is to have a series of “concentric” levels of defense. For Jericho, the levels or perimeters were: house doors > inner wall > outer wall > revetment wall > ditch > open land.

Today most of us live a community of some sort. Most urban, suburban, and rural areas are divided into housing groups called wards, precincts, neighborhoods, communities, sub-divisions, or by similarly defined words. Although times have changed, the concept of perimeter defenses has not. Almost all communities, regardless of their location, have some sort of restricted access. The purpose of restricted access is to control the flow of traffic and people. In communities similar to the one below, access is controlled by the number of entrances into the community. In this case there is only one access point.



Another method used for controlling entry is the use of one-way signs and road blocks such as the concrete barrier in the photo to the right.



In addition to concrete barriers, fences and dirt mounds are often used to block off the entry lane of a street or even the entire street.

The use of guards and gates to control entry into an area is not new and dates back to ancient times.



Although gated-communities have always existed, such communities have become more popular in recent times. Concerns for safety, comfort and security has given rise to these communities. Each community offers unique amenities to its residents, with safety being first on the list.

There are two downsides to most gated communities. First the homeowner usually pays a higher homeowners association (HOA) dues in order to cover the cost of maintaining the community's common areas, amenities, and any personnel costs.

The second downfall, and more serious one, is that in most gated communities, homeowners will develop a false sense of security. The problem is that the term "gated community" implies security, and while the gates and guards, control the flow of vehicles and people into the community, it does not prevent or control people from just going around the gates/guards and "walking" into the community. For example in the photo showing the aerial view of a community, there is nothing to prevent a person from parking along the highway, and walking through the woods to come out into someone's back yard.

The only true reason for a gated entrance is to control the flow of traffic. While this will help prevent someone from bringing in a truck and carting off your possessions, it does

nothing to protect you from someone intent on confronting and harming you. It just makes it harder to steal large items from your home or yard.

At the turn of the century (2000 AD) we saw the rise of a different form of gated community – the “vertical gated community.” Vertical gated communities have those same characteristics and amenities as the standard gated communities that most of us have seen. The difference is that instead of spreading across a lot of acreage, they are located in cities in the form of high rises. Realtors don’t call them gated communities or vertical gated communities but rather as luxury apartment buildings or luxury condominiums.

These vertical communities often offer amenities that regular gated communities usually do not have. For example, the ground floor could be a grocery store along with hair salons, dry cleaners, and other stores. In some buildings there may be 4-5 floors with commercial businesses and the residences above them. Essentially residents can live in a “work/live/play” environment without ever having to leave the building. However vertical communities also have their dark side.

In many cities only the rich can afford to live in a vertical community. Depending on location, units in one of these communities can cost as little as \$700,000 to more than \$5 million. Some properties have been valued at \$1,000 per square feet. Living in vertical communities tends to isolate residents from involvement in civic and outside activities, produce elitist attitudes among the residents, and, just like their land based gated communities, create a false sense of safety.

Regardless of whether your community has one of the “choke points” described above, an intruder or intruders, intent to gain access, will do so. It is important to realize that all perimeter defenses can be breached.

Once the outer perimeter of your community (the choke points) has been breached, the only other perimeter defense area is the lot that your house sits on. Fences will only slow down an intruder. However detection devices can send you an alarm, warning you of an intruder. For most homeowners, motion detectors are used to sound an alarm.

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This is part two of a four part series on making your life safer. Part 3 will discuss creating obstacles that intruders will need to overcome once they have breached your outer perimeter(s).