

Planning Exercises

Use these as examples that can be adapted to your own life and circumstances and by doing so improve your personal planning ability.

Scenario 1: My Dinner with Andre Part II

This is a deliberate situation. Like the book's Rule 2 (Trust and Use Your Intuition), pick a restaurant (preferably with windows or, better still, mirrors) and sit down for a nice meal. Now imagine someone is waiting for you between where you're sitting and your destination, whether it be your car, home, or hotel. You've got time because you're safe while you remain in place. This person isn't enough of a threat for you to call the authorities, so imagine you've already informed a friend or family member of your situation. And now it's time to leave. The exercise's objective is this: How do you get to your destination?

Start by drawing on the information and questions you've learned so far. Can you leave by a back entrance and give them the slip? Would the restaurant allow you to do so? Go ahead and ask them, see what they say. Is there anyone you can recruit to help you? Would a restaurant employee or manager be willing? Possibly to even escort you back? What alternate routes are available? What alternative means of transportation are available?

Scenario 2: The Devil Now Wants Your Prada

This scenario takes place while shopping or sightseeing. Go anywhere with crowds or at least enough people that you can choose someone or a group as potential threats. Put yourself in a situation such as inside a store, where you can formulate deliberate plans and consider your options because the interior affords you a certain degree of safety.

You'll find yourself asking the same questions as in Scenario 1. Can you leave by a back entrance and give them the slip? Would the store allow you to do so? Is there anyone you can recruit to help you? Would a store employee or manager be willing? To even escort you, possibly? And so forth.

Next time, switch it up. While you're walking, pick a moment and imagine someone is following you with criminal intentions. Or have a friend surprise you by selecting an individual. Are you prepared to dial the police? If you're in a foreign country, do you even know (unlike me in Mexico) the number? Where do you need to go to be fully safe, is it home or your hotel? Alternatively, where's the nearest safe place you could duck into? If none, is there someone or a group you see around you that you believe might help?

Scenario 3: Raiders of the Lost Parked

Your car and parking lots are situations worth exploring because, particularly if you're an American, you're likely in and out of your vehicle a lot. Parking lots are common locations for attacks, from rape to robbery, or theft of your vehicle. As you are walking to your car, imagine that someone was following you but you lost them and don't know if they are waiting in the parking lot. As always, begin with the end in mind: What is it you need to do right now?

Always available to you is your default option: Call the police and ask them to come. Trust me, it'd be the easiest call they get that day. Also remember that you don't have to get to your car at that moment necessarily, unless you've somewhere to be. In which case it's a great opportunity for you to make a hasty plan.

Where are the places your creeper would most likely wait to ambush you? Near your car? Near the parking entrance? Are there stairwells you have to pass through that serve as

unavoidable choke points? Has the sun set, making the lighting where you parked different than you anticipated? Again, use your imagination to consider questions that apply to your situation.

If you don't have somewhere to be, can you find a nearby safe place? Never feel compelled to rush when you have the option not to. Waiting or coming back later are perfectly reasonable. If you're American, do what a European would do: Go for an espresso. This is a great way to turn a hasty plan into a deliberate one, a fantastic option.

And then, when you do decide to approach your car with the understanding that you don't know where your creeper is, you can be better prepared with your keys in hand, both so you don't have to fumble and also as a convenient weapon.