

NITJ How to Saty Safe in Joahnnesburg show notes

Transcript

You're listening to New in Town Johannesburg. The podcast that aims to help you find your way as a newcomer in this amazing, vibrant, diverse South African city. I'm Hannah Pirnie. And I'm Sarah Passmore, both of us British expats who live here. This episode is a little bit longer than usual because it's a subject everyone loves to talk about. Yep, it's security. We're looking at how to live safely and feel comfortable in your day -to -day life in Jozi.

And we have very kindly been hosted by CAP this morning, a private not-for-profit security company. So what they do is they provide assistance to individual houses and communities. And they also work very closely with the South African police to capture all of the data and intelligence and to try and prevent the crime rather than just be responsive.

I'm Lloyd Brody, Solutions Director for CAP. Basically, the control room is divisionalized into respective departments and with the responsibility that they have in respect of incoming calls, dispatching, vehicle dispatches, incidents in progress and or incoming alerts from like an alarm system.

My name is Sean Jammy. I'm the Chief Operating Officer of CAP. We were founded in late 2006 as a result of increasing levels of crime in the northeast of Johannesburg. And the community at the time felt there had to be a better way. We employ about 600 people and we're very proud. We make quite a significant difference to the Johannesburg crime landscape.

Let's say I've just had a home invasion or something's going on. I've pressed my little security button to alert you. But how would you say a typical response would then play out with CAP?

I mean, I think the first thing that we need to reinforce is that that response is not what we're about. That response is exactly that. It's a response to crime. What one needs to try and do is be proactive about crime is try and measure yourself by how many crimes you prevent from happening, which is quite tough, right? Because very often you're measured by what doesn't happen rather than what does, you know. But ultimately, should a crime occur, we will obviously respond and make sure that the scene is safe. We will attend the victims as much as we can. And we then dispatch a team of field intelligence officers to understand as much about the crime as possible and to advocate for the victims in this particular case. So to work with SAPS, the South African Police Services, to identify those suspects. And our goal is ultimately to then neutralize those suspects by apprehending them. That's, you know, a first

prize because getting potential criminals or criminals out of circulation is absolutely key in the fight against crime. It's amazing seeing your set up here. I mean, I see cap vehicles on the streets all the time.

When I first came to South Africa, I saw this sort of big vehicle and your guys inside with their big guns. And I was thinking, holy moly, where have I come to? Now I see them and I feel quite sort of secure in the knowledge that they're patrolling. It's quite a different mindset. Now I can also see what you're doing behind the scenes. You've got a whole sort of intelligence service going on here. So tell me what in the, say, let's in the last year or last two years, how many criminals do you think you've taken out of circulation? Yeah, well, thank you for that. I mean, you just reminded me of when CAP launched in my suburb and you suddenly feel, you saw this big vehicle and you felt like there was someone there for you. There was someone that you could call to have your back. And it's kind of like the tip of the iceberg, right? What you see, the cameras or the vehicles or, you know, are amazing people. They really are the tip of the iceberg. They're supported by these internal teams. And as you say, there's a strong focus on information, okay? And turning information into action.

Aside from the roughly 500 suspects that we've arrested in the past year and kind of do every year as a result of our routine operations, that's responding quickly. And that's all in conjunction with the SAPs who really are a very powerful partner. So that's a defensive strategy, patrolling and hoping that one will succeed. Our offensive strategies in terms of potentially understanding suspects and then working with SAPs to remove them from circulation, that's resulted in about 250 arrests over the past year, which is a new strategy and it's been wildly successful. And as a result, we've seen significantly lower crime, and once again, we're talking about serious violent crime, than virtually any other year of our existence.

So if I am just brand new to South Africa, what would your advice be on how can I personally stay safe and how can I keep my children safe? First of all, take a deep breath. Welcome. We're very happy to have you here. And it's not that bad. Okay. The key thing here is that one needs a higher sense of alertness and one needs to understand that crime is a threat. It's real. It's not something that people just talk about. However, it's not as pervasive as it's made out to be. You know, not everyone's a criminal. Okay? And not every poor person is out to steal your cell phone or your handbag. So I think my first suggestion is to just try and be objective about it. Try not to be scared. Understand what the threat is. But really, I think the mindset shift is one of alertness, one of being constructive about it. It's like any other risk, any other threat. You know, if we have a threat to our health, if we're overweight, we say, well, let's lose some weight. And it's the same thing. Let's be constructive about how we meet this challenge together.

What would your advice be on how do I choose where to live and what are the differences? Yeah, it's quite funny. It's like every average South African is a security expert. They'd be able to get a job as a sort of high level protection officer. Look, I think live where you're comfortable. If an estate makes you feel more comfortable, by all means, it can be beautiful places to live and lower walls. I personally would love to see people moving to the suburbs, living in free standing homes, and many or most of us do, but there's different strokes for different folks. I think what one has to realize is that in all but the most unusual cases, you're going to leave your home. You're going to go to a shopping mall. You're going to go and eat at one of our many, many, many restaurants. And that's when one needs to take precautions.

So where you live, it's essential that there is a security strategy in place. So if you're in an estate and you want to pay a few thousand rand a month to defer or abdicate that responsibility to a body corporate, who must make sure your security is sorted. Great. If you want to learn about energizers and passives and, you know, electric fences, then by all means, a stand-alone house is the right thing for you... if you actually want a little bit more control about the threat, right? Because if you're looking after your own security, you at least know it's sorted. Do what makes you more comfortable. It's totally up to you.

So when I first came, I didn't have a car to begin with and I wanted to register my dog at the vets. So I looked on Google Maps and I saw, oh, it's just a mile down the road. I'll just put her on the lead and I'll walk down the road. I was in Birdhaven and the vets was in Oakland. So I just had a nice little afternoon walk, registered the dog, walked back. I later had a conversation with some South African friends who just looked at me like I had done the most ridiculous thing ever. That I put myself at risk and they were saying don't ever do that, don't ever walk somewhere like that - drive. And I remember thinking how much at risk was I really? Should I have walked?

I'm gonna say you absolutely should have walked. Once again it's just being pragmatic about it. Don't have your cell phone dangling from your hand. Don't wear a one carat diamond engagement ring. Don't make yourself a target. I mean, preferably walk a Rottweiler. But no, I think it's fantastic that you walk. South Africans don't walk. Just like people that live in Los Angeles don't walk. We don't have a walking culture here. I'm sure what you did notice though, Sarah, is that the sidewalks aren't in great condition. Well, if there are any at all. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And that's a shame. I think it's more about your physical safety, just from traffic and things like that. So that's something that you have to consider. But no, by all means, walk to the vet as much as you want. I run every morning around the parks and I walked our kids to the park. They're now all at school, but as toddlers, we went out on our bikes and we did it every day.

So what do you do, subconsciously probably now, every time you leave your house, to make sure that you and your family are safe? What are the sort of the top five things that you're always going to think about or do?

I think the first thing is actually understanding how criminals operate. And once you understand that they're either going to operate on an opportunistic aspect or gathering of information, now you can take a step back and put yourself in positions where you're limiting the amount of information they can gather or making yourself a soft target or understanding how to remove that opportunity. So you'll talk to a lot of people and they all have window bars or security gates at their house or alarm systems or electric fences, but utilizing it when they go out and actually arming their system and making sure that it's fully functional or locking their gate is one of the first things that guys forget to do. So you hear stories of people fishing items out of an open window, managing to squeeze through it. So the first stage we always make sure is when I'm leaving, my house is locked up and I've put on my alarm. That's the first thing. Second thing is just being alert and aware of your surroundings. If you take cognizance of your neighbours and the people in your area or the people that walk their dogs, for example, suddenly it's a lot easier to identify something that doesn't fit or doesn't belong. Then actually making that call, so that's one of the big things CAP says is call in something that is suspicious or doesn't belong. And the first thing is your gut will always tell you. Make that call, let someone who's trained and a professional go and engage and you don't know what you could be preventing. And then it's like the basic discipline.

So people have heard, don't put your handbags or items on your back seat or on your front seat. Don't drive with your windows open and your cell phones in your hands and all that kind of stuff. That creates that opportunity that I was speaking about earlier that says to the criminal, look at me, I'm an easy target and hand through a window they can grab a cell phone or smash a window for the handbag. But if you remove that opportunity from plain sight, well, there's nothing that they can rob. So, discipline when you're driving, alert driving through the areas, keeping your windows and doors locked. Most cars today, I hope, have got aircon fitted. You don't need to utilize the manual aircon, as I say. Keeping valuable items away from in plain sight. Stopping your car a little bit of distance away from the car that's in front of you that, God forbid, you see something happening behind you, in front of you, someone approaching, you have the ability to manipulate and get out the way. It might not even be a criminal aspect it could be an accident that you're preventing. So all of this is really a safety aspect. When you're maybe driving specifically at night, later on at night, approaching red robot slowly, because a moving target is harder to attack than someone's stationary that, you what we all do is we race to the red robot probably to check our cell phone. So rather slow down, approach slowly, looking around, identifying, is there anyone around that is of concern? Have I noticed a car that's maybe following me? And by the time you've, you know, moved into a very slow,

maybe five to 10 kilometre kind of, chugging along, the robot will go green and you're able to move all free. You know, you haven't raced to stop behind the red robot.

And then also just, as I said, not only utilizing our items or physical security aspects that we have, but checking that they work. You know, a lot of us don't know where our panic buttons are in our house, or if we do know, haven't tested that they're actually sending an alert to your relevant on response company, security provider, et cetera. You know, maybe it's also understanding who you should call in an emergency from a medical perspective, from a security perspective, from a fire perspective. You know, having those numbers pre-programmed into your phone. One of the small things I like to do is also keep my phone on me, because if I have to jump out of the car in an emergency or something, I don't want to jump out or leave it. I don't have anything on me or my tool that can connect me to anything, you know.

That's a really good point. I don't carry my phone with me when I'm walking the dogs. I don't have any jewellery on just because I don't want to make myself a target. Should I walk with my phone?

I think the answer practically now is to just have a cheap phone with a prepaid sim in it that you don't mind if it gets dropped or kicked around and put it in a pouch somewhere, okay, and use that to summon help if needs be. That's a good idea though, just, and I also heard to have a separate wallet. So have a separate phone, have a separate wallet, and then just give those two things. I've often wondered if I don't have something to hand over. Is that worse? Is that worse? Just saying, here you go. Yeah.

There's no set rule and I think you're starting to venture, when you start panning like that, you're starting to venture from practicality to paranoia. The other side of the coin is none of us really in today's day and age are walking around with things of much value. Okay, you've got a, you know, I don't know, 500 Rand, a thousand Rand cash or whatever it is. You've got credit cards and ID documents, which are a real pain to get to get replaced. But my view is, you know, God forbid there's an incident and God forbid you are accosted. Okay. And we're a lot about walking in the public space. Just say, Hi guys, here's my phone. Here's my wallet. You know, make it more civil. Hi, my name is Sean. I'll be your robber today. Hi Sean, my name's Sarah.

You joke, but my husband had exactly that. And it was after we'd been in Ellis Park. So it was completely his fault. We were looking for an Uber and he had had way too much to drink and walked off into Hillbrow. The guys came, he was like, I'm sorry, they had a chat about the match and just took his, and he was like, just take the stuff. So it was lovely.

But yeah. I have these rules, right? Be responsible about your security, make a plan, you know, have an alarm system, drive safe routes, make sure you understand the

geography of the area so you don't drive into unsafe areas or walk into Hillbrow like your husband did. But if those those three steps fail, you know, be responsible, be alert, be responsive.

If the crime occurs, the rule all the time is to de-escalate, don't do anything funny. And really, you know, we all have insurance. Our insurance companies are used to paying claims and say, okay, guys, you know, here's my phone, here's my watch. Here's my car. Here's my car. But this is relatively random stuff. We hear about it, you know, we've got this horrible thing that I don't know if it's a South African thing or if it's international but its a suburb WhatsApp group. I was just about to broach that I'm glad you've done it first. Yeah, and as a result we all know about all the crime probably five times over - you can have one thing happening and broken telephone dictates you're going to hear about it five times in five different ways and you're going to be unable to piece it together and most of the time it's a difficult to extract lessons from that right?

We had a great example yesterday where we had this image being circulated from one of our communities of, "watch out these guys are trying to break through gates". Okay. And it went all over social media. Prior to it going through social media we had actually dispatched a team. We had found the guys. We had verified that they worked for one of these gate installation companies and were putting stickers on the gates. Okay. To say, you know, if you need your gate motor to be fixed, call XYZ installations or whatever they were called. The biggest crime there is it's a pain to clean your gate motor after they've put the bloody stickers on. My ex partner had a great expression, it's "just because you're paranoid doesn't mean no one's out to get you". So there's healthy paranoia, but at the same time, you know, guys, these are pretty random things, okay? By all means, when you go walking out, have your walking phone, okay? And use that as part of the plan. Take your jewellery off. Walk in groups. Okay, try you know, if you haven't got the Rottweiler or if you can't dress your Pekingese up as a Rottweiler try and walk together with people but you know, God forbid the incident happens really try and de-escalate it. Okay guys, you don't want anything to do with me. Here's my watch. I haven't got anything else. Okay, take it go Goodbye.

Yeah, I would find that easier than I think my husband would I think. He doesn't want to be a hero, but I think, you know, the testosterone would kick in and he'd go into fight mode rather than flight mode. Yeah. At the risk of annoying one half of your audience, I don't know which one, I think women have got a far more sensible perspective on security than men do, provided they can check their egos at the doors as well. I think ego is almost always the enemy of being safe. Understand. It's just a thing. It's just a watch. Yes. You've had your space invaded Yes, it's not a nice thing. And yes, you're going to need a heal after that. Okay, but really don't compound this by getting angry or by chasing the guys or by swearing at the guys, you know and really, you know more and more we see professional criminals Yes, there is a segment of the criminal population that isn't professional.

And one thing we can touch on just now is the size of the criminal population because it's very small relative to what you think it is. But these guys are professionals generally. They're executing their job. It's their job. Their job is to separate your valuables from you. Just let them do their job. In the same way, if you're doing your job, if you're a call centre operator, you don't want someone to shout and scream at you. They don't want to be shouted and screamed at. I mean, I do feel that some sort of constructive training, some sort of constructive security training, whether it's a very good anti-hijack course, I'm a big fan of, you know, just the physical aspect of self-defense training. And it's not a bad idea to do. It's good, you know, it's some exercise and it makes you feel more empowered because the calmer you feel during an incident, the more you understand what that incident's about, the more chance you've got of being safe. And thank God, you know, most of the incidents we see they end with zero injury other than the emotional trauma of this. It's a little bit traumatic, I'd imagine, to hear this type of stuff. But I understand that these things do happen. They do only happen occasionally and more often than not, everybody's okay afterwards.

Let me just quickly hit on maybe some of the statistics someone who lives abroad will hear about South Africa when it comes to crime. We have a very high murder rate here.

The real horror of South Africa, and the reason I tell people that Africa is not for cissies, is the massive disparity between have and have nots. And the fact that poor people are *poor* here, it's horrendous. People live in horrific environments, and it's not just their physical environments. Access to education is problematic. Access to many basics, the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. People don't have it. And yes, as a result, you know, you've got that sort of pressure cooker effect where the murder rate is high, gender-based violence is unacceptably high. These are more societal issues. And the threat to the haves, the people that are able to secure themselves is far, far smaller than to those of us that live in these horrible conditions in townships, et cetera.

And what would your advice be to make sure your house is secure?

Physical, people and procedures. So looking at physical security, it includes lighting, it includes gates, security bars, high walls, all your kind of clear view fencing, palisade fencing, your technology that comes with that. So electric fence, your security systems, that speaks to the physical security. Procedures is now utilizing the system. So it doesn't help, like I started off saying in the in the beginning, having this fancy alarm system and all these gates and systems if they're not being armed, they're not being maintained. So procedures speaks to utilizing the resources that you have. We like to utilize the term, sweat your assets, you know, utilize that accordingly, be disciplined in it. Procedures also speak to when you're approaching

your house, for example, when I'm driving home now, I'm approaching my driveway, I don't just turn into my gate and stop and wait for the gate to open, because I'm creating an opportunity to be blocked in, to be distracted and to become a victim. So rather I parked parallel to my driveway. I checked now, also this has started before I'm approaching home, that I haven't been followed. There's no one standing around in the street but close to my driveway. A car that stopped too close behind me in front of me, anything of concern. That stopping now parallel to my driveway gives me a chance to look and identify there's no risk. When it's safe to do so, I then open my gate and now I can turn in freely straight drive through, gate closes immediately because you've got it all set on a timer with your beams etc. and you've entered your driveway safely.

So these are kind of procedures that one has to look at. And then people, it's understanding who's coming in and out of your house, being disciplined, but it's understanding these people that are coming to work in your environment, whether it's part-time, full-time or even just contractors. Who are they? Do we understand where they're coming from? Are they reliable? Are they legitimate? And you know who I'm letting into my property is a big thing. Who I'm letting look after my kids or have access to understanding how my systems operate and work. So it's also procedures around how much do the staff know of what goes on and the happenings of inside the house and how much they have access to because that can be a big criminal gain if they are coerced into giving out information that they don't even know. So those would be the three things really that I'd focus on.

If somebody's just arrived, that's a lot to take in. So where can they go to get help?

So the first thing is like from our side, obviously, engage us. We've got professionals that will one, come out and look at your property from a security aspect and say, okay, they look at potential weak points and they also understand what threats you would face in that environment at this property and the general modus operandi or crime trends at the time and design that solution and help you implement that. Okay. From a procedural point of view, focus more on not what to do if you become the victim of a crime, more on how not to become a victim. And then finally, from a people perspective, we help a staff vetting process. So understand the people that are going to work in the environment with the use of the SAPS, doing criminal backgrounds and checks and profiling and understanding, is this person a risk? Is there something to be concerned about? Have they ever been flagged potentially, involved in an incident, who they're engaging with? And you know, because that's your first step is, is there something to be of concern? And if they're cleared, then now we can also help equip that person to be a resource to us. There are additional eyes and ears for us in our communities.

You mentioned the internal security gates. This is something completely new for me coming to South Africa. It's a gate or like a shutter that will come down and will

separate the sleeping area generally from the rest of the house. So that people will lock them or bring the shutters down at night. First house I lived in, we had one. I think we used it once. Do you recommend people use them and do you recommend that people have them?

Yes, I think it goes back to again the principle of creating as many boundaries as possible, as many layers between you and the criminal. For me, I have a passive that we're talking about the indoor alarm sensor in my passage that looks at that gate and I have a really strong security gate. We lock it at night. Our alarm is armed and we discipline that the beams are active while we're inside.

You set your beams as soon as you come into the house or?

Once I'm inside the house my beams are active. I mean, today's technology is amazing. You can utilize a remote or your cell phone. So further to talk about that discipline, and like I said, it has to become a way of life. I box at 5 AM in the morning, I leave my house, and as I drive out, I use my cell phone app to arm my alarm back into sleep mode. My wife's at home now, you know, someone's seen me leave. They know that the big scary husband isn't at home, and she's vulnerable, but I've put it back. The alarm is now armed, everything's active so she's back in sleep mode - just means that certain zones have been removed so you can move around. But that's the kind of discipline that we use. So I use my alarm all the time. I can check that it's been activated. I can check that I can separate the different modes, et cetera. But so yes, when I'm at home, my beams get on. But the moment we're done having dinner or watching TV in the lounge, we move on, we lock that security gate.

If you've got that shutter, definitely utilize it. Because God forbid in that odd case where guys have got through all those layers we've discussed. That physical security barrier cutting you off from the rest of the house is that final layer of safety for the guy. So I'm a big fan of that kind of like safe area or safe room. I think we would recommend it because the difference between a trespassing, a burglary and a home invasion, it's a fine line, okay? A trespassing is someone in your property that aren't breaking, burglary, they're breaking and steal something, and a home invasion, you come face to face with them and they'll threaten you with a weapon.

The third is what we want to stop at all costs and that gate is the difference between a burglary and a home invasion potentially. Statistically how many crimes occur? The average home in the sort of let's call it more privileged area of Johannesburg will have you know the average family will face roughly 23 incidents per thousand households. So that's not necessarily a break in, that's a total number of incidents. So it's somewhere between 23 and 27, and that's extrapolated from SAP statistics and census statistics. But that could be a trespass. That could be a trespass. And it could just be someone who's opportunistically seen a phone, grabbed it, and taken it. Within cap areas, so the best performing CAP areas, that number's about three and

the worst performing cap areas the number's about 15. And it depends on the specific area and on the specific threats. And like you say, you know, there isn't in that statistic a differentiation between a murder or a theft of the street number on your front wall. That sort of puts into perspective, I think. I like that number because it puts it, that 25 out of a thousand really just puts it into perspective.

Do you recommend people have big dogs?

I mean, if they like big dogs, why not? I mean, Lloyd has a dog called a Boerboel. I don't know if anybody... Oh, they're gorgeous. So I have two little yappers. Well, mine are much nicer than Lloyd's. But no, look, so there was a study done in the sort of mid -2000s where the researcher went to interview convicted felons and said to them, what are the thing that you're most worried about? And most of them said a small dog.

We're a nation of dog lovers and you need to look after your pets as well. So poisoning of pets is a reality. It's a horrific reality. So yes, a small dog is fantastic. Big dog is fantastic. Just give them love, look after them and let them sleep inside. Outside sleeping dogs are a no-no in our world. And if they *have* to be outside sleeping dogs, make sure that they're away from the front wall.

When we were looking to buy a house and estate agent said to me... We went to one house and it had a built-in safe. And she said, "if you buy this house, get rid of that because a safe is a target. Don't ever have a safe in your house". Would you recommend a safe or does it make the house a target? That safe discussion is just like, it is the typical paranoia. Okay. One needs to trust the people that are in your home. If you do have a safe, have the key. Don't have a locked safe. Don't have a safe. Cause if you, if you do, God forbid, have that home invasion and you're told to open the safe and you said, I just don't have the key. OK, they're going to think you're lying and that, you know, there's a whole bunch of gold bars in the safe. So by all means, have a safe. You know, if you if you have a firearm, for example, you legally need a safe. But have a safe, keep the valuables in the safe, do whatever you need. But but it's it's actually less of a security benefit and more practically a place to just make sure that the stuff is just locked away. But no, there's no need to be that paranoid.

Okay, another thing. Is there any type of car, someone said don't get a Volkswagen. Any particular car that's the target for hijacking?

I mean, I hope no one at Volkswagen is listening. Cars that are stolen most and cars that are hijacked most are the cars that are sold most. So because white cars are sold most, white cars are going to be the most hijacked cars, okay? And because Toyota's or Volkswagen's sell the most, they're going to be the most stolen or hijacked cars. Yes, there are cars that are higher up on the hit list, typically 4x4s.

Double cab, we call them backies, which is a double cab pick-up truck. Those are higher up on the list. However, Yeah, you know the cars that you want to drive, generally other people want to drive, so it's stealable, right?

Is there any truth behind the Toyota Fortuner's because the taxis, they have the same parts as taxis? Or is that a myth? No, so there's certain cars, my goodness I'm going to annoy the people at Toyota as well. No, there are certain cars that are much easier to steal. So the cars that are easier to steal, it's not necessarily a hijack. So hijacking is quite rare, okay? It's theft of motor vehicles and there's certain vehicles, one's a Ford, one's a Toyota, one's a Volkswagen, okay, there's all three of them, so I can annoy them all evenly, that they do have security vulnerabilities, or there's a little, you know, cottage industry and, you know, making little systems to override the anti-theft systems on those vehicles so they're easier to steal, okay. So, I mean, this is a South African joke, is that there's certain hotels in South Africa that if you go there, and you're in either a Toyota Fortuner or Hilux or a Ford Ranger or a VW Polo, they'll make you park in an ultra high security section of the parking lot, okay, where there's more guarding. Now crime exists because of crooks, not because people drive VW Polos. But yes, be sensible about it. Don't park on the streets if you can.

You'll often see in car parks, beware car jamming. Can you just explain what that is?

When you try to lock your car, so you've got the keys are all fancy today, they're automatic locking with the immobilizers, et cetera. All it does is that you lock your car and the guys have blocked that signal so your car isn't locked. And now instead of them having to try to jimmy the door open or slide something under to break open that lock, they open your open door and yeah, they've got systems to override technology or hot wire cars you've heard and they take it off. So that's what car jamming is. All they don't even take your car. All they've done is they've noticed that you've put your laptop bag in the boot on the back seat. You think your car's locked and now they open the door and once you've walked off into the centre, they take your items. So again, comes down to awareness. So when I'm parking my car, who's around me? Does it look like there's cars with people sitting in or loitering around? Again, that's out of place. And then it's making sure that when I've locked my car, don't lock it walking off. Stand next to your car, lock the car, make sure that it is locked. And again, now today it's actually a bit difficult with the fancy cars, because as you put your hand on the handle, it unlocks again. But there's ways around that you can hold your key further away, but make sure that you've locked the doors, you've stood next to your car, you've locked it. There's ways of checking some of the fancy cars, it beeps after a double click, or your mirrors fold, those are kind of things that you check for when you're parking. And it's a reality, because it's a... It's an easy one, you know, everyone walks off, thinks it's done and come back to no car or goodbye to my items.

I mean, I hope the message has been, you know, and what CAP firmly believes, is that crime can be beaten. And when you talk a lot about crime and you give people advice on crime, obviously crime is front of mind. But really, you know, it is the sort of threat that one can mitigate and one can protect oneself against. Well, the one thing we haven't touched on is road closures and...not just road closures, but the whole community aspect and the way that South Africans have responded to crime. And we made fun of the street WhatsApp groups, but the strength of the community and it's quite heart warming to see how communities have risen to this challenge. Obviously in an estate environment, it happens, you know, by default because you're part of a body corporate or a legal structure that forces you to be part of it. But in most of the communities you've spoken about, whether it's Craighall Park, Glenhazel is a great example, Norwood is a great example, Parkhurst is a fantastic example. These are really wonderful communities where you know citizens and patriots have said "well let's build something better and let's challenge this constructively." So yeah I guess it's to be part of that you know is my advice and but take it with a pinch of salt because just like every community you've got, like every village needs an idiot right? so you're going to have the people that are that are a little bit out there, okay? And you're gonna have the people that are really constructive. But I think participating in that structure is one of the particular joys of Johannesburg.

One other thing is we mentioned walking and you said, great. Walking in Delta Park, walking in Emmarentia, walking in James & Ethel Grey, I was always advised to go between 6am and 9 am and then 4pm and 6 pm. Have you got any kind of helpful tips on walking in public spaces?

Spaces that are utilised are spaces that are safer, okay? So use the spaces when they're being utilised. But if your spidey sense is tingling, listen to it, because you know, the open spaces potentially make you easy prey for an amateur criminal.

I think there's also one thing that we haven't touched on. It's the number of criminals. What we understand is that there are far fewer criminals than we think there are. So roughly 300 suspects are responsible for roughly 70 % of the violent crime in Johannesburg. Okay? And yes, it's a rotating 300 suspects, but at any given time, there are only 300 active violent criminals responsible for a vast majority of the crime, which means crime can be beaten. If we thought we were...you know, really trying to fight an unwinnable fight. We wouldn't be here because that's just dumb. But we very much believe that this is something that can be won.

We've talked a lot about the negative things, the worst things that can go wrong in Johannesburg. What is the best thing about Johannesburg? Why do you still live here? Why do you love it? Why are you here?

For me, it's just all about the people. It's the magic and the resilience of the people of Johannesburg. It's not a beautiful city, but the human beings make it a beautiful

place. And these little magical interactions you have, you know, with the guy on the street corner that you can have a little chat to, or these unexpected, you know, driving up Bompas Road and you see the sun in one direction or the moon the other direction, it can be quite a beautiful place from that perspective.

See, I disagree. I think it's one of the most beautiful cities. It's so underrated. Like, your office window, you have the most magnificent view - just green, just trees and soon to be purple trees and just the beautiful parks, the spruit, you know, the places you can go are absolutely stunning that you don't get in many other cities. And I'm just going to say a spruit is a river.

I ride motorbikes and it's that, it's the views and the places you can go and you know, Sean mentioned as well for me, it's that sense of community and the amazing stuff that we're exposed to and we've seen it through the communities as well is, you know, you hear of God forbid a tragedy where someone's house is burned down and within 15, 20 minutes people have arrived with all various types of clothing and shoes to help the guys. There's a meal roster that's gone out to make sure that the, you know, that family's fed for the next seven nights and guys have arrived. That sense of community and just upliftment and that's something that's special. And you see that, you know, everyone's going through their own levels of stress or concerns or financial problems or difficulties, but your problems aren't as bad as the next person. And when you see like how a small gesture of kindness can go a long way, that speaks volumes of the South African community. And I think one of the reasons I'm still here and one of the reasons also, you know, I've dedicated my life and career to CAP is because we know that we're making a difference. And for me, that's been one of the biggest and most rewarding aspects of this whole journey.

That was New in Town Johannesburg with me Hannah Pirnie and me Sarah Passmore. Follow us on Instagram at [newintown.podcasts](https://www.instagram.com/newintown.podcasts) and for more information on what we've been talking about go to [movingtosouthafrica.com](https://www.movingtosouthafrica.com). Next time I'm going to tell you everything you need to know about schools.

*** All information was correct at the time of recording**