



Episode 23: No Commission is Worth Your Life

Let's be honest – REALTORS face an ever-changing industry. With emerging tech, growing trends, and a booming market, it's vital to keep up. Join me, Gilbert Gonzalez, CEO for the San Antonio Board of Realtors, as I get real with experts on what REALTORS need to know about this industry. It's time to get real.

GG ([00:23](#)):

With September being REALTOR Safety month, it's a good time to bring awareness to such an important topic around safety when showing homes. I want to welcome Janice Tisdale. Janice is a local REALTOR who had a very scary experience and is here to share her story with us. So, Janice, thank you for joining us. Janice, we have the benefit of you telling this story to our new members at orientation, but we wanted to take a chance and just reshare it with all of our members on our podcast. So, if you wouldn't mind, will you tell us the experience you had that unfortunate day way back when?

JT ([00:59](#)):

Sure. Well, on December 23rd, 2010, I went to show a house from, in Tara Mont and my client was a client that had come from my husband's business partner. So, at that point I felt, you know, I shouldn't be afraid or alarmed, and I had actually shown him these houses in November. So, we went to look, I met him at like 1:30. He said his plane was running late and so I met him about 1:30 in front of the house and he said he wanted to go see another house. So, we ran over there real quick. And then he said, now let's go back to this one. So, we went back to the house, and we walked around, and we just walked for I guess, we were in the house for over 45 minutes. And I just started to feel very uncomfortable because he kept trying to get, get me to get in front of him.

JT ([02:02](#)):

And the one thing I never do is let a client get behind me because it puts you in a real awkward situation because they can always attack you when they're behind you. So, I would stay out in the hall, and this was a really large house, like 6,000 square feet. And finally, we went down the stairs and he went back into the master bedroom, and he stayed in there a very long time. And my 16-year-old had been calling and going, Mom, when are we, when are we going Christmas shopping? So finally, I just yelled out at him and I said, Emilio, I have to go. I have another client to show a house too. And he finally came out of that master bedroom, and we were walking around, and I had, while he was in the master bedroom, I just started to feel very uncomfortable.

JT ([02:54](#)):

The hair on the back of my neck was standing up, and I walked to the front door, and I opened it because I thought I really needed an escape route because I was really feeling uncomfortable. And seriously, at that point, I should've just gone to my car, gotten in it and driven off. It was a vacant house.

And what could he steal? He couldn't steal anything, and you can always come back and lock it up. But it was a million-dollar house two days before Christmas. And you know, in real estate we think, wow, what a commission, you know? Well, it's not always about the commission. It's a lot about your life. And I am really lucky that I'm here telling a story again today. So, as we stood in the kitchen, I said, I really have to go. So, we walked to the front door and this house had like eight steps

JT (03:53):

you went down and then, a landing at the top. And he started down the steps. Well, I turned to my back because we're always vulnerable because we're always turning our back to pick up a lockbox or to, to go, you know, to lock the door. And this was the old-fashioned combination locks. So, as I went to pick up the lock box, he pulled out a, they call it a tire thumper. Sorry, I lost my words, a tired thumper, and it was 16 inches long with the three-inch metal tip. And he whacked me over the head, and I fell forward, and I turned around and I said some really unkind words to him, which I won't repeat on the podcast. But if you know, Janice, you know what I said, anyway, I said, why did you do this?

JT (04:51):

And he said, I needed \$4,000. Well, you know, I don't know about you, but I, I think I had \$4 in my purse that day. And I asked him to call my husband or to call Stevie, who was the person who had recommended him to me. And he goes, no, I can't do that. And so, we stood on that porch for 45 minutes while I was bleeding profusely from the head. And at three different times, people drove by. Once, was a lady in a golf cart and he picked up the tire thumper and said, if you say one word, I will hit you again. Well, I let the lady in the golf cart go by and then a UPS truck came. And so, I had a jacket on my head, and I just raised my jacket and just kind of twirled it, trying to make a motion at the UPS person, but he kept driving by.

JT (05:50):

And then in a little bit, I mean, the time, it's like you don't really remember the timeframe. You know, I just know it was 45 minutes and here come some kids in a car. So I, he had sunglasses on and he wouldn't take them off. And I just turned around and waved my jacket. And my head, my hair was really blonde back then. And so, my head was soaked in blood and these kids drove on by. And then I, you know, I said to him, why don't you get a piece of paper, go to your car? I'll write a note that says I tripped and fell. You didn't, you didn't hurt me. And my husband will believe it because I'm such a klutz. So finally, he went to his car, he wanted to take me to the hospital. And I told him he would have to kill me before I got in the car with him.

JT (06:47):

I was not getting in his car. And so he went to his car and when he went to his car, I watched him open the door and sit down in the seat. So, I had been trying to unlock my car with my car keys, which were in my pocket. He had already taken my phone away from me. At one point, he had taken my phone away from me and I had actually called my husband on the golf course, but God forbid he answered the phone. Then I called my sister, and she laid the phone down and she had the whole conversation recorded. So anyway, but nobody is paying attention to me. And so, I started to run down the stairs, and I just didn't realize how weak I was or how out of shape I was. And I got to the corner and here he came, and he was, he grabbed my arm, and he was dragging me across the street.

JT (07:49):

And here come these kids in that car and they slammed on their brakes. And I started to scream, help me, help me. He's trying to kill me. And five teenagers bounded out of this car and four were boys and one was a girl. And one of the boys grabbed, you know, went to grab me away from him. And he said to

the boy, he goes, I'm only trying to protect myself. She just robbed me. And the little kid, his name is Sean, he goes, whatever dude. It was just so funny at that point, it was hysterical. So, they put me in their car, and I had to sit on the lap of one of the kids, because there were five kids in a Honda civic, a little tiny Honda civic. And we jumped in the car, and they said, we know right where a police officer is and only teenagers know where the cops are.

JT (08:44):

So anyway, we went, started back down Babcock and we didn't even see him get in his car and we're going down Babcock. And the Lutheran High School at Camp Bullis and Babcock, they said, there's a policeman right there. And so, we pulled in and I got out of the car and went over to the policeman and said, I have a client that just tried to hurt me. You know, he could tell my head was bleeding terribly. And I, I stopped, and I looked up and I don't know why I stopped, but I looked up and I go, oh my God, there he is in that greenish gray Mercedes, because a truck had gotten behind us and then he was behind the pickup truck. So, I don't think he saw us turn into the school. And so, the police officer took off and caught him right at the entrance to the La Cantera Golf Course.

JT (09:41):

And then the kids called my husband and met my husband to you know, so I could have a ride. And, but the funny thing is, I think this is one of the funniest things, as the kids said to me, they go, well, I said, what are y'all doing here? And they go, oh, we're filming a commercial. And they said, are you thirsty? And I said, oh yes, I'm so thirsty. I think my adrenaline was just going crazy. And they go, here, have a red bull. I'm going, oh my God. I had never had a red bull in my life. And I drank this red bull. It wasn't like I wasn't hyped up enough, you know, so I had this red bull and then you know, my husband met them and then we went back to the house to get my car.

JT (10:31):

And that was quite a sight because you know, the police had brought him back to the house where I was attacked. And anyway, so, you know, it was a really scary experience. And the thing I take away the most from it is that a commission is always not worth it. You know, when, when I got so scared in the kitchen and I went and opened that door, I should've just left because I could have come back. And I didn't do that because you know, who wouldn't want a million-dollar, sell a million-dollar house at Christmas time and it was supposed to be cash. And so, it would have been a wonderful thing, but my life was definitely much more important. And,

GG (11:22):

You know, I think it goes; you talk a little bit about how you started to have that uncomfortable feeling. What was it? What, was it something he said, was it the way he was acting? Like, where was it that all of a sudden you knew this situation has turned. This is not a man looking to buy a house, he's looking to harm me?

JT (11:41):

Well, when I first drove up, his banker was supposed to have been with him and as any good REALTOR, I had Googled him, and I Googled his name. My kids had both gone to boarding school in the east where he supposedly was from, and I couldn't find anything about him. And he was supposed to be worth \$1.9 billion dollars and he wasn't worth anything. And so, when you take into consideration all these things, when I got into the house that day and he had no banker with him, and then we went to the other house first and then came back to this house and he just stayed and stayed. And I had actually written him a contract for this house, the month before. And I told him he had to get me the earnest money and proof of funds. And he had never done any of those things.

JT (12:38):

And I was so busy in December. I just didn't really have time to chase him around, you know, but someone who wants to buy a million-dollar house usually does those things for you. And I just couldn't find out anything good about them. And I had spoken to Stevie the night before about this man and Stevie said, oh, you just don't want to show a house on Christmas. Well, that wasn't true. And when he kept trying to get behind me in the house that day, I just really, you just, I mean, I wish I knew what makes you have that feeling, but I think it's just a God given sense that God gives us. And I was just feeling awful. And that's why I stood in the kitchen while he went into the master. And I actually thought that tired thumper came from the pull-down staircase that you have in some houses that have the long wooden sticks, but he was actually an 18-wheel truck driver. And he had it hidden in his boots with his dress pants on, so it didn't show.

GG (13:46):

So, he had that thing with him the whole time. It's not like he went to the car. He had this intent from the get-go.

JT (13:51):

Right. He, and that's why I think he got so much time in prison because it was a planned attack. In the end, he got 60 years in prison, and he has actually appealed the sentencing twice and has been turned down. And he was 74 when he attacked me. And now he's seven, eight, almost 83 years old. So

GG (14:17):

We're hoping he stays in prison for a long time. And they later found stuff in his car that even caused you, in retrospect, you know, now it was not just harm or robbery. There was a greater motive going on.

JT (14:30):

Right? And his car was, in his pocket was a seven-inch knife and in his car was a 14-inch knife. He had plastic bags, he had rope and twine. And then the day before he had gone to the center there in that subdivision and gotten a plan of the subdivision. So, he knew where all, there weren't very many houses. Then. They had had a parade of homes, so, he, he had intent to harm me.

GG (14:59):

This, this person came to you as a referral. And most people, I think when you get a referral, it's, there's some level of confidence with the person who's coming. Do you change now the way you prescreen clients? Like if it's a referral, do you just assume I've never met you before? So, I'm going to do some extra research on you.

JT (15:20):

Well, I do extra research now and I did do a lot of research on him, but then I always tell my husband, I go, well, I guess maybe you had a motive in this too. And so, but anyway, we've been married 52 years now. So, I guess he didn't really have a motive, but I research people and, you know, I used to do phone duty all the time. I do a little now, but I haven't done it, but now I've started to do it again. But I don't just jump in the car because I kind of decided that I'm an important person. And if you want to make an appointment with me, you have to make an appointment just like you do with a doctor or lawyer. So, someone calls in and says, oh, I need to see 1111 Maine in 15 minutes. I don't do that anymore. So, and if they really want to see that house, they'll appreciate it. So

GG (16:19):

Now, with knowing all that stuff was in the back of his car, he expected you to pass out that first hit, And you survived.

JT (16:28):

And that's why I think he was so shocked when I said, what the, did you do this for? You know, and my husband's theory behind all of this is that when I had gone to write a contract with him, I had met him at a restaurant over off Broadway. I had on diamond earrings, my diamond watch and a Rolex, and my husband thinks I had my jewelry on. Well, on that day of the showing, as I was driving down Babcock, I took off all my jewelry and hid it in the car. And that's the one thing I tell the ladies, don't wear your jewelry. So, once he saw that I didn't have any jewelry on, it wasn't like instinct cash, you know, like he could go pawn it or whatever. And he wanted to take me to the bank, and I go, well, I can only get \$400 out of my bank and one time a day. And I think he was really shocked,

GG (17:28):

You know and I think it's, it was 45 minutes that you were there with him. And I don't know if you picked up the REALTOR in you obviously try to negotiate your way out. Right. And talking to him and how else you can still go. I won't tell anyone. You were making a statement. How did you decide to do that?

JT (17:46):

Well, I was a flight attendant for Pan Am. So, we went through a lot of training about hijackers and whatever. And I've been on a hijacked plane, and I've been on a plane where the galley caught on fire. I've been on a plane where the galley door opened during takeoff. So, I, I just happened to be that kind of a person. If there's an accident on the plane, I'm the one, that's the calm person and can, where a lot of people just fall apart. But at one point I did start to cry, and I said to myself, put on your big girl panties and get over this. You can do this. You can talk him out of this. And that's what I did. And I did, you know, but you know, some people don't have that ability and I do. I'm just good during a crisis.

GG (18:43):

Now, I love that you are able to laugh and joke about it now, and I'm sure at the time, it wasn't scary. But you made the comment about how your husband wasn't paying attention. And then your sister recorded the whole thing. Those, those are great opportunities, which I think a lot of people use now and say, I'm going to go somewhere. If you get a call from me, be aware. Have you, has that changed the way you show houses now?

JT (19:10):

Right, because I mean, now if I go to show a house, I call my husband when I leave. And I call my husband when I get there, and he drives me nuts.

GG (19:18):

What do you mean he drives you nuts?

JT (19:19):

So, the first year he didn't let me out of his sight. He went to every showing, but now we just have communication. And also on my phone, I have real alert of, I have several things that I can just push and touch. And that's what every REALTOR should have. Because even if you're a guy, you can find yourself in this situation. You, you are not exempt from being hit over the head or attack. And a lot of guys think they are, but you're not exempt from it.

GG (19:54):

A gun is a gun, and if you're not prepared.

JT (19:56):

Right. And, and I do have a gun now so, and after that, several of my husband's friends go, okay, we're taking your wife, we're going to teach her how to shoot and we're going to get her a license. And so that's what my husband's friends did. Cause my husband doesn't do guns. So that's what we did. And you know, I just think you have to be comfortable carrying a gun, but you need to carry an alarm on your phone, or you need to carry mace or something. You have to be prepared. And I think you should, if you're not comfortable showing someone a house, ask a friend because you're less likely to be attacked. If you have someone else with you

GG (20:37):

Again, following the instincts. So you, you mentioned a firearm and some people aren't comfortable with that. What are the different ways since then, I mean, you've done a lot of, of speaking about REALTOR safety that you would encourage new REALTORS, established REALTORS to take care of themselves.

JT (20:57):

I think it's real important to take a self-defense class. You need to learn to protect yourself because you can protect yourself quite easily. If you just take these classes. And I just think it's real important for women in this industry to take safety classes, a self-defense class and learn how to protect yourself. So, I think that's real important.

GG (21:22):

What are those apps that you recommend?

JT (21:25):

Well one is safe alert and real alert. If you just go to TAR, put in safety alerts, they'll give you a whole list of them.

GG (21:33)

Okay, so we'll look for a TAR one.

JT (21:35):

When I go, just show a house now, I never parked in the driveway because you get yourself blocked in. That day I was in a circle drive, and I was headed out, but it's much better to park in the street. Let your clients park in the driveway. I always let my clients go first because I don't want them behind me. When I'm opening the door, I always ask them to stand back so that I can get the door open. If, if I get there first, I open the door, but I never go into a house without my clients because you never know what lurks behind those doors. And so, I just feel like it's it's just a safety matter. I just don't do it. And when I walk into a house, I kind of scan around and go, how can I get out of here if I need it to. Like that day I went and unlocked the front door so I would have an escape route. When I'm doing an open house, I usually let the neighbors know that's what I'm doing. I think that's real important. You know, I always let someone know where I'm going. I just think it's real important to let someone know where you're going.

GG (22:48):

Do you think REALTORS are seen as easy targets?

JT (22:49)

Yes.

GG (22:50)

Why is that?

JT (22:52):

Well, I think people have the, they think that we're rich because we sell a million-dollar house, and they don't really realize how much our commission gets cut down to. So, they think we're rich and we're by ourselves. So, you know, we're showing houses, even if the house is occupied, the people who live there aren't at home. So, I just think they feel like we're easy targets and that no one knows where we are. And I, I usually don't put people in my car anymore. 10 years ago I did, but I don't anymore unless they happen to be a relocation. And I pray to God, my company deals with real relocation companies. So sometimes I have to put them in my car, but usually someone follows me. So, I just think we just have to be careful. We're very vulnerable and I think you need to dress appropriately, and you need to have on flat shoes and not four-inch-high heels, because you might have to run. And I did that day. I ran, but I wasn't in very good shape.

GG (24:03):

Well, we're glad that you got to the point to where those kids who I believe are like children. Now

JT (24:10):

They are, I have five new children at my house. Let's see. I think two are married now. And you know, they call me on the phone, and you know, just about three months ago, one of them called and said, Hey, I'm thinking about becoming a REALTOR. What do you think? You know? So, they're, they're good kids.

GG (24:30):

If you were going to give any last advice to our members on how to be safe, or what is the best advice you give to any new REALTOR about their safety?

JT (24:41):

Well, I think you have to be aware of your surroundings of the people you're dealing with. And I always take a picture of the license plate when they pull up, they, they don't know what I'm doing, but you need to do something. And I, I think what every REALTOR should do, which we don't do is, when you have a new client, you need to have them come into your office, fill out a form, get their driver's license, because you can't even show up an apartment in San Antonio without giving up your driver's license. So, I just think you need to be aware. And if you're not feeling comfortable, ask someone to go with you. Call me, I'll go with you. You know? I, I just think we need to be more cautious and it's just not as, as easy as we think it is, you know, there are a lot of weirdos out there

GG (25:35):

And, and you said it before, and I just want to reiterate it. That no commission is worth your life.

JT (25:41):

No commission. I mean, even that day, I should have just bolted from that house, and I didn't do it. Now I would have bolted, you know? So, you just have to be careful, especially when you show, when you do an open house, you should let neighbors know when you're at a house by yourself. You, you know, you just, you just have to be really aware of what people are doing.

GG (26:07):

Janice, I want to say thank you for sharing your story with our members today, as well as for sharing them, sharing your story with our members every month at every orientation that we were having for so many years. We greatly appreciate your service to the association and the board and helping. I believe, that your presentation has saved lives. So, I thank you for that.

JT (26:31):

Oh, you're welcome. And I know it has, because people come up to me and say, oh my gosh, you're Janice. And I just want you to know that I thought about something you said, and I really think it saved, saved me from getting in trouble. So, it's been my therapy for the last 10 years. And so, I'm just happy to do this. So, thank you.

GG (26:56):

Thank you everybody for listening and stay tuned for our next podcast.

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