

CRIMINALS DON'T REST IN A CRISIS

THE LONG SHADOW OF THIS YEAR'S CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC HAS ENCOURAGED US ALL TO APPRECIATE THE POWER OF COMMUNITY SPIRIT AND THE NEED TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR OURSELVES AND OUR LOVED ONES. REGRETTABLY, THAT BRITISH RESOLVE DOES NOT EXTEND TO THE CRIMINAL FRATERNITY, WHICH HAS BECOME EVEN MORE ACTIVE AS JOB SECURITY AND THE ECONOMY HAVE WEAKENED. IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF EXPERT COLUMNS ON HOW JEWELLERS CAN PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM FRAUD AND THEFT, ANDY FAIRBANKS, CEO OF UK PROTECTION OUTLINES MEASURES TO CONSIDER RIGHT NOW.



In this first column it would be difficult not to address the situation across the industry of the recent coronavirus pandemic and how that has affected the security of retailers and brands alike.

Whilst we await the mass impending doom of redundancies that has been promised for months by the media, I will be reflecting on where we are now, what the future looks like and what are we preparing for in the coming months and the run up to Christmas.

There was a steady stream of attempted criminal cases reported throughout lockdown along with increased levels over overnight burglary to boutiques that had been closed.

An experienced group believed to be from Eastern Europe have been targeting stores by tunnelling in with power tools via adjacent buildings.

These offences continue with no substantive criminal charges yet to note however they do share the same modus operandi as burglary's seen some years ago in the UK.

Above

*Andy Fairbanks,
CEO of UK
Protection Ltd and a
former policeman.*

Fraud was a particular feature of lockdown from basic card fraud attempts at online purchases to persons assuming the identity of well-known retailers claiming they have unicorn pieces in stock with no waiting list. Luckily, seasoned clients did not fall for this scam and transfer money however some of the frauds were more complex in their nature and set over a more protracted period using the confidence gaining method of entrapment.

Since brands and retailers opened their boutiques and welcomed back clients there has again been a steady flow of watch snatches nationwide with the latest trend using young children to hold the item and run from the store to awaiting accomplices. Whereas before certain brands were the favoured choice it would appear all brands are now a target for these snatches.

With the potential for social and economic turmoil to increase over the coming months it is important to ensure the awareness of crime is not forgotten. The high streets are quieter, and this makes the

movement of mobile crime gangs that much easier. There is also less foot traffic which again lends itself favourably to moped enabled crime and other robbery offences which we have seen a downturn of in recent times.

As with all crime there are certain factors that are common throughout. With our industry key times of the day often play a role. Opening & closing times are always an increased risk period, situational awareness of staff is key to this. Morning opening staff are just starting their day so not always fully alert in their tasks and evening closing can often be dark with staff tired from their day and keen to leave.

Over the coming months I will be sharing tips on how to protect your business better and more effectively.

I will dispel some myths and do my best to keep you all up to date with the latest crime trends and anything new hitting the high streets.

For now, I wish you all the very best in trading and safety.