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Open Invite to Your Burglars

Successful burglars have lots in common — home owners who unwittingly give invitations to robbery. Here's how thieves thank you for your generosity.



Leaving boxes by the curb alongside the trash lets burglars know you've got new toys inside.

You come home to an open front door, a ransacked house, and missing valuables. How did a burglar know you'd be gone? How did they get in?

In these 10 thank-you notes, your friendly neighbourhood burglars share advice on how to stop lending them a helping hand.

1. Thanks for the ladder!

Call me a social climber if you will, but I did discover a ladder in your back yard. Thank you for leaving it where I could lean it against your home and easily reach a second-story window. I really love it when upper story openings aren't wired to a home security system!

So, if you want to keep me out, store your ladder in

the basement or a locked garage. And call your security company to wire upper-story windows into your alarm system.

*Vertically yours,
A rising star*

2. Loved your trash

Can't tell you how much fun I have driving around neighbourhoods on trash day (especially after big gift holidays) when the empty boxes on the curb reveal what wonderful new toys you have. Your thoughtfulness made it possible for me to land a new laptop and a flat-screen television in one easy trip to your home!

Next time, break down the boxes and conceal them in the recycling or trash bins.

*Happy shopping!
Curb side Cruiser*

3. Dear Can't-Get-Around-to-It

Recently, I noticed you hadn't trimmed trees and shrubs around your home, so I knew I'd have a wonderful place to hide while I worked to break into your home. I really can't thank you enough for all the great new things I grabbed.

Next time, trim back bushes and trees near windows and doors. Make sure entry points to your home are easily visible from the street — I much prefer to work in private! While you're at it, install motion-sensor lighting. I'm scared of bright lights!

*Cordially,
The Tree Lover*

4. Nice Plain Door!

I was sincerely relieved to find your back door was a plain wood-panel door. I had no trouble kicking it in (my knees appreciate how easy that was!) Imagine how silly I felt when I discovered that your windows weren't locked anyway.

You may want to take a cue from your neighbour and install steel-wrapped exterior doors with deadbolts on all your entries. And be sure your windows are locked when you're away.

*All the best,
Buster Door*

5. Bad reflection on you.

You'd be surprised how many home owners position a mirror in their entry hall so I can see from a window if the alarm system is armed. (Yours wasn't, but I'm guessing you know that by now!) Thanks for taking a lot of pressure off of me.

A little free advice: Relocate the mirror so your alarm system isn't visible if someone else would peer through a window.

*Fondly,
Mr. Peeper*

6. The telltale grass

Wow, isn't it amazing how fast the grass grows these days? I swung by now and then and noticed your lawn was uncut, newspapers were piling up on the front steps, and your shades were always closed. To me, that's an open invitation.

Next time, hire someone you trust to mow regularly, pick up around the doorstep, open and close various window shades, and turn different lights on and off (or put a few on timers). One more thing: Lock any car you leave in the driveway, or I can use your garage door opener to get in quickly.

*Best,
Your Trip Advisor*

7. Getting carried away

Many thanks for putting your valuables into an easy-to-carry safe that I could carry right out your back door. (Nice jewellery, and thank you for the cash!)

You may want to invest in a wall safe, which I rarely attempt to open. Or, rent a lock box at your bank.

*With appreciation,
Mr. Safe and Not-So-Sound*

8. Dear BFF

Thanks for alerting a professional acquaintance of mine via your social network that you were away for the week in Puerto Vallarta, having the time of your life. Me? I enjoyed a very relaxing visit to your home with no pressure of being caught.

If only you had known that posting comments and photos of your trip on social networks is fine — but do that after you return so you won't broadcast your absence!

*Sincerely,
Cyber Savvy*

9. Tag, you're it!

Where are you? When you use popular geo-tracking apps, such as FourSquare and Glympse, I might know if you're not home. Web sites such as www.pleaserobme.com help me keep track of your whereabouts.

If you prefer that I not visit your home, be careful about geo-tagging. But, otherwise, thank you for the loot!

— *Just Tagging Along*

10. Thanks for the appointment

Thanks for inviting me into your home to view the laptop you wanted to sell. I do apologize for the scare I gave you when I took it (and your purse).

Did you know that some large cities are averaging one so-called "robbery by appointment" per day? If you want to sell high-ticket items to strangers, I suggest you arrange to meet at the parking lot of your local police station. I definitely won't show up, and you'll still have your valuables (and your purse!)

*Regards,
A Tough Sell*

To find out more and get your home inspected call your local independent property inspector on **1800 17 88 22** or email info@ipi.net.au

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