

Jan.
2026

NEWSLETTER

Issue
#12

You cannot reverse the effects of crime. Crime cannot be undone...

January's Uncomfortable Truth

Every January, the same story unfolds. Crime surges, losses mount, and the questions return. How, in an age of advanced technology and constant connectivity, are we still caught unprepared? This article looks beyond the statistics to examine the habits, assumptions, and failures that allow crime in South Africa to thrive year after year. From holiday complacency to poor planning and misunderstood security, it is a stark reminder that crime does not take a break and neither should our responsibility to protect what matters most.



André Mundell, Alwinco, Independent Security Risk Assessor

Crime Didn't Take a Holiday: January Has Proven This Again

Once again, it is January, and for the past twenty years we have had the same conversation. We talk about crime after December, or crime after the holidays, and the patterns repeat themselves. What continues to amaze me is that we live in the twenty-first century. We have access to advanced technology, yet we are still losing the war against crime.

In December, the losses happen faster, on a larger scale, and with greater impact.

For some reason, the belief that "it will not happen to me" is deeply rooted in South Africa. This mindset is shared by homeowners and business owners alike. It is so entrenched that people do not spend enough time ensuring

their security is up to standard, nor do they fully use the technology available to them. As a result, crime continues to escalate.

The irony is that the technology exists. Security systems can be monitored from anywhere in South Africa and from anywhere in the world. Yet despite this capability, many fail to take full advantage of it, and the same risks, mistakes, and outcomes repeat year after year.

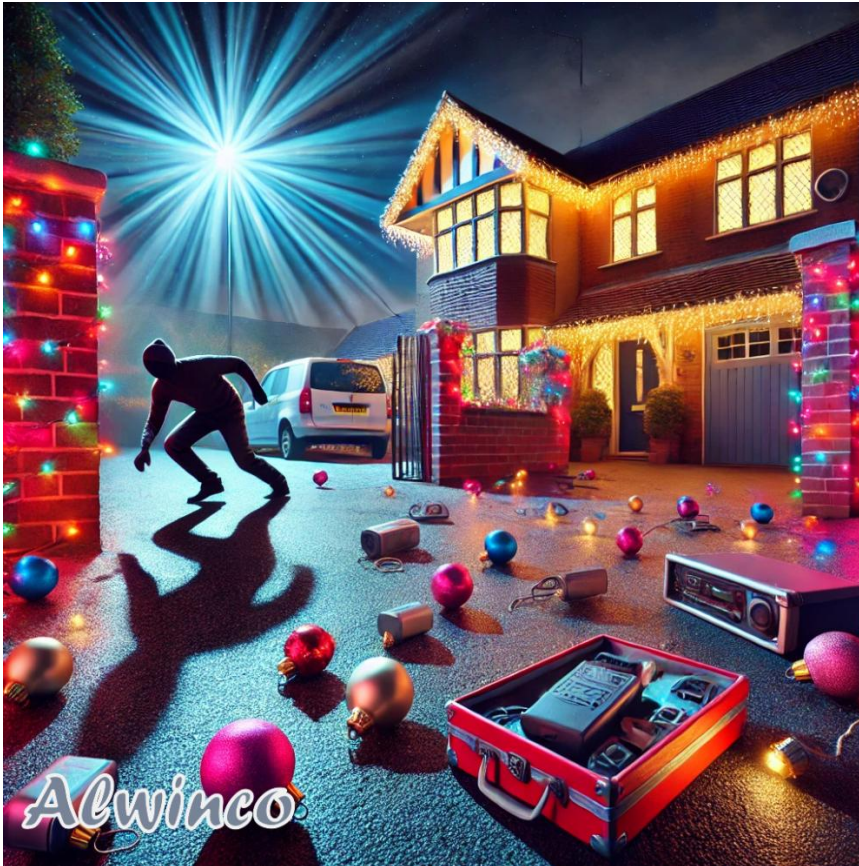
Every January, after the December holiday period, crime reports arrive. Housebreakings, kidnappings, murders, and hijackings follow a familiar pattern.

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More recently, another major issue has come into focus. It is not entirely new, but it is being reported more often: property hijacking. Property hijacking occurs when, while you are on holiday, someone unlawfully rents out your property, collects the money, and leaves you with serious problems. You return home to find strangers living in your house. The impact is immediate and difficult to resolve.

There was also a time when gate security failed repeatedly. People entered through access gates without anyone noticing.

In many cases, the owners had not even left the area. They were still around, in holiday mode, hosting parties and allowing access more freely. Some incidents involved gate motors being removed. Others were reportedly caused by compromised access codes. These scenarios only occur when security is poorly set up and not properly managed.

Why people do not spend time protecting their investments and lives is difficult to understand.

Break-ins happen at schools,

office parks, offices, and warehouses. After each incident, when we assess what happened, it is usually clear how the crime could have been prevented. Yet very few are willing to think ahead or act proactively.

Some attempt last-minute solutions in the final days before going on holiday, and this almost always ends badly. They rush to a corner shop or outlet selling products that resemble security and assume it will be effective. **However, it rarely is.** Security cannot be improvised at the last minute, and cosmetic solutions offer little more than a false sense of security.

Everyday crime is also still poorly understood. Handbags and wallets are stolen with ease, often in predictable ways, yet the same mistakes are repeated. Added to this are tragic accidents and cases of drunk driving. It is difficult to understand why people attend large parties and then choose to drive through the city. Most cities offer alternatives. A simple phone call can arrange a vehicle to collect you and take you home safely. Yet the same risks are taken again and again.

There is an old saying in South Africa when it comes to security: **wisdom only comes after disaster.** Maybe they were right.

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We face a severe crime season, and the damage goes far beyond what is stolen. The psychological impact is significant. Families, wives and children live with the knowledge that criminals were inside their property. Businesses lose not only physical items, such as computers, but also data, often large volumes of it, which may be irreplaceable. They must rebuild systems, restore operations, and regain confidence while life moves on as if nothing happened.

South Africa has cities consistently ranked among the ten most dangerous in the world, yet many still believe and act as if nothing will happen. The common response is, "Don't tell me how to manage my security," until it is too late.

December saw an alarming surge in crime, which I can see clearly from the calls I receive. Suddenly, after the fact, people want to implement different security measures. Too often, this comes from not understanding how to balance security against the value of life and investment.

Even when nothing physical is taken, the psychological effect of knowing your property was violated cannot be ignored. These are the same people who now have to stand in long queues for new driver's

licenses, bank cards, and ID books. Neglecting security has consequences.

Crime, as I have said many times, should be understood as a living organism, similar to a virus or even cancer. It adapts, changes shape, blends in, but remains deadly. It moves quietly, then erupts in violence like a tsunami. Crime in South Africa is not just common; it is dangerous, unpredictable, and relentless.

Did you know that if your vehicle breaks down in the middle of nowhere, it can be a death sentence?

If your towing services are not fast and reliable, the people who stop are not there to help. They are there to plunder. Leave your car unattended, and you may never see it again. Criminals will break it open and take everything inside. Do not take my word for it. Look at the news. Accidents happen, people do not help, and valuables are plundered. It all comes down to planning.

Most people do not plan properly. They do not ensure their vehicle is serviced for a trip, and they do not plan for their security.



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They have never had a proper security risk assessment conducted to understand where opportunities for crime lie. To fix a security risk, you first need to understand it. A security risk assessment identifies risks and provides a clear path to address them effectively.

Security today serves a double function. First, it warns you about crime. Second, it provides evidence of what happens, which is essential if you have to defend yourself.

For businesses, there is a third function: a well-designed security system provides a management component. Modern technology provides vast amounts of information, making it possible to set up systems correctly, understand patterns, and build a far more effective security environment.

At the end of the day, it comes down to one question: do you have the willpower? From the calls I receive and the crimes that occur, the answer is often no. There is no willpower to protect assets, property, life, or business. As soon as December and the holiday season arrive, people seem to lose the willpower to protect what matters most. After forty years in security and twenty years in independent security risk assessment, I still struggle to understand this mindset.

It is not rocket science. Again: If you understand your risks, you can take the right steps to protect yourself, your family, and your business.

Then there are those who, even after the warnings, leave boxes from new purchases outside the gate. Laptops, TVs, appliances, sometimes even with warranty information visible, are left in plain view. Fridge boxes, microwave boxes, camping gear boxes are all exposed. Homeowners then wonder why their property was targeted. This illustrates a simple lesson in planning and discretion: publicly displaying new possessions invites unnecessary risk.

I hope everyone reading this newsletter understands that they now have a full year to plan properly. The first step is an independent security risk assessment. An independent assessment does not sell products. Its purpose is to educate, to show risks that could lead to crime. Once completed, you have the year to review the report and implement a real security system. With a solid foundation in place, you can build on it and take advantage of modern solutions, controlling your entire security system from your phone or tablet.

With the right system, you know exactly what is happening at

your property. There are no blind spots, no surprises, and no one can enter your property without your knowledge. You understand the levels of security, how they are set up, and how to arm your system. It is not complicated, yet it allows you to build a stronger system.

Remember: a proper security system serves multiple purposes. It protects you, alerts you, assists you, and creates evidence for your protection. That evidence can be used in court and demonstrates to the authorities why protecting your home is necessary. For this reason, it is essential to have the right security system properly installed.



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My advice for everyone in 2026 is simple.

- **First, arrange an independent security risk assessment.** This is the most important step.
- **The second piece of advice I can offer is this: the best gift you can give your family in 2026 is a proper advanced driving course.** I am not referring to driving on a farm or a dirt road. I mean a proper advanced driving course, led by professionals who teach safe and confident driving. This is a practical, meaningful, and potentially life-saving gift for wives, children, and family members.

For anyone with questions, please contact me. We can arrange a virtual meeting to discuss it in detail. I wish you all the best for the new year.

Alwinco
ALWAYS IN CONTROL