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No Prosecution Desired!

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These words make some of us cringe! But wait..... we caught the suspect. Are you sure the victim doesn't want to prosecute? No. They are just happy to get their property back.

There are many reasons a victim will answer, "No," when an officer asks, "Are you willing to prosecute?" As mentioned above, they are often 'done,' once they get a valuable returned to them. Sometimes the suspect is a family member that they have to continue to have a relationship with. Perhaps it is a neighbor's child and they don't want to cause any additional problems. Occasionally, the suspect has befriended them in some way and the victim thinks they can handle the problem with them on their own. In domestic violence cases, victims used to say "no" often because they couldn't imagine how they would manage without the financial support of the suspect. Others fear retaliation. Some victims just want the police to know something happened. In some trespassing incidents, the victim just wants the police to tell the suspect to leave and not come back. The list goes on and on.

One reason to say "no" to prosecution, however, is because the victim just doesn't know or understand what it means. If someone has never been a victim, this might be a brand new phrase to them. Not only are they wondering what it means, but what will be expected of them. Will they have to go to court? Will they have to go to the police station? How long will it take? Will they have to take time off of work?

Therefore, it is important to educate the public

about what prosecution really means and what is expected of them if they become a victim.

"Will I have to go to court?" is the most common question. They may or may not have to go. If the suspect is caught red-handed and has admitted they are guilty, there is a good chance they will take a plea bargain. On the other hand, if detectives have to track down a suspect and build their case through the evidence, there is a good chance that the victim may need to testify. This is especially true if the victim can identify the suspect.

If we have the opportunity and take the time to explain how the system works, the victim can then make a better decision. In crime prevention, we can assist officers and detectives by educating the public about prosecution before they become a victim. Explain to them that if they do not desire prosecution, such as in property crimes, we no longer have a victim and the case ends there.

It is also important to note that if a suspect "gets away with it" this time, they will continue to commit crimes. Therefore, it's possible the victim may even be re-victimized by the same suspect. In addition, there is a good chance that a suspect may have already committed the same crime in other areas and that this victim is not the first one.

It will help law enforcement if we can charge the suspect for each crime they have committed, therefore giving us a better chance of ending their crime spree and reducing the number of future victims.

If we can educate the public before a crime happens, helping them to understand the importance of prosecuting, hopefully we can change "No!" to "Yes, I'm willing to prosecute." It's a win/win situation for both law enforcement and the victim.

You Did What?!

Although I did a lot of initial whining about it, I finally realized that the only way my kids would communicate with me on a regular basis would be through 'texting'. Personally, I like a phone call, but once they are grown you take what you can get, knowing they are busy with their own families. Which leads us to Grandkids...aren't they just the best! I seize every opportunity to enjoy mine. After all, they are at an age where they are very entertaining too!

Recently, my daughter asked me to 'babysit,' (I corrected her, "It's not babysitting to me, it's spending time with my Grandkids!") so that she could take my son-in-law in for a minor surgery. This involved me taking their kids to school, along with the car pool kids, and making sure I delivered them all back to the right houses afterwards. Needless to say, I insisted she write out instructions for this feat! Because there were going to be more kids than seatbelts in my truck, she was going to leave me their multiple seat vehicle. The plan was simple; they would drop off the vehicle at my house and when I got home from work I would secure my truck in the garage and drive their vehicle back to their house to spend the night, so they could leave for the early morning appointment without getting all the kids up too early.

Just as I was straightening up my desk to head to my last meeting of the night before the vehicle switch, I received a text message from my daughter: "Dropped off car 4 u. Driver door unlocked. Keys under seat." My first reaction was of course, "*You did WHAT?!*" I calmed down and thought, "Funny!" I was pretty sure she was teasing. I texted back, "Please tell me you were joking!" I got back, "No. I'm serious, is that bad?" Okay, now I'm sure she was just messing with me and I should play along, but don't have time. I text back, "Please

don't stress me out. I have to speak to a large group in just a few minutes." She sends back, "No really. It's not a joke. Do you want me to do it different?" *Of course I do!* Would my child really think this was okay after I am constantly bugging her to take her garage door opener off the visor when the car is in the driveway? Lock the car every time? The list goes on when it comes to crime prevention!

Calm down, she was probably in a hurry and stressed, so not thinking. I send back, "Yes. When a car thief finds an unlocked door, the first place they are going to look is under the seat for the keys. Please go get them, lock the doors, put the keys inside the house and make sure you lock it back up before leaving. Thank You!" She immediately responds with, "Okay! I will go back by. Have a good meeting! Love You!" Now, I can have a good meeting! Well, once my heart stops pounding that is!

So, I got home and their vehicle was locked up tight, keys on the counter of my locked house, all was well. I delivered kids to school, took a lovely nap when the baby did, picked them all back up and even delivered them to the right houses. We got back to my house, with the right number of kids, and my Grandson said, "Grammy, can we have some candy?" Why of course they can! After all, they are at Grammy's house and my job is to spoil them! But wait... there isn't any candy... Grammy ate all of it to relieve the stress about the keys left in an unlocked vehicle! We'll just go get ice cream today! Yes, Grandkids are great! Probably until they can drive anyway!