

A FREE GUIDE FROM SAFE INTERNATIONAL

6 Lures Predators Use and How to Spot Them

Simple to Remember. Built for Stress. *Changing & Saving Lives Since 1994.*

Why This Guide Exists

Most people think danger looks dangerous.

It rarely does.

Predators rely on appearing normal. Helpful. Trustworthy. Safe.

Understanding how they approach is your first line of defence — not fighting back, not running. Recognising what is happening early enough to walk away.

This guide gives you six documented lure patterns used across real cases. Learn them. Share them. They are more useful than any technique.

LURE 1: The Distraction Lure

What it looks like

Fake injury. Dropped items. Asking for simple help carrying something.

Why it works

Most people are too polite to say no. Predators count on this.

How to spot it

Any request for physical help from a stranger — especially near a vehicle or isolated area.

Real Example

Ted Bundy wore a fake arm sling and asked women to help unload his sailboat. He ran this lure on at least five women in the same park on the same afternoon. The women who said no walked away safely.

- ✔ **What to do:** A simple "no" is not rude. As Gavin de Becker, author of *The Gift of Fear* says — "no" is a complete sentence. You are not obligated to help a stranger.



LURE 2: The Authority Lure

- ☐ Someone presenting themselves as police, security, a doctor, or any figure of authority.

We are conditioned to comply with authority. Predators exploit that conditioning.

How to spot it

Any authority figure asking you to go somewhere private, isolated, or into an unmarked vehicle.

What it looks like

Someone presenting themselves as police, security, a doctor, or any figure of authority.


Why it works

We are conditioned to comply with authority. Predators exploit that conditioning.

Real Example

Ted Bundy posed as "Officer Roseland" and told 18-year-old Carol DaRonch that someone had tried to break into her car. She went with him because he appeared to be police. She survived by fighting back and throwing herself from the moving car.

- ☑ **What to do:** Real authority does not require you to leave a public space alone. Ask for a badge number. Call the precinct directly. A legitimate officer will not object.



LURE 3: The Opportunity Lure

Real Example

Christopher Wilder posed as a fashion photographer in shopping malls targeting women he found attractive. Today the same lure runs through Instagram DMs.

What it looks like

Modelling offers. Photography. Jobs. Financial help. Exciting experiences.

Why it works

Desirable offers lower your guard. The more attractive the opportunity, the less scrutiny people apply.

How to spot it

Unsolicited offers that require you to meet privately, travel somewhere, or move quickly before you can think it through.

- ✔ **What to do:** Confirm identification independently before any meeting. Share your plans with a trusted friend or family member. If the offer is real, it will still be real tomorrow.

LURE 4: The Trust-Building Campaign

What it looks like

Weeks or months of contact before meeting in person. Gifts. Emotional support. Shared confidences. Feeling like someone truly understands you.

- ✔ **What to do:** "I've known him a while" is not the same as "I actually know who he is." Ask what you know about this person that you have confirmed independently — not just what they have told you.

Why it works

We associate time with safety. Predators know this and invest time deliberately.

How to spot it

A relationship that feels unusually intense, unusually fast, or that the other person seems to be steering toward a physical meeting.

Real Example

John Edward Robinson spent weeks and months building relationships online before meeting women in person. He targeted women in financial difficulty and positioned himself as the hero. He appeared trustworthy because he had worked at it.

LURE 5: The Safe Person Illusion

Real Example

Gary Ridgway — the Green River Killer — showed women photos of his son, talked about his church attendance, and drove an ordinary vehicle. Survivors described him as appearing completely normal. The safety signals were real. They just were not true.

✔ **What to do:**
Perceived safety is not verified safety. Trust your gut. If something feels off, it is worth paying attention to — even if you cannot explain why.

What it looks like

Someone who goes out of their way to appear trustworthy. Talks about their kids, their faith, their community involvement. Appears completely ordinary.

Why it works

We look for safety signals. Predators engineer them deliberately.

How to spot it

Someone who seems to be working unusually hard to convince you they are safe.
Trustworthy people rarely need to tell you how trustworthy they are.





LURE 6: The Secondary Location Transition

📄 What it looks like

"Let's go somewhere quieter." "My car is just over here." "There's a better place for this."

Why it works

Once you move to a secondary location — especially a vehicle — you are isolated, unwitnessed, and harder to help.

Why they want you there

They cannot do what they intend to do where they are. Public spaces mean witnesses. Witnesses mean risk. A secondary location removes both.

How to spot it

Any request to move from where you are to somewhere else — especially if it feels rushed or the reason does not quite make sense.

✔ **What to do:** You can always say no to moving. You can always decline a ride. A person with legitimate intentions has no reason to require you to leave. The discomfort of appearing rude is nothing compared to what your intuition is already telling you.

The One Thing to Remember

Good-looking does not mean good person.

Danger rarely looks dangerous. That is the entire point of the lure.

You are not being paranoid. You are being prepared.

Share This Guide

If this was useful — share it.

With a friend. A daughter. A student. A colleague.

The more people who understand these patterns, the harder they are to use.



A Friend

Help the people closest to you stay aware and protected.



A Student

Young people benefit most from learning these patterns early.



A Colleague

Workplaces and communities are stronger when everyone is informed.

A Personal Note

And if something in this guide hits close to home — my inbox is open. No pressure. Just a conversation.

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SAFE International

Changing & Saving Lives Since 1994.

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Want to Go Deeper?

This guide covers the lures. The full blog post covers the complete victim selection process – what predators look for before they ever approach.



If you are a self-defence instructor:

This content forms the foundation of a single powerful class. Explore SAFE Certification to see how we build this into a full curriculum regular people can actually remember.

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