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SAFETY FIRST

The Bilyeu Group keeps you seriously secure

BY STEPHANIE STEWART



Jeff Bilyeu at Encore

Nobody likes to think about the worst happening. You see it on TV every day, often sensationalized in our 24/7 news cycle—a guy with a grudge posts a threat on the Internet, then returns to his old office or ex-wife’s home with a loaded gun. A successful businessperson traveling in Central America is kidnapped and held for ransom by a drug cartel. A popular celebrity is haunted by an obsessive stalker, who eventually breaks into his home. It all sounds distant, but we know these things really happen. What to do? Well, if you’re honestly worried about a potential threat, call someone whose business it is to keep you safe. If you’re in the Mid-South—if you’re anywhere—that person is Jeff Bilyeu of The Bilyeu Group.

Bilyeu’s looks are deceiving—average height and build, he looks more like a stockbroker or golf pro than a security expert—but it’s quickly apparent he’s no mall cop. Bilyeu received a B.S. in criminal justice from Ball State University in Muncie, Ind., in the late 1980s, then took a job with a security firm headquartered in Dayton, Ohio. There, he traveled, working internally within large corporations on narcotics investigations in the workplace.

“It was a unique environment,” he says with a candid smile. “I was inside these Fortune 500 companies, with only select people in the organization aware I was there, completely undercover.” He worked across the nation—from Fort Smith, Ark., to Holland, Mich.

In one case, he stayed inside a company with more than 3,000 employees for 15 months as a “vending machine repairman,” allowing him access to every department. He spent the first six months getting to know people, before he was given the okay to start tracing drug deals, backed up secretly by local, state and federal law enforcement. Early on, Bilyeu learned to get a job done with methodical, professional success.

He resigned from the security firm in 2001, and moved to Northern Virginia to get married. There, he further developed his skills and contacts: He became a licensed investigator and personal protection specialist (PPS), operated as a contractor for awhile, then opened his own security firm in 2004. “I wanted to do my own thing at that point,” he says. “It was a good opportunity.”

When his wife took a voluntary job transfer in 2008, the couple—and the business—relocated to Nashville. “It’s my job. I could be anywhere, but I choose to be here,” Bilyeu says.

In the course of his years of training (including with the Israeli Special Forces, among other high-profile organizations), Bilyeu has more than refined his specialized protection skills. This isn’t about being a TV stereotype shooting away and doing everything alone in response to a threat to a celebrity or politician. The priority, after all, is getting the person in need of protection to complete safety. “Yes, I carry a gun, but that’s not the focus of what I do ...” he says meditatively. But know for certain—he has people for that.

If it’s a protection job requiring a team—whether for a crew of business people going to a dangerous area or that threat to a well-known individual—he’s got a team to cover every base. Not only does Bilyeu have the background to protect big-names celebrities, the Saudi royal family and prominent business execs, he’s got smart, capable people all over the globe he can work with, depending on what needs to be done.

Bilyeu points to a large company he works with as an example of the varied work he does. Last year, he traveled with their executives to Argentina to provide protection internationally. Recently, he helped them deal with an internal issue—a disgruntled ex-employee at one of their facilities posted threats aimed at the company and photos of guns on his MySpace page.

“I got the information on Wednesday night. By 9 a.m. on Thursday, I was ready to go with my team,” Bilyeu says. After a 10-day, 24/7 surveillance, they saw no signs of the ex-employee acting, but the time they spent was well worth it, as many violence-prone individuals wait days—or longer—before acting.

In May, The Bilyeu Group provided security for the prestigious new MSNBC White House Correspondents Dinner After-Party, with a team focused on keeping A-list attendees safe—it’s a *big deal*—especially given the threats out there. There’s no question he’s a true leader in the personal protection industry, dealing with issues in a proactive manner.

Perhaps Nashville is an ideal location for The Bilyeu Group. As generally safe as we like to pride ourselves on being, it’s good to know there are people here to keep us that way. We’ve got everything from major industries to a huge celebrity culture and recording industry, multiple large universities and a huge tourist industry. All those things, while wonderful in and of themselves, provide an atmosphere that make it cool to know Bilyeu’s around.

We don’t want to wake up to find the scary, awful headlines—exec kidnapped, student makes threats then goes on a shooting rampage, rising musician injured by stalker—are suddenly happening here. Part of feeling secure is knowing somebody has your back ... just in case. I feel better knowing Jeff Bilyeu is on Nashville’s side.

For more information, or to consult with The Bilyeu Group, visit bilyeugroup.com or call them at (615) 824-1065.