



Beverley Milun and her eight-month-old son taken a week before the hijacking.

pedal and knocked me clean off my feet. The car hit me so hard that I was thrown into the air and landed in the middle of the street. I looked up at him and begged him one last time to give me my baby. He just looked at me and said, 'I don't care about your baby, I'm going to kill the baby', before driving away.

Somehow I had managed to get up, run after the car, open the door and climb on top of the hijacker's lap. He was trying to kill my baby and shaking his body like a rag doll, hitting his head against the sides of the car seat. I pulled the keys out of the ignition and the car started to slow down. The man hit me in the face before throwing me out of the moving car. I hit the gravel, rolled a couple of times and could see the car about four metres away. I got up and ran to it but my son wasn't in his seat anymore. They had thrown him out the car and he was lying in the middle of the road, face down and screaming helplessly. I grabbed him just as a neighbour, who heard screaming, came running to help. The hijackers pointed their gun at him but ran away when he raised his arms in surrender. We hunted for the car keys and drove to the hospital. The doctors immediately took my son for a CAT scan. He had an adult hand-sized contusion on the left side of his head and his neck, shoulder and back muscles were torn. He was also badly concussed. At the time I was so pumped with adrenalin that I didn't realise the injury I sustained to my leg when the car hit me. The tissue had been torn to the bone and I needed extensive physiotherapy to help me walk again.

The police arrived and dusted the car for fingerprints. The suspects' prints were everywhere but no one was ever arrested and I never heard from the investigating officer again.

The healing process that followed was difficult and long. Both my son and I suffered acute post-traumatic stress. There are no words to describe what it feels like to watch someone hurt your child like that. But that experience changed my outlook on life completely. There had to be something significant I needed to learn from the experience. The breakthrough came when I was finally able to let go of the resentment and anger I felt. I started speaking about my experience to others. I also began reading – learning and creating a mentoring system that could help others.

One of my biggest goals was to meet my attackers face-to-face as I knew that would be the final step in my own healing process but the odds of that ever happening was almost impossible. So I decided to network my way into the maximum-security juvenile prison near Soweto as an alternative.

For three weeks I mentored 50 convicted hijackers, rapists, murderers and robbers who were already engaged in personal development work. Many people don't understand why I wanted to surround myself with hardened criminals but for me it was about closure. As much as I wish my son and I had never endured such violence and inhumanity, I am also grateful the experience came and went and I learnt from it, grew from it and have changed my life because of it. ”

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Hijackers Tried To Kill My Son

She was determined that they would have to kill her before they would kill her child.

WHEN Beverley Milun heard the tragic story of one-year-old baby Marzanne Kruger, who was bludgeoned by house robbers in Robinhills, Randburg recently, she found herself reliving her own life-changing experience. Beverley and her eight-month-old son were viciously attacked and beaten during a botched hijacking outside their home in Highlands North, Gauteng. The harrowing experience changed Beverley's outlook on life, ironically in a positive way. This is her amazing story.

“It was 19h45 on a Saturday night and I was driving home with my eight-month-old son strapped in his car seat. As I was reversing into my driveway, I saw a cat lying in the road. I got out the car to see if it was still alive. It was dead so I picked it up to move it to the side. That's when I heard the footsteps. I looked up to see two men walking towards the car. They appeared out of nowhere. I remember thinking 'get up, stand up, straighten your legs, stand!' but I was literally frozen with fear. Instinctively, I knew they were going to hijack the car.

One of the men grabbed me and put a gun to my head while the other jumped into the back seat of the car. All I could think about was my son, who was still strapped in the car. I told the man that he could take the car but I just wanted my son – he said no. At that moment the fight or flight instinct kicked in – and hard. I managed to push the man away and ran in front of the car and put both my hands on the bonnet. There was no way I was going to let them take my baby. He bumped me with the car a few times but I wouldn't budge until eventually he put his foot down on the



Beverley is the author of *The Survival Guide To Parenthood Through The Eyes Of A Single Mother*. It's an entertaining and insightful journey through many of the experiences life throws to all parents and how to handle each of them. To win one of five copies of this book valued at R180, sms the words 'survival guide', your name and surname, contact details and postal address

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