

Statement re: House-sitting at 35 Rata Street

On July 5th, 2008, I arrived at Kate Dewes' and Rob Green's house (35 Rata St, Christchurch) to house-sit for two weeks while they were away overseas. This was a good solution for me as I was visiting my elderly parents who live around the corner (1/7 Kauri St) and are friends of Kate and Rob. Rob showed me around the house before they left, and as an afterthought, mentioned they had some security concerns but that they shouldn't be any problem for me.

I think the first, or possibly the second night that I was staying, I returned to the house and parked in the front part of the drive, near the street, at about 11:00pm. It was dark, of course. It appeared to me that the interior of the house (in the lounge room) was lit from the inside, and there was a person in the room, moving. By "lit" I don't mean that the light was on and I clearly saw a person. More like that the corner of the room, which was dark, was illuminated. And that I clearly observed a person as a clear full size silhouette, their head bobbing up and down as if looking for something. I believe I looked for about ten seconds. Long enough to be sure of what I was seeing, and then decide to get out of there.

I was unnerved and retreated to the footpath to think about what to do. I decided that discretion was the better option, left my car in the drive and walked to my parents' place to call and report a possible break-in. They were locked up and asleep. So I walked to Riccarton Road to look for a phone box to call the police and report a break-in. I could not find one. I then returned to the house (35 Rata Street). I think this would be 20- 30 minutes later. The light was gone and all was dark. As a neighbour (over the road) drove up and returned home just then, that told me someone nearby was up and about. Therefore I thought this was a good time to enter the house, which I did. I went by the path at the front of the house, up the steps at the side and entered from the side-door. I checked the sliding door that separates upstairs and downstairs was closed and I went upstairs. I did not look around downstairs.

A couple of days later there was a second incident that stayed in my memory. In previous days I had already seen a nondescript older model car parked outside 35 Rata St. enough times for me to be aware of it. Returning home in my car about 11:00pm, I saw this car parked outside 35 Rata Street; so I pulled up about twenty feet behind it. In my lights I could see there was a man sitting in the driver seat. With the previous incident in mind, I thought I would wait before getting out. This was a suburban street at 11:00pm. It is dark, there is nothing going on, and so there appeared to be no obvious reason for someone to just sit in a car.

I waited about twenty minutes I recall. That is, me sitting in my car, twenty feet behind the other car with a man in the driver seat, apparently doing nothing. Just at the very moment when I had decided to give up on this and get out of my car, he started his car and left. He drove off, not in any regular fashion, but did a hard 180° turn at about the maximum speed possible with tyres squealing. I never saw the car again. I did not get a clear look at the driver, other than a general impression that he was a man, probably white, probably in his thirties or forties.

David Watson February 7, 2011.

