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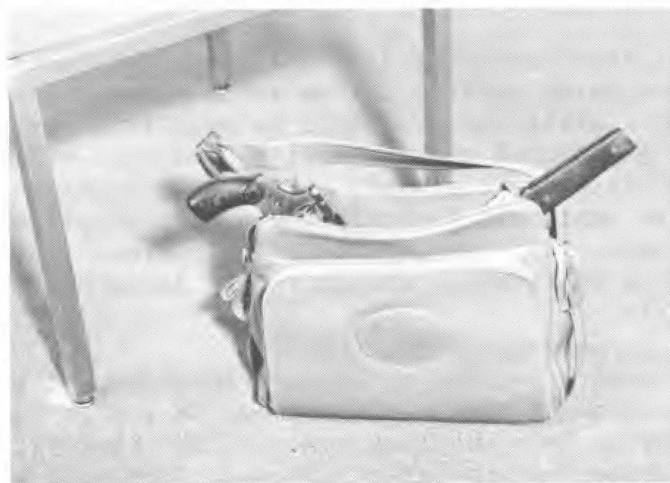
HOMICIDE IN A HANDBAG

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BLACKSBURG, VIRGINIA



THIS IS NOT A MYSTERY STORY

It is true that most women do not carry a gun or a knife in their handbag. However, most women do carry items that can be just as lethal to little children. Shock? Disbelief? Let's examine the situation. Empty your purse or handbag onto a table out of the reach of small children. How many of the following do you find?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin | <input type="checkbox"/> Digitalis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart stimulants | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail file |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heart depressants | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail scissors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blood pressure regulators | <input type="checkbox"/> Laxatives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nerve pills | <input type="checkbox"/> Nail polish remover |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxants | <input type="checkbox"/> Ephedrin |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stimulants | <input type="checkbox"/> Cortisone |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleeping pills | <input type="checkbox"/> Motion sickness pills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins | <input type="checkbox"/> Alum |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Iron preparations | <input type="checkbox"/> Paregoric |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Thyroid pills | <input type="checkbox"/> Spirits of ammonia |
| <input type="checkbox"/> R _x cough remedy | <input type="checkbox"/> Contraceptive pills |

This is only a partial list. How did you score? Even 1 check is a warning.

Little children are explorers. When something is found that is different, pretty, interesting, or better yet, looks like candy, the child's natural reaction is to put it into the mouth. Here is when we adults enter the scene.

First let's inventory our list item-by-item and ask ourselves, "Is it really necessary that I carry this in my handbag?" This should eliminate a number of possible hazards.

Now let's look at each remaining item and ask, "Do I need to carry this many?" Why carry a bottle of aspirin for an infrequent headache? Or a full prescription of sleeping pills when you will be away from home for only a weekend? For a small additional charge, most pharmacists will give you a small, labeled, child resistant container at the time that you pick up your prescription. Use this container for only the number of pills that you will need while away from home. This is particularly important for stimulants, nerve pills and diarrhea pills which are extremely dangerous even if one or two are taken by a child.

Do what we may however, hazards still lurk in that handbag. Mothers with small children at home usually hang their handbag on a high hook or put it on a closet shelf. Returning from shopping however, the handbag may be dropped on a chair while the groceries are being unloaded, "just for a minute." But little children are quick.

Going visiting or receiving visitors poses another problem. The handbag usually ends up on the floor beside the visitor's chair. Attention may be directed to another room, but the handbag remains unguarded and ready to be explored by little children.

A handbag on a chair, stool, coffee table or on the floor is inviting tragedy. Ask your guests if you can hang their handbag in the closet with yours.

We keep guns and knives out of the reach of children--can't we pay the same respect to handbags?

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