

# Program makes viewers Street Smarter

BY GREG KOWALSKI  
STAFF WRITER  
Channel 50  
news anchor  
Amyre Makupson  
has been beaten,  
strangled,  
grabbed and gener-  
ally mistreated by the  
West Bloomfield police  
routinely for the  
last 14 months.  
And she loves  
it.

Makupson  
hosts and stars in  
the regular Mon-  
day news feature  
called Street  
Smarts, a seg-  
ment on safety  
tips that puts a  
realistic spin on crime and pre-  
vention.

"I really believe we are sharing  
information with people that is  
useful," Makupson said as she  
prepared for a day of taping with  
the West Bloomfield police. "Peo-  
ple really identify with it."

Working with the police,  
Makupson and a Channel 50  
taping crew from time to time go  
to various places around the  
metro area to tape their safety  
segments which are aired on the  
10 o'clock news every Monday.

They tackle such topics as how  
joggers can protect themselves  
from attackers and what to do if  
attacked, how to keep from being  
robbed while shopping, how to  
protect valuables at the car  
wash, how to avoid being raped  
and how to recognize business  
scams.

Since May 1996, Street Smarts  
has aired about 60 times, and  
Sgt. Tom Keilman of the West  
Bloomfield police said there is no  
shortage of topics.

"It's a great experience," Keil-  
man said. He coordinates the  
police department's participation  
and helps come up with Street  
Smarts topics.

Street Smarts grew out of a  
single segment on rape defense  
that was done by the West  
Bloomfield Police and Channel  
50. The response was so good  
that the two stations - police  
and TV - decided to make it a



Keeping it safe: West Bloomfield police  
Sgt. Tom Keilman shows how accessi-  
ble items are in an unlocked locker.

regular feature.  
Each segment runs about  
three minutes which is enor-  
mous by TV standards where the  
average news story runs 75 sec-  
ond long.

Keilman meets with Makup-  
son and producer/reporter Lau-  
ren Hudson at Channel 50's  
Southfield station where they go  
over story ideas.

"Everybody brings story ideas  
to the table," Makupson said.  
Once the topics are determined  
they head out into the metro  
area for a day of taping.

"We try to shoot a couple of  
segments at a time," Keilman  
said. They may go to an area  
park, business or to residents'  
houses picked at random.

In one piece on how to recog-  
nize phony utility workers they  
went to several homes at random  
and found most people trusted  
them because they looked offi-  
cial. But before they actually  
entered a house they identified  
themselves and explained to the  
home owners what they were  
doing.

Most people are cooperative  
and want to be part of the seg-  
ments, Keilman said. "We will  
never let anyone look stupid."

Makupson usually is the vic-  
tim in the realistic crime re-  
enactments. Sometimes Keilman  
will play the attacker, but officer  
Rick Trubuly is usually "the  
dedicated bad guy," Keilman



Safety talk: Channel 50 anchor Amyre Makupson interviews Theresa Krul of Farmington for a Street Smarts seg-  
ment on gym protection.

said.  
He's grabbed Makupson,  
tossed her to the ground and  
generally given her a bad time  
over and over.

"He's had so many encounters  
with her on the floor it's unreal,"  
Keilman laughed.

The re-enactments look so  
authentic because Makupson  
gets a pretty good battering.  
Viewers seeing her anchoring  
the news don't realize that she  
may be nursing some major  
bruises, scrapes and aches from

a day's taping.  
But it's the authenticity that  
makes Street Smarts so power-  
ful, especially because Makup-  
son is seen as the victim.  
"She's somebody they can iden-  
tify with," said Hudson. "To see  
somebody attacked they know

and care about drives it home,"  
Hudson said.  
Makupson is a good sport  
about it all and bears the bruise-  
es, although not necessarily  
silently. Her recognizable  
screams are a Street Smarts  
trademark.

Beyond the theatrics, Street  
Smarts accomplishes a serious  
service, Makupson said. "It's  
about real-life crime and what  
we can do to make you safer."

Much of the taping is done in  
the suburbs, including upscale  
stores.

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