

Leawood woman saved countless lives

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LEAWOOD, Kan. - Janette Fennel of Leawood has one remarkable story of how in one instant, back in 1995, her life change forever. Fennell recalls that day like it was yesterday.

"We were coming home and we had our 9-month-old baby in the back seat and we were living in San Francisco at the time and before the garage door could come all the down, two masked men with guns rolled in underneath."

She and her husband were kidnapped at gunpoint and forced into the trunk of their car to a remote location where they were robbed of their jewelry, cash and assaulted for their ATM pin code.

"The last thing they said before they closed the trunk.. if this isn't the right pin we're going come back and kill you, " said Fennell.

Amazingly in the dark, they managed to find the right cable hidden under carpet that opened the trunk leading to their escape but it wasn't time to celebrate.

Their baby wasn't in the back seat, instead their child was left in the garage back at home.

That experience of being kidnapped and locked inside a trunk sparked her to start a nationwide campaign to improve vehicle safety.

Janette asked Congress to pass a law to make it mandatory for ever vehicle to haven an internal trunk release. Her persistence finally paid off, in 2001 Congress passed a law requiring trunk releases in every vehicle sold in the US.

Janette also started a group run out of Leawood called [Kids and Cars](#) which has helped pass through other laws to improve vehicle safety.

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