

Audio

Thunder Bay couple survive carjacking in Mexico

'We won't go back' says Jim Aitken after four armed men forced his car to the side of the road near Mazatlán

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Jim and Carole Aitken from Neebing, Ont., a small municipality immediately south of Thunder Bay, had their three-month winter vacation cut short when they were carjacked, while returning to the house they had rented in Mazatlán, Mexico.

Jim Aitken, 69, told CBC News they were staying in a gated community of over 100 houses and felt quite safe.

He and his wife have been wintering in Mexico since just before he retired in 2003, and were scheduled to return home to Ontario in mid-April.

The couple, along with their son and daughter-in-law, were on their way back to Mazatlán after having lunch in a smaller village 50 kilometres away.

Four men with automatic rifles

Suddenly, a car cut in front of them, swerved and stopped, blocking the road and forcing them to stop, said Aitken.

"Four armed men with automatic rifles jumped out of the vehicle, ran to our vehicle, banged on our windows with their rifles, motioning to put the windows down which I did," Aitken said.

"They reached in and unlocked the doors. They opened the driver's and passenger's door and pulled my son and I out of the car."

Aitken and his son were forced into the carjacker's vehicle, while two men jumped into his car with his wife and daughter-in-law in the back seat, he said.

The four Canadians were then driven to a remote location off the highway.

"While they were driving, the passenger [carjacker] in the car we were in, sat facing us with his weapon trained on both of us, oscillating back and forth," Aitken said.

"Pretty rough roads, we were bouncing around in the car and I was just praying that the damn gun wouldn't discharge by accident."

'Put the rifle up to his head'

During the car trip, Aitken said he was asked to hand over his rings and a gold chain around his neck.

Then the car stopped and they were told to get out.

"They put my son on his knees and put the rifle up to his head," Aitken said.

"They demanded that I empty out my pockets and he his, this in front of his wife and my wife, his mother, which was pretty terrifying for them."

They were eventually driven back out to the highway and and left on the side of the road, Aitken said.

He said he is never going back to Mexico. "We won't go back, definitely."

CBC News has contacted a tourism official about the matter and expects to have more on this story tomorrow.

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