

DECEMBER 2021

Red

DECEMBER 2021 £5.25

150
Great Gifts
FROM SMALL
BRANDS

RED FOR THE BEST THINGS IN LIFE

A Wonderful Christmas

MARVELLOUS FOOD,
DIVINE DECORATIONS,
PARTY DRESSES, MODERN MAKE-UP,
LUXE GIFTWRAP, CHIC CRAFTS, ECO CRACKERS,
HOSTING TIPS, SKI ESCAPES

REDONLINE.CO.UK **H**





HOW I GOT HERE

Female bodyguard and founder of security services company UMBRA International Kate Bright charts her career journey

As one of very few women who hold a Close Protection Licence, Kate Bright is asked a lot of questions about her job. But, she says, far from being a disadvantage, being a woman in such a male-dominated industry is an opportunity for growth and development. 'If my head of security and I check into a hotel, we look like a couple having a night away,' she says. 'Whereas, if a group of big burly men turn up, it's much more obvious.'

Starting out as a PA, Bright never imagined she'd become a bodyguard. But, six years on from setting up UMBRA, business is thriving. Bright has protected numerous high-profile families and celebrity clients, and in 2018, did a TEDx talk entitled *Can Women Protect Men?* The answer, of course, is yes.

MY FAMILY WAS MY FIRST EXPERIENCE OF PROTECTION. I grew up in a big Irish-Bavarian household, full of noise and laughter, and realised early on that my siblings were my de-facto bodyguards. My older brother and sister are also my godparents, so I always had their protective wrapper around me. In turn, I was protector to my younger brother, collecting him from school. That was my earliest experience of people looking out for one another.

'I WANT TO BE A ROLE MODEL. IF YOU CAN'T SEE IT, YOU CAN'T BE IT'

AFTER STUDYING FRENCH AND MANAGEMENT AT ROYAL HOLLOWAY, I BECAME A PA. I started my first job the day I finished university, working in the chairman's office of Fox Kids, which was being taken over by Disney. I was one of five assistants, and I was able to interact with all the senior staff at Disney. That was my first real experience of dealing with people at the highest level of business.

I WENT ON TO WORK FOR A NUMBER OF HIGH-PROFILE FAMILIES. Over the next 15 years, I progressed from PA to EA (executive assistant) roles and eventually became chief of staff. I managed families' affairs, becoming protector of their life and lifestyles.

INCREASINGLY, THE WORD 'SECURITY' KEPT POPPING UP. I found myself working more and more closely with my clients' security

personnel, men and women who had worked in everything from Special Forces to government agencies globally. A lot of them had come from military law enforcement backgrounds, and I was really inspired by their work ethic and discipline.

IN 2013, I DECIDED TO TRAIN FOR MY SECURITY INDUSTRY AUTHORITY CLOSE PROTECTION LICENCE. The two-week course surprised me. Although there was a physical element, such as martial arts, it was a lot more classroom-based than I'd imagined, all about the importance of planning and preparation, and learning crucial first aid skills. The methodology of close protection is that if you're in a scenario where you're fighting someone, who's looking after the client? Therefore, everything that you learn is about how to not get into that situation, how to avoid and diffuse.

AS A WOMAN FROM A NON-MILITARY BACKGROUND, I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD BECOME OPERATIONAL. However, once people found out about my training, the phone began to ring. Security personnel wanted a woman on their team, because my physical presence could help them be more discreet. I realised that there was a demand for women like me – that a diverse team with a diverse skill set is the best way to combat the risks and threats of modern life.

IN 2015, I FOUNDED MY COMPANY, UMBRA. The idea is to provide an all-round security experience for clients, from people management and procurement to project management and advice. UMBRA finds trustworthy people, gives good advice and helps clients project manage all areas of their lives. The business combines my PA skills with close protection knowledge, and it is my proudest creation to date.

ONLY 5% OF PEOPLE WHO HOLD A CLOSE PROTECTION LICENCE ARE WOMEN. In this sort of minority, you can either succumb fully to imposter syndrome, or you can embrace your difference and see it as an opportunity. Any judgement I have experienced, I've always aimed to turn into something I can use to counter it.

I'M HUGE PASSIONATE ABOUT BRINGING YOUNG WOMEN INTO MY INDUSTRY. There is a lot of versatility and flexibility, and we need more talent to come through. I want girls like my young nieces to see me as a role model, and for security to be a normal career path for them to aspire to. If you can't see it, you can't be it.