



Welcome to this week's edition of Defuse News

A weekly briefing for individuals, families and the advisers who work alongside them — on protecting privacy, understanding exposure, and managing personal risk calmly, before problems escalate.

Each week, I draw on what I am seeing in my own work — behavioural threats, unwanted attention, fixation, reputational pressure, and the calls most people are never properly taught to make — and write about it plainly. Alongside the casework, I also write about the things that quietly hold the best adviser relationships together: trust, discretion, specialism, independence, judgement, and the personal connection that good advice depends on.

Serious situations very rarely arrive without warning. They build slowly, often in plain sight, and the most common mistakes are doing nothing when something is actually wrong and overreacting when nothing is.

The aim of Defuse News is to help the people around prominent clients recognise these situations earlier, respond to them appropriately, and reflect on the advisory relationships that underpin them.

Defuse Global has no commercial ties to close protection teams, technology providers or security firms. The judgement we offer is independent. Clarity, not protection, is the outcome that matters.

Philip Grindell MSc CSyP Founder & CEO Defuse Global

Trusted Adviser on Behavioural Threats and Risk Mitigation, Author, *Personal Threat Management: The Practitioner's Guide to Keeping Clients Safer*, Former Counter-Terrorism Security Coordinator, UK Government and Royal Family, Listed in the *Spear's 500* as Top Recommended in Security, Intelligence and Investigations

What Clients Are Really Paying For

Trust in professional advice has always been built on the same few principles, and those principles are quietly under pressure.

As advisory firms have grown and expanded into new service areas, some of what once defined the best client relationships has become harder to deliver.

The principles themselves still matter, though, and it is useful to set them out clearly.

A lot of advisers now describe themselves as full-service, and on the surface, it sounds reassuring.



One firm



One relationship



Everything covered under one roof

The trouble is that, in serious matters, full service often means thinly stretched.

When someone goes to an adviser about a matter that matters to them, they are looking for specialist advice.

- ✓ Real expertise
- ✓ Judgement built over the years
- ✓ Experience of the unusual cases as well as the common ones

The reassurance that the person across the table is, on this subject, among the best people in the field.

And underneath all that sits the thing the client is really paying for:

🔒 Trust that the advice they are being given is the best advice they can get.

In the private client world, that kind of trust rests on a few quiet principles.

Each is worth thinking about properly.



Discretion and privacy

The fewer people inside a relationship, the easier it is to protect what the client has shared.

Small practices are well placed to hold information carefully.

- Conversations stay in the room they belong in.
 - The senior adviser who first met the client is the same person handling the matter today.
 - Files sit in fewer systems.
 - Junior staff are not routinely exposed to information they have no reason to see.

Privacy in this world is less a policy than a working habit, built into how the practice is run day to day.

Specialism

Real expertise takes years to build and is impossible to fake when it matters.

You can tell within minutes whether the person across the table understands the problem or is reading a brief for the first time.

Advisers who go narrow and deep know their subject the way a surgeon knows the body.

They have seen it many times, in many forms, including the unusual cases that the generalist has only read about, and that depth is what carries them through the harder situations.



Knowing what someone stands for

There is a quiet benefit to advisers who hold a clear focus over many years.

You learn what they do well, and you can refer to them with confidence.

When I first started out, I knew exactly what each of my peers stood for.

✦ If a client needed close protection, I knew who to call.

✦ If they needed cyber, I knew who to call.

That kind of clarity is useful in private client work, where introductions tend to be made on reputation as much as on credentials, and where knowing who to recommend is part of the job.

Independence

A specialist whose practice is built around a single area is well placed to give advice based solely on what the client needs, because there is nothing else to sell.

That independence is what allows an honest adviser to say something many find difficult to say out loud:

☞ Sometimes the right answer is to do nothing at all.

I learned the value of that independence early in my career.

I was once asked to add recommendations to a report that, in my view, were not necessary for the client.

I declined.

The work I do today is built on the principle that emerged from that moment: a client paying for specialist advice should be able to assume that what they are hearing is the adviser's actual view, not something shaped by other considerations.

The personal connection

Something happens quietly as any advisory firm grows.

- The senior adviser who built the relationship has more clients to look after.
 - Calls take longer to return.
 - Meetings get delegated.

It is a familiar experience.

The relationship begins with a senior figure who took the time to understand the client, ask the right questions and earn their confidence.

A few months on:

- the calls are being returned by someone the client has not met
- a junior colleague is now sitting in on the meetings
- the original adviser is harder to reach

Nothing has gone wrong exactly, but the relationship has quietly shifted, and the client feels it long before anyone names it.

None of this is anyone's fault.

It is the natural consequence of growth.

But for clients whose situations need close, attentive handling, the direct line and the personal attention are often the very things they valued most in the first place, which is why many private clients prefer to work with small, deliberate practices where the senior person stays involved throughout.

Value

There is a common assumption that broader services mean better value.

In private client work, the opposite is often the case.

Real value comes from:

- ✓ Depth of judgement
- ✓ Quality of relationship
- ✓ Advice shaped only by what the client actually needs

A small number of trusted advisers, each strong in their own area and working together when the situation calls for it, will usually serve the client better than a single arrangement that tries to cover everything.



It is a harder business model.

- You leave revenue on the table.
- You say no more often than yes.
- You sometimes have to explain to a prospective client why you will not be the only adviser they need.

But all of this comes back to the same question.

🔗 When someone places a serious matter in front of an adviser, can they trust that the advice they are getting is the best advice in the field, from someone who actually knows?

A trusted adviser is someone with the expertise to give the right answer, the independence to give it honestly, and the relationship to deliver it in the way the client needs to hear it.

Sometimes that answer is to act decisively, sometimes it is to do nothing at all, and the client has to be able to trust that whatever is said is what the adviser would say to their own family in the same position.

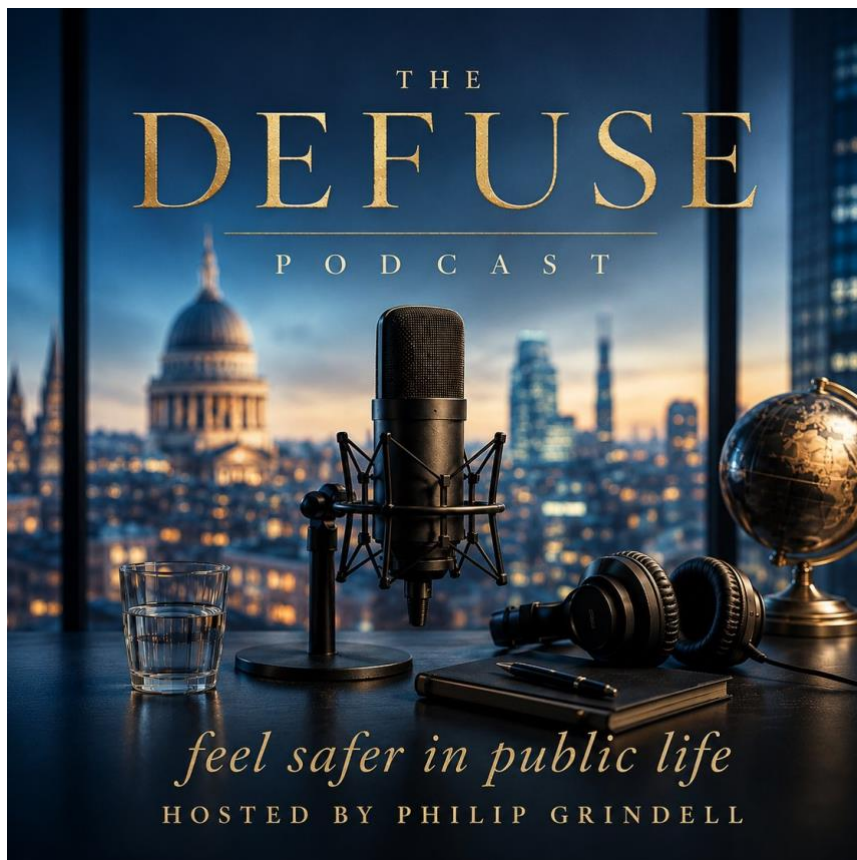
 **That kind of trust is rare.**

It cannot be manufactured, it cannot be scaled, and it is almost impossible to recover once lost.

Which is why the advisers who hold it tend to keep the same clients for decades.

Interested to hear other views.

What do you think turns an adviser into one a client will keep for decades?



A new look and a wider conversation.

The Defuse Podcast has a new face. The artwork above this post reflects where the show is now and extends a wider invitation to the conversation we have always been having.

The work has always been about more than threat. Reputation, privacy, the people around our clients, the psychological weight of being visible, the quieter things that wear people down long before anything serious happens — all of these sit alongside the physical side of safety, because feeling safer in public life depends on the whole picture, not one corner of it.

What is changing now is the range of voices and subjects we bring into the show.

Future episodes will continue to cover threat and security, and they will sit alongside conversations with guests who work in the other areas that contribute to how safe someone really feels. Wealth and finance, property and home, health and mental wellbeing, family, education and legacy, faith and what goes on inside as much as outside. The advisers and people around our clients who quietly shape how settled their lives feel.

Anything that helps someone in public life feel safer is fair game. The primary focus remains the UK, and the test is simple: does this help someone feel safer in public life? If it does, it belongs in the conversation.

If you have been listening for a while, thank you. The conversations get more interesting from here.

If you have not yet found the podcast, this is a good time. And if you work in an area that aligns with the question above — including ideas I have not yet considered — I would welcome hearing from you.

[**Download The Defuse Podcast here**](#)



If anything in this newsletter has caused you to think, you may benefit from our help. Contact us at info@defuseglobal.com

Defuse Ltd, 124 City Road, Old Street, London EC1V 2NX, United Kingdom, +44 02072930932

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