



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.

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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

The way in is rarely the family

When people picture a threat to a prominent family, they picture the family. The principal, perhaps a spouse, and the children. It feels like the obvious place to look, so it is where the attention and the spending tend to go. Cameras, a trained driver, a discreet word with someone who knows about these things.

 **In practice, the family is rarely the way in. The way in is the people around them.**

It is the assistant who runs the diary. The house manager who holds the keys, the codes and half the passwords. The adviser who knows where the money sits. And, more and more, it is the service provider sitting one step removed — the firm handling the travel, the property, the legal work, the wealth — holding a copy of almost everything that matters about the family, on a system the family has never seen.

None of these people is a problem. That is the whole point. They are trusted, for good reasons earned over the years. But trust earned back then tells you very little about today, and that gap is where most real exposure now sits.



Consider the service provider for a moment, because it is the part most families never think about at all.

A good firm does excellent work and asks for what it needs to do it: names, addresses, dates of birth, travel plans, and the schools the children attend. The provider is reputable, the people are decent, and the work is first class. So far, so reassuring.

? But ask the question almost nobody asks: where does that information actually live?

On whose servers, seen by how many of their staff, kept for how long, and shared with which sub-contractors, you never approved?

⚠ This matters because data sitting on someone else's database can go wrong in two quite separate ways, and most families have considered neither.

The first is a compromise from outside: the provider is breached, and a profile the family thought was private is suddenly in the hands of people who should never have it.

The second is harder to talk about and more common than anyone admits: the threat from within the provider itself.

 A member of their staff, not yours, who lets the information out. Sometimes through plain carelessness, a misdirected email or a laptop left on a train. Sometimes deliberately, sold or passed on by someone with a grievance, a debt or a price.

 There is a third danger, quieter than both, and it is the data that should have been deleted and never was.

The work ends, the engagement closes, the invoice is paid, and the file simply stays.

 **The real weakness is almost never the principal.**

The family is careful, the staff are loyal, and the problem turns out to be sitting with a supplier two steps down the chain that nobody thought to question, because everyone assumed someone else had.

 **A background check from the day they were hired proves only who they were on the morning it was carried out.**

 **Trusting people was never the mistake.**

 **The mistake is treating trust as a box that, once ticked, never needs looking at again.**



🔑 The five points worth holding on to:

1 The family is rarely the weak point.

Look outward, to the people and firms around them, before you look at the family itself.

2 A service provider you trust is also a service provider holding your data.

And so is every provider you have stopped using. It can be lost in three ways: breached from outside, let out from inside, or simply kept long after the work is done. Ask where it lives, who can see it, and whether it is deleted when you part company.

3 A background check is a photograph, not a guarantee.

It tells you who someone was on one particular day, and nothing about who they are now.

4 The risk inside the circle is almost always a change in circumstances, not a flaw in character.

Watch for what has changed in someone's life, not for some failing in who they are.

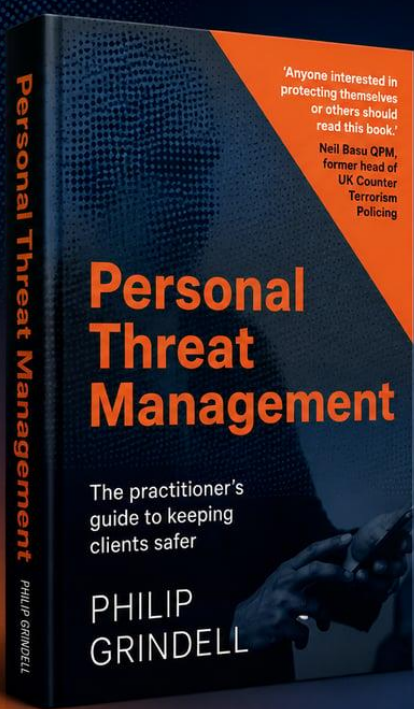
5 Quiet attention beats loud security.

Noticing costs nothing and protects far more than another camera ever will.

👁️ Serious situations rarely arrive without warning.

They build slowly, often among the people we are least inclined to look at.

The work is not to be trusted less. It is to keep looking.



Personal Threat Management

PHILIP GRINDELL

The practitioner's guide to keeping clients safer

'Anyone interested in protecting themselves or others should read this book.'
Neil Basu QPM, former head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing

The essential guide to
KEEPING CLIENTS SAFER
in today's unpredictable world

- PRACTICAL ADVICE**
Real-world strategies
- EXPERT INSIGHT**
From a trusted voice
- PROTECT WHAT MATTERS**
Keep yourself and others safer

FINALIST 2026
#BBA2026
THE BUSINESS BOOK AWARDS
in Partnership with Publishers Group

“ He is one of the world's leading advisers on personal threat risks and this book is a significant resource to anyone involved in helping others feel safer.

Kim Leadbeater
Member of Parliament for Spen Valley (sister of Jo Cox MP)

amazon **Best Seller**

Why I wrote 'Personal Threat Management: The Practitioner's Guide to Keeping Clients Safer'

Most security advice is sold to people rather than built for them. Someone arrives with a product to push, and the client ends up with guards, gates, and gadgets that do very little to address the risks they actually face. I wrote this book to offer something different.

Personal Threat Management is the practitioner's guide to keeping clients safer in a world that has changed faster than the advice most people are given. It draws on what I learned setting up the threat assessment team in Parliament after Jo Cox was murdered, and on the years since, spent protecting families from threats that are rarely physical and almost never loud.

The aim is a simple one. Help the people around prominent clients see trouble coming, respond appropriately, and avoid the two mistakes I see again and again: doing nothing when something is genuinely wrong, and overreacting when nothing is.

I'm grateful it has found its readers. It is an Amazon bestseller and a finalist in the 2026 Business Book Awards, and it carries generous words from Neil Basu, former head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing, and from Kim Leadbeater MP, Jo Cox's sister, whose support means a great deal to me.

If your work brings you close to people who feel exposed, I think you will find something useful in it.

"Very likely to prevent harm, and perhaps even to save lives." **Robert A. Fein, co-author of the US Secret Service Exceptional Case Study Project**

"Grindell's voice is ignored at your peril, and more importantly, your client's." **Julian Pike, then Head of Reputation Management and Sport at Farrer & Co, now Partner at Gunnercooke**

"A book that everyone involved in the protection of public figures should get their hands on." **Rory Stein, formerly Nelson Mandela's bodyguard**

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