



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 Target May Not Be Who You Think It Is

Why the person who attracts attention is rarely the only one at risk

 **Most threat assessments focus on the person receiving the attention. That may be exactly where the real risk is missed.**

Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor is in the news again, over his safety.

A man has been given an interim stalking protection order after allegedly confronting him near his Sandringham home, having chased him on foot and then by car. He was found in camouflage and a balaclava, carrying a rock and an axe. His trial is set for the end of July.

Andrew, who lost his publicly funded protection when his titles were removed last year, now reportedly believes he is the member of the Royal Family most at risk.

That belief may well be wrong, and why it is wrong matters to anyone who advises a prominent client.

In the days before the incident, the man had reportedly been asking around the village which house was Andrew's, while telling one resident he believed the Prince of Wales lived there. His phone reportedly contained research into other members of the Royal Family, including children, along with weapons and methods of killing.

So the fixation was never settled on one person.

? *"How much danger is Andrew in?"* is the wrong place to start.

✓ The better question is the one most people skip:

Who else had already become part of this man's thinking?



A Pattern With a Name

We call this **target dispersal**.

A fixated person spreads their attention beyond the individual who first drew their interest, and family, staff, advisers, even buildings get caught up in the same problem.

Research from the US Capitol Police found that contact with multiple targets signalled someone moving from words towards a physical approach.

My own work on attacks against British politicians pointed the same way.

👉 **The offender was rarely obsessed with the individual, but with what that individual represented.**

The person is seldom the whole story, which means the named target may not even be the one in greatest danger.

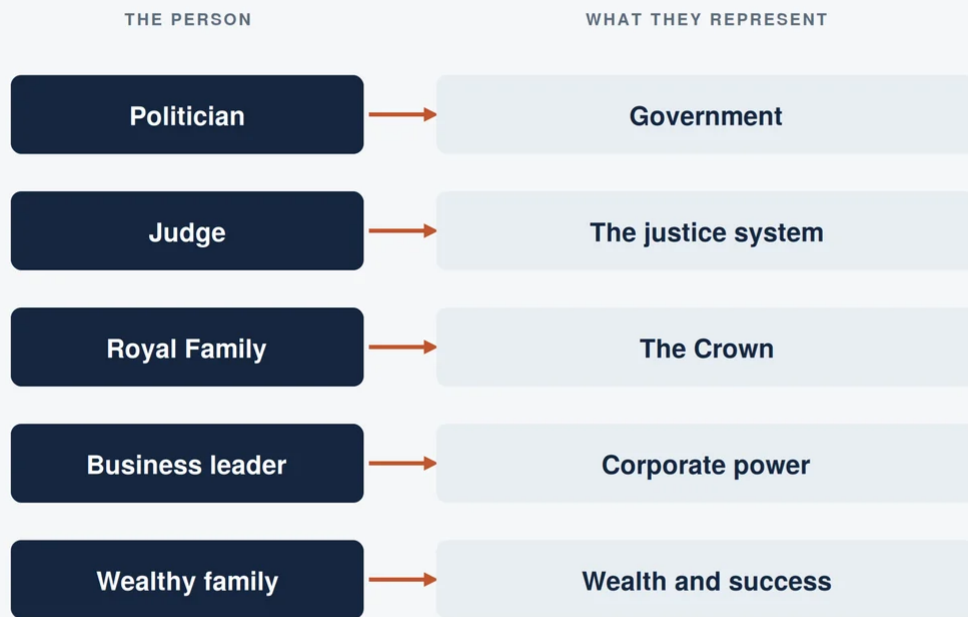
Most people see one target. Threat assessors should look for the expanding circle around them.

💡 **Key Insight**

A grievance can be highly targeted. The victim often isn't.

THREAT ASSESSMENT

Targeted for what they represent



A principal need not be high profile or controversial to be at risk.

The quiet client is not always the safe one.

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A Second Case, From the Other Direction

The Andrew case shows a fixation spreading outwards.

One I studied closely runs the other way.

In May 2010 the Labour MP Stephen Timms was stabbed at his constituency surgery in east London.

His attacker, Roshonara Choudhry, had been radicalised online and set out to punish an MP for backing the Iraq war.

She did not begin with Timms.

She drew up a list of MPs who had voted for it, researched several, and chose him because he was her local member, the easiest to reach.

She booked an appointment, walked in, and stabbed him.

He survived and she is serving a life sentence.

The lesson is the same.

The grievance came first; the war vote made every MP who supported it a possible target, and access decided the rest.

👉 Your client may have done nothing to single themselves out, beyond being the most reachable face of something larger.

⚠️ Here Is Where It Gets Uncomfortable

This is the part advisers find hardest to sit with.

And it is the part that matters most to the people you look after.

Sometimes the fixation has nothing to do with a grievance, or with anything the person has done.

They are fixated on for what they represent.

- A politician stands for the government.
- A judge stands for the justice system.
- A member of the Royal Family stands for the Crown.

A source close to Andrew reportedly made exactly this point, that he cannot stop being the late Queen's son and the King's brother, whatever happens to his titles.

On that narrow point he is right.

👉 You cannot resign from what you symbolise.

The same holds for your clients.

A business leader can represent corporate power.

A wealthy family can represent wealth itself.

They need not have wronged a soul; they simply stand for something a fixated person has come to hate or envy.

For a threat assessor, that is the trap.

A principal who keeps a low profile and provokes no one can still be targeted for what they represent.

⚠️ The quiet client is not always the safe one.

That is why complacency is the real danger.



What This Means for You

When something concerning lands on your desk, the instinct is to ask whether your client is at risk.

The more useful question is:

Who else has become part of it?

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Is the contact spreading to people around them?
- ☐ Are new names appearing in the family, the office, or among advisers?
- ☐ Is the focus the client, or what they stand for?

The people best placed to notice are rarely the security team.

They are:

- ☐ The lawyer who takes the odd call.
- ☐ The family office contact who handles the post.
- ☐ The wealth manager who hears an offhand remark.
- ☐ The assistant who spots a pattern nobody else has seen.

You see the early signal long before it reaches anyone like me.

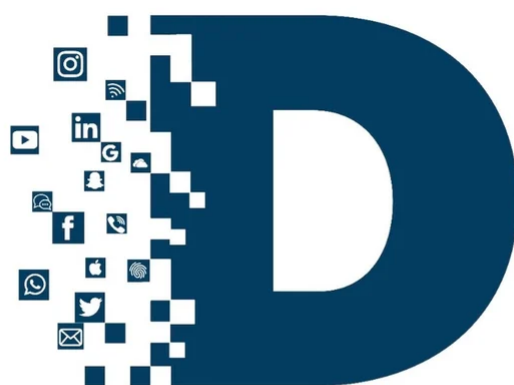
On their own, these incidents seem minor.

Together, they form a pattern that may have been developing for weeks.

Final Thought

The person receiving the most attention is not always the person facing the greatest danger. The offender may act alone.

The grievance rarely points to a single target. And that is often where the real risk begins.



PERSONAL DIGITAL EXPOSURE ASSESSMENT
— DEFUSE GLOBAL —

How easy is it to find you online?

This week's piece looked at how a fixation can spread to the people and places around a prominent individual. Getting ahead of that starts with a simple question: how easily can you, your family and the people close to you be found?

Most people are surprised by how much of their personal information sits in plain sight. Addresses. Phone numbers. Family connections. Property records. Leaked passwords. The raw material someone needs to target you, your household or your business.

Our Digital Exposure Assessment shows you where your information appears online, what can be removed, what needs watching, and where the real risk sits.

You receive a clear, plain-English report setting out:

- ✓ What personal information about you is exposed online
- ✓ Which data broker and people-search sites hold your details
- ✓ Whether your credentials have appeared in known data breaches

- ✓ What can be removed, and what cannot
- ✓ Practical steps to reduce your exposure

We turn it around within seven to ten working days. The aim is straightforward: to show you what others can find about you, before the wrong person does.

Be hard to find. Even harder to target.

[Book your Digital Exposure Assessment here](#)

DEFUSE

FEEL SAFER IN PUBLIC LIFE

Defuse Global Digital Exposure Assessment

A plain-English guide to how your digital exposure is managed



Your personal information is everywhere.
Strangers can find it.
Criminals can exploit it.

? THE PROBLEM

Your personal information is collected, copied and published across the internet — often without your knowledge or control.



EASY TO FIND

Data brokers and people-search sites collect your details from public records and commercial databases and publish them online for anyone to find.



EASY TO EXPLOIT

Criminals use your information for identity theft, fraud, phishing, stalking, harassment and social engineering to target you and your family.



HARD TO REMOVE

These records are constantly copied, shared and republished. What gets removed today can reappear tomorrow.



BREACHES HAPPEN

When your data is stolen in a breach, it can be sold on criminal forums and dark web marketplaces.



SOME DATA CAN'T BE DELETED

Lawful public records like court judgments, property ownership and Companies House filings are designed to be public and can't be erased.



The problem isn't just what's out there — it's that you **don't know where it is, who can see it, or how it's being used.**

Defuse Global finds it, removes what can be removed, monitors what can't, and helps you stay in control.



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

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