

Welcome to this week's edition of Defuse News

A weekly briefing for people whose profile attracts attention.

They already know the alarm code

Separation is the one situation where a threat usually means what it says.

A stranger must learn your life before they can target you. Where you live, when you leave, which door you use, who collects the children. That takes time and leaves traces, which is how these cases get noticed.

The person you have just separated from needs none of it. They have the alarm code, the gate code, the wifi password, the routine, and the sentence that gets a reaction.

There is nothing to spot, because they learned it all while you were together.

📊 What the evidence says

Former partners are the biggest single group of stalkers. The College of Policing in England and Wales reviewed the evidence in 2024 and put it plainly.

Someone who was once a partner is more dangerous than a stranger or an acquaintance, and a recent separation comes up repeatedly in the research.

67 of 111	domestic killings in England and Wales in the year to March 2025 were by a partner or an ex
94%	of 358 cases of women killed by men showed following, watching or repeated unwanted contact
1 month	the average gap between a separation and the killing
1 in 20	reported stalking cases ends with anyone charged

Jane Monckton Smith and colleagues at the University of Gloucestershire looked at 358 cases of women killed by men in the UK between 2012 and 2014.

They found following, watching or repeated unwanted contact in 94 per cent of them. That figure gets misused. They started with the killings and worked backwards, so it does not mean stalking usually ends in death. It does show that when these cases end badly, the behaviour was visible first.

Money changes the shape, not the fact

Those figures cover every kind of household, and there is a comfortable assumption that money and standing put a family outside them. They do not. What wealth buys is a different version of the same problem.

The gates, cameras and alarms are there to keep strangers out, and the person they now have to keep out has been coming through the front door for years.



🚓 Why nobody calls the police

Most of these families will not call the police, and their reasons are not foolish:

- **They do not want the details leaking.**
- **They want to decide how this ends.**
- **They do not trust the police to do the job.**

That is the reason I hear most often, and they have a point. The Suzy Lamplugh Trust made a formal complaint about the way stalking is handled, the inspectors who investigated it made 29 recommendations, and around one in twenty reported cases ends with anyone charged.

It usually falls to the family to handle it themselves, which works well enough as long as somebody has been given the job.

⚠️ Why a threat from an ex is different

Being the former partner changes the rules on threats, which is where most advice goes wrong. Nearly everyone who goes on to hurt somebody gives no warning first, and that is what people in my trade are taught. There is one exception, and it is well established in my field: the closer the two people once were, the more likely a threat is to mean exactly what it says.

Which makes the messages everybody deletes the most useful thing anyone had. Not replying is good advice. Deleting them is a mistake.

👁 What to watch for

People read those messages looking for the frightening one, and that is the wrong exercise. Somebody can write something appalling at midnight, be told to stop, and stop. Somebody else never writes a line you could show a solicitor and spends six months getting closer. What gives the second one away is drift:

- **Messages start arriving** by routes nobody agreed.
- **The gaps between them** get shorter.
- **A blocked account** is replaced within a day.
- **Questions that used to come to you** start going to the school, the nanny, the friend who stayed out of it.

None of that frightens anyone on its own, which is why it gets ignored.

One clear instruction to stop is worth more than a year of reading messages. Send it once, plainly, and through a solicitor if there is one. Then watch what happens. Some people stop, and that is the end of it.

Others accept it, apologise, and are back within a fortnight by another route.

That is the point to get advice, rather than wait and see whether it settles.



🔑 The afternoon that prevents most of the harm

Work through the list. Start with the wifi, because everything else runs through it.

- **Wifi** — the cameras, the drive with the scanned passports on it, the door locks, the smart TV.
- **The alarm**, and not only the code: who has the app, the emergency code that quietly tells the alarm company you are being forced, and the list of names that company will take a call from, which in most houses I have seen still has people on it who left years ago.
- **The doorbell camera** — an old login left in place lets somebody watch your drive for months.
- **The car app** — it shows where the car is and often unlocks it.
- **Mail redirection** — set up once and still working years later.
- **The firm who fitted the system** — they hold the master account and were never asked to give it back.

Changing a password is not the point. What matters is whose name the account is in, and which phone gets the text when somebody asks to reset it. Change the wifi password while the router is still registered to their email, or the cloud account while their mobile is still the number the code goes to, and you have locked the door and left the key under the mat.

Whatever you change, tell the people who use it. A gate code altered without warning means police at the door at three in the morning, and a family spending the next hour sure there is somebody in the house.



📰 What the papers publish

Big divorces are news, and one story can publish four things at once: how much money there is, that the household is in trouble, private details that would never otherwise have come out, and the name of a celebrity lawyer.

Some of it is put there on purpose, none of it goes away, and the people who pick which houses to rob look online long before they go near a gate.



The full list

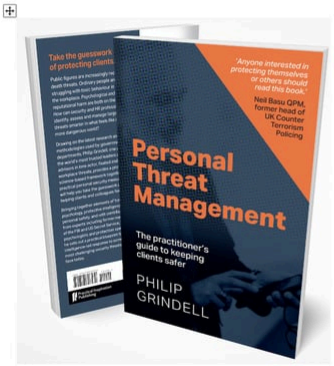
The accounts, codes and apps above are the short version. We keep a longer one, in the order it should be worked through. Reply to this email and I will send it over. No charge and no follow-up unless you ask for one.

If something has already started, and the behaviour has begun to change rather than simply continue, that is the point at which it is worth having somebody read it properly. Fifteen minutes is usually enough to know whether you have a problem.

Book a time here:

From the author of this newsletter

Personal Threat Management



The practitioner's guide to keeping clients safer

The book is about judgement rather than equipment. How to tell the difference between somebody who is frightening and somebody who is dangerous. How to read behaviour as it changes over time, instead of counting incidents one by one. And what should happen next at each stage.

It is written for the people whose work includes keeping somebody else safe: family offices, chiefs of staff, lawyers, HR teams and security leads. It draws on the methods used by government threat assessment units, with contributions from former FBI and US Secret Service specialists, psychologists and protection practitioners.

> *"Anyone interested in protecting themselves or others should read this book."*
> Neil Basu QPM, former head of UK Counter Terrorism Policing
>
> *"A significant resource to anyone involved in helping others feel safer."*
> Kim Leadbeater, Member of Parliament for Spen Valley

Published by Practical Inspiration Publishing. An Amazon bestseller, and a finalist in the Specialist Business Book category at the 2026 Business Book Awards.

Order a copy here:



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Summarize

Get a brief overview of the main points and key takeaways



AITOPIA
This week's edition of Defuse News focuses on the idea that the perceived target of attention or risk may not be the true target. It highlights various patterns in personal risk, including behavioral threats and unwanted attention. Key insights include how easily individuals can be found online, the fact that the person attracting attention is often not the only one at risk, and the need for broader awareness among those surrounding high-profile individuals. The piece emphasizes that those most capable of noticing potential risks are often not part of the security team. Overall, it serves as a guide for individuals and families on managing personal privacy and safety proactively.

Compare with GPT-6 Astra

Stop generating



AITOPIA

Vision

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Free Plan

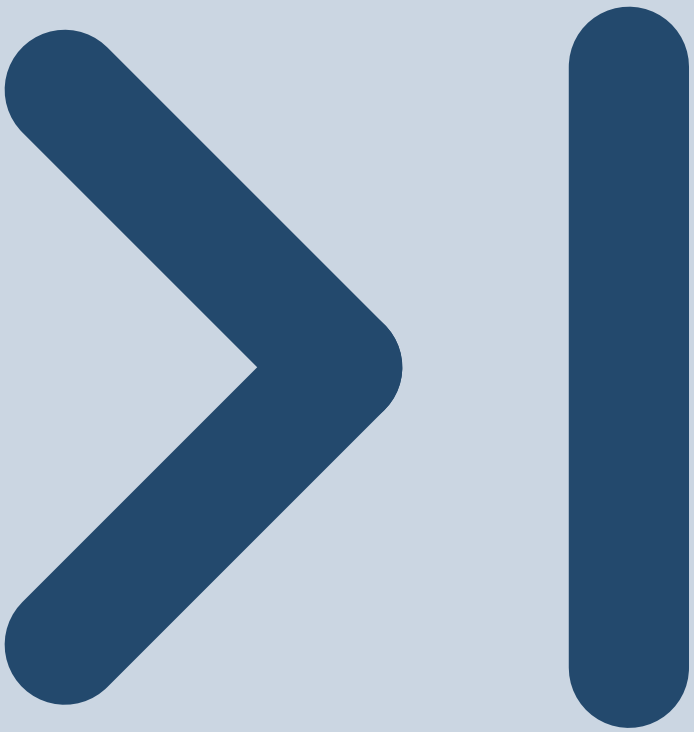
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Fast Text
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Advanced Text
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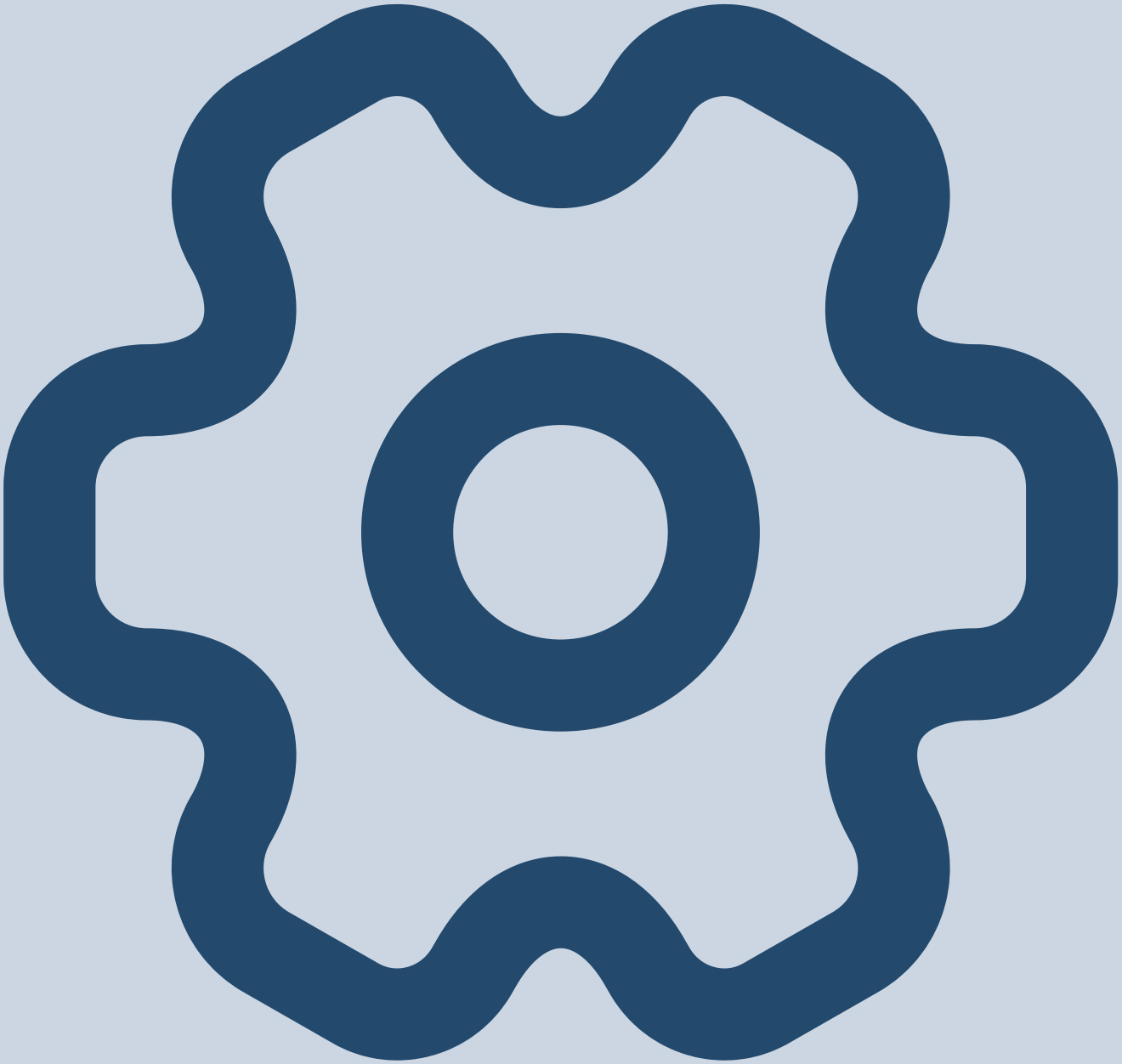














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