

Welcome to this week's edition of Defuse News

A weekly briefing for people whose profile attracts attention.

Who's steering your client round the problems they'll never see?

Your client has had a quiet year, and the family office is now looking hard at what protection costs. It's perfectly reasonable to ask whether all of it is still needed.

The answer depends on whether anyone has been watching.

When I served in a British Army close observation platoon, we would live covertly, often in a hole in the ground, for weeks at a time. Most days nothing happened. The job was learning what normal looked like.

A group renovating a house near the border might arrive at nine and leave at six, after which the place stayed dark. Then one night they came back at ten. The pattern had broken, and that told us more than any single sighting.

"Quiet feels like safety, but it can simply mean nobody is watching."



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Animals that live among predators know this. A troop keeps one member looking up while the rest feed, so the group can move off early.

The same discipline now works in a digital world, turned round to face the client. It starts with learning what is normal for them: how much comment their posts usually attract, and who tends to take an interest.

Then a change stands out. A sudden flurry of attention, or one account watching closely, raises questions. Is it a journalist, a competitor, a fixated person or a criminal? Someone persistently active who suddenly goes silent has rarely stopped for no reason either.

Knowing the person matters as much as knowing the data. A Personal Protection Officer I worked alongside knew the late Queen so well that a single look told him whether she was tired or wanted to stay beyond the planned time.

That understanding rests on unseen work. In my experience, royal protection officers spend at least half their time looking ahead, planning each engagement and settling problems before they can arise.

"Nobody notices a problem that never happened."



Private protection often trims this first when budgets tighten.

That's understandable; nobody notices a problem that never happened, so the hours spent preventing it look like cost with nothing to show. The best close protection teams we work with are the exception. We insist they do the preparatory work, and the client pays for it.

Your client can pay now to prevent a problem or pay later (usually more) to resolve one that could have been prevented.

Continuous watching also lets your client scale protection down safely while things are calm. It gives early warning that close protection or residential security should return, with time to plan.

One test on my police driving course involved driving down the M4 at night at speeds of up to 140mph. My instructor repeated two commands the whole way: "Look up" and "More gas."

"At that speed, there is no dealing with a problem once you reach it."

You have to spot it far enough ahead to ease round it smoothly and safely.

A client who has been well protected rarely knows how close trouble came. The quiet year they enjoyed is the evidence that someone was looking up.



🎧 On the podcast: True Wealth

Success changes a person's threat profile long before anybody has decided to do anything about it. More visibility. More personal detail sitting in public view. Routines and movements that are easier to work out than they were a year ago. And attention that is difficult to read — some of it warm, some of it odd, some of it worth a second look.

Personal security tends to get considered after something has happened. Guards, gates and cameras have their place, but they are one part of a response and not the whole of it.

I joined Anthony Ng Monica and Fintan Costello on True Wealth to talk about how wealthy individuals and families can think more clearly about their own safety.

The conversation covers:
🔎 How privacy and personal exposure change risk
🧠 Why behaviour matters when you are assessing a concern
🛡️ Where physical security actually fits
📋 What to do if you believe you are under threat

The aim throughout is prevention: identifying what matters early and taking measured action before a concern becomes a crisis.

My thanks to Anthony and Fintan for the invitation.

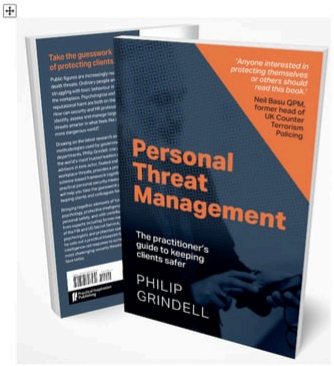
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From the author of this newsletter

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

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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.

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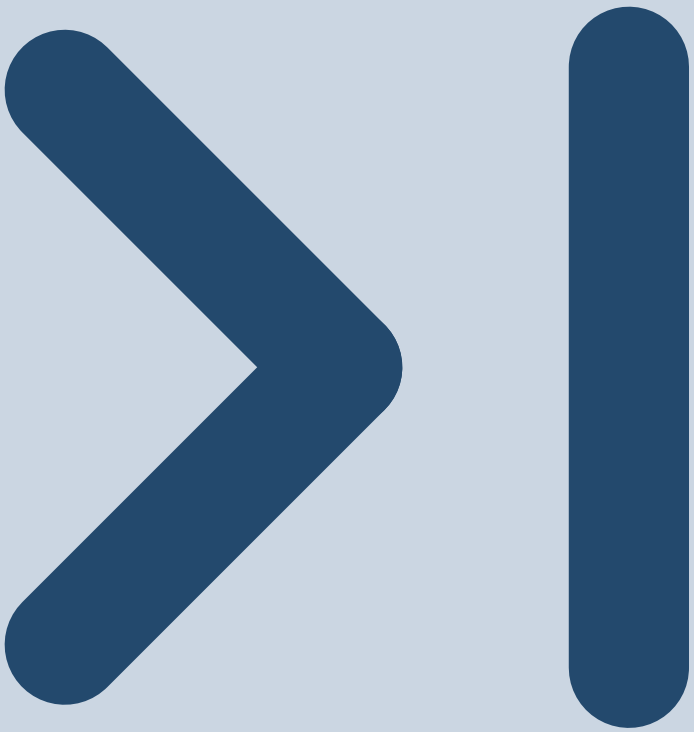
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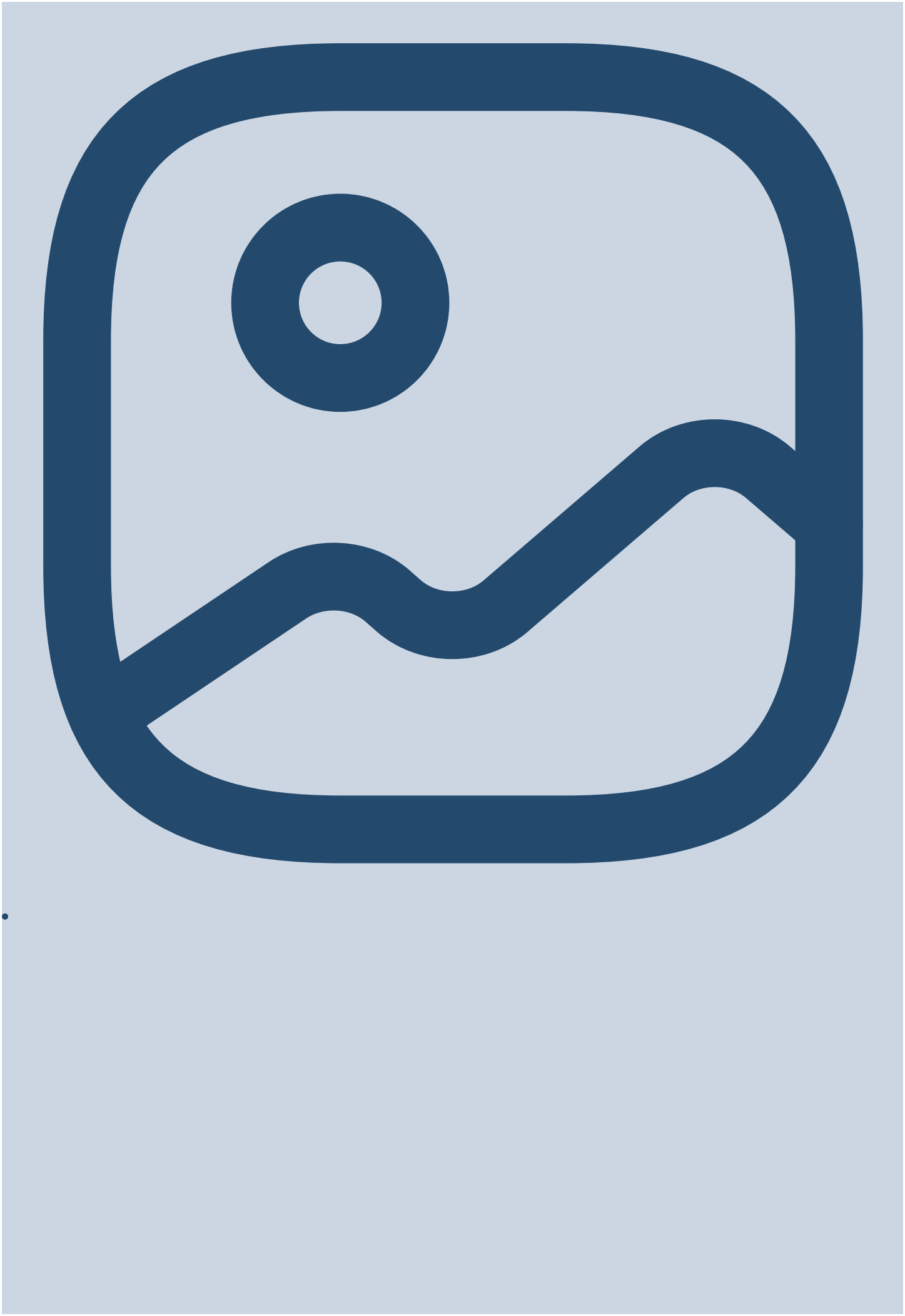










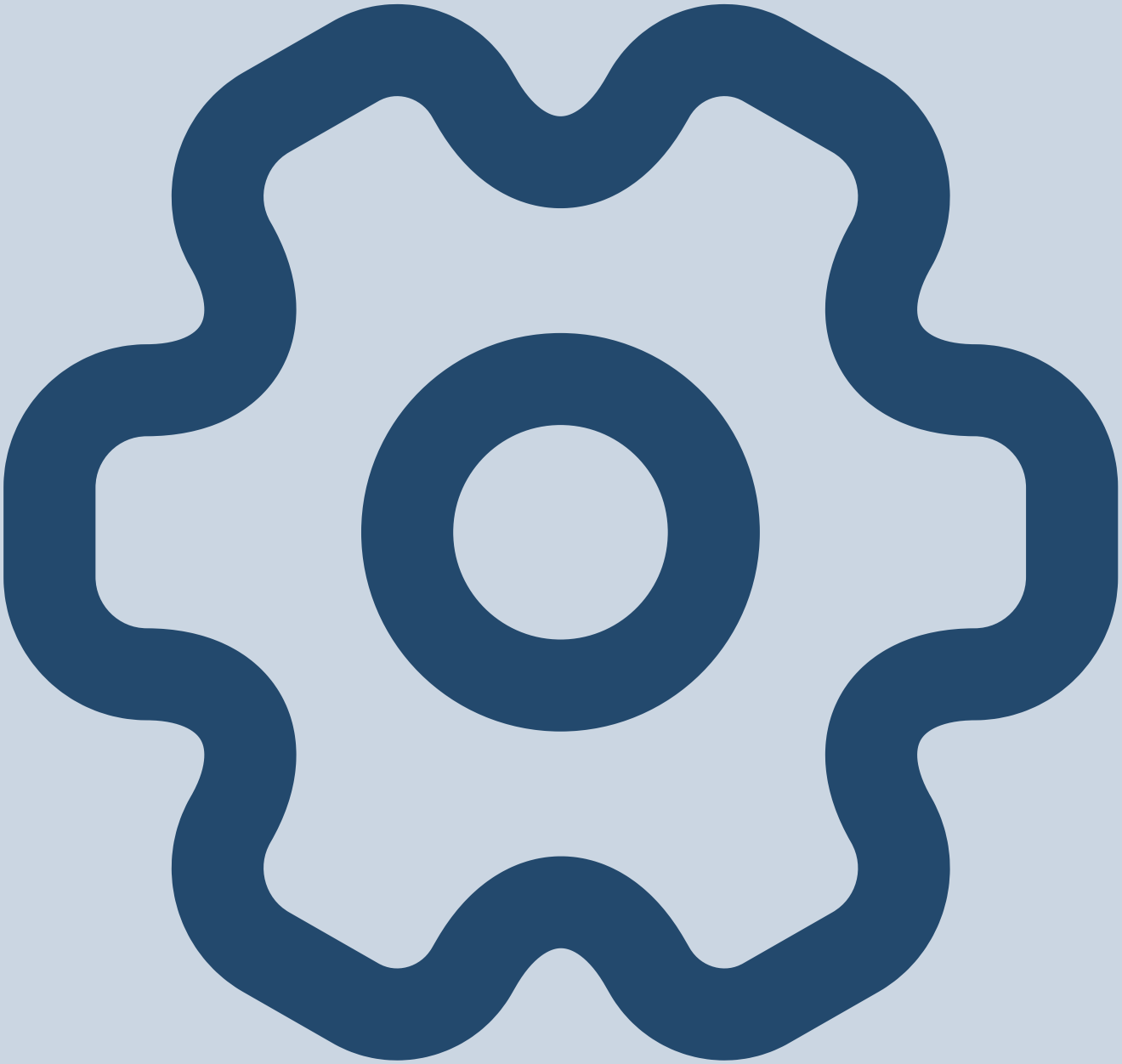














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