

**HOW TO SHIELD
YOURSELF
AGAINST
STRANGER-
STALKING
IF YOU'RE
YOUR OWN BOSS**

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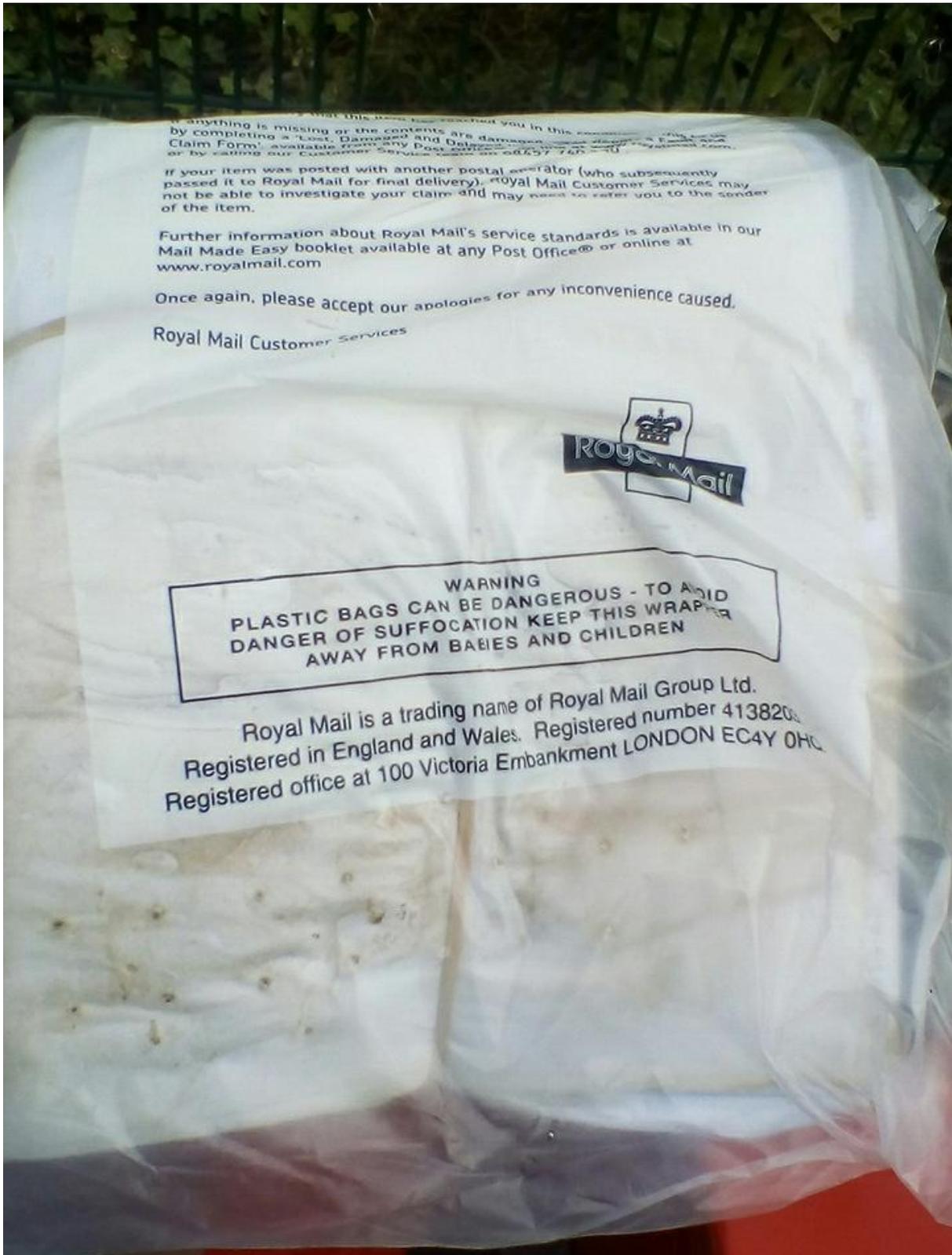
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Foreword

Hi there, entrepreneurial person! Did you see the pandemic coming? Did you predict that we'd have to change the way we do business and live our lives? No?

Well, guess what, most women don't expect to become stalked either but it happens. It also happens to people like you and me who have to have our contact details online and who have to communicate with customers, fans, suppliers, colleagues, competitors and leads. It happened to me. I became the target of so-called sadistic stalking and it has included extensive hacking. When it began, I'd been self-employed for over a decade.



October 2017: Since the start of 2011, a great deal of my postal mail has gone missing, and some arrived only after a delay of for example 9 months. This photo shows you a package of wet and muddy letters from a period of about 6 months, handed to me by a Royal Mail employee. This is merely one example of what has been going on in my life since I became stalked.

I've learned a heck of a lot from the experience and I've put together this little booklet that is brimming with tips. Most of these tips are ridiculously simple. Most are free or cost little to implement though one or two of them may be expensive.

If you implement the simple and cheap tips alone, they will form a shield around you. It does not mean that stalking will never happen to you, but you'll have limited that chance and you'll also have limited the risk to you.

Awareness helps too. It's not true that all stalking starts out as someone being really obnoxious or hanging out wherever you go in real life. Some stalking starts out in a kind and friendly manner and a lot of stalking these days begins online, outside of your awareness.

Before I wrap up this foreword, I want to give you two thoughts that are intended to inspire and support you.

"When another person makes you suffer, it is because he suffers deeply within himself, and his suffering is spilling over. He does not need punishment; he needs help. That's the message he is sending."

— Thich Nhat Hanh

"Freedom is not given to us by anyone. We have to cultivate it ourselves."

— Thich Nhat Hanh

Stay well. Stay safe. Stay free. Stay happy.

All my best,

— Angelina



Chapter 1

The first thing I'm going to tell you is to outsource all your email handling, your social media handling, your [incoming] phone calls, everything.

That's going to cost you a little bit, yes, but it's also going to free up a lot of your time and it's going to unburden you of potential stressors – concerns – and in some cases, it can even prevent suicides such as the suicide of Lee MacMillan, a YouTuber who was trolled online and then committed suicide, tragically.

What you do is you create a buffer, a filter. When emails come in and get filtered – screened – by another company, it puts a buffer between you and anyone who may have become obsessed with you without you realising it.

In some cases these may be people who just become fascinated with you, who think you're a fascinating person and who make you their study object. That is not necessarily a bad thing, a negative thing, a dangerous thing, but it can really make you anxious because you do not know what's going on in that person's mind.

And you can prevent that a little bit by just creating a buffer between you and such another person. Because if that person decides to call you, he is going to end up speaking with somebody else and that's going to confuse him a little bit and throw him off a little bit and discourage him a little bit.

It won't discourage everyone – of course not – but it creates a buffer between you and the world out there. The unknown.

And you will not be the one who's talking to that person who tries to contact you. That means there is no direct impact on you, such as weird vibes after a call.

The company that screens your calls, emails, handles your social media for you, you will have to instruct them well, of course. You need to know which calls are relevant for you which need to be forwarded and which ones can be dismissed straight away.

It also prevents that somebody sends you spoofed email with a photo of how they're using one of your products or a PDF with prices from one of your suppliers that has custom code attached to it and will not or may not be detected by your security software.

In that case, it will also end up – and perhaps even be detected – at the bigger company that handles your social media, your emails and your calls for you.

Yes, outsourcing your communications costs a little but it's really worth it. It's really really worth it. This is a very simple tip but it's really worth it. I used to do this in the past when I was simply very busy, very often in a lab where I couldn't take phone calls and it gave the impression that I was a much bigger company and people would tell me "I spoke with one of your colleagues but..." It worked. It worked. It worked very well.

Do instruct the company well. I, for example, had not made clear to the company that I was not interested in sales people from chemical companies who wanted to sell me bulk chemicals.

Lee MacMillan's story:

<https://people.com/human-interest/van-life-influencer-lee-macmillan-dies-by-suicide-at-28/>



Chapter 2

The second tip I'm going to give you – this is not useful for everyone – is to shield your connections on LinkedIn.

All media that have chat facilities are vulnerable to hacking because the chat facility creates a direct conduit into your equipment, that is, unless you let another company handle your LinkedIn traffic as well.

If you shield your connections it means that anyone who connects with you, who spoofs somebody else's account or who creates a profile on the basis of someone who isn't even on LinkedIn but exists in real life, if you then connect with that person, that person will not be able to see who your other connections are and that person will not be able to contact your other connections or even pretend to be one of those other connections at some point.

What happened to me, for example, was that one day I noticed that one of my oldest LinkedIn connections showed up as a very new connection, just a few weeks old. I think that whoever was targeting me assumed that this person – because he was on the other side of the world, in South America – was just a chance connection. It was actually someone I had worked with, had had phone calls with, had emailed with, so I was able to tell that the profile that I was now connected with was fake. The profile photo didn't match either.

What I've also experienced is that somebody wanted to connect with me who used to work at an organisation that I had often worked with and who was now working at a similar organisation so that seemed legit. I did have an odd feeling about it and as soon as I connected with her and asked her why she wanted to connect with me she started sending me really strange messages... really strange messages.

That made clear that this was not the person who this account claimed to be from, claimed to be. This was somebody else. These were spoofed communications. You can protect yourself to some degree – you can't protect yourself 100 against everything – by shielding your LinkedIn connections, by not allowing your other connections to see who you're connected with. If you become really seriously stalked, there is a big chance that that person will also start contacting your family, friends, colleagues and so on. If you shield your connections on LinkedIn, they will not be able, or chances are that they will not be able, to contact your other LinkedIn contacts.



Chapter 3

Here's another tip. If you ship goods - if it's only stickers, anything, to your fans - make sure you do not list your home address on the shipping label. That's how Devann's stalker ended up at her address one day. She's had to relocate several times. You can work out how to do this. You can find a solution for how to do this.

And if you're a company director in the UK, work with Companies House. Companies House can shield your home address. You do not have to list your home address for everyone else to see. You can also work with the voters register. Make sure that the voters register – if you're a registered voter in the UK – is not public for everyone.

Also check that your domain name registrar is not revealing your home address to the world either. Ask, for example, your hosting company. And check that companies like PayPal and eBay aren't revealing your home address.

Do not mention online which conferences and network meetings you will be attending.

Examples of postal solutions:

- Rent a PO Box. I did that for many years. It also provided me with an excuse for a daily walk.
- Team up with other people in a similar professional situation and rent an office address together to share the costs, if you feel that doing this on your own would eat into your profits too much.

Devann's story:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEmKr74caY8>



Chapter 4

Here's the next tip. If you make videos, make sure that your video does not show where you live. There's a YouTuber in Arizona – Prepper Princess – who went outside and accidentally showed where she lived. She showed something that was recognisable to other people and somebody did show up at her home address. She was not a happy camper! She was not a happy camper!

And, of course, make sure that you blur all vehicle registration plates.

Simple. Simple but effective. Take care.

My mother used to say “better safe than sorry”. She said it in a way that I wasn't able to understand as young as I was when my mother was still alive, but she was right. Better safe than sorry. Better get caught with an umbrella in the sunshine than be without an umbrella when it's pouring. Better have prevention in place that isn't needed than not having it in place and find out that it was needed. It will be too late to close that barn door by then.

Prepper Princess, in fact, freaked out a little and went back to making videos inside her home only. She was visibly upset that someone had shown up at her door. It made her feel vulnerable. She had not exactly been inviting people to come over for coffee, after all.

This is why I am not including a link to the particular video in which she talked about this.

Some people are much more easy-going about such occurrences, but if you want to shield yourself against potential stranger-stalking, do not reveal where exactly you live.



Chapter 5

If somebody starts to harass you, starts to troll you, starts to worry you, starts to annoy you, starts to concern you, that person may well want to claim your headspace.

Do not let the person get into your head. Do not ruminate, do not let the person get into you head.

Go for a walk, use mid-theta binaural beats, do some yoga, watch a TV series, do anything that will relax you and take your mind of whatever is going on.

A lot of people on the internet are out there just to needle other people. They will home in on vulnerability or what they think is a vulnerability and start needling you.

That is, if you've outsourced your social media, that won't be a problem.

But if you haven't, because money is tight or for whatever reason, don't let the person get into your head.

Try to shrug it off as well as you can and do not respond.

Here's another one: Do not block the person on Twitter [or other social media]. Because when you block a person, it shows that they're having an effect on you and they will create another account just to start needling you again.

Mute them. Just mute them.

As simple as that.

Don't block them. Ignore them. Ignore them completely.

Go ice-skating, dance it off, watch a hilarious film... you catch my drift. Get him out of your mind. Do anything that will take your mind off whoever is... messing with you!

You can stare into the flame of a lit candle for a minute to empty the mind.

You can retreat to what Thich Nhat Hanh calls "the island within":

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzlG6EYIZ4>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1un_agCuMzw

If they work for you, you can use for example mid-theta binaural beats. You listen to them over your headphones).

About binaural beats:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/theta-waves>

Generate your own mp3 files:

<https://mynoise.net/NoiseMachines/binauralBrainwaveGenerator.php>

Good MP3 download high theta:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1jweo-psW4riTbLjlg8W_pwhwzo5fUKdO/view?usp=sharing

Chapter 6

This time, we'll talk about security. Go over your locks. Do not necessarily rely on a locksmith because locksmiths always think "burglars". They think "brute force". They do not think about stalkers, persistent people who will take the time to figure out how your lock works.

Any lock can get picked. What differs is how much time it takes. So if you want optimal security, put a lot of different locks on your doors. Because that means that anyone who wants to pick your locks has to be able to master them all. That will delay that person. That will delay that person a lot and it will also limit the number of people who will be able to pick your locks.

Do not rely on CCTV cameras, particularly not if you can access them remotely because that also means that they can get hacked, of course. You may want to consult with one locksmith and then consult another locksmith and see what he or she says, but again, they tend to expect brute force from burglars, they do not expect cunning individuals who are after you personally.

Another thing that you should do if you can afford it is to let an IT security company, a top-notch company, go over your IT security at least once a year. That means tablets, phones, computers [and routers etc]. And then I would advise to hire another company to do the same so that you can see what they have in common and where perhaps one of them has messed up. Do that once a year and that should also give you some added security. But always be alert and remain alert. Don't go overboard, though. Don't become paranoid. Use common sense.

My locks were picked for years. I did have a feeling that something like that was going on, something strange. I had for example come home a few times to find my door unlocked, but I told myself that I must have forgotten to lock my door, even though I didn't really think so. There were other signs.

A particular big puzzle was that things seemed to get hacked that couldn't really get hacked because they weren't online. A UPS for example was interfered with.

Everything changed when I came home one Friday afternoon and found that a heavy object on the wall had been moved. From that point on, objects were often taken or returned, moved, destroyed etc, notes or stickers left and all sorts of other interference took place. 5 or 6 pairs of colourful socks disappeared from my dirty laundry and were replaced by black socks. My duvet was turned around. I could mention more example but I'll leave it at that.

I first added a very simple lock, then I changed a lock and I sometimes stacked a lot of stuff in front of my door when I left, such as a laundry basket with a vacuum cleaner and old printer on top. On the outside. Then I added a padlock. Next, I consulted a locksmith who came over and recommended a lock that I installed myself to save on expenses – it was great to be able to do that myself – but that was just as easy to pick as the previous one even though it was an upgrade. The locksmith didn't really listen to what I told him, by the way. He told me that I shouldn't be turning my home into a fortress and that I shouldn't end up feeling almost like I was living in a prison.

I upgraded that lock to a high-security lock that I purchased elsewhere and installed myself. That too, great to be able to do myself, even though it took me a while to figure out how to make it all work. That high-security lock did put a stop to the lock-picking for a while, but eventually, that too got picked.

I previously hid a motion-triggered camera for a while, but because I had to hide it, motion didn't trigger it.

If you want to know more about locks, there is a lawyer on YouTube who has lock-picking as a hobby:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm9K6rby98W8JigLoZO6FQ>

If you're in Canada, well, I've been told that Bowley locks are good even though they too can get picked, of course. Any lock can get picked.

<https://www.bowleylockcompany.com/>

There is one highly exotic lock that would likely keep a lot of people out but it is so exotic that it is very hard to get. It requires a flexible, snake-like key. Of course, that too can get picked but not too many people will be able to do that. The lock is so rare that it is also hard for people to purchase and practice with before they tackle the one on your door.



June 2019: Photo of minor vandalism in my home after lock-picking when I was away for the day. There have also been several incidents of animal cruelty, to spite me, and many other acts of interference with my life.



Chapter 7

Here are some ridiculously simple tips that will be superfluous for most of you.

Always cover all cameras when they're not in use. You don't know who might be spying on you. A piece of writeable off-white Sellotape or Scotchtape is enough to obscure the view sufficiently and is easy to remove and put back. It's also dirt-cheap.

The second tip is that you should always verify people who call you or email you or chat with you. Look them up online and then contact the person to make sure that the person who contacted you really is the person who they claim to be. It's happened that a geochemist wanted to connect with me on Skype. I accepted that request because this was not out of the ordinary. That's how someone then hacked into my computer that time.

The third really stupidly simple tip is to close your curtains your shades whatever at night when you're in your office at home so that nobody will be able to look in from outside and see whether you're alone what you're doing and what you're wearing.

If you want to take it one notch up... or if you think that someone is targeting you... make sure that you have a phone that has a removable battery. If you have the battery in your phone, even if there is no SIM card in it, your phone can be tracked.

Another great tip is a surprising one. Some of you may remember beepers. Pagers. They use a very different kind of technology than mobile phones and their signal is much stronger. They don't suffer the kind of interference from tunnels, bridges, thick walls etc that phones do. Consider them.

Leaving "location" off on your phone is tricky because location off also often means that friends and emergency services cannot find you if they want to. That's why it is good to go over these things with a top IT security company (Chapter 6). These people should be able to tell you what your settings should be. If they can't, find a different company. There are many "computer companies" out there who have very little actual knowledge and even real experts sometimes mess up.

Check whether your birthday is visible on social media. Shield that too.

Use one junk-type email address for people to contact you on social media, including LinkedIn, or also in general as first contact address. Once you start working with people, if you're a service professional, for example, then you can give people your real e-mail address. This can be an address for which you own the domain name but don't have a website.



Chapter 8

Here's another tip that is really simple and that always works when you're in business for yourself, not just within a stalking context.

Buddy up with peers from the beginning. Whether it's a customer that annoys the crap out of you, whether you have some doubts about whether somebody will be able to pay the bills or not, buddy up with others.

If stuff happens like what happened to David and Ina Steiner who had a bloody pig's head delivered to their house, whose neighbours got pornography magazines that were "supposed to be" for David, cockroaches, a book about what to do when your spouse dies, then you know who to call and not wrestle with this all by yourself or be told that it's your own fault for being a blogger or for having a Twitter account.

By the way, it was eBay staff that did this to the Steiners, very highly paid eBay staff. Ex-eBay staff I should say. One of them was a former police officer. He had been pretty high up in the police, too.

Should stuff like that happen, don't bottle it up. Talk about it. Talk about it with others who are in the same boat, people who know what it's like to run a business.

Again, others will likely tell "you stay off social media, blah blah blah" but if you're if you're in business for yourself, you have to be on social media, you have to be contactable.

But as you've now seen, there are things you can do to shield yourself a little bit. You can have your contact details online but they do not have to be the contact details for your private home. They do not.

Again, team up with people from the beginning, from the get-go. Doesn't matter whether they're in the same kind of business or undertaking that you're in, whether it's a fellow YouTuber or a Twitcher or somebody who sells hats, doesn't matter, doesn't matter. Find somebody who will understand what sort of thing you're going through when you're going through stuff.

The people who stalked Ina and David Steiner also set up a fake Twitter account that pretended to be an eBay seller's.

The Steiners' story:

<https://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2021/07/lawsuit-ebay-tried-to-terrorize-stalk-and-silence-couple-that-ran-news-site/>



Chapter 9

Think about whether you really need an accurate photo of yourself online. Maybe a stylized photo would work much better and it's also the case that some people are really obsessed with a very specific way you look.

So if you often wear a hat in real life, put a photo online that does not have you wearing a hat. If you normally wear glasses, put a photo online that does not show you with glasses or the other way around.

A cartoon image of you may work really well too.

With real customers, real clients, real suppliers, that won't make a difference. But people who become obsessed with you because you remind them of their mother, things like that, they may not even recognise you in real life if you change your appearance slightly or put a stylised photo, a glamour shot, something like that online.

Again a very simple thing that you can do that can shield you a little bit from people who may claim a lot of your time if you don't shield yourself. Simple.

It's simple. Yes, this is very simple. I told you we were going to talk about very simple stuff, not about scary stuff. Very simple practical stuff. But together all these steps that you take they add up, they create a substantial shield around you in all sorts of ways. It's really worth making that little extra effort. Do it.



Chapter 10

Should you become hassled, should you become stalked, trolled, anything... do not talk about it online. Do not mention it online.

Talk about it offline.

Do not mention it online because when you do, you're telling the other person that he is getting to you, that he is getting your attention, that he is successful. You will be encouraging him. Do not get angry, desperate, scared, frustrated online. Just ignore the person.

Do not talk about it online. Do not talk about it online. Do not talk about it online.

Is this hard to do? Yes. Does this stop all stalkers? No.

But it will stop a lot of people and it will stop a lot of trolls because they want to own you, they do not respect your boundaries. Some of them may be working very deliberately to upset you.

Some simply don't understand that other people communicate differently.

I repeat, do not talk about it online. Do not talk about it online.

Do talk about it with your colleagues, friends, family.

Don't mention the word "stalking" but warn them that something is going on and tell them that they may get calls from people posing as your friends, a doctor, a police officer, anything like that perhaps even from you, through voice cloning.

IP addresses, email addresses, call IDs, caller IDs, it can all be spoofed. Faked. Yes, there is software that you can use to mimic anyone's voice, from written text. You can also call people pretending to be a different gender or have a Scottish or Texan accent, what have you.

Video can be spoofed too. If you want to check whether a video is genuine, ask the person to turn around (360 degrees). If the person cannot do that or it takes far too long, you may be dealing with a deepfake.

I have fallen for this too. You don't need to be stupid to fall for these things. I've been talking with someone who I thought was a journalist up north, who turned out to be somebody else. At some point, the person diverged so far from reality that I realised I could not possibly be talking with a journalist up north about a case up north that I thought I might be able to help with.

It's also happened to me that I thought initially that I was talking with a social worker. But something about the questions she asked was off. She didn't ask obvious questions and she seemed to have a very limited focus. When I later checked the register for social workers, and even temporary social workers, it turned out that I had been fooled.

I later also received a letter from my family doctor stating that he had spoken with this person. However, there was no connection between the two, so they couldn't possibly have spoken with one another, even if the person had been real. I think this was based on a vaguely phrased letter from my physician that I kept in a bag that was almost always next to my desk at home. I think that

someone either jumped to the wrong conclusions on the basis of that letter or was trying to find out what I had talked about with my doctor. I shredded the letter. (In my experience, going to the police is almost always a waste of time and usually makes things worse.)

I also found out that people I used to know in the past, people who didn't know me very well, sometimes people who'd never met with me or who'd never even spoken with me had been contacted and been told I don't know what kind of stories about me.

You can't protect everyone, you can't contact literally everyone and tell them that something like this may happen, as I've mentioned before. But it helps to be aware of it that it happens often, that it can happen and it certainly helps if people in your close circle colleagues and so on are aware of this and will not for example reveal that you will be at a sports club this evening or where you live or what your mobile phone number is. Tell them not to do that. Tell them to check with you.



About the author

Angelina Souren used to work in the tourism & hospitality sector in Amsterdam, then had herself assessed very thoroughly, quit her very lively dead-end job and enrolled as a full-time earth science student.

Angelina has since served as Associate Editor for the international newsletter of the US-based Geochemical Society (1998 – 2010) and as board member as well as editor-in-chief of the newsletter and scientific yearbook for the Environmental Chemistry (and Toxicology) Section of the Royal Netherlands Chemical Society (2001 – 2005).

She was a board member and member of several committees of the NIMF foundation for women in science and technology in the Netherlands (1988 – 1993). In 2002, she was a panel member at NIMF's 15th anniversary symposium (3rd "Iustrum").

She's a feminist and among many other things, a former member of Toastmasters of The Hague. She became self-employed in 1997. She's previously lived in the United States and has been based in England since the end of 2004. She wrote this booklet so that she can help you avoid a lot of what happened to her in England.

Those experiences made her dive into the topic of neurodiversity. She now has a YouTube channel in which she talks about inclusivity, otherisation, personality disorders, (neuro)diversity and life in general.



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