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https://www.losaltosonline.com/community/how-abusive-husband-turned-wifes-own-technology-against-her/article_96058404-3af0-58d9-ad43-7c278be3518b.html

How abusive husband turned wife's own technology against her

Ruth Patrick
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This is the third in a six-part series on domestic violence and technological abuse. Names, professions, history and other personal identifying features have been changed to create a composite character to protect confidentiality. After leaving her abusive husband, Beth discovers that he has been using technology to stalk, frighten, control and discredit her and then learns what to do about it. To read parts 1 and 2, visit losaltosonline.com.

While divorcing her abusive husband, and in a final act of desperation to prove to herself and the authorities that she was not completely crazy, Beth hired a private investigator to “sweep” her house and car to see if she was being filmed, recorded or monitored in any way.

Here is what they uncovered: Hidden surveillance cameras had been installed in many of the light fixtures throughout the house and several more tiny hidden cameras were embedded in the weather clock beside her bed; the electrical outlets in the living room, dining room and kitchen; the coat hooks inside the front door; and even in the bathroom.

How was Beth’s husband, Ed, able to break into the house, take documents and move things around with no sign of forcible entry?

Beth learned that he had been using a “bump” key, a kind of skeleton key that fits into many ordinary locks.

When they were living together, Beth would come out of the shower and Ed would start harassing her: “Why did you go to the bank twice today?” “What were you doing over at your sister’s last night?” “Why did you see an attorney?”

How could he know all these things? Using the “Frequent Locations” feature within “Settings” on her cellphone, he would check her phone while she was in the shower, see every address she had visited, what time she went and how long she stayed at every location over the past month.

Like most people, Beth had been using her phone throughout the day every day. But unlike most people, all of her phone’s features – navigation, surfing the Web, phone calls, written correspondence – had been compromised.

Turning Beth’s own technology against her was one more way to control her, isolate her, prevent her from getting help, and another way to make her – and everyone else – think she was crazy.

In Part 4, we’ll learn the other ways Ed used technology to spy on Beth.

Ruth Patrick, M.A., is a local resident and domestic violence outreach specialist. She was recently named director of the WomenSV program under the nonprofit Domestic Violence Intervention Collaborative. WomenSV, formerly with Family and Children Services, is a Town Crier Holiday Fund recipient. For more information, call 996-2200.