

June 26, 2015

Dear reader,

For the past seven years, I have covered hacking and cybercrime as a professional journalist, and I get to see these crimes from the perspective of both criminal and victim. Unfortunately, no one is telling us what's really going on, what risks are out there, and how to protect ourselves.

As a female journalist, I've experienced things my male counterparts never have. I received three gender-specific death threats while writing for the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and I continue to experience online stalking and harassment to this day. One stalker published my home address on Wikipedia and falsified court documents. Another made it her multiyear obsession to force me to lose every one of my online accounts. Both used social media in their attempts to follow, threaten, intimidate, stalk, attack, and terrorize me and the people close to me.

Like many women, I attempted to file restraining orders but to no avail, and I had to educate the appropriate authorities and legal contacts about technology and social media every step of the way. In several instances, I also had to explain to well-known online businesses how their systems were being abused to target me and women like me.

Seven years later, we're still having the same problems, and I believe that's because we aren't addressing the critical difference between how men and women experience and perceive privacy: most men aren't targets, but most women are.

*The Smart Girl's Guide to Privacy* is designed specifically to help women fight back, stay safe, and clean up this mess we're in.

But my book isn't just a collection of everyday safeguards, insider tips, and secrets. I've done my best to address every crazy way that a woman's privacy can be threatened online because these extremes are seldom covered by privacy groups. In preparing this book, I interviewed developers, psychologists, attorneys, hackers, victims of all genders, women who founded organizations to fight online harassment, and more to make this book an agent of meaningful change—for everyone.

It's not enough to tell people not to share information online, or to simply ignore or report the problems. We can use practical methods and tools to combat threats to our privacy, and I hope that this book will empower you and those you care about to do so.

Warm wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Violet Blue". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

P.S. Using the enclosed privacy stickers is the only way to ensure that online creeps can't photograph or record you using the cameras on your devices. Someone can be watching without the record light ever turning on. Learn more at <http://privacystickers.org>.