

How Grandma Hears Everything

by Kevin D. Murray, CPP, CISM, CFE, CDPSE



...and why your business should care.

There is a new eavesdropping spy trick in town. You could get burned unless you know about it.

Let's start with Grandma. She is hard of hearing. A while back the family gave her money to buy two new hearing aids. Nice. Now she has stopped saying, "WHAT!" all the time. She hears everything clearly.

There is only one problem. She seems to hear everyone's conversations even when she is not in the room. Sometimes she is in her room with the door closed.

It's a mystery, but we'll figure it out soon.

Now, let's go to the office.

Harry was hired last year by a large law firm. He is still low on the totem pole but is eager to get ahead. Ahead, in Harry's mind, means money. Be it a promotion, or an opportunity to sell the firm's secrets, he doesn't care.

Harry is rarely invited to top level meetings, but he seems unusually well informed. Like Grandma's bedroom his cubicle is not within earshot of the interesting conversations. It is about 45 feet from the boardroom and the main conference room.

He sits at his desk, obviously doing his work, and knows everything being said.

By the way, Grandma is Harry's grandma. Being technically inclined, he helped her set up and program her new hearing aids.

Modern Hearing Aids

In case you haven't heard, hearing aids have come a long way since the ear trumpet days ...very long way.



Features¹ now include:

- Digital frequency customization.
- Bluetooth compatibility.
- Artificial intelligence.
- Smartphone apps.
- Rechargeable batteries.
- Tinnitus masking.
- Computer programmability.
- Wireless synchronization.
- Telecoil.
- FM compatibility.
- Directional microphones.
- Digital noise reduction.
- Impulse noise reduction.
- Wind noise reduction.
- Feedback management.
- Data logging.
- AND ACCESSORIES!

¹ <https://www.healthyhearing.com/help/hearing-aids/technology>



Grandma's Secret

When Grandma purchased her hearing aids she also bought an accessory. This is a wireless Bluetooth microphone. It can transmit up to 65 feet away and allows her to:

- Make calls using her smartphone, hands-free, with the audio going directly to her hearing aids.
- Give it to a companion to use while in a noisy restaurant.
- Or, *forgetfully* leave it in the kitchen while she listens in from her room.

Harry's Secret

As mentioned earlier, Harry is ambitious and fresh out of law school. He was hired by a large law firm and can't wait to make his mark.

Being low on the totem pole, he is not yet invited to the weekly partner's meeting. Not knowing what's going on eats at him. Then he remembers helping his Grandma set up her new hearing aids, and *that* accessory.

Harry immediately purchased a hearing aid just like Grandma's. He has perfect hearing but he wears it to work every day anyway.

It looks like the picture, but with his slightly longer hair it is hardly noticeable. Anyone who does notice is too polite to ask about it, or question it.



Now when Harry wants to know what's going on, he secrets his little microphone in the conference room. Back in his nearby cubicle he works normally and hears normally. He is also eavesdropping on the partner's discussions with crystal clarity.

Harry is now thinking of casting his intelligence net a bit wider.

- Planting this device in a colleague's office might yield some interesting phone conversations, or blackmail fodder.

- Leaving it in his briefcase at a deposition while excusing himself to make a call, or go to the restroom, might yield some strategic nuggets.



By exposing Grandma's and Harry's secret I hope I have protected you from impromptu hearing aid eavesdroppers. This is only one of many electronic surveillance spy tricks. Helping you with the others is my business.

Kevin

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Murray Associates² is an independent security consulting firm, providing eavesdropping detection and counterespionage services to business, government and at-risk individuals.

Headquartered in the New York metropolitan area, a Murray Associates team can assist you quickly, anywhere in the United States, and internationally.

² <https://counterespionage.com/about-murray-associates/electronic-eavesdropping-detection/>