

Bill Walter – Locksmith Newsletter



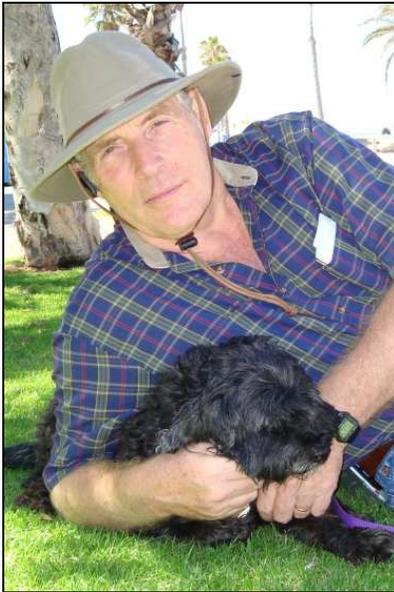
Spring 2008

310 396-7784

Emergency Service 24/7

License # LCO-4438

Residential & Commercial



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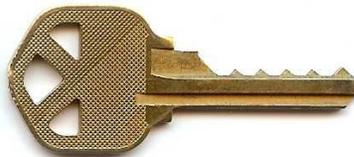
"Are bump keys as easy to use as they show on the internet?"

That's probably the single most asked question I get. I'm sure by now most of you have seen the videos on the web or maybe an actual news report on T.V. expounding how we're just not safe any more because anybody can open any lock in just seconds.

First, let me say; "Sex sells, but fear sells even better!" Let's all go shopping to make ourselves feel better, only this time let's buy new locks.

The concept of key bumping has been around

since 1926, but only in the last couple of years has it come to national attention. Bump keys are available on the internet like the videos say; however, in California you are required to have a locksmith license to possess, carry or use any tool that will open a lock other than the actual key. I have one Schlage bump key and one Kwikset bump key, but I virtually never use them.



My Kwikset Bump Key

My personal experience and the experience of all the locksmiths I've talked with is that we can usually pick a lock in less time than it takes to "bump" a lock open. If you watch the videos closely there's always an edit just before you see the lock opened.

If I sit down with one lock and bump it over and over again, I can get the feel of that particular lock enough to where I can open it within 1 or 2 hits. Doing the same thing with lockpicks, I can get it down to 1 or 2 seconds. If I were

going to videotape myself bumping a lock, I would prepare the lock ahead of time to make sure it opened in one hit.

One of the few exceptions to all of this would be the Schlage F51 series locking doorknob. This is Schlage's least expensive lock. In an effort to make it more desirable to the public, they put in "pick resistant" pins. I tried to pick one of these a while back. It took me 90 minutes. I was told by other locksmiths after the fact that these locks are actually easier to bump than pick. That's when I made my bump keys.

Here's my problem with pick & bump resistant locks; if you're going to make a lock pick resistant, do it to the deadbolt, not the latch. When you step outside to pick up the morning paper and the wind blows the door shut behind you, why make a bad situation worse by having to destroy the lock? With a deadbolt, at least you need to have the key with you for the door to be locked!

Bill Walter

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