Now Hear This! Electronic Eavesdropping Equipment Designs (Equipment Design) by Winston Arrington

Unique Source

This is a how to book giving you schematics/diagrams of electronic eavesdropping equipment.

My Personal Review:
This book presents a large number of circuits, almost all of which are for `bugs`, that is, eavesdropping devices that transmit audio by radio waves, although there are some other related circuits. No other book in the marketplace presents so many circuits.

The circuits shown start with the well-known free running modulated oscillators, then progress through more complex (and more reliable) designs with both aperiodic and tuned final amplifiers, voltage regulation of the oscillator, VOX circuits, subcarriers and crystal control. There are phone taps - serial and parallel, and combined phone and room taps.

Frequencies range from 28MHz to 450MHz. None cover the FM broadcast band but many transmit in ham radio bands (almost guaranteeing discovery) and some transmit in marine and aircraft bands - the authorities are not happy with people who interfere with aircraft safety. Output power ranges from 10mW to 400mW. There is a (now obsolete) design of an infinity transmitter and one really unusual way to conceal a microphone.

The author is a man of few words. In 126 pages there are just 14 describing the circuits and none which describe operation, construction, trouble shooting, layout or design of PCBs. On the other hand there are 134 schematics. There are also 18 pages of very competent and level-headed advice on countermeasures contributed by Kevin Murray.

This is not for beginners. You would need to be able to
* Analyse a circuit diagram
* Substitute VHF/UHF transistors if the type specified was not available
* Know what resistors and capacitors are suitable for VHF/UHF operation.
* Design PCBs for UHF operation
* Troubleshoot an RF circuit
The designs are all 1970s vintage with a few updated to use ICs and surface mount components. The author uses a series of common modules in each circuit so while they look repetitive, we can assume that they are the fruits of experience. There is nothing in this book that you could not find in any good text on electronics design; indeed that's what the professionals would be using. But for students who are bright but directionless design a bug for the principals office is always a better motivator than read chapter six and attempt the odd-numbered questions. For security professionals it defines the lower end of the threat spectrum - not what government agencies are using.

On the other hand there is material here that has other uses. The current direction in radio engineering is low power, short range wireless solutions for sharing data, and most security electronics companies are diversifying into environmental monitoring (animal tracking, air and water quality monitoring) using radio transmitters adapted from eavesdropping devices. Telemetry transmitters use similar circuits and amateur radio operators interested in QRP operations will find numerous useful circuits.

A word of caution here. Most governments have made illegal the construction, possession, distribution (by sale or otherwise), use or use of material obtained from eavesdropping devices except in special circumstances so you are advised to check your local laws if you want to do more than read this book.

On the other hand, successful prosecutions are rare and similar devices are openly advertised for sale. Detection of these devices is difficult. Any competent hobbyist could produce this equipment from readily available components or by disassembly of consumer items. Wireless microphones are often a feature of school or university curriculums.

But before you go into business consider this. Whether your clients are cops, spies or gangsters, they are eavesdroppers and conspirators - inherently untrustworthy. They dont regard you as an electronic genius - youre just the hired help, some geek who is useful but expendable. Look after number one! The smartest player is often the one who does not join the game.

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