



# Physical Security and advanced attacks

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## CS1660 Introduction to Computer Security

# Legal Notice

- Laws regarding lockpicking vary significantly state-by-state
- In most states purchase and possession of dedicated lockpicking tools is legal
  - Penalties are raised significantly if you get caught using them in commission of a crime
  - Typically moves an offense from a civil offense or misdemeanor to a felony

# What Is Physical Security?

- Any physical object that creates a barrier to unauthorized access
- This includes: locks, latches, safes, alarms, guards, guard dogs, doors, windows, walls, ceilings, floors, fences, door strikes, door frames and door closers

# Is Physical Security An IT Concern?

- You have been working hard to secure your network from cyber attacks
  - Redundant layers of antivirus programs, firewalls and intrusion detection systems should protect against every possible electronic method of entry
- But what if an attacker gains access to the server room or network wiring closet ...
- Is your network still safe?

# Compromising Locks

- For centuries, the lock has been one of the cornerstones of physical security
  - We rely on dozens of them every day to protect people and assets
- The trust most people place in locks is unwarranted
  - Most locks can be easily compromised with nondestructive methods
  - Sometimes within seconds and with readily available tools
- “Locks keep honest people honest”

# Destructive vs. Nondestructive Entry

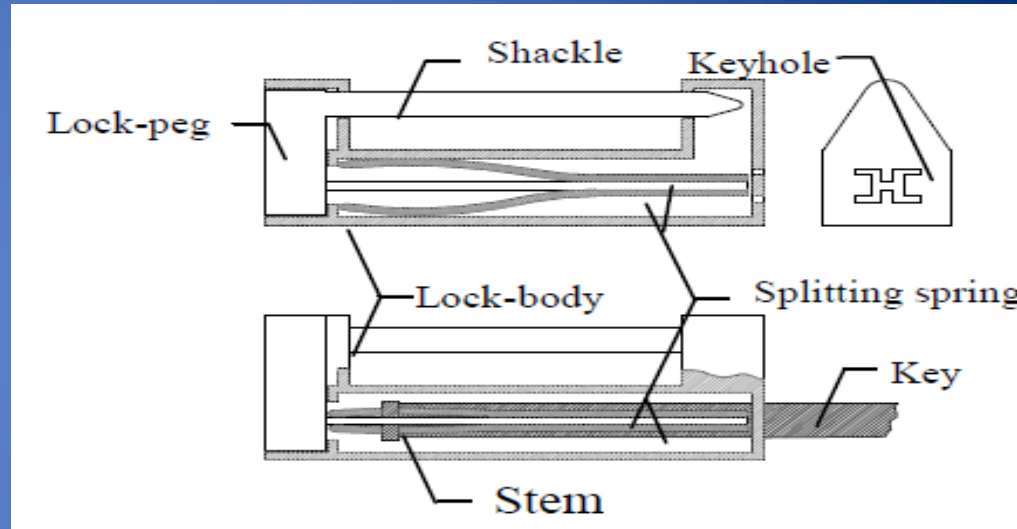
- Destructive entry
  - Involves using force to defeat physical security
  - Methods involve crowbars, bolt cutters and sledge hammers
  - Negative impact on IT resources is apparent
  - Remediation steps also obvious
- Nondestructive entry
  - Compromises security without leaving signs of a breach
  - Defeats intrusion detection
  - Greater and long-term threat

# History of Locks Vs. Encryption

- Very easy to break
  - Very few physical keys
    - The width and the length of the key
  - Few combinations  $C^S$ 
    - Difficult to use with a large number of cylinders (C) and symbols (S)
  - Effective because people were not good at casting iron or algorithms
- Very easy to break
  - Very few possible encryption keys
    - i.e. 1-26 letter shift
  - Effective because people were not able to read (illiterate)

# Splitting-spring lock

- Lock body has a Keyhole
  - key to insert
  - supporting guide for the sliding bolt to move
- Sliding bolt
  - a shackle for hanging the lock
  - a stem for bonding one end of the splitting springs
  -
- If locked: sliding bolt is trapped by the opening springs against the inner wall of the lock-body.

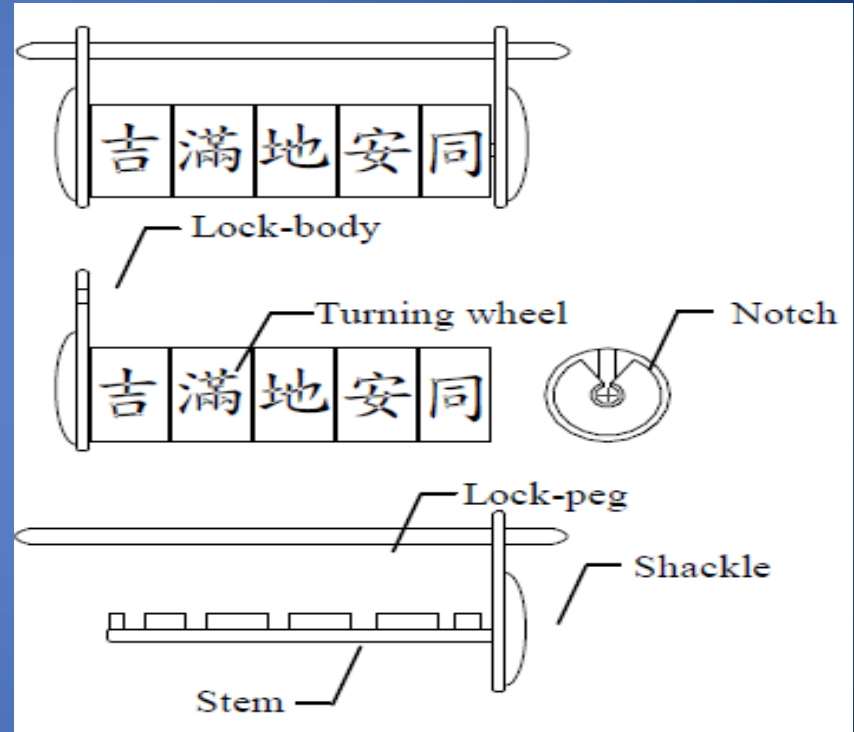


•For opening, key is inserted and its head squeezes the opening springs so that the sliding bolt can exit from lock-body.



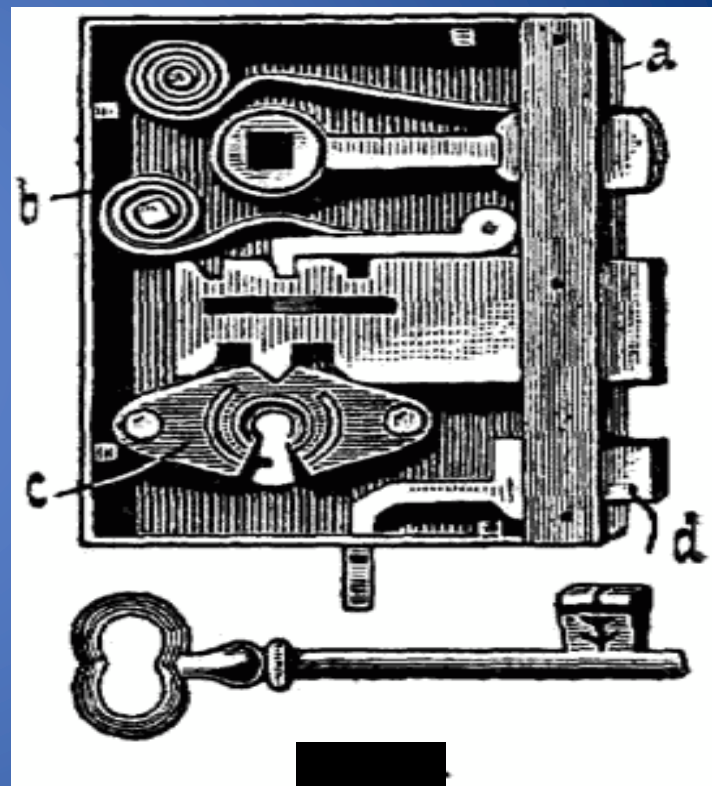
# Letter-combination lock

- Lock-body has an axis with rotating wheels for guiding the movement of the sliding bolt
- Rotating wheels have same size with four letters engraved on the surface
- When all letters are in the correct position a channel is formed that allows the stem to slide apart from the lock-body



# Warded Locks

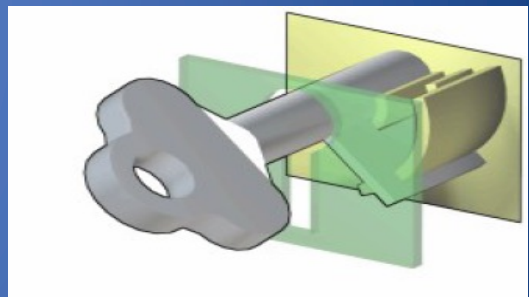
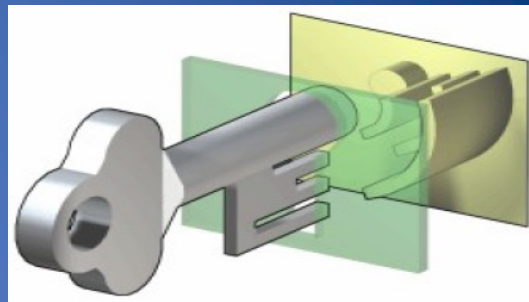
- Locks of this type were used in ancient times
- The key moves the bolt assisted by a support spring
- Security relies on the fact that not all keys pass through the key hole

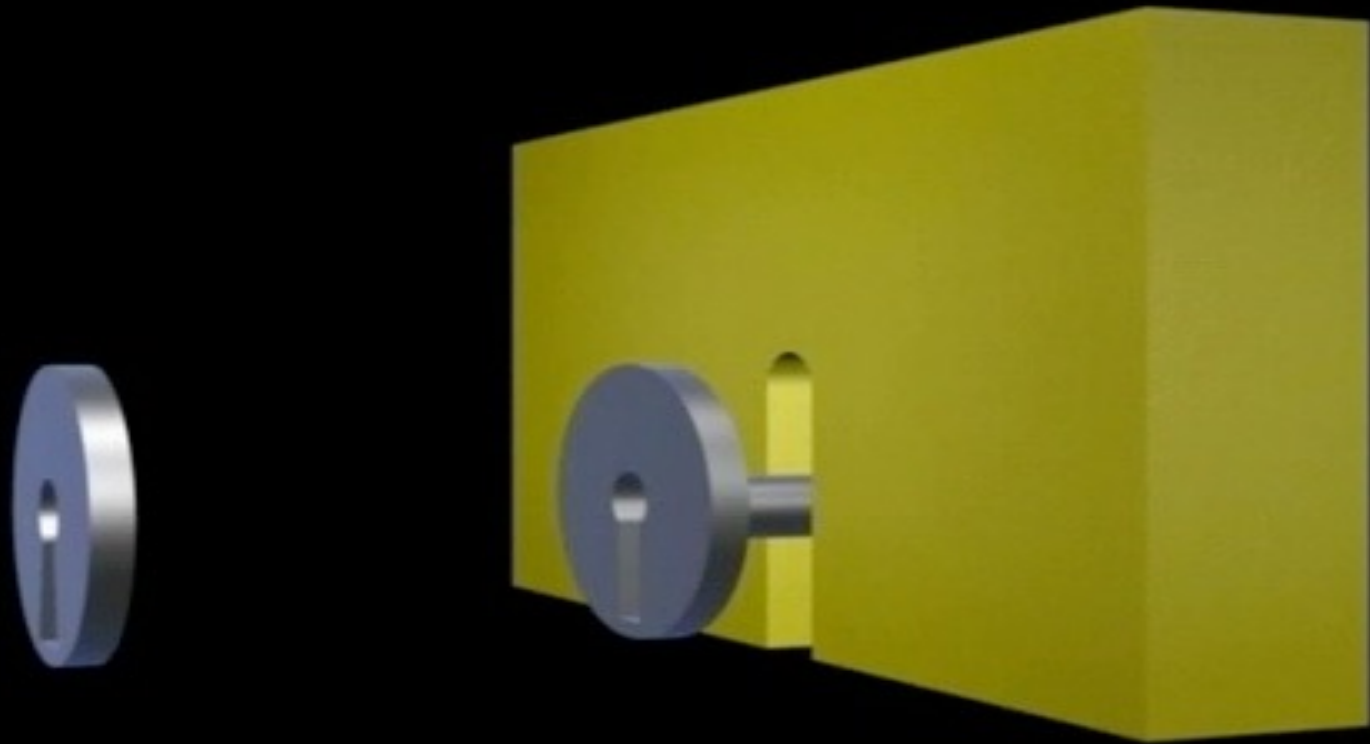




# Skeleton Key

- Usually in old style doors or desks
- Different concentric obstructions
- Easy to lock pick with Skeleton keys
- They come from ancient Rome





# Warded Picks

- Warded padlocks have a number of elements that are superimposed to determine the profile of the key



- Easy to "break open" with a set of key samples





# Pick vs. Bypass

Break open a lock in a nondestructive manner can be achieved either through:

- Pick: acting on the lock mechanism simulating the operation of the key
- Bypass: manipulation of the bolt without using the lock



# TSA Lock

- The U.S. government has established a set of rules for the inspection of baggage without the presence of passengers
- Special TSA-approved locks allow both inspection and protection against theft
- An important element is that the inspection must be easily verifiable by the user



Transportation  
Security  
Administration



## Baggage Locked?

Please use a TSA-recognized lock or leave your baggage unlocked to avoid having your lock broken if a physical inspection is required.

A list of TSA-recognized locks can be found at: [www.TSA.gov](http://www.TSA.gov).

Baggage may be searched at any time.

### ¿Está cerrado su equipaje?

Por favor use un candado reconocido por TSA o deje su equipaje sin cerrar para evitar que se tenga que romper el candado si se necesita hacer una inspección física.

Se puede encontrar una lista de candados reconocidos por TSA en: [www.TSA.gov](http://www.TSA.gov).

El equipaje se puede registrar en cualquier momento.

TSA Contact Center 1-866-289-9673

[www.TSA.gov](http://www.TSA.gov)



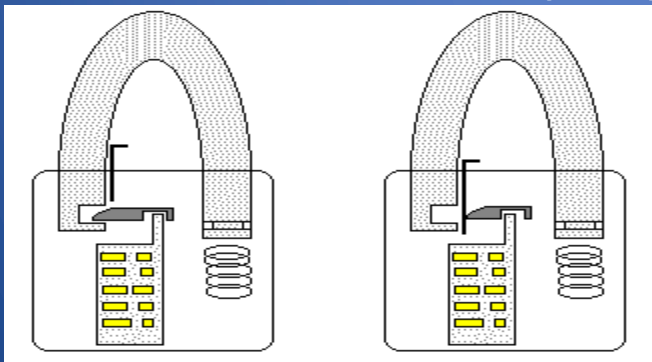




# Shims



- It is often possible to open a padlock by slipping shims in between the shackle and the lock's casing
- No need to defeat the actual locking cylinder where the key is placed





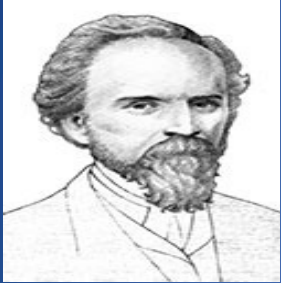
Handcuffs  
typically use locks  
Warded

The key to remove  
the block that  
allows the lever to  
open

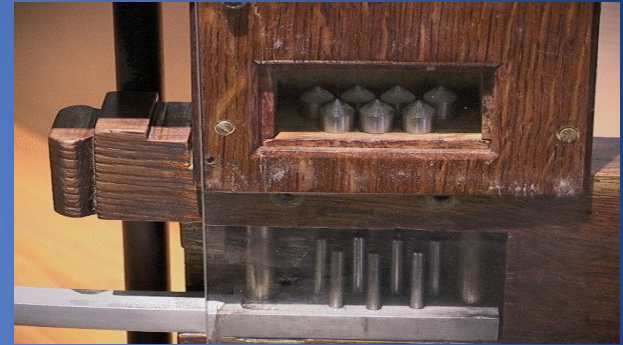


Opens the throttle inserting a shim between the  
rack and lock

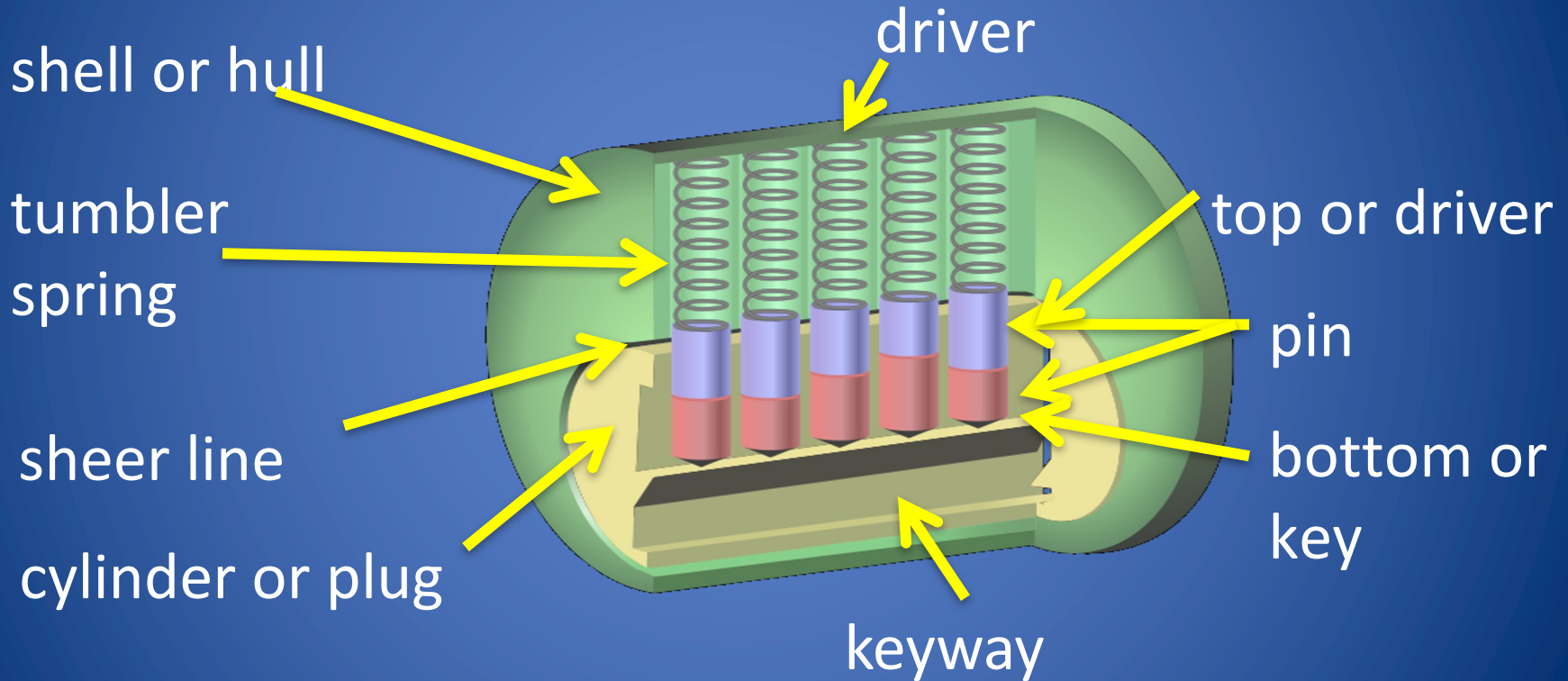
# 1860: Yale Pin Tumbler Lock



- Modern version of the Egyptian single-pin design
- Utilizes two pins for locking
- Double-detainer theory of locking
- Created shear line



# Terminology



# How Does a Lock Work?





# LOCK PICKING

# Lock Picking

- Lock picking had been the exclusive art of locksmiths, professional thieves, spies and magicians for hundreds of years
- However, with the advent of the Internet, information about lock picking methods and tools has become readily available
  - E.g., YouTube has many lock picking videos

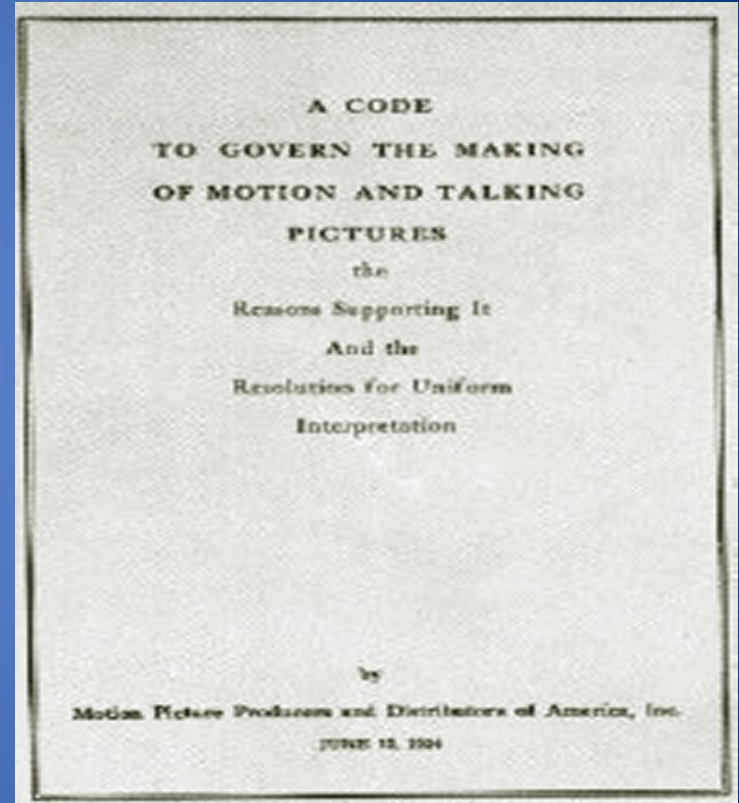


Press Esc to exit full screen mode.



# Lock Picking in Movies

- Genuine lock picking in movies used to be prohibited
- Before 1967, the Hays code (Motion Picture Production Code) required censorship of Hollywood movies
  - “All detailed (that is, imitable) depiction of crime must be removed, such as lock picking or mixing of chemicals to make explosives”



## Lock Picking

### Physical object

- Lock on door, safe, etc.
- Key to the lock
- Access to room, safe, etc.

## Cryptanalysis

### Equivalent crypto object

- Unbroken cipher text
- Cryptographic key
- Plaintext

These techniques are based on the same principle,  
overcoming an obstacle that is in between you  
and something you are trying to access

# Lockpicking Tools

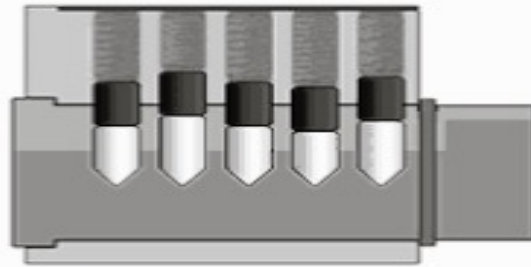
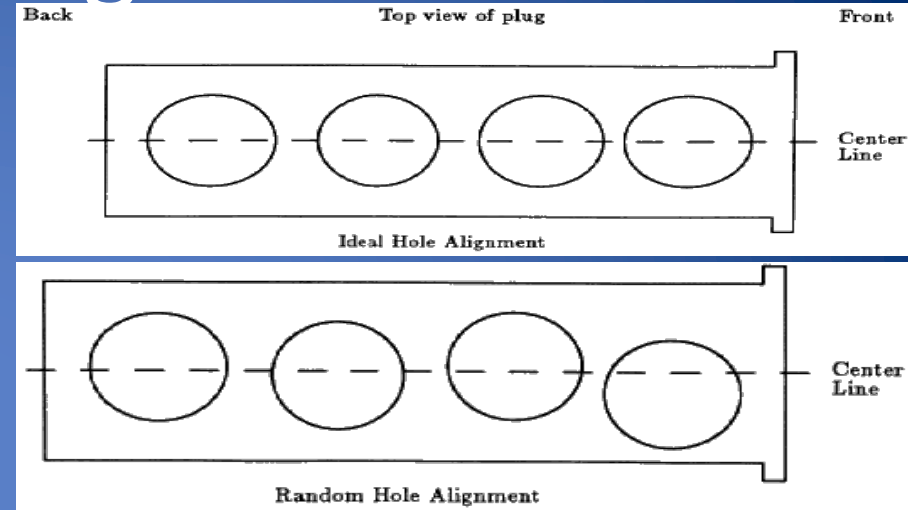
- Feelers
- Scrubbers
- Tension tools



Image credit: southord.com

# Picking

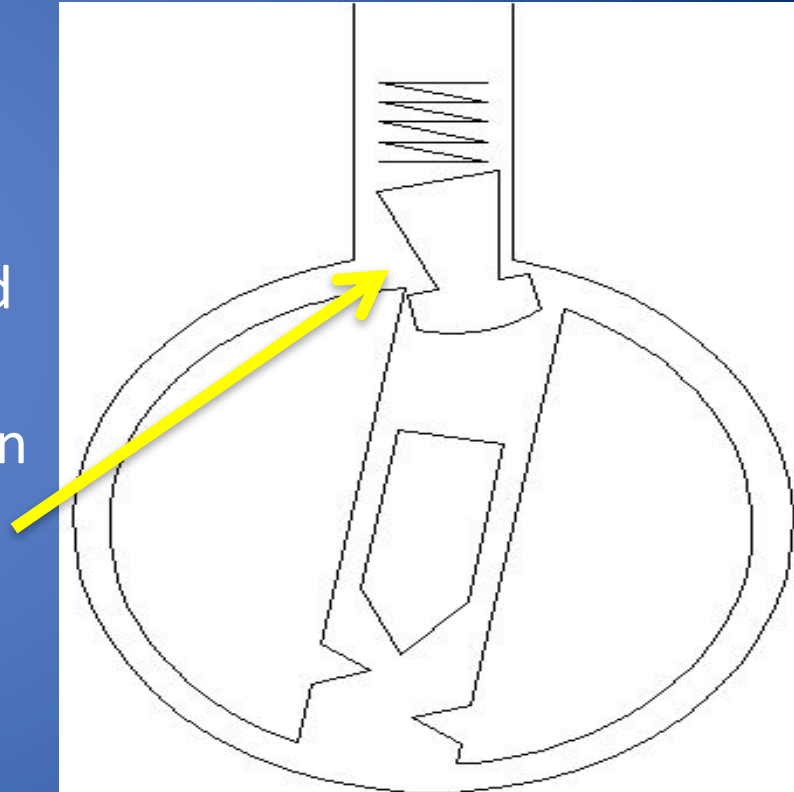
- It is all about exploiting mechanical defects
  - Better locks = less defects
- Conceptually a  $O(n^2)$  problem lifting all pins to the correct height
  - Misaligned pin stacks reduce it to a  $O(n)$  problem or better

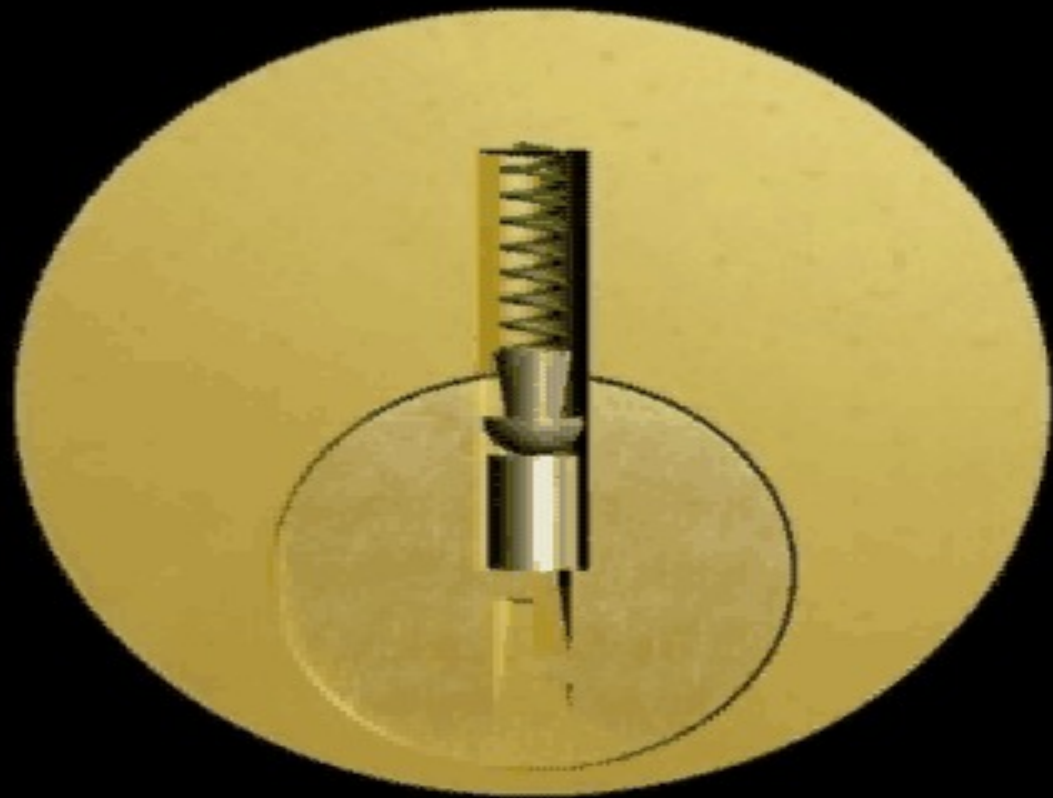


# High Security Pins

- Special pins can complicate a lot the task of picking

Top pin is placed in a position similar to that on shear line but that does not allow opening



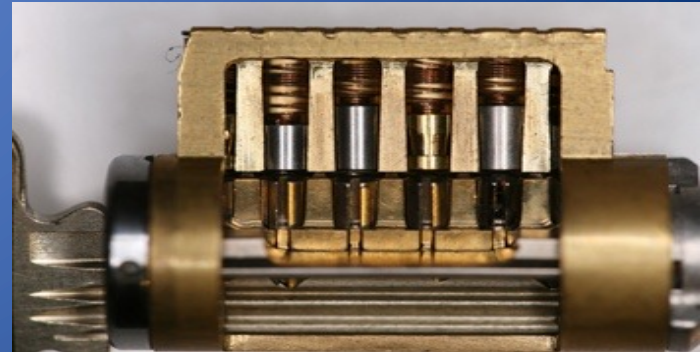


# Locks for Critical Infrastructures



- Which locks protect these places?
- What characteristics do they have?
- What are they?

**Medeco**  
CS1660 physical security

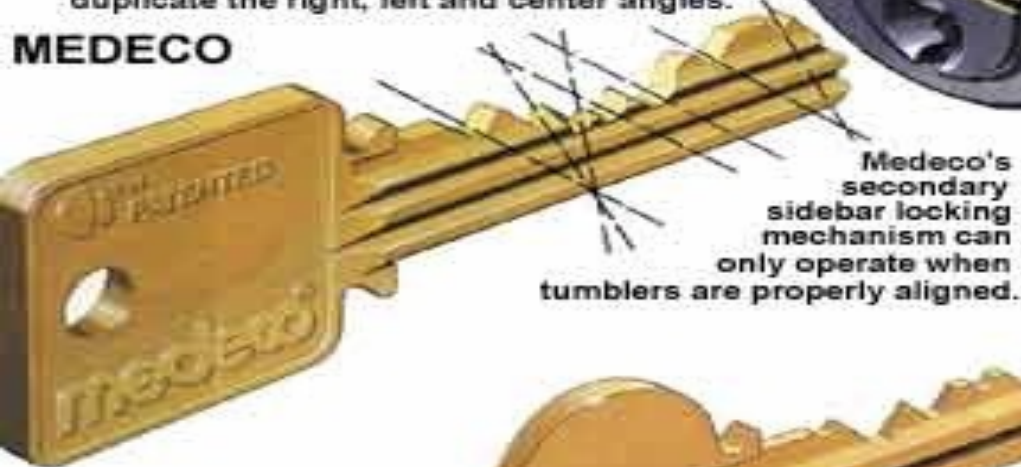




To resist drilling, Medeco adds hardened steel inserts to critical sections of the lock face and sidebar.

Medeco keys are unique and require special key cutting machines to precisely duplicate the right, left and center angles.

## MEDECO



Medeco's secondary sidebar locking mechanism can only operate when tumblers are properly aligned.

## COMMON



The common lock cylinder, with no hardened steel inserts, offers little protection against drilling.

A common key can be cut at any corner store and has no provision for controlled duplication.



The Medeco pick-resistant pin tumbler must be elevated and rotated to the proper position for the lock cylinder to operate.



Common pin tumblers are vulnerable to picking.

Let's Watch That Again!



Medeco m3: 

# Statistics

- 4-6 pins, 4-10 levels
- $10^6 = 1,000,000$  possible keys!
- The angular positions of the cylinders allow to obtain about 180 different positions  
 $(180 \cdot 10)^6 = 3.4012224 \times 10^{19}$
- (Un) fortunately there is a need for some tolerance in locks

# Typical enhancements

- Sidebar
- Drill-proof pins
- Slide
- Biaxial rotation
- Magnets
- Non-uniform top pin (more combinations)
- Strict chain of custody on key controls
- Electronic audit trails



# Bumping

- A different way of picking locks
- Virtually all traditional Yale and similar locks can be opened by bumping
- What lock pickers say about bumping:
  - RELIABLE
  - REPEATABLE
  - SIMPLE TO LEARN

# “Bumping” Physics

## Newton cradle

4/25/24

CS1660 physical security

Third Law of Motion:

*“For every action, there is an equal and  
opposite reaction”*

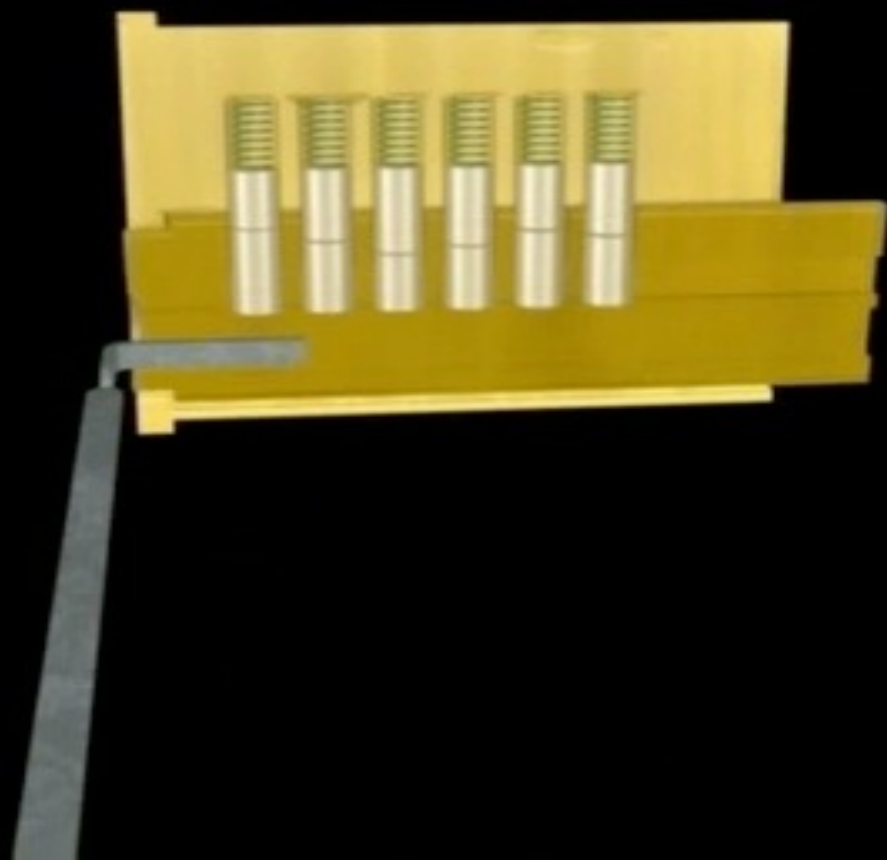
Sir Isaac Newton 1650

38

# Pick Gun

- Manual and electronic pick guns are a popular method for quick and easy ways of opening up doors
- The pick gun is used in a similar way but usually has a **trigger** that creates an upward movement that must be repeated rapidly to open the lock

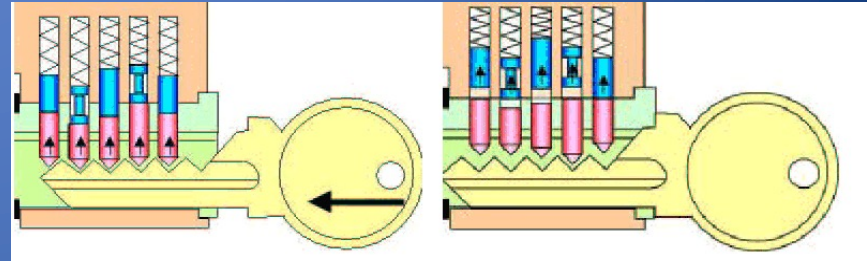






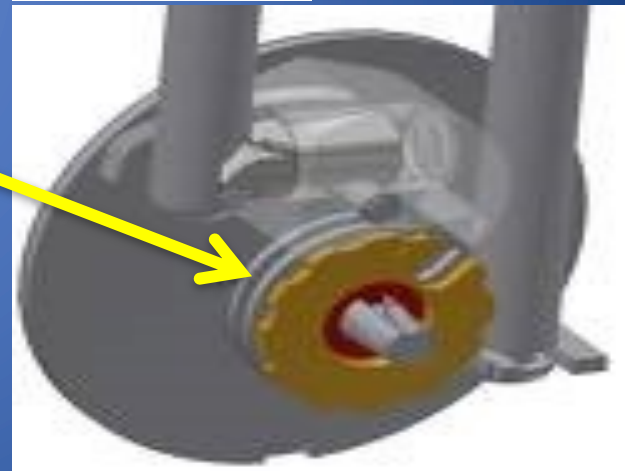
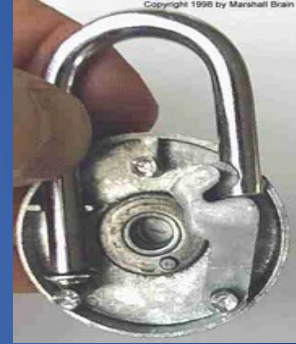
# Bump Keys

- Driver pins “jump” higher than the cylinder just for an instant
- If a light rotational force is applied, the cylinder will turn
- Lock bumping is a very fast method for opening the lock
- The lock is not damaged in any way
- Few key-pin locks cannot be bumped



# Combination Lock

- There are locks that do not require a physical key to be opened but a code
- Combination locks allow attacks based on reducing the space of possible combinations to try
  - The gears have a higher tolerance of the external disk combination



# Biometric padlock

- Usability
  - No need to worry about forgetting the password.
  - No need keys and mobile phones with you.
  - No need multiple steps to open the lock.
  - Easy touch solve any trouble
- Unfortunately not always secure
  - Shimming and Weak materials
- ‘Ontogeny Recapitulates Phylogeny’
  - A biological theory on evolution of the species similar to the evolution in the computer industry
  - Pay attention to avoid the repetition of old mistakes



# Credits

## Video:

- **Richard Edwards, Mirko Jugurdzia**  
**Visual Guide to Lock Picking DVD**  
Standard Publications, Inc.

## Image:

- Southord.com
- Medeco.com
- MIT guide to Lock Picking
- [www.clksupplies.com](http://www.clksupplies.com)
- Wikipedia: lock picking, bumping, etc.

# BREAK!

5

4

3

2

1

# Attack Trees

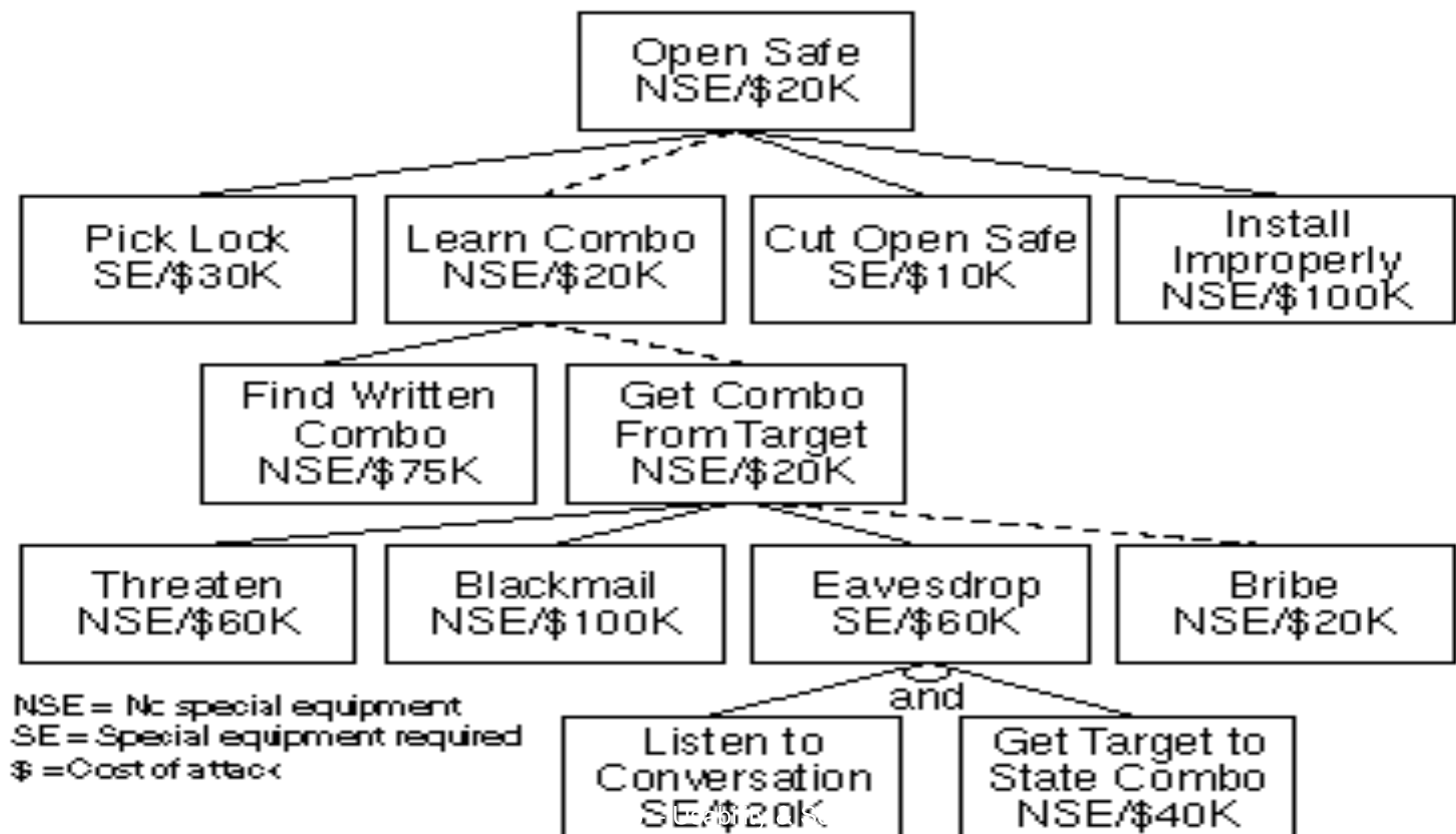
- Bruce Schneier introduced Attack trees showing how multiple attack vectors can compromise a single target
- You represent attacks against a system in a tree structure, with the goal as the root node and different ways of achieving that goal as leaf nodes
- <http://www.schneier.com/paper-attacktrees-ddj-ft.html>













How do I continue  
learning about  
**cybersecurity?**

# Learning from recent attacks

# CS1660 Farewell

- And now before the course will be over ...
  - Thanks to all!
  - A journey lasted 23 lectures...
  - This is an intro course just the tip of the iceberg
  - Transmit the security mindset and the passion
  - Stay in touch, during the summer I will work on improving
- And now the course is over 😊