



Script: Lauren's Ordeal

Lauren goes to school one day and everything has changed. Her friends won't talk to her, people laugh and point when she walks past and someone has sent her disturbing text messages. She keeps receiving vicious emails from people she doesn't even know, people have posted lies and rumours about her on the internet and when she logs into Messenger, she has been blocked by all her friends.

Lauren is being bullied in cyberspace.

Lauren:

Well, I was best friends with this girl called Susan. We'd share all our secrets together, you know, she was one of those friends who you could tell anything to. During first term we were really close. I gave her my MSN username and password. I didn't think anything of it at the time.

A few months later we had this huge fight and we stopped being friends. When I went to school the next day I noticed that people were suddenly avoiding me, and even my group of friends wouldn't talk to me. They just completely ignored me.

I started to notice other people in the school pointing at me and whispering things and laughing amongst themselves. I started to get text messages saying all these awful things that weren't true, and I couldn't understand why people were doing this to me. I had no idea what the messages meant.

When I arrived home I had a stack of new emails, some from people I didn't even know, saying all these things about my private life they couldn't possibly know.

I went on to Messenger and there was hardly anyone online which was really unusual. All I could think was that people must be blocking me.

I logged on to my school's public message board and was completely shocked to see that someone had posted all these new topics about me, saying all these terrible things that weren't true at all.

When things got that serious I had to tell my parents. They contacted the school and the message board was shut down until they could fix the problem.

The next day someone set up a blog, containing my photo and a list of lies and rumours about me, and people started posting comments. This went on for about a week. It was so hard to deal with, I was so stressed.

I did what I could to deal with the problem. I contacted my ISP and put a spam filter on my account so only emails from my address book got through. I also blocked people in my contacts list that were sending me nasty messages.

But then I started getting text messages saying things like 'I hate you' or 'Why don't you just die?'



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That's when the police got involved. They traced the numbers from the threatening messages and visited the offenders. They eventually discovered that I had supposedly sent all my friends a message telling them all these secrets about my life, which was a complete lie.

And then it hit me what had happened – Susan must have logged on with my username and password, then she sent the people on my contact list a message, saying all this stuff about my life that wasn't true.

I confronted Susan and she said it was just a bit of fun and didn't mean for it to get so serious. But the damage had been done. Pretty much all of the people in the group I was in aren't my friends anymore. There's just a couple of people at school that I still talk to and trust, but otherwise I just tend to keep to myself and focus on my study.

Even though things are different now, I've been told I did all the right things. I told my parents what was happening, the school was able to shut down the message board, I blocked all the emails from people I didn't know, and I saved all the abusive and threatening messages that I received on Messenger and my mobile which can be used legally as evidence.

What I should never have done was give my personal details to someone else. I never imagined that giving someone my username and password could affect my whole life the way it has.