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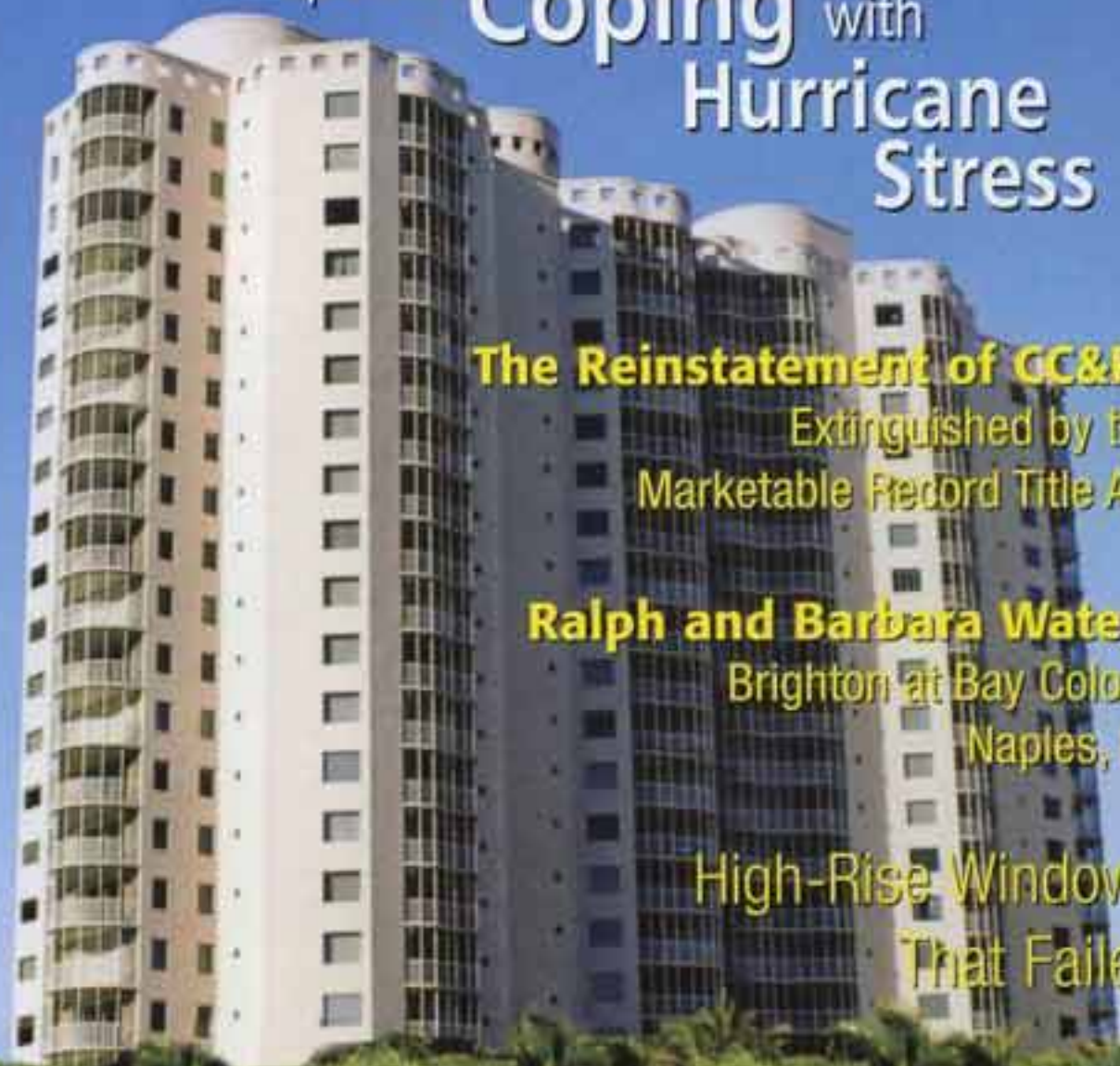
April 2006

special: **Coping** with  
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**Ralph and Barbara Waters**  
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**High-Rise Windows**  
That Failed





## Persons, Property, and Premises Protection

by Brad Higdon and Paul Chadwick

**I**n this day and age, it's not surprising that most property managers, associations, and even residents themselves are preoccupied with improving security. For the past several years, we've seen a consistent and significant upturn in both standard conventional security and high-technology 'systems' type security applications.

A few years back, a common request was for, "a couple of cameras at the recreation center to catch the teenagers throwing lounge chairs into the pool or gouging the felt on the billiard tables." How times have changed.

More recently, in fact just a few weeks back, it was a 23 door, radio frequency identification (RFID), access control system and 32 color cameras with digital video recorders.

We cover a fairly large region comprised mostly of southeast Florida including Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties. The prevalence of interest here isn't limited to any specific segment of the community. From high-end, luxury condominiums on the beach to more modest rental communities, every property feels a need for a comprehensive security plan or policy of some sort.

Whether the concern is common criminal activity, potential assault, or even squabbles between board members resulting in vandalized Mercedes, improving overall security has become a priority.

In simpler times, a guard service, calling the locksmith, or posting inquiries for possible witnesses were about the only options available. And, if you did have an antiquated black and white video tape recorder, the cameras were inevitably in the 'wrong place at the wrong time' (and the bad guys always wore, or drove, grey).

As Americans have become accustomed to access cards and badges at the office, cameras in intersections, and carefully controlled pedestrian traffic patterns at the airport, there's a sense that their comfort level at home deserves similar respect.

If you've ever had to re-key the entrance locks of a 500-unit apartment building and/or kept track of who has what key and when, you know the challenge. The advent of electronic access control systems has revolutionized the way managers look at the most basic point of security, the doors.

Systems using "magnetic stripe" (credit card style) technology have been around for decades. But due to both costs and the complicated nature of administration, these systems

were often reserved for large institutions, government facilities and the like. But, as in everything else, personal computers and user friendly software have brought these systems to a clubhouse near you.

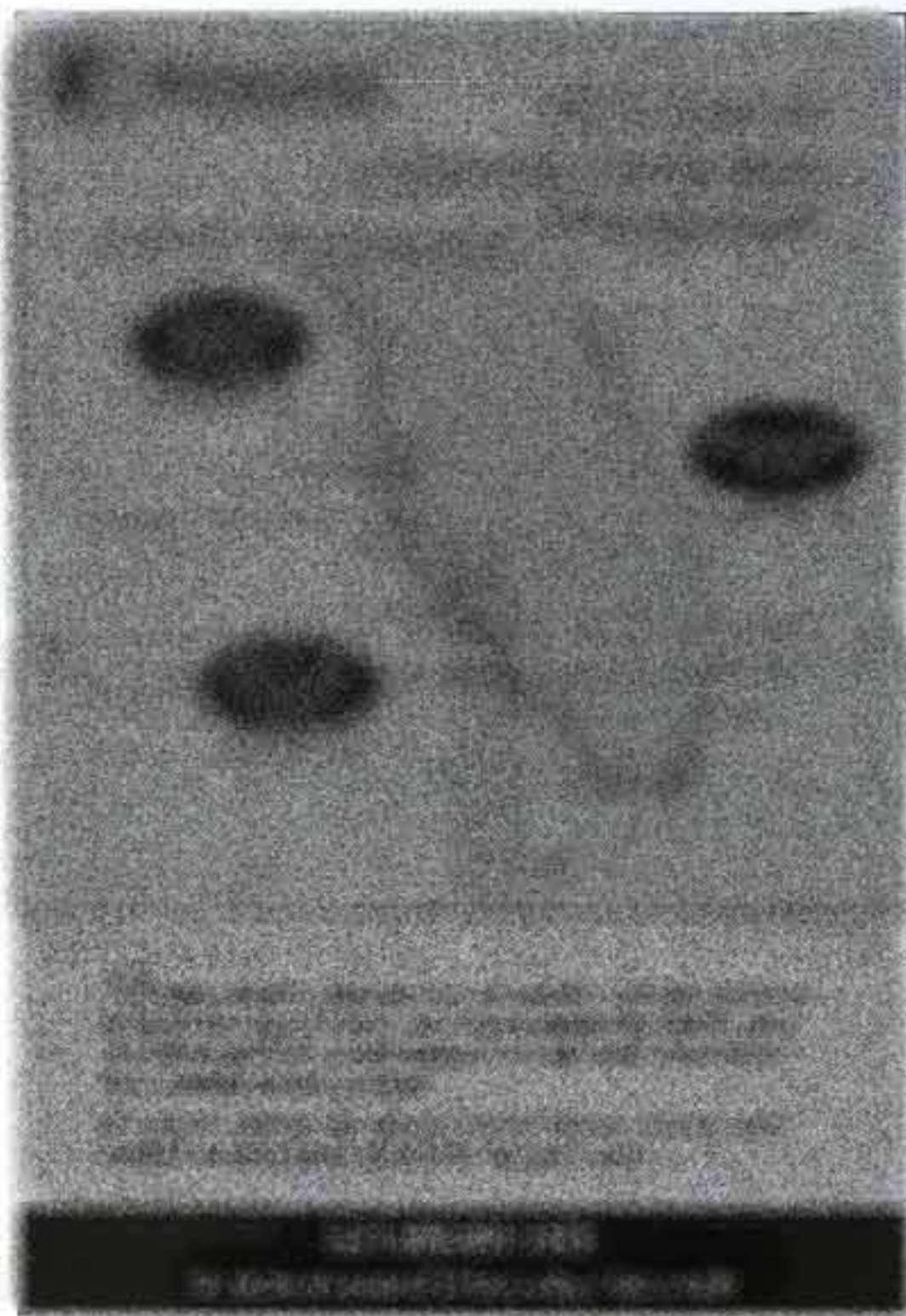
We are now seeing everything from small two-door access control systems all the way up to 100-door campus-wide integrated network projects using the same basic radio frequency (RF) 'proximity' technology where the uniquely addressed card or keyfob (remember the Mobil 'Speedpass') never even touches the reading device. Authorization for access is immediately granted or disallowed, recorded/logged, and the door unlocked in less than two seconds.

When a user moves, is denied further entry, or forgets to return a RF card, keyfob or vehicle transponder, the administrator can simply deprogram that specific user out of the system while still maintaining records of unauthorized attempts at entry. Many of the new systems consist of a common database/software package controlling pedestrian gates, egress doors, and even garage/parking access. Residents, staff, service contractors, and housekeepers are given specific authorization based on priority level, time of day, day of the week, or limited one time, automatically expiring temporary tags. As we get even further acclimated to the prevalence of these technologies, it will become common to see biometrics (retina/fingerprint

scans), automated functions, remote control and monitoring (through the internet) of systems, asset management of property, and seamlessly integrated security/access/surveillance systems.

I've focused on "access control" and only occasionally mentioned closed circuit television, (CCTV or surveillance), camera systems. As I write, I find that the boundaries of these systems have become blurred in my own mind. The combined value of electronic access control and surveillance systems is greater than the sum of their individual parts. Even if the systems are not directly interfaced, having time-stamped data from either is indispensable.

The cost of high quality color video cameras has dropped by half over the past 10 years and now, with the wide variety of video transmission



means, (traditional coax cable, data cable, telephone lines, wireless, LAN, WAN and the internet), cameras can go anywhere. High capacity digital video recorders/multiplexers, although still somewhat pricey, make routing and recording days worth of video easy. The pictures are great, too.

A large majority of our projects are in older buildings and properties where any electronics they may have had are either hodge-podge conglomerations of equipment installed years ago or are nearly non-existent. Converts are created quickly once the versatility of new technologies is realized.

One high-rise beachside condominium on Galt Ocean Mile in Fort Lauderdale is a good example of the easy acceptance of these systems. With the encouragement of some visionary residents and board members,

Regency Tower Condominium took the plunge. An older building sitting on a very prime piece of real estate, Regency Tower dates back to the early 1970s.

Eric (Rick) Berkowitz, a resident at Regency Tower, took the lead, realizing the power of Radio Frequency Identification (RFID). As Eric explains, "Within the last year, many Galt Mile (Condo) Associations either installed new security systems or announced plans to do so. Once they witness a fully functioning system in a neighboring building, concerns harbored by association officials are usually dispelled. Association boards are no longer considering whether or not these new systems would benefit their residents, but when they should be installed. After all, who could reasonably argue against a less expensive better mousetrap?"

Being a close-knit community, word spread quickly along Galt Ocean Mile. Since then, almost two years ago, that first 10-door system at Regency Tower has spawned similar systems in several of their neighboring buildings. We have already completed two others and are now in the process of installing a fourth with 20+ doors and gates.

It's clear to me that the longer these systems are in, the more they are appreciated. As I hear the feedback, it starts with skepticism, moves to excited enthusiasm, and soon becomes, "how did we ever live without it?"

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