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175475

AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF  
FORMER INTIMATE STALKING VICTIMS

Final Report Submitted to the National Institute of Justice\*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The problem of stalking has only received widespread recognition during the present decade following the media coverage of a few "high profile" cases involving celebrities such as actresses Teresa Saldana, Rebecca Schaffer, and Jodie Foster, talk-show host David Letterman (see Perez, 1993: 268-270), and most recently, Nicole Simpson, ex-wife of O.J. Simpson. The result of increased public awareness of this type of behavior has resulted in the passage of anti-stalking laws during the past seven years in every state, beginning with California in 1990 (Cal. Penal Code, Section 646.9).<sup>1</sup>

### **Anti-Stalking Legislation**

Current anti-stalking legislation varies from state to state in terms of substantive, or legal, definitions as well as the seriousness of the crime (and corresponding sanctions). Several authors have written comprehensive overviews of the content of anti-stalking legislation throughout the United States (e.g. Hunzeker, 1992; McAnaney, Curliss, & Abeyta-Price, 1993; Sohn, 1994; Thomas, 1993). While there is no universally accepted definition of stalking, it is generally "associated with pursuit or harassment rather than actual physical harm" (Sohn, 1994: 207). Common elements in stalking statutes are references to "repeated following," "harassing," "course of conduct," "harm to victim," and "credible threat" (McAnaney, 1993: 894-897; see also National Criminal Justice Association, 1993).

"Course of conduct" refers to behavior that occurs over some period of time (i.e. a series of acts). These acts may be the same or a variety of actions over time included repeated "following, nonconsensual communication, harassing, and trespassing," or certain other forms of physical contact (McAnaney et al., 1993: 894-895; U.S. Department of Justice, 1993: 44). The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA) has

developed a model anti-stalking code in which they define "course of conduct" as "repeatedly [on two or more occasions] maintaining a visual or physical proximity to a person or repeatedly conveying verbal or written threats or threats implied by conduct or a combination thereof directed at or toward a person" (NCJA, 1993: 43). Some statutes specify the intended, while others specify the actual, effect that the behavior must have on the victim in order to constitute stalking. This may include the intent to place the person in fear of physical injury or to cause emotional distress (McAnaney et al., 1993: 896). Finally, in some states the anti-stalking statutes make reference to "credible threat." In essence this means that the victim must actually believe that the stalker has the capacity to carry out a threat (e.g. "that would cause an individual to reasonably fear for [his/her safety or] the safety of another individual" (McAnaney et al., 1993: 896-897)).

In addition to substantive variations in stalking laws, the classification of the crime according to seriousness (and resulting sanctions) also varies from state to state. Typically, stalking is classified as a misdemeanor, however several states have provisions in their statutes whereby certain aggravating circumstances can result in the behavior being classified a felony. For example, if a stalker is violating a temporary restraining order or an order of protection, or if a convicted stalker commits subsequent stalking behavior, the individual can receive a harsher sentence (McAnaney et al., 1993: 900-901).

### **Extent of the Stalking Problem**

Although only a handful of highly-publicized cases (and the resultant public pressure) appears to have been the impetus for anti-stalking statutes, a recent national

survey resulted in estimates that over one million women and 370,000 men each year are victims of stalking (Tjaden, 1997). The researchers also suggest that one in twelve American women will be stalking victims at some point in their lives. These estimates far exceed earlier, more conservative estimates (see e.g. Guy, 1993: 995). Although stalking is estimated to be a widespread problem affecting people of all walks of life, research on stalking and victims of stalking has been scant.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the nature of the stalking experiences of non-celebrity, former intimate victims, or “ordinary people.” Victim interviews provided the researcher with data on the nature of the stalking, the relationship between the victim and the stalker, the victim’s response to the stalking, the consequences of the stalking for the victim, and the needs of stalking victims and fulfillment of those needs in terms of victim services and the criminal justice system.

### **Research Approach**

#### **Sample**

The sample for the study consisted of 187 women who were recent (i.e. during the previous five years) former intimate stalking victims in Chester, Delaware, Bucks, Lehigh, Philadelphia, Dauphin, and Montgomery Counties in south-eastern Pennsylvania identified through victim service agencies and law enforcement agencies, as well as through advertisements in widely distributed area newspapers (e.g. Philadelphia Inquirer, etc.).<sup>2</sup> Counties were selected based on efficiency in terms of the shortest travel distances for the researcher and fellow interviewer as well as the potential of the population of the

counties to provide large numbers of subjects with varying demographic characteristics. In addition, fliers were posted in laundromats, supermarkets, and an international women's symposium in Philadelphia.

The resulting sample consisted of female stalking victims ranging in age from 18 through 74 ( $x=34.5$ ,  $s.d.=9.3$ ,  $median=34$ ), who were between the ages of 15 and 58 when the stalking began. About three-quarters of the sample were nonhispanic white (74.5%) and 23.4% were African American. Other racial groups were not well represented in the sample. Ninety percent of the women had completed at least high school, and 69% had completed at least some college. The victims' annual household incomes ranged from nothing through \$130,000. Most of the women resided in suburban areas (74.3%), some in urban areas (23.5%), and few in rural areas (2.2%) despite advertising efforts soliciting subjects from rural areas.

### **Legislative Model**

The general concepts contained in the Pennsylvania stalking statute were used as the framework upon which this research was based. Pursuant to this statute:

A person commits the crime of stalking when he engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts toward another person, including following the person without proper authority, under circumstances which demonstrate either of the following:

- (1) an intent to place the person in reasonable fear of bodily injury;
- or
- (2) an intent to cause substantial emotional distress to the person.

PA Code Section 18: 2709 (rev. 1994)

When women called to inquire about participation in the study, they were screened to insure that they met two criteria for inclusion in the sample. First, they must have been repeatedly harassed, followed, and/or threatened during the past five years by someone with whom they had had an intimate relationship (i.e. through marriage,

cohabiting, or dating).<sup>3</sup> Second, the women must have either experienced emotional distress, fear of bodily harm, actual bodily harm, or the belief that the stalker intended to cause one or more of the above. It is important to note that, unlike the legal definition of stalking presented above, *actual* intent to cause fear of bodily harm or to cause substantial emotional distress was *not* a criteria in this research study.

### **Data Collection**

Extensive (1 to 3 hour) semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with each woman in order to gather information about the nature of her former relationship with her stalker, characteristics of the stalking experience, the effects of the stalking, and her resultant needs. A brief questionnaire was also administered to obtain demographic information about the women. Data were collected from January 1996 through July 1997.

The interview consisted of both open-ended and fixed alternative questions. Respondents were able to elaborate following every question. The interview began by requesting the woman to describe what happened to her in terms of her stalking victimization. Responses to this question lasted anywhere from 5 minutes to two hours. Following this question, the respondent was asked a series of follow-up questions which explored five different areas or domains: (1) her prior relationship with the stalker; (2) the characteristics of the stalking; (3) her attempts to discourage the stalker (through both legal and extralegal mechanisms); (4) assistance sought by the victim through formal and informal networks (and the subsequent handling of the situation by others); (5) the effects of the stalking on the victim; and (6) other victimization experiences. Several of the areas and/or specific questions were based on a review of the scant stalking literature

(Dietz, 1989a, 1989b; Dietz & Martell, 1989; Dietz et al, 1991a, 1991b) as well as the general victimization literature (e.g. Abt, 1982; Baurman & Schadler, 1991; Cohen, 1990; Finn & Lee, 1987; Maguire, 1991; Newburn, 1993; U.S. Department of Justice, 1994; and Voss, 1991).

Due to the nature and the length of the interviews, each interview was tape-recorded and later transcribed. Content analysis of the data resulted in the identification of over 500 variables. All of the variables included in the analysis achieved an inter-rater reliability level of 87% or better.

### **Characteristics of Stalkers**

Stalkers were, on average, slightly younger than the victims in the sample ( $x=31.2$  years,  $s.d.=8.9$ ,  $median=30$ ), ranging in age from 17 through 57. Fifty-seven percent of the stalkers were nonhispanic white, 37% were African American, and 6.5% were other racial minorities. Of the 100 stalkers whose education was specified by the victims, 77% had completed at least high school, and 45% had completed at least some college, though their educational backgrounds ranged from some elementary school through completion of a doctoral program. Sixty-nine percent of the stalkers were employed; 62% in blue-collar positions and 37% holding white-collar positions.

According to the interview respondents, 61.7% of the stalkers had some type of prior criminal record. Of those who were able to specify the type of prior record, 31% indicated a prior record for violent offenses. Compounding this propensity for violence is the high rate of reported drug and alcohol abuse among stalkers. According to the victims, 72% of the stalkers abused either drugs or alcohol. (See Table 2.) Notably, 65% of the women in the sample reported physical abuse during their prior relationship with



the stalker. Sixty-six percent of these women identified drug and/or alcohol use as a trigger of that violence.

### **Victim-Stalker Prior Relationship**

The prior relationship between victim and stalker varied: 37% were married, 25% were living together but not married, 24% were seriously dating or engaged, and 15% were dating only casually. Seventy-five percent reported that the stalker began his controlling behavior during their prior relationship. As highlighted above, nearly two-thirds of the women suffered domestic violence during their prior relationship with the stalker.

### **Characteristics of the Stalking**

The length of the stalking period ranged from 1 month through 456 months, with a median of 12 months. Generally, the perceived motivation for the stalking was reconciliation or revenge. (See Table 3.) Seventy-five percent of the women perceived reconciliation as the stalkers' motivation, and 45% indicated that revenge was the motive. (Women were able to identify more than one motivation.)

The most common stalking behaviors reported by the victims were phone calls (90.4%), watching (78.6%), and following (68.4%). (See Table 4.) Over half the respondents reported that they received phone calls at least daily from their stalkers. When asked whether they noticed any triggers of the various stalking behaviors, one-third of the women stated that the break-up itself was the trigger and 26.7% mentioned drug or alcohol abuse.

### **Threats and Violence**

Seventy-three percent of the women reported threats of violence made by their stalkers against them, and 37 percent mentioned threats of violence towards family,

friends, coworkers, or other affiliates. (See Table 8.) Forty-six percent of the victims reported that their stalkers had committed violence against them during the stalking. (See Table 33.) Those who received explicit threats were also more likely than those who received implicit threats or no threats, to have experienced violence at the hands of their stalkers (65.7% versus 23.9%, respectively). (See Table 9.)

Comparisons between victims of nonhispanic white and African American stalkers reveal that victims of African American stalkers were more likely to have experienced threats of violence and actual violence during the stalking. (See Tables 15 and 16.) Data also indicate that stalkers with higher levels of education were less likely to be violent and less likely to make explicit threats, while implicit threats did not vary as greatly by stalkers' education. (See Tables 20 and 21.)

#### **Victims' Attempts to Discourage Stalker**

Most of the victims tried various extralegal approaches to discourage their stalkers. Reasoning with the stalker (69.5%), ignoring the stalker (42.8%), moving to a different residence (33.2%), and changing telephone numbers/blocking calls from the stalker (31.6%) were the most common. (See Table 24.) The majority of women reported that each of these attempts was unsuccessful in discouraging the stalker. The most common legal attempts to discourage the stalker included police contact (71.7%), protection from abuse orders (51.3%), and arrest (27.8%). As with the extralegal attempts to discourage the stalker, the victims expressed that the majority of these legal attempts to discourage the stalker had either no effect or made the stalkers' behavior worse. (See Tables 25 and 26.)

## **Victims' Needs**

Interview respondents were asked to identify their greatest need as a result of being stalked. Psychological/emotional support was the greatest need of 38% of the women. Twenty-three percent mentioned that they needed a sense of security, and 10% stated that their greatest need was criminal justice system support. (See Table 29.) Typically, victims sought assistance from their friends (68%) and family (54%), and they reported that their friends (37%), family (21.7%), or themselves (25%) were responsible for having met their needs during the stalking. (See Tables 27 and 30.)

## **Police Responsiveness**

Victims were asked several questions pertaining to police responsiveness to their situation during the stalking period. Responses varied greatly from one jurisdiction to the next and from one victim to another. Overall, the victims gave the highest ratings to the police for "speed of police response" and "politeness," and the poorest ratings for "sympathy" and "how well the police lived up to victim's expectations." (See Table 31.)

## **Effects of Stalking on Victims**

Victims reported a variety of psychological, physical, financial, and quality of life effects of the stalking. Victims' immediate emotional reactions upon learning that they were stalked included "fear/terror" (57.2%), anger (23.5%), and insomnia (12.8%). The 33-item Trauma Symptom Checklist (Briere & Runtz, 1989) was administered to the victims, and they indicated the frequency with which they experienced each symptom during the stalking (never, occasionally, fairly often, and very often). The symptoms with highest mean scores for the sample were sadness, insomnia, restless sleep, and tension. (See Table 32.)

Forty six percent of the women experienced violence at the hands of their stalkers. Eighty-one percent of these women suffered physical injuries ranging from small scrapes to gun shot wounds. The most prevalent injuries were bruises (27.3% of the total sample), small scrapes and cuts (18.2%), and black eyes (12.3%). (See Table 33.)

Eighty percent of the victims incurred financial costs ranging from nominal costs to costs exceeding \$100,000 (median = \$1,000). Twenty-seven percent of the women incurred moving expenses as a result of trying to evade their stalkers. Twenty-eight percent changed their telephone number. Twenty-nine percent reported losing salary or tuition as a result of the stalking. Damage to victims' cars (20%) and other property damage (22%) were also experienced by some of the victims. Twenty percent spent money changing locks or adding deadbolts for added security. (See Tables 34 through 36.)

Almost all victims (99%) reported reductions in the quality of their lives as a result of the stalking. Eighty percent reported a high level of fear, 94% were constantly wary, 64% reported changes in activity patterns. (See Tables 37 and 38.)

### **Stalking compared to Other Victimitizations**

Thirty-eight percent of the stalking victims reported having been victims of another crime in their adult lives. When asked to compare the harm of the stalking and the other crime, most women (75%) reported that the stalking was more harmful than the other crime regardless of whether the other crime was a misdemeanor (85.3% stating stalking was more harmful), a felony (64.9%), a property offense (83.8%), or a violent offense (64.7%). (See Tables 39 and 40.)

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings above shed light on some aspects of stalking behaviors and victims' experiences and needs. Based on the interviews with 187 female victims of former intimate stalking, we can conclude that stalking is a serious offense that can have a great impact on victims' lives. It is apparent that these women are suffering first as a result of their attempts to leave their partners, and then as a consequence of the relatively scarce and/or ineffective assistance in discouraging the stalker and meeting the victims' needs. The stalkers described by the victims employ a great variety of tactics in the commission of the offense, and many of the perpetrators reportedly have drug and/or alcohol problems. A large percentage of women in the sample experienced verbal threats and/or violence at the hands of their stalkers, intensifying the seriousness of the crime.

### **Policy recommendations**

The following are policy recommendations for law enforcement agencies, courts, legislatures, and victim service agencies based upon the research findings discussed above.

- Treatment of stalkers by the police, courts, and correctional agencies, whether that treatment entails deterrence or rehabilitative approaches, should reflect the seriousness of the behavior. When appropriate, this treatment should address drug and alcohol abuse among former intimate stalkers.
- Law enforcement and other justice system agency personnel should be trained to better understand the plight of stalking victims in order to avoid "re-victimizing" them by failing to (1) demonstrate appropriate empathy, (2) implement the provision

of current anti-stalking statutes, and (3) make referrals to other agencies that can assist victims.

- Legislatures should review current anti-stalking legislation and make appropriate changes that would increase the effectiveness and enforceability of these laws. Legislative review should be implemented, shifting the focus of criminal intent in stalking statutes from the stalker's intention to inflict emotional or physical harm to the stalker's intention to commit acts which, in turn, inflict emotional or physical harm.
- The process by which victims obtain restraining orders and protection from abuse orders needs to be streamlined. Present criteria for obtaining restraining orders and protection from abuse orders should be reviewed. Alternatives should be made available to women who are unable to obtain protection orders due to current criteria.
- Mechanisms should be provided to assist victims of stalking who have not been victims of intimate violence. Alternatives to mechanisms available to physically battered women (i.e. Protection from Abuse orders) should be in place in every jurisdiction.
- Victims of former intimate stalking should, at a minimum, be treated as well as victims of stranger stalking. The same degree of seriousness should be attributed to former intimate stalking as is attributed to a situation where a victim is stalked by a stranger.
- Education should be provided to increase awareness among legislators, victim service professionals, and criminal justice practitioners of the serious effects of stalking on its victims and the importance of treating stalking offenses more seriously. Workshops

and training courses should be offered to the police, district attorneys, judges, and victim counselors in order for them to be more sensitive to the unique needs of stalking victims.

- Training and education of criminal justice professionals regarding the anti-stalking legislation in their own jurisdiction as well as the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. §2261) should be conducted so that these laws can be enforced more effectively and the intended protections can be afforded to stalking victims.
- Funding opportunities should be provided to develop innovative programs to better coordinate police, court, and victim service agencies in their handling of stalking cases.
- Greater resources should be provided to victims of stalking, including education, information and guidance, counseling, and support groups. Support groups should be developed not only for stalking victims who were formerly abused by their partners, but also for stalking victims who have not been victims of domestic abuse.

#### **Future research recommendations**

The following are several suggestions for future research that should result in an even greater understanding of the offense of stalking and victims' experiences.

- Additional research should include data collected from the stalkers themselves to better understand the nature of stalking.
- Based on the large number of victims reporting the abuse of drugs and/or alcohol by their stalkers (72%), additional research is needed to further investigate the link between substance abuse and stalking behavior.

- Three-quarters of the victims reported that “controlling” behavior was present in their prior relationships with their stalkers. Further research to examine the early predictors of later stalking would be helpful.
- Future research on stalking victims should include victims of psychopathic and erotomaniac stalkers to better understand the uniqueness and similarities of their experiences and needs.
- The inclusion of male victims of stalking in research would broaden our understanding of stalking victimization.
- Ongoing evaluation of the impact (i.e. effectiveness) of state and federal anti-stalking legislation is necessary to determine whether it effectively and adequately redresses the harmful behavior of stalking.
- Victims revealed that local law enforcement personnel lacked a complete understanding of current anti-stalking legislation. Research is needed to assess the need for education of law enforcement professionals regarding federal and state anti-stalking legislation and enforcement procedures.
- The experiences of stalking victims in rural areas should be addressed to determine whether their experiences are similar to those of victims in urban and suburban areas, and to determine whether their needs are satisfactorily being met by existing services.



## **FINAL REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The problem of stalking has only received widespread recognition during the present decade following the media coverage of a few "high profile" cases involving celebrities such as actresses Teresa Saldana, Rebecca Schaffer, and Jodie Foster, talk-show host David Letterman (see Perez, 1993: 268-270), and most recently, Nicole Simpson, ex-wife of O.J. Simpson. The result of increased public awareness of this type of behavior has resulted in the passage of anti-stalking laws during the past seven years in every state, beginning with California in 1990 (Cal. Penal Code, Section 646.9).<sup>4</sup>

### **ANTI-STALKING LEGISLATION**

Current anti-stalking legislation varies from state to state in terms of substantive, or legal, definitions as well as the seriousness of the crime (and corresponding sanctions). Several authors have written comprehensive overviews of the content of anti-stalking legislation throughout the United States (e.g. Hunzeker, 1992; McAnaney, Curliss, & Abeyta-Price, 1993; Sohn, 1994; Thomas, 1993). While there is no universally accepted definition of stalking, it is generally "associated with pursuit or harassment rather than actual physical harm" (Sohn, 1994: 207). Common elements in stalking statutes are references to "repeated following," "harassing," "course of conduct," "harm to victim," and "credible threat" (McAnaney, 1993: 894-897; see also National Criminal Justice Association, 1993).

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In addition to substantive variations in stalking laws, the classification of the crime according to seriousness (and resulting sanctions) also varies from state to state. Typically, stalking is classified as a misdemeanor, however several states have provisions in their statutes whereby certain aggravating circumstances can result in the behavior being classified a felony. For example, if a stalker is violating a temporary restraining order or an order of protection, or if a convicted stalker commits subsequent stalking behavior, the individual can receive a harsher sentence (McAnaney et al., 1993: 900-901).

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Although only a handful of highly-publicized cases (and the resultant public pressure) appears to have been the impetus for anti-stalking statutes, a recent national survey resulted in estimates that over one million women and 370,000 men each year are victims of stalking (Tjaden, 1997). The researchers also suggest that one in twelve American women will be stalking victims at some point in their lives. These estimates far exceed earlier, more conservative estimates (see e.g. Guy, 1993: 995).

Although stalking is estimated to be a widespread problem affecting people of all walks of life, research on stalking and victims of stalking has been scant. Until recently, the research that *had* addressed the stalking issue has been primarily legal in nature (see e.g. Guy, 1993; Hunzeker, 1992; McAnaney, Curliss, & Abeyta-Price, 1993; National Criminal Justice Association, 1993; Perez, 1993; Sohn, 1994; Thomas, 1993). Much of the less common empirical research had focused solely on high-profile cases, or cases involving celebrities and political leaders (see e.g. Dietz, Matthews, Martell, Stewart, Hrouda, & Warren, 1991a; Dietz, Matthews, VanDuyne, Martell, Parry, Stewart, Warren, & Crowder, 1991b; Hoffman, 1943; Sebastiani & Foy, 1965; Shore, Filson, Davis, Olivos, DeLisis, & Wyatt, 1985). Other empirical research has focused on small samples of erotomaniac stalkers who have delusions about another individual with whom they are "in love" and who they sometimes believe reciprocates those feelings (see e.g. Doust & Christie, 1978; Ellis & Mellsope, 1985; ElGaddal, 1989; Goldstein, 1986, 1987; Leong, 1994; Segal, 1989; Zona, Sharma, & Lane, 1993).

Related to, and inclusive of some, stalking behaviors is the area of abuse of former and current intimate partners. A great deal of domestic violence research has

been conducted, but this body of research does not usually reflect the distinction between those who have been stalked and those who have not. The exception to this is the literature on temporary restraining orders and orders of protection (see e.g. Finn, 1989, 1991; Finn & Colson, 1990; Harrell, Smith, & Newmark, 1993; Schollenberg & Gibbons, 1992). Again, however, this research fails to present a comprehensive picture of stalking experiences because women who obtain restraining orders are not representative of all stalking victims.

Researchers have examined violence and abusive relationships in terms of “the dominance motive” (Rouse, 1990; also see Eastal, 1994); deterrence (e.g. Williams & Hawkins, 1992); risk factors related to family violence (e.g. Sugerman & Hotaling, 1989); and personality characteristics of abusers (e.g. Dutton & Starzomski, 1993; Else et al., 1993). While the body of domestic violence literature may provide some insights into some stalking behaviors, a distinction must be made between domestic violence involving the abuse of a current sexual partner and violence against former sexual intimates. The latter is more likely to include a stalking component, due to the nature of the relationship between the victim and the offender. Although a person may be violent towards his/her spouse, this does not constitute “stalking” if the victim remains “voluntarily” in the situation.<sup>5</sup> Wilson and Daly (1993: 4) discuss this distinction:

...violent possessiveness and sincere threat entail a risk of lethality, destroying the very object that the husband is concerned to retain. One can... assess the magnitude of elevated risk in the aftermath of actual separations, at which time possessive husbands may continue their threats and violence to coerce the woman's return. (See Mahoney, 1991, who notes that *the use of assaults and threats to get estranged wives back has scarcely been remarked in the domestic violence literature, since the residency status of the couple is rarely reported.*) [Italics added]

In fact, Finn and Colson (1990: 10) claim that police and hospital records indicate that the majority of domestic violence incidents take place when the victim and abuser are not currently living together.

The only recent, large-scale study conducted that has investigated the incidence and nature of stalking victimization was a telephone survey conducted by Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes of the Center for Policy Research in Denver (see U.S. Department of Justice, 1997). Their study included victims of current intimate, former intimate, acquaintance, and stranger stalkers. They found that females were more likely to be stalked by current intimates and former intimates than by acquaintances or strangers. Conversely, most male victims reported having been stalked by acquaintances or strangers (U.S. Department of Justice, 1997: 9). While Tjaden and Thoennes considered stalking by current intimates, former intimates, acquaintances, and strangers, the focus of the research described in this report is limited exclusively to *former* intimate stalking experiences.

### **TYPES OF STALKERS**

Typically, three types of stalkers have been identified in the literature related to stalking: erotomaniac, psychopathic/sociopathic, and former intimate (see e.g. Guy, 1993; McAnaney et al., 1993; Sohn, 1994). Each type is characterized by different motivations and/or different relationships with the victim.

#### **Erotomaniac Stalkers**

Erotomaniac stalkers are interested in a romantic relationship with their victim, however this type does not include those with whom the victim has had a previous intimate relationship. Numerous researchers have studied erotomaniac behavior (e.g.

1989b; Dietz & Martell, 1989; Dietz et al., 1991a; Dietz et al., 1991b; Doust & Christie, 1978; Ellis & Mellsop, 1985; ElGaddal, 1989; Goldstein, 1986, 1987; Hoffman, 1943; Leong, 1994; Leong & Silva, 1992; Meloy, 1989; Noone & Cockhill, 1987; Sebastiani & Foy, 1965; Segal, 1989; Shore et al., 1985; Shore et al., 1989; Taylor, Mahendra, & Gunn, 1983; Zona et al., 1993). Two types of erotomaniac stalkers are described in this literature: erotomaniac and borderline erotomaniac. The erotomaniac stalker is under the delusional belief that his/her feelings for the victim are reciprocated, when in fact they are not.<sup>6</sup> Erotomanics are typically female (only 20-30% male), withdrawn, unmarried individuals who single out "objects" of "greater intelligence, status, looks, authority" (Segal, 1989: 1264). The borderline erotomaniac desires to create an intimate relationship with the victim, recognizing that their "love" interest may not be reciprocal.

Not every erotomaniac, however, becomes a stalker; some are content to fantasize about the object of their affections without harassing the individual. Sometimes, however, "the lives of their delusionary objects may be disrupted for years by harassment and, in extreme cases, by violence" (Segal, 1989: 1265). When attempted or actual contact is made and continued, though discouraged by the object of the delusions, the erotomaniac individual could be classified as a stalker. The contact may be made through various means, including sending letters and gifts, making telephone calls, and/or following the victim or conducting surveillance.

### **Sociopathic/Psychopathic Stalkers**

The sociopathic stalker is not motivated by relationships (real or imagined). Examples of sociopathic stalkers would be serial murderers and serial rapists.

Sociopathic stalkers “seek individuals that fit their assault criteria – they first formulate the characteristics of the ‘ideal victim’ and then seek an ‘acceptable example’ to fit the criteria” (McAnaney et al., 1993: 842). These types of stalkers are *not* suffering from delusions, nor have they had prior intimate relationships with their victims.

### **Former Intimate Stalkers**

Former intimate stalkers are those who have had a relationship with the victim at some point in time. While the domestic violence literature has dealt with a combination of current and former intimates, only the former intimate can possibly be included in the stalking domain. By definition, a “current intimate” presumes a consensual and ongoing relationship (e.g. cohabiting, dating, etc.). Stalking presumes “*nonconsensual*” communication or contact which is not possible to establish in situations of current intimates because implicit in the relationship is consent of contact. Offensive behavior involved in current intimate relationships, however, may violate other laws (e.g. domestic abuse). The focus of this research, then, is on former intimate stalking victims. According to McAnaney et al. (1993: 839-840), former intimates “are intensely emotionally dependent on their partner” and “may be jealous of real or imagined infidelities and exhibit a need to control their former partner.”

Typically, former intimate stalkers are seeking revenge or reconciliation through stalking. Some former intimates may seek revenge while others seek reconciliation, and some former intimate stalkers fluctuate between desiring reconciliation and revenge, while still others begin with a desire for reconciliation but later become motivated by revenge (i.e. if the victim further rejects the stalker).

As mentioned earlier, though the existing domestic violence literature is valuable, the temporary restraining order and order of protection literature is most closely related to the stalking issue. Those former intimates who require civil action to keep them away are the most likely to fit the description of the stalker. It is commonly believed that the "former intimate" is the most prevalent type of stalking relationship (e.g. Thomas, 1993: 126) and it has been stated that nearly all (possibly 90%) men who kill their wives, girlfriends, or former intimates, stalked them first (Sohn, 1994: 205).

### STALKING VICTIMS

In addition to the various categories of stalking *offenders*, there also exist several "types" of stalking *victims*. Media figures are popular victims of some stalkers. Celebrities are susceptible to all three types of stalkers, but are especially vulnerable to erotomaniac stalkers. The erotomaniac stalker may become so fascinated with the celebrity that he or she may harass the victim by mail, phone, and/or in person. In addition, celebrities and politicians are easily accessible by sociopathic stalkers. Finally, former intimate stalkers are probably just as likely to stalk a famous person with whom they have had a relationship as they are to stalk an "ordinary" ex-spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

Although the media often focuses on celebrities who are stalked, victims of stalking are, more often than not, "ordinary people" (Perez, 1990: 276). Like the celebrity victims, these victims can be the targets of former intimate, erotomaniac, or sociopathic stalkers. "Ordinary people" are especially susceptible, however, to those with whom they have had intimate relationships. As stated earlier, it is believed that this



is the most common type of stalking situation (Thomas, 1993: 126). The focus of this study is on the experiences of this group - non-celebrity, former intimate stalking victims.

## **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this research study was to explore the nature of the stalking experiences of non-celebrity, former intimate victims, or "ordinary people." Victim interviews provided the researcher with data on the nature of the stalking, the relationship between the victim and the stalker, the victim's response to the stalking, the consequences of the stalking for the victim, and the needs of stalking victims and fulfillment of those needs in terms of victim services and the criminal justice system.

### **Research Approach**

#### **Sample**

The sample for the study consisted of 187 women who were recent (i.e. during the previous five years) former intimate stalking victims in Chester, Delaware, Bucks, Lehigh, Philadelphia, Dauphin, and Montgomery Counties in south-eastern Pennsylvania. Participants were identified through victim service agencies and law enforcement agencies, as well as through advertisements in widely distributed area newspapers (e.g. Philadelphia Inquirer, etc.).<sup>7</sup> Counties were selected based on efficiency in terms of the shortest travel distances for the researcher and fellow interviewer as well as the potential of the population of the counties to provide large numbers of subjects with varying demographic characteristics. In addition, fliers were posted in laundromats, supermarkets, and an international women's symposium in Philadelphia.

This sampling size and approach was intended to recruit a diverse group of research participants in terms of socio-economic status, education, race, and type of geographic area. While this was clearly a sample of convenience (and caution is recommended in generalizing beyond the group studied), the research was exploratory in nature with the purpose of identifying patterns and common characteristics among the victims' experiences. It is expected that future researchers will use the data provided herein to guide them in more rigorous research on more representative samples of stalking victims.

### **Legislative Model**

The general concepts contained in the Pennsylvania stalking statute (PA Code Section 18: 2709 (rev. 1994)) were used as the framework upon which this research was based. Pursuant to this statute:

A person commits the crime of stalking when he engages in a course of conduct or repeatedly commits acts toward another person, including following the person without proper authority, under circumstances which demonstrate either of the following:

- (1) an intent to place the person in reasonable fear of bodily injury;  
or
- (2) an intent to cause substantial emotional distress to the person.

PA Code Section 18: 2709 (rev. 1994)

When women called to inquire about participation in the study, they were screened to insure that they met two criteria for inclusion in the sample. First, they must have been repeatedly harassed, followed, and/or threatened during the past five years by someone with whom they had had an intimate relationship (i.e. through marriage, cohabiting, or dating).<sup>8</sup> Second, the women must have either experienced emotional distress, fear of bodily harm, actual bodily harm, or the belief that the stalker intended to cause one or more of the above. It is important to note that, unlike the legal definition of

stalking presented above, *actual* intent to cause fear of bodily harm or to cause substantial emotional distress was *not* a criteria in this research study.

### **Data Collection**

Extensive (1 to 3 hour) semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with each woman in order to gather information about the nature of her former relationship with her stalker, characteristics of the stalking experience, the effects of the stalking, and her resultant needs. This data collection approach was selected due to the exploratory nature of this research and the limited knowledge base in the area of stalking victimization. A brief questionnaire was also administered to obtain demographic information about the women. Data were collected from January 1996 through July 1997.

The interview consisted of both open-ended and fixed alternative questions. Respondents were able to elaborate following every question. The interview began by requesting the woman to describe what happened to her in terms of her stalking victimization. Responses to this question lasted anywhere from 5 minutes to two hours. Following this question, the respondent was asked a series of follow-up questions which explored five different areas or domains: (1) her prior relationship with the stalker; (2) the characteristics of the stalking; (3) her attempts to discourage the stalker (through both legal and extralegal mechanisms); (4) assistance sought by the victim through formal and informal networks (and the subsequent handling of the situation by others); (5) the effects of the stalking on the victim; and (6) other victimization experiences. Several of the areas and/or specific questions were based on a review of the scarce stalking literature (Dietz, 1989a, 1989b; Dietz & Martell, 1989; Dietz et al, 1991a, 1991b) as well as the

general victimization literature (e.g. Abt, 1982; Baurman & Schadler, 1991; Cohen, 1990; Finn & Lee, 1987; Maguire, 1991; Newburn, 1993; U.S. Department of Justice, 1994; and Voss, 1991).

Due to the nature and the length of the interviews, each interview was tape-recorded and later transcribed. Although the purpose of the interviews was to identify *general* common themes and patterns, content analysis of the interview transcripts did result in the identification of over 500 variables. However, because of the semi-structured approach taken in conducting the interviews, not all respondents provided data pertaining to every variable. Data analysis, therefore, was limited to bivariate statistics since the feasibility of multivariate analyses would be limited by missing values. All of the variables included in the analyses achieved an inter-rater reliability level of 87% or better.

#### **Victim (Sample) Characteristics**

The ages of the women in the sample ranged from 18 through 74 ( $x=34.5$ ,  $s.d.=9.3$ ,  $median=34$ ). Their reported ages at the time the stalking began ranged from 15 through 58 ( $x=30.5$ ,  $s.d.=8.8$ ,  $median=29$ ). The majority of the women in the sample were nonhispanic white (74.5%). Fewer (23.4%) were African American, and only two percent were Asian or Hispanic. The victims' educational backgrounds ranged from some elementary school through completion of a doctoral program. Ninety percent had completed at least high school and 69% had completed at least some college. Seventy percent of the women worked outside the home, and annual household incomes ranged from none through \$130,000 ( $x=\$31,115$ ,  $s.d.=\$26,725$ ,  $median=\$24,000$ ). Most of the respondents resided in suburban areas (74.3%), some in urban areas (23.5%), and very

few in rural areas (2.2%). Most (82.2%) of the women in the sample had had only one stalking experience in their pasts. Those who had more than one experience were asked to answer the interview questions based on their most recent stalking experience.

### **Stalker Characteristics**

Victims reported that their stalkers were between 17 and 57 years of age when the stalking began ( $x=31.2$ ,  $s.d.=8.9$ ,  $median=30$ ). Over half (57%) of the stalkers were nonhispanic white, 37% were African American, and 6.5% were other racial minorities. Only 100 of the stalkers' educational levels could be specified by the victims. Seventy-seven percent of the stalkers reportedly had completed high school, and 45% had completed at least some college. Sixty-nine percent of the stalkers were employed according to their victims. Of these, 62% had blue-collar jobs while 38% were employed in white-collar positions. Twenty-three percent were unemployed and 5% were in prison.

According to the respondents, 61.7% of the stalkers had some type of prior criminal record. Of those who were able to specify the type of prior record, 31% indicated a prior record for violent offenses. In addition, several of the respondents mentioned that the stalker had stalked other former intimates in the past. One-hundred-five respondents indicated whether or not their stalkers had stalked another former intimate. Of these respondents, 48.5% stated that their stalkers had stalked at least one other former intimate in the past.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS<sup>9</sup>

### GENERAL

#### **Stalker-Victim Prior Relationship**

The women in the sample had various types of former relationships with their stalkers, although all relationships were heterosexual. Thirty-seven percent of the women had been married to their stalkers, 25% had been living with, but were not married to, their stalkers, 24% were either seriously dating or engaged to their stalkers, and 15% had only casually dated their stalkers. The women reported having known their stalkers for between 1 and 456 months prior to the beginning of the stalking ( $x=97$ ,  $s.d.=79.6$ ,  $median=72$  months).

Seventy-five percent of the women reported that the stalkers began their controlling behavior during their prior relationship. Another 17 percent said that controlling behavior began immediately after separation. Only 3.2% stated that the controlling behavior did not begin until a while after separation. Typical controlling behaviors included placing limitations on the victims' participation in social activities, financial control (e.g. victim denied access to checking and savings accounts and credit cards), denial of mobility (e.g. removing access to automobile), and other related constraints. A representative example of this behavior is expressed in the following victim's account:

He'd call and check on me. And I'd be out. He'd come home that night and say, "You were gone all day. Where were you? Were you out spending my money again? What did you buy today? What did you do? Who were you with?" He don't trust me. I'm not allowed to go with my friends out to dinner. I'm not allowed to go out to bars. Nowhere. I sit in this house. This is my job...my kids, the house. I mean, he doesn't even like me to go outside.

Many of the stalking victims (n=122, 65.2%) reported having been physical abused during their prior relationship with their stalker. The most common types of physical abuse suffered at the hands of their former intimates were pushing, slapping, and punching. (See Table 1 below.) When asked about triggers of violence within the prior relationship, of those who were able to specify triggers (n=66), two-thirds stated that drug or alcohol abuse were responsible for the violence. Another 10.6% stated that jealousy was the trigger for the violence. One hundred (53.5%) of the women reported having been emotionally or mentally abused during their prior relationship with their stalker.

**Table 1: Types of Violence During Prior Relationship with Stalker**

<b>Types of Violence</b>	<b>Frequency/Percentage of Women Reporting Each Type of Violence</b>
Pushing/Shoving	48 25.7%
Kicking/Stomping	13 7.0
Slapping	36 19.3
Rape/Sexual Assault	16 8.6
Punching	34 18.2
Victim Being Thrown	15 8.0
Use of a Weapon	10 5.3
Choking	19 10.2
Grabbing	11 5.9
Objects thrown at Victim	12 6.4

### **The Role of Children in Stalking Situations**

The majority (57.2%) of the victims had not had children with their stalkers, although 20.9% had one child with their stalkers, and 21.9% shared two or more children with their stalkers. Of those who had children with their stalkers, most stated that the stalker had at least some contact with the children, thus increasing the contact between stalker and victim.

There are children involved here so there will always be that connection between this person and me. In order for the children to have access to

both of us, they live with me, they have visitation with him. In order for that to take place, he has to come to the house to pick them up.

Thirty-three percent of the women reported that the stalker tried to use the children to get the victim back. Most often, victims reported that the stalker would negatively discuss the victim with the children (20.7% of those who had children). Other victims reported that the stalkers would try to get custody of the children (12.6%) or withdraw child support (9.2%) in order to "get to" the victim. Only a handful (6.9%) reported that the stalker threatened the children or harassed/followed the children (2.3%).

### **Stalker Drug/Alcohol Abuse**

Seventy-two percent of the victims reported that their stalkers abused drugs, alcohol, or both. (See Table 2.) Sixty percent of the respondents reported that their stalkers abused alcohol, and over a quarter (25.7%) stated that their stalkers drank daily.

He drinks, and when he drinks, he gets abusive, and that's the way everything starts up. It was a nice month because he was in jail for a DUI for 30 days. The next time, he got a third [DUI] after pounding at my door. They pulled him over [trying to drive away] and he'll be in for a year for that one. So it'll be a peaceful year.

Over half of the women also reported illegal drug abuse by their stalkers (54.9%), with crack or cocaine the drugs of choice.

He was always using drugs. I don't know what he was like as a normal person. I didn't know him like that. I know him as being under the influence of alcohol and drugs. I couldn't tell you what he would be like as a normal person.



**Table 2: Stalkers' Abuse of Drugs and/or Alcohol**

Alcohol Abuse	Drug Abuse		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	75 (42.9%)	30 (17.1%)	105 (60.0%)
No	21 (12.0%)	49 (28.0%)	70 (40.0%)
Total	96 (54.9%)	79 (45.1%)	175 (100%)

### **Characteristics of Stalking**

The characteristics of stalking are grouped here into four basic areas: length, motives, conduct, and triggers of stalking behaviors. Of particular interest is the occurrence of threats and violence during the stalking experiences. Accordingly, these behaviors are addressed separately below.

#### **Duration of Stalking**

The length of the stalking varied greatly from just one month through 456 months ( $\bar{x}$ =28 months, s.d.=50.2, median=12 months). While the length does not necessarily affect the intensity of the stalking experience, it is worthy of mention that half of the victims had their lives actively disrupted by their stalkers for a period of one year or more.

#### **Perceived Motivations of Stalkers**

Victims were asked to identify their former intimates' motives for stalking them. (See Table 3.) Many women gave multiple responses. The most frequently perceived reasons for the stalking were: reconciliation (74.9%); revenge (44.9%); possession/control (26.9%); jealousy (14.4%); and intimidation (6.6%). Often, women would say

that the men fluctuated back and forth between reconciliation and revenge, or that they started out wanting reconciliation but it later changed to revenge.

Absolutely reconciliation at the very beginning, I could tell he wanted reconciliation. He was trying to get me to go back out with him. And he became very angry when I went and filed for divorce. But he just said, "As long as you're my wife, I have every right to do whatever I want to you." So, I said, "Fine! Let's get a divorce." And then he really flipped out. After that it was clearly revenge.

Similarly, another woman said:

He did it to get me back, and then when he saw that he couldn't get me back, it was just a ploy to make my life miserable.

**Table 3: Respondents' Perceived Reasons for Stalking by Former Intimates**

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Reconciliation</b>	125	74.9
<b>Revenge</b>	75	44.9
<b>Possession/Control</b>	45	26.9
<b>Jealousy</b>	24	14.4
<b>Intimidation</b>	11	6.6
<b>To see children</b>	6	3.6
<b>Mental illness</b>	4	2.4

The finding that reconciliation was the most common motivation for the stalking coincides with others' domestic violence research findings. For example, in his study of 100 women who applied for restraining orders against intimates and former intimates, James Ptacek (1997) found that nearly half of the women specified some type of "separation assault" in their affidavits for obtaining the orders. In these cases, the men reportedly battered the women in order to force them to remain in or return to the relationship with the batterer. Or, if this failed, the battering was used as revenge against the women for leaving.

## Stalking Behavior

I went to my grandmom's and lived with her for awhile. He would be parked outside of her house, and be calling me up at work and threatening to kill me. "You can't leave me. I won't let you leave me. I'll kill you." And then I got my own apartment and the same thing – he'd be parked outside or follow me around. One time my friend and I were on our way to my mother's house and he was trying to run me off the road. I had to finally get a restraining order.

Table 4 below depicts the most common stalking behaviors according to this sample of 187 women. Telephone calls were, by far, the most typical behavior involved in the stalking situations. Not only was it the most prevalent behavior, but it was the most frequent behavior as well. Over half of the respondents indicated that they had received phone calls at least daily from their stalkers.

**Table 4: Number of Women Reporting Various Stalking Behaviors**

<b>Stalking Behavior</b>	<b>Number of women reporting behavior</b>	<b>Percentage of women reporting behavior</b>
Phone calls	169	90.4%
Letters	111	59.4%
Gifts	71	38.0%
Following	128	68.4%
Driving/Walking by house	101	54.0%
Watching	147	78.6%
Sabotaging employment	63	33.7%
Trespassing	100	53.5%
Breaking into house/car	67	35.8%
Property damage	82	43.9%
Stealing Victim's Property	46	24.6%
Involving other members of victim's family	106	56.7%
Involving victim's friends	108	57.8%

Victims were asked to describe the content of the letters and telephone calls. (Many victims also brought the actual letters to the interview.) The responses of the 101 victims who described the content of the letters they received from their stalkers are

presented in Table 5. Most of the letters received were amorous in nature, according to the victims. Stalkers were less likely to put threatening or angry content in the letters. The content of telephone calls, however, was distinctly different from that of the letters. (See Table 6.) Stalkers were much more likely to make verbal threats than written ones.

**Table 5: Content of Letters Sent by Stalkers to Their Former Intimate Victims**

Type of Content	Number of women reporting type of content (n=101)	Percentage of women reporting type of content
Amorous	78	77.2%
Threatening	28	27.7%
Angry	12	11.9%
Delusional accusations	6	5.9%
Friendly (but not Amorous)	7	6.9%
Apologetic	6	5.9%
Blank	4	4.0%

**Table 6: Content of Phone Calls by Stalkers to Their Former Intimate Victims**

Type of Content	Number of women reporting type of content (n=158)	Percentage of women reporting type of content
Amorous	75	47.5%
Threatening	106	67.1%
Angry	50	38.0%
Delusional accusations	20	12.7%
Friendly (but not amorous)	6	3.8%
Apologetic	5	3.2%
Hang-ups	50	31.6%
Check-up calls	11	7.0%

Many of the behaviors involved in stalking are seemingly mild, however, when taken together, they create a situation where the victim's life is greatly affected, as articulated by the following victim:

Just because a woman is not punched in the face does not mean that she's not being stalked or murdered or anything else, but there are lots of other ways you can tell. If there's consistent behavior, you know, if there's a pattern of unusual events, and that's basically what stalking is. It's a lot of isolated events culminated into something that makes sense. Because if you look at the isolated incidents, I mean if you just looked at the cough medicine incident, where this guy knew what I had bought at the store, you would think, "Yeah, so what?" But then, as my friend said, "If you look at every single incident throughout the five months that occurred, you see a clear pattern." And that's what the criminal justice people don't understand. They don't know anything about that.

### **Triggers of Stalking Behaviors**

Women were asked whether they noticed any triggers to the stalking types of behaviors (e.g. phone calls, letters, following, violence, etc.). Ninety-four of the women mentioned specific triggers that they believed led to the stalking behavior. One woman, who was separated from her husband stated:

At different times over a period of a few years, if I was to date someone or if I was to pursue child support, I would suddenly start getting a lot of threats. I would come out of work and my windows would be smashed or my tires would be slashed. My son was kidnapped once for four days. At that point I went and got emergency custody, and then I got permanent custody, so it lasted a while.

The most commonly perceived triggers of stalking behaviors are presented in Table 7 below. A third of the all triggers mentioned were directly related to the break-up or termination of the intimate relationship. Over a quarter of the perceived triggers were related to drug and/or alcohol abuse. General jealousy and the victim acquiring a new boyfriend accounted for 16% and 11% of the triggers, respectively. Almost nine percent of the triggers were scheduled court appearances. Victims mentioned that the stalker would try to intimidate them into dropping charges or failing to appear in court.

**Table 7: Victims' Perceptions of Triggers of Stalking**

<b>Perceived Trigger of Stalking</b>	<b>Frequency of Women Reporting Trigger</b>	
Break-up	35	(33.3%)
Drug/alcohol abuse	28	(26.7)
Jealousy (general)	17	(16.2)
Victim has new boyfriend	12	(11.4)
Court hearings coming up (PFA, child support, criminal)	9	( 8.6)
Victim had a baby	4	( 3.8)
Total	105	(100.0)

## **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

### **THREATS AND VIOLENCE DURING STALKING**

#### **Threats during Stalking**

Many of the victims reported threats made by their stalkers. Table 8 below indicates the number of women who experienced each type of threat. Where available, data are included regarding whether the threat was direct or explicit (e.g. "I'm going to kill you.") or implied (e.g. "You'd better start looking for a new job."). The most common threats were threats of violence towards the victim (72.7%), followed by threats of violence towards those affiliated with the victim (37.4%) such as victims' family, friends, and coworkers. The number of direct threats of violence far exceeded the number of implied threats.

**Table 8: Types of Threats Made During the Stalking**

<b>Types of Threats</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage of women reporting this type of threat</b>
<b>Threats of violence towards victim</b>	136 (99 direct, 37 implied)	72.7%
<b>Threats of violence towards victims' affiliates</b>	70 (62 direct, 8 implied)	37.4
<b>Threats to take children away</b>	31 (of 85 women with children)	16.6 (36.5% of those with children)
<b>Threats to sabotage job</b>	10	5.3
<b>Sexual threats</b>	4 (3 direct, 1 implied)	2.1
<b>Threats to kill self and victim</b>	33	17.6

### Threats and Violence during Stalking

Women who were explicitly threatened with physical violence were significantly more likely to have experienced physical violence during the stalking than women in situations where there were implicit or no threats made by their stalkers. (See Table 9 below.) Almost two-thirds of those who reported explicit threats of physical violence also suffered physical violence, whereas less than a quarter of those who reported implicit or no threats suffered physical violence. This merely demonstrates that a correlation exists. However, it does not necessarily indicate a causal relationship. The stalkers who both made explicit threats and were physically violent did not necessarily carry out the specific threats of violence indicated in the threats.

**Table 9: Actual Violence by Threats of Violence**

Actual Violence	Threats of Violence Towards Victim			
	Explicit	Implicit	None	Total
Yes	65 (65.7%)	9 (24.3%)	12 (23.5%)	86 (46.0%)
No	34 (34.3%)	28 (75.7%)	39 (76.5%)	101 (54.0%)
<b>Total</b>	99 (100%)	37 (100%)	51 (100%)	187 (100%)

$X^2=32.77$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p<.00001$

### Physical Violence Before and/or During Stalking

As indicated in Table 10 below, in about a third of the situations where there was no before-stalking physical violence, stalkers were violent during the stalking period, while just over half of the women who suffered before-stalking violence also suffered violence during the stalking.



**Table 10: Physical Violence During Stalking by Whether Violence Occurred During the Prior Relationship**

Violence during Stalking	Before-Stalking Violence		
	No	Yes	Total
No	44 (67.7%)	57 (46.7%)	101 (54.0%)
Yes	21 (32.3%)	65 (53.3%)	86 (46.0%)
Total	65 (100%)	122 (100%)	187 (100%)

$X^2=7.51, df=1, p<.01$

### Age, Threats, and Violence

Threats and violence during the prior intimate relationship did not vary greatly by victim's age. Violence during the stalking, however, was reported most often by victims who were over forty when the stalking began. (See Table 11 below.) In addition, stalkers who were in their thirties were more likely than any other age group to have been violent during their prior relationship with the victim. (See Table 12 below.)

**Table 11: Physical Violence During Stalking by Victim's Age**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Victim's Age				Total
	< 20 years	21-30	31-40	41 or older*	
No	17 (68.0%)	34 (49.3%)	26 (50.0%)	17 (70.8%)	94 (55.3%)
Yes	8 (32.0%)	35 (50.7%)	26 (50.0%)	7 (29.2%)	76 (44.7%)
Total	25 (100%)	69 (100%)	52 (100%)	24 (100%)	170 (100%)

$X^2=5.58, df=3, p=.134$

\*Age groups "41-50" and "51 and older" were combined due to the small number in the "51 and older" group (n=3).

**Table 12: Physical Violence Before Stalking by Stalker's Age**

Physical Violence Before Stalking	Stalker's Age				Total
	< 20 years	21-30	31-40	41 or older*	
No	7 (41.2%)	22 (44.0%)	7 (15.9%)	6 (30.0%)	42 (32.1%)
Yes	10 (58.8%)	28 (56.0%)	37 (84.1%)	14 (70.0%)	89 (67.9%)
Total	17 (100%)	50 (100%)	44 (100%)	20 (100%)	131 (100%)

$X^2=9.23$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=.026$

\*Age groups "41-50" and "51 and older" were combined due to the small number in the "51 and older" group (n=3).

**Race, Threats, and Violence**

Because 96.8% of the victims were nonhispanic white or African American, comparisons based on race were limited to these two groups. Although most women (72.6%) reported having been threatened by their stalkers, nonhispanic white victims were less likely to experience threats than were African American women. Similarly nonhispanic white victims were less likely to suffer violence at the hands of their stalkers than were African American victims (42% and 58%, respectively, experienced violence). Since most women shared the same race as their stalkers, similar findings resulted when comparisons were made between stalkers of each race. African American stalkers were more likely to make threats and commit physical violence during the stalking than were nonhispanic white stalkers. (See Tables 13 through 16 below.)

**Table 13: Threats of Physical Violence by Victim's Race**

Threats of Physical Violence	Victim's Race		
	Nonhispanic white	African American	Total
None	42 (30.4%)	8 (18.6%)	50 (27.6%)
Implied only	28 (20.3%)	8 (18.6%)	36 (19.9%)
Explicit threats	68 (49.3%)	27 (62.8%)	95 (52.5%)
<b>Total</b>	138 (100%)	43 (100%)	181 (100%)

$X^2=2.85$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.241$

**Table 14: Physical Violence During Stalking by Victim's Race**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Victim's Race		
	Nonhispanic White	African American	Total
No	80 (58.0%)	18 (41.9%)	98 (54.1%)
Yes	58 (42.0%)	25 (58.1%)	83 (45.9%)
<b>Total</b>	138 (100%)	43 (100%)	181 (100%)

$X^2=3.43$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $p=.064$

**Table 15: Threats of Physical Violence by Stalker's Race**

Threats of Physical Violence	Stalker's Race		
	Nonhispanic white	African American	Total
None	20 (28.2%)	8 (17.4%)	28 (23.9%)
Implied only	19 (26.8%)	6 (13.0%)	25 (21.4%)
Explicit threats	32 (45.1%)	32 (69.6%)	64 (54.7%)
<b>Total</b>	71 (100.1%)	46 (100%)	117 (100%)

$X^2=6.87, df=2, p=.032$

**Table 16: Physical Violence During Stalking by Stalker's Race**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Stalker's Race		
	Nonhispanic White	African American	Total
No	39 (54.9%)	18 (39.1%)	57 (48.7%)
Yes	32 (45.1%)	28 (60.9%)	60 (51.3%)
<b>Total</b>	71 (100%)	46 (100%)	117 (100%)

$X^2=2.79, df=1, p=.095$

### **Education, Threats, and Violence**

The greater the victims' education, the less prevalent before-stalking and during-stalking violence. (See Tables 17 and 18 below.) Interestingly, however, threats of violence did not vary by victims' education. Tables 19, 20, and 21 below present data regarding the stalker's education, threats, and violence. The patterns in the table depicting violence before and during stalking (Tables 19 and 20) are similar to the

patterns found in the corresponding tables that included the victim's education. One other pattern worth noting is that, the greater the stalker's level of education, the less likely the stalker was to make explicit threats (Table 21). Implicit threats, however, did not vary greatly by stalker's education.

**Table 17: Physical Violence Before Stalking by Victim's Education**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Victim's Education				Total
	< high school diploma	Completed high school	Some college	B.A./B.S or more	
No	4 (21.1%)	11 (28.2%)	21 (31.3%)	28 (46.7%)	64 (34.6%)
Yes	15 (78.9%)	28 (71.8%)	46 (68.7%)	32 (53.3%)	121 (65.4%)
Total	19 (100%)	39 (100%)	67 (100%)	60 (100%)	185 (100%)

$X^2=6.42$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=.093$

**Table 18: Physical Violence During Stalking by Victim's Education**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Victim's Education				Total
	< high school diploma	Completed high school	Some college	B.A./B.S or more	
No	5 (26.3%)	22 (56.4%)	34 (50.7%)	40 (66.7%)	101 (54.6%)
Yes	14 (73.7%)	17 (43.6%)	33 (49.3%)	20 (33.3%)	84 (45.4%)
Total	19 (100%)	39 (100%)	67 (100%)	60 (100%)	185 (100%)

$X^2=10.11$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $p=.018$

**Table 19: Physical Violence Before Stalking by Stalker's Education**

Physical Violence Before Stalking	Stalker's Education				Total
	< high school diploma	Completed high school	Some college	B.A./B.S or more	
No	1 ( 4.3%)	12 (37.5%)	10 (41.7%)	12 (57.1%)	35 (35.0%)
Yes	22 (95.7%)	20 (62.5%)	14 (58.3%)	9 (42.9%)	65 (65.0%)
<b>Total</b>	23 (100%)	32 (100%)	24 (100%)	60 (100%)	100 (100%)

$X^2=14.58, df=3, p=.002$

**Table 20: Physical Violence During Stalking by Stalker's Education**

Physical Violence During Stalking	Stalker's Education				Total
	< high school diploma	Completed high school	Some college	B.A./B.S or more	
No	8 (34.8%)	16 (50.0%)	12 (50.0%)	14 (66.7%)	50 (50.0%)
Yes	15 (65.2%)	16 (50.0%)	12 (50.0%)	7 (33.3%)	50 (50.0%)
<b>Total</b>	23 (100%)	32 (100%)	24 (100%)	21 (100%)	100 (100%)

$X^2=4.46, df=3, p=.216$

**Table 21: Threats of Physical Violence During Stalking by Stalker's Education**

Verbal Threats of Physical Violence During Stalking	Stalker's Education				Total
	< high school diploma	Completed high school	Some college	B.A./B.S or more	
None	4 (17.4%)	6 (18.8%)	5 (20.8%)	10 (47.6%)	25 (25.0%)
Explicit	15 (65.2%)	18 (56.3%)	14 (58.3%)	6 (28.6%)	53 (53.0%)
Implicit	4 (17.4%)	8 (25.0%)	5 (20.8%)	5 (23.9%)	22 (22.0%)
<b>Total</b>	23 (100%)	32 (100.1%)	24 (99.9%)	21 (100%)	100 (100%)

$X^2=9.10$ ,  $df=6$ ,  $p=.168$

#### **Income and Violence**

When viewing the cross-tabulations for victim income and violence (Table 22), a pattern emerged revealing that those victims with the greatest annual household income (over \$40,000) were the least likely to have experienced violence at the hands of their stalkers. This pattern is also apparent in the cross-tabulations for victim income and violence during the prior relationship (i.e. before-stalking violence). The group reporting an annual household income of over \$50,000 was the least likely group to report that violence occurred during their prior relationships with their stalkers (Table 23).

**Table 22: Physical Violence During Stalking by Victim's Annual Household**

**Income**

<b>Physical Violence During Stalking</b>	<b>Victim's Income</b>						<b>Total</b>
	<b>&lt;\$10,001</b>	<b>\$10,001- \$20,000</b>	<b>\$20,001- \$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,001- \$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,001- \$50,000</b>	<b>&gt;\$50,000</b>	
<b>No</b>	14 (50.0%)	20 (42.6%)	16 (55.2%)	11 (50.0%)	15 (62.5%)	14 (73.7%)	90 (53.3%)
<b>Yes</b>	14 (50.0%)	27 (57.4%)	13 (44.8%)	11 (50.0%)	9 (37.5%)	5 (26.3%)	79 (46.7%)
<b>Total</b>	28 (100%)	47 (100%)	29 (100%)	22 (100%)	24 (100%)	17 (100%)	169 (100%)

$X^2=6.43$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p=.267$

**Table 23: Physical Violence Before Stalking by Victim's Annual Household Income**

<b>Physical Violence Before Stalking</b>	<b>Victim's Income</b>						<b>Total</b>
	<b>&lt;\$10,001</b>	<b>\$10,001- \$20,000</b>	<b>\$20,001- \$30,000</b>	<b>\$30,001- \$40,000</b>	<b>\$40,001- \$50,000</b>	<b>&gt;\$50,000</b>	
<b>No</b>	6 (21.4%)	13 (27.7%)	11 (37.9%)	5 (22.7%)	8 (33.3%)	14 (73.7%)	57 (53.3%)
<b>Yes</b>	22 (78.6%)	34 (72.3%)	18 (62.1%)	17 (77.3%)	16 (66.7%)	5 (26.3%)	112 (46.7%)
<b>Total</b>	28 (100%)	47 (100%)	29 (100%)	22 (100%)	24 (100%)	19 (100%)	169 (100%)

$X^2=17.66$ ,  $df=5$ ,  $p=.003$



## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### VICTIMS' ACTIONS IN RESPONSE TO STALKING

#### Extralegal Attempts to Discourage Stalking

Victims reported numerous extralegal attempts that they made to discourage their stalkers. (See Table 24 below.) Most women tried to reason with their stalkers (69.5%), and many tried to simply ignore them (42.8%). Moving and changing one's phone number/blocking calls from the stalker were also fairly common. About 19% pleaded with the stalker, and 13% threatened to call the police in order to discourage the stalker.

I had my telephone number changed three times already this month. I want my children to know who their father is, so I would try...like when I thought that he would be calm, I tried to give him my number, allow him to have communication with his children because they would ask for him. ...But then he starts acting like a nut again, I changed my number.

**Table 24: Victims' Extralegal Attempts to Discourage Stalking**

Attempts to Discourage	Number and Percentage of Victims Trying This Approach
Reasoning with stalker	130 (69.5%)
Ignoring stalker	80 (42.8)
Moving	62 (33.2)
Changing telephone number/blocking calls from stalker	59 (31.6)
Pleading with stalker	35 (18.7)
Threatening to call police	24 (12.8)
Had family/friends talk to stalker	8 ( 4.3)
Threatened to get stalker in trouble at work	7 ( 3.7)
Argued with stalker	3 ( 1.6)

When asked what effect the attempts to discourage seemed to have on their stalkers, few women reported positive effects. Of 408 reported types of discouragement, victims reported behavior improvements following only 37 (9.1%) of these attempts. All

of the attempts reported above had no effect or a negative effect according to the majority of the women in the sample.

If you're going to stay in the same location...work through the [court] system. But you'd better be prepared to give up your life, because it's a full-time job, it takes up every penny you have, and you get very little recourse. So you're putting out 90% of energy and you're getting back maybe 10%. But it's all you can do....

### **Attempts to Discourage Stalking through the Legal System**

Most victims (n=150, 80.2%) used various legal approaches to attempt to discourage their stalkers. (See Table 25.) Seventy-two percent of the victims sought police assistance in discouraging their stalkers, and 28% of the stalkers were arrested at some point during the stalking period. Just over half (51%) of the women filed for Protection from Abuse Orders (PFAs). Fewer than one-quarter of the stalkers faced criminal charges.

As was the case with the extralegal attempts to discourage the stalker, victims reported that the legal attempts to discourage the stalker were largely ineffective. (See Table 26.) Seventy-seven percent of the victims stated that police involvement either had no effect or made the stalkers' behavior worse. Similarly, victims reported very little effectiveness of arrest, criminal charges, or protection orders. These findings coincide with earlier research findings on the effectiveness of arrests and restraining orders in deterring domestic violence (see e.g. Hirschel & Hutchinson, 1996; Klein, 1996; Schmidt & Sherman, 1996). However, the results of this study conflict with the results of a study conducted by the National Center for State Courts. In that study (see U.S. Department of Justice, 1997: 37-44), 285 women who were petitioning for protection orders in three different jurisdictions were interviewed and asked about the effectiveness

of the civil protection orders. The majority of women in that sample perceived protection orders to be effective deterrents to further abuse.

Only four of the victims whose stalkers went to trial commented on its effectiveness. Although two of the four stated that this legal approach had a positive effect on the stalkers' behavior, these numbers are too small upon which to base any generalizations.

**Table 25: Legal Action Taken to Discourage Stalker**

<b>Legal Action</b>	<b>Number and Percentage of Women Reporting Legal Action</b>	
<b>Called police/Went to police</b>	105	(71.7%)
<b>Stalker was arrested</b>	105	(27.8)
<b>Criminal charges filed</b>	105	(24.1)
<b>Stalker brought to trial (no plea bargain)</b>	105	( 5.9)
<b>Stalker was convicted or plea bargained</b>		
<b>Before going to trial</b>	105	(24.1)
<b>Victim filed for Temporary Restraining Order (TRO)</b>	105	(12.3)
<b>Victim filed for Protection From Abuse Order (PFA)</b>	96	(51.3)

**Table 26: Perceived Effectiveness of Legal Attempts to Discourage Stalker**

<b>Effects</b>	<b>Legal Attempts to Discourage</b>						
	<b>Police Involvement</b>	<b>Arrest</b>	<b>Criminal Charges</b>	<b>Trial</b>	<b>Temporary Restr. Order</b>	<b>PFA</b>	<b>Total</b>
No change	65 (61.9%)	16 (44.4)	14 (40.0)	2 (50.0)	8 (42.1)	37 (45.7)	142(50.7)
Worse behavior	16 (15.2)	5 (13.9)	9 (25.7)	0 ( 0.0)	4 (21.1)	13 (16.0)	47(16.8)
Better behavior	8 ( 7.6)	9 (25.0)	7 (20.0)	2 (50.0)	5 (26.3)	15 (18.5)	46(16.4)
Other (e.g. varied)	16 (15.2)	6 (16.7)	5 (14.3)	0 ( 0.0)	2 (10.5)	16 (19.8)	45(16.1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>105 (99.9)</b>	<b>36 (100)</b>	<b>35 (100)</b>	<b>4 (100)</b>	<b>19 (100)</b>	<b>81 (100)</b>	<b>280(100)</b>

$X^2=19.89$ ,  $df=15$ ,  $p=.176$

## Orders of Protection

As indicated in Table 26 above, over half of the victims in the sample filed for protection orders. According to the victims, in 62% of the cases, the order of protection either had no effect or worsened the stalker's behavior.

Some women expressed frustration because they were told that they would not be able to obtain orders of protection. One woman who had been stalked for 35 months by someone she had dated twice, was frustrated by his constant phone calls, letters, and showing up at her office when she was there alone in the evenings. When asked whether she had ever tried to obtain a protection order, her response was:

Towards the end, I remember talking to a detective about that. And I couldn't...there was some reason that I couldn't. I think it was because I never had an intimate relationship with him.

Another woman stated:

I was having a lot of trouble getting a protection order because you never saw him do these things [stealing the car, stealing the beeper, harassing me, etc.]. I lived in an apartment, and he'd be hanging outside my apartment, and the police would say, "Well, we can't make him leave because this is not your private property." He'd sit there right on the hood of my car right in front of them. And then the cops would leave and then he would slash my tires or whatever it was. I had a hard time getting any protection.

Other women who had not formerly lived with or been married to their stalkers expressed similar experiences.

One woman who had a protection from abuse order described her frustrations with the court when she went to a hearing for a PFA violation.

They threw one away because they say that I was the one who broke it for taking him back. But I guess they didn't understand, it wasn't my choice to take him back. He kept on harassing me and threatened me. If I didn't take him back, he was gonna do this, that, and the other thing.

This woman's stalker had a prior record that included aggravated assault and statutory rape. He tracked the victim down at a battered women's shelter and constantly showed up there to harass her. He also made threats to kill the victim and himself.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **ASSISTANCE, VICTIMS' NEEDS, AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIVENESS**

#### **Sources from Whom Victims Sought Assistance**

But there was just no one there through most of it. And women feel very isolated and they get to feel ashamed somehow. We've been taught that it's our fault. And you just tend to be really ashamed to tell anybody. It's just like this vicious cycle.

Nearly all victims sought assistance during the stalking (95.7%) through family, friends, victim service agencies, therapists, and the like. Most (82.4%) requested assistance shortly after realizing that they were being stalked. Those who didn't ask for help right away (17.6%) gave various reasons for the delay including the belief that the stalking would cease, embarrassment, fear, lack of information, and lack of support.

Typical people from whom victims sought assistance were friends (67.9%) and family (54%). Less frequently, victims identified victim service agencies (37.4%) and therapists (27.8%) as sources from whom they sought help. (See Table 27.) Based on these findings, it is apparent that the stalking victims in this sample overwhelmingly sought aid through informal support networks (e.g. friends and family) as opposed to more formal "helping" organizations (e.g. shelters, victim support groups).

**Table 27: Sources From Whom Victims Sought Help**

Sources from whom help was sought	Frequency and percentage of women seeking help from this source	
Friends	127	67.9%
Family	101	54.0
Victim Service Agency	70	37.4
Psychologist/Therapist	52	27.8
Spouse/Boyfriend	30	16.0
Legal Aid	26	13.9
Boss/Co-workers	16	8.6
Victim Support Group	16	8.6
Neighbors	11	5.9
Shelter	11	5.9

**Needs and Fulfillment of Needs**

Victims were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, how well their needs were met by the four most common sources of assistance (i.e. friends, family, victim counselors, and private therapists). The mean ratings are presented in Table 28 below. A score of "1" indicates that none of the victim's needs were met by that person while a score of "5" represents that all of the victim's needs were met. The mean score for "friends" was a 3.97, with scores for "victim counselors" (3.94) and "private therapists" (3.89) falling closely in line. The mean score for "family" was a 3.55. All of these scores exceed the mean score for the police (2.90) as presented below in Table 31, indicating that the victims' needs were better fulfilled by friends, family, therapists, and counselors than by the police. This may be due, at least in part, by the types of needs that the victims expressed. One woman expressed her frustration with the inability of a battered women's shelter to respond to her needs.

It was hard at first because, when I wanted to leave here and go to a shelter or somewhere, I couldn't because they didn't have enough beds for five kids. I was like, "Oh, man! What am I supposed to do?" I didn't

want to come back here [home]. It was hard because, I guess, a lot of people aren't prepared for a single parent with five kids in trouble.

Victims were asked to identify their greatest need, and their responses were then categorized into one of several categories. (See Table 29 below.) More women (38%) identified needs pertaining to psychological and emotional support than any other area. Twenty-three percent stated that "a sense of security" was their greatest need. Another 10% stated that they needed "criminal justice system support."

**Table 28: Victims' Ratings of How Well Their Needs Were Met by Various Groups**

Source of Assistance	N	X	Stand. Dev.
Family	154	3.55	1.40
Private Therapist	44	3.89	1.32
Victim Counselor	84	3.94	1.31
Friends	157	3.97	1.19

**Table 29: Victims' Greatest Needs**

Greatest Need Identified	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Psychological/emotional support	66	37.7%
Sense of security	40	22.9
Criminal justice system support	18	10.3
Financial support	15	8.6
Other	36	20.6
<b>Total</b>	175	100.1*

\*Total sum exceeds 100% due to rounding.

Victims were also asked whether their needs were met, and if so, by whom? Forty-nine percent of the victims said that their needs were met. Of those women (n=92), most stated that their needs were met by their friends, their families, or themselves. (See

Table 30 below.) It is interesting to note that informal support systems were much more beneficial in meeting the needs of the victims than were the formal support agencies.

**Table 30: Who Met Victims' Needs?**

<b>Person who met victims needs</b>	<b>Frequency and percentage of women reporting that that person met their needs*</b>	
<b>Friends</b>	34	37.0%
<b>Self</b>	23	25.0%
<b>Family</b>	20	21.7%
<b>Significant other</b>	11	12.0%
<b>Stalker (by stopping)</b>	12	7.6%
<b>Therapist/Psychiatrist</b>	6	6.5%
<b>Police</b>	4	4.3%
<b>Co-workers</b>	3	3.3%
<b>Courts</b>	3	3.3%
<b>Other</b>	3	3.3%

\*Based on those women whose needs were met (n=92). Several women listed two people who met their needs.

### **Police Responsiveness**

As stated earlier, most women (72%) requested police assistance at some point during the stalking. These women were asked to rate, on a five-point scale, how quickly the police responded; how polite, helpful, and sympathetic the police were; the extent to which the police lived up to the victim's expectations; and the extent to which the police met the victim's needs. The mean ratings for each of the items are presented in Table 31. In each case, the lower the score, the more positive the rating. For example, a score of "1" for sympathy would mean that the police were very sympathetic, while a "5" would mean that the police were not at all sympathetic. The best (lowest) mean scores that the police received were for the items "response time" and "politeness," while the worst (highest) mean scores were for "sympathy" and "living up to victim's expectations."



**Table 31: Mean Sample Scores Rating Police Assistance**

<b>Police responsiveness variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>Speed of police response</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>2.22</b>	<b>1.15</b>
<b>Politeness of police</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>1.31</b>
<b>Sympathy of police</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>3.07</b>	<b>1.34</b>
<b>Helpfulness of police</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>2.88</b>	<b>1.35</b>
<b>Lived up to victim's Expectations</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>3.13</b>	<b>1.53</b>
<b>How well police met needs</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>2.90</b>	<b>1.44</b>

Many women expressed frustration with the way the police handled the situation or with the limitations that they perceived were placed on the police.

I [called] ten times before the cops really did anything. Yeah, they would lock him up for 24 hours and then let him back out again. And then, they only had lock-up one other time for like 2 minutes. They let him back out. He came back, busted the windows. I called the cops again, and the cop says, "Well, he doesn't have to leave the house. You do." But another cop said that wasn't necessarily true.

Another woman who had been stalked for two years said:

I wanted him arrested and in jail. And when he had his hands around my neck, my thinking at that moment was, "Am I gonna have to get my face smashed in for the police to believe me?" I was pretty frustrated with their lack of power, really.

Other victims were frustrated with the apparent ignorance of the police with respect to the validity and enforceability of protection orders from other jurisdictions (as specified in VAWA), and with the frequent requirement made by the police that the victim obtain a restraining order prior to the police taking any action against the stalker.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### **EFFECTS OF STALKING ON VICTIMS**

Respondents were asked numerous questions regarding the effect that the stalking has had upon their lives. These consequences can be categorized into four general categories: psychological/emotional effects, physical effects, financial costs, and practical/quality of life effects.

...I was spending my precious time on the phone with lawyers and crises hotlines, and it was emotionally taking me away from time with my children. And I was, when I could have been or should have been there cheering them at a game, I'm sitting at a payphone trying to get all this solved, or I had to pick them up late from school because I'd have to sit in courtrooms. You go to court at 9:00 and they don't see you until 4:00. It took me away from my children at a time when they absolutely needed me.

#### **Psychological/Emotional Effects**

There were several interview questions aimed at eliciting information about psychological consequences. The women were asked open-ended and fixed-alternative questions about the emotional/psychological impact. One open-ended question pertained to the immediate reactions of the victim upon realizing that they were being stalked. The most common responses were "fear/terror" (n=107, 57.2%), anger (n=44, 23.5%), insomnia (n=24, 12.8%), frustration (n=23, 12.3%), depression (n=21, 11.2%), questioning choice in men (n=21, 11.2%), and nervousness/anxiousness (n=19, 10.2%).<sup>10</sup> When specifically asked about the emotional effects (in another question), 44.4% stated that they had become very distrustful or suspicious, 41.7% said that they were fearful, and 31% stated that they were nervous or "jumpy." Other common emotional effects cited were anger/resentment (26.7%), paranoia (35.7%), and depression (21.4%).

In addition to open-ended questions, the interview included fixed-alternative questions based on Briere and Runtz's (1989) Trauma Symptom Checklist (TSC-33, a 33-item checklist to measure traumatic impact of abuse. Respondents were asked to rate how frequently they experienced each of 33 symptoms during the stalking period. The possible responses were never, occasionally, fairly often, and very often. Responses were rated zero (0) for never through three (3) for very often.

Mean sample scores for each checklist item are found in Table 32 below. The most frequently occurring symptoms for the sample were sadness ( $x=2.16$ ), insomnia ( $x=2.15$ ), restless sleep ( $x=2.10$ ), and tension ( $x=2.06$ ).

### **Physical Effects**

Many of the women suffered physical consequences during the stalking. (See Table 33.) Forty-six percent ( $n=86$  women) experienced violence at the hands of their stalkers, and of these women, 81.4% ( $n=70$ ) suffered physical injuries ranging from small scrapes to gun shot wounds. The most prevalent injuries sustained were bruises (27.3% of the total sample), small scrapes and cuts (18.2%), and black eyes (12.3%). Of the women who experienced violence at the hands of their stalkers, the majority (66.3%) reported one or two violent incidents.

**Table 32: TSC-33 Item Means and Standard Deviations for Entire Sample**

#	Item	X	SD
1	Insomnia	2.15	1.00
2	Restless sleep	2.10	.99
3	Nightmares	1.39	1.14
4	Early morning awakenings	1.66	1.19
5	Weight loss	1.18	1.19
6	Isolation	1.78	1.12
7	Loneliness	1.74	1.13
8	Low sex drive	1.58	1.20
9	Sadness	2.16	.98
10	Flashbacks	1.99	1.00
11	Spacing out	1.45	1.10
12	Headaches	1.28	1.06
13	Stomach problems	1.25	1.23
14	Crying	1.27	1.04
15	Anxiety attacks	1.55	1.11
16	Temper problems	1.24	1.12
17	Getting along with others	.70	.95
18	Dizziness	.45	.79
19	Passing out	.11	.46
20	Hurt self	.40	.81
21	Hurt others	1.01	1.17
22	Sexual problems	.60	.99
23	Sexual overactivity	.14	.52
24	Fear of men	1.31	1.15
25	Fear of women	.16	.54
26	Excessive washing	.37	.88
27	Inferiority	1.23	1.08
28	Guilt	1.44	1.13
29	Unreality	1.38	1.11
30	Memory problems	1.02	1.11
31	Out of body experiences	.65	.85
32	Tension	2.06	.90
33	Trouble breathing	.56	.81

**Table 33: Frequencies for Various Violence and Physical Cost-Related Variables**

<b>Stalker on victim violence</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
<b>No</b>	101 (54%)
<b>Yes</b>	86 (46%)
<b>Number of violent incidents</b>	
<b>None</b>	101 (54.0%)
<b>One or two incidents</b>	57 (30.5%)
<b>Three or more incidents</b>	29 (15.5%)
<b>Physical injuries</b>	
<b>None (no violence)</b>	101 (54.0%)
<b>None (despite violence)</b>	16 ( 8.6%)
<b>Yes, physical injuries</b>	70 (37.4%)
<b>Types of Physical Injuries Suffered</b>	
<b>Small scrapes/cuts</b>	
<b>Serious cuts (requiring treatment)</b>	34 (18.2%)
<b>Bruises</b>	9 ( 4.8%)
<b>Black eye</b>	51 (27.3%)
<b>Bloody nose</b>	23 (12.3%)
<b>Sprain</b>	3 ( 1.6%)
<b>Knocked unconscious</b>	2 ( 1.1%)
<b>Broken bone(s)</b>	9 ( 4.8%)
<b>Long-lasting injury</b>	9 ( 4.8%)
<b>Internal injury</b>	12 ( 6.4%)
<b>Gun shot wound</b>	2 ( 1.1%)
	7 ( 3.7%)

### **Financial Costs**

Most (79.6%) of the victims reported experiencing at least some financial cost as a result of being stalked. (See Table 34.) These expenses ranged from nominal amounts up to over \$100,000 (median = \$1,000), with few women (<11%) receiving reimbursement through insurance. Financial costs were often the result of attempts to discourage the stalker through such means as changing one's telephone number (27.8%) or moving (26.7%). (See Table 35.) Nearly one-fifth of the women reported changing or

adding locks or deadbolts. About one-fifth of the victims also incurred expenses due to legal fees. Twenty-nine percent reported financial losses as a result of lost salary for missed work or forfeited college tuition. These losses were incurred due to either missed time for court appearances or changing jobs or schools due to the harassment. Some women were "encouraged" by their superiors to leave their jobs due to the perceived risk of potential harm to their coworkers.

As a result of physical and psychological duress, 16% of the women in the sample incurred medical and/or counseling expenses. Twenty percent of the women reported damage to their automobiles, and 22% reported other property damage (e.g. broken windows, broken doors, vandalism).

Of the costs reported by the women in the sample, the most common (though not necessarily the most expensive) costs were the result of attempts to discourage the stalkers (i.e. changing phone number, moving, etc.). Nearly a third of the costs mentioned were related to these attempts. Another 13.4% of the costs reported were related to measures to increase security (i.e. changing locks, purchasing weapons, etc.). (See Table 36.) Nineteen percent were the result of property damage, and 13.4% of all of the costs reported were due to the loss of tuition or salary.

The emergency custody order cost me \$800, three smashed windshields.  
Two full sets of tires... one here, two there.... Let's see, I'd round it off at \$2000.

When asked if any of the losses were covered by insurance, the victim responded:

No, it was all out-of-pocket and he never had to pay for anything. And the damages were never enough to surpass my insurance deductible.

**Table 34: Financial Costs to Victims and Insurance Coverage**

<b>Financial Cost to Victims</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	32	20.4
\$1 - \$249	19	12.1
\$250 - \$499	6	3.8
\$500 - \$999	14	8.9
\$1,000 - \$2,999	27	17.2
\$3,000 - \$9,999	36	22.9
\$10,000 or more	23	14.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>99.9*</b>
<b>Insurance Coverage</b>		
None	98	89.1
\$1 - \$999	3	2.7
\$1000 or more	9	8.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>99.9*</b>

\*Does not sum to 100% due to rounding.

**Table 35: Frequency of Most Common Financial Costs**

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage of Victims Reporting Expense</u>
<b>Attempts to Discourage Stalker</b>		
Changing telephone number	52	27.8
Loss selling old home to buy new home	25	13.4
Moving expenses	50	26.7
Purchasing a different car	7	3.7
<b>Measures to Increase Security</b>		
Changing or adding locks/deadbolts	37	19.8
Purchase of a weapon	8	4.3
Security system	8	4.3
Installation of motion lights	1	.5
Car alarm	1	.5
<b>Legal Fees</b>	37	19.8
<b>Loss of Salary/Tuition</b>	55	29.4
<b>Medical/Psychiatry Bills/Medication</b>	30	16.0
<b>Damage to Property</b>		
Damage to car	37	19.8
Other property damage	41	21.9
<b>Other</b>	21	11.2



**Table 36: Financial Costs Incurred Classified by Type**

<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage of Total Costs in Category</u>
<b>Attempts to Discourage Stalker</b>	134	32.7%
<b>Measures to Increase Security</b>	55	13.4
<b>Legal Fees</b>	37	9.0
<b>Loss of Salary/Tuition</b>	55	13.4
<b>Medical/Psychiatry Bills/Medication</b>	30	7.3
<b>Damage to Property</b>	78	19.0
<b>Other</b>	21	5.1
<b>Total</b>	410	100.1

### **Quality of Life Costs**

In addition to which my stomach was constantly queasy and I was always looking in the rear view mirror when I was driving. I was afraid to answer the phone at night, it just gives you an awful, creepy feeling.

Some of the most significant costs to the victims do not fit in the three categories listed above, yet seriously impact upon the victims' daily lives. (See Table 37.) These "quality of life" costs range from changing activity patterns to quitting one's job to moving. Nearly 99% of the women reported quality of life costs. These 185 women reported 843 quality of life changes resulting from the stalking experience. Ninety-four percent of the women said that they were very wary or "constantly looking over my shoulder." Sixty-four percent reported changes in activity patterns such as avoiding certain areas or taking a circuitous route to work. Seventy-two percent of the victims reported locking doors and windows that they previously left unlocked, and almost 59%

leave lights on or off as a deterrent to their stalkers. Fourteen percent of the women mentioned that changing their phone number affected the quality of their life and 13% mentioned that they purchased Caller ID boxes and/or avoided answering the telephone until they were able to identify the caller.<sup>11</sup>

I watch who I give my address to. I watch who I give me phone number to. Very, very rarely do I give my phone number out. I told a couple of my neighbors if they ever see this person to notify the cops. ...I carry mace with me.

Another woman stated:

I don't really go and hang out with my friends that much. I don't go anywhere by myself for the most part. I don't trust anybody ...that I didn't know before ...because I don't know who he's friends with, who I can trust. I don't go out that much. I refuse to go to parties...because you never know if he's gonna be there.

Several questions related to fear were included in the interview. Victims were asked to rate on a ten-point scale their level of fear of the stalker during the stalking period. Eighty percent rated fear at a high level (8 through 10). When asked of what they were fearful, 60% feared violence, 32% feared the unknown or element of surprise, and 7.1% feared that the stalker would kidnap their children. (See Table 38.)

**Table 37: Practical or "Quality of Life" Costs to Stalking Victims**

<b>Change in Quality of Life (QOL)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
None	2	1.1
Changes in activity patterns (Avoids certain areas, circuitous route to work, etc.)	119	63.6
Does not go out alone	44	23.5
Walks with keys in hand	4	2.1
Constantly looking over shoulder	175	93.6
Locks doors etc. not locked before	134	71.7
Leaves lights on or leaves lights off	110	58.8
Moved	62	33.2
Bought weapon (gun/knife)	30	16.0
Mace/pepper spray	76	40.6
Caller ID/Does not pick up phone	24	12.8
Purchased dog for protection	18	9.6
Installed bars on windows/doors	10	5.3
Purchased additional life insurance	7	3.7
Changed phone number	26	13.9
Quit job	4	2.1

**Table 38: Fear of Stalker**

<b>Fear Measure</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fear of stalker (on a scale of 1 – 10)		
Little or no fear (1-3)	3	1.7
Moderate fear (4-7)	32	18.1
High fear (8-10)	142	80.2
Fear of violence	102	60.0
Fear of unknown/surprise	54	31.8
Fear of harm to others	2	1.2
Fear of stalker kidnapping children	12	7.1*

\*Adds to 101.1% due to rounding.

## RESEARCH FINDINGS

### COMPARISON TO OTHER CRIMES

#### **Victims' Comparisons of Stalking to Other Crimes**

Near the conclusion of the interview, victims were asked if they had been victims of other crimes in their adult lives. If they indicated that they had been, they were asked to specify the type of crime and to briefly describe what had happened. Based on the information given, the crimes were classified according to seriousness and by whether they were property or violent offenses.

Victims were also asked to compare the other crime with the stalking in terms of relative harm to the victim. The results are presented in Tables 39 and 40 below. Seventy-one of the stalking victims reported having been victims of other crimes in their adult lives. Fifty-three of the victims (75%) reported that the stalking was more harmful to them than the other victimization experience. Another 14% stated that the two crimes were comparable. Eighty-three percent of the stalking victims who had been victims of property offenses during their adult lives said that the stalking caused greater harm to them, while 65% of the victims of violent offenses stated that the harm from the stalking was greater than the harm from the violent offense. Of those who were victims of misdemeanors (besides the stalking), 85% stated that the stalking was more harmful to them, and 65% of the victims of felonies indicated that the stalking cause them greater harm than the felony.

**Table 39: Relative harm - Stalking versus other victimizations**

Relative harm	Seriousness of other offense		
	Misdemeanor	Felony	Total
Stalking was more harmful	29 (85.3%)	24 (64.9%)	53 (74.6%)
Other offense was more harmful	1 ( 2.9%)	7 (18.9%)	8 (11.3%)
Offenses were equally harmful	4 (11.7%)	6 (16.2%)	10 (14.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>34 (99.9%)</b>	<b>37 (100%)</b>	<b>71 (100%)</b>

$X^2=5.254$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.072$

**Table 40: Relative harm - Stalking versus other victimizations**

Relative harm	Type of other offense		
	Property	Violent	Total
Stalking was more harmful	30 (83.8%)	22 (64.7%)	52 (74.6%)
Other offense was more harmful	3 ( 8.1%)	5 (14.7%)	8 (11.3%)
Offenses were equally harmful	3 ( 8.1%)	7 (20.6%)	10 (14.1%)
<b>Total</b>	<b>36 ( 100%)</b>	<b>34 (100%)</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>

$X^2=3.28$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $p=.194$

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings above shed light on some aspects of stalking behaviors and victims' experiences and needs. While the qualitative nature of the research, combined with the use of an availability sample that was limited in size, places constraints on data analysis and the generalizability of the results, the data shed light on the nature of stalking and victimization experiences. Based on the interviews with 187 female victims of former intimate stalking, we can conclude that stalking is a serious offense that can have a great impact on victims' lives. It is apparent that these women are suffering first as a result of their attempts to leave their partners, and then as a consequence of the

relatively scarce and/or ineffective assistance in discouraging the stalker and meeting the victims' needs. The stalkers described by the victims employ a great variety of tactics in the commission of the offense, and many of the perpetrators reportedly have drug and/or alcohol problems. A large percentage of women in the sample experienced verbal threats and/or violence at the hands of their stalkers, intensifying the seriousness of the crime.

The research findings raise issues for future research and the consideration of a number of legislative and justice system policy changes.

### **Policy recommendations**

The following are policy recommendations for law enforcement agencies, courts, legislatures, and victim service agencies based upon the research findings discussed above.

Treatment of stalkers by the police, courts, and correctional agencies, whether that treatment entails deterrence or rehabilitative approaches, should reflect the seriousness of the behavior. When appropriate, this treatment should address drug and alcohol abuse among former intimate stalkers. Law enforcement and other justice system agency personnel should be trained to better understand the plight of stalking victims in order to avoid "re-victimizing" them by failing to (1) demonstrate appropriate empathy, (2) implement the provision of current anti-stalking statutes, and (3) make referrals to other agencies that can assist victims.

Legislatures should review current anti-stalking legislation and make appropriate changes that would increase the effectiveness and enforceability of these laws. Legislative review should be implemented, shifting the focus of criminal intent in stalking statutes from the stalker's intention to inflict emotional or physical harm to the

stalker's intention to commit acts which, in turn, inflict emotional or physical harm. The process by which victims obtain restraining orders and protection from abuse orders should be streamlined. Present criteria for obtaining restraining orders and protection from abuse orders should be reviewed. Alternatives should be made available to women who are unable to obtain protection orders due to current criteria. Mechanisms should be provided to assist victims of stalking who have not been victims of intimate violence. Alternatives to mechanisms available to physically battered women (i.e. Protection from Abuse orders) should be in place in every jurisdiction. Victims of former intimate stalking should, at a minimum, be treated as well as victims of stranger stalking. The same degree of seriousness should be attributed to former intimate stalking as is attributed to a situation where a victim is stalked by a stranger.

Education should be provided to increase awareness among legislators, victim service professionals, and criminal justice practitioners of the serious effects of stalking on its victims and the importance of treating stalking offenses more seriously. Workshops and training courses should be offered to the police, district attorneys, judges, and victim counselors in order for them to be more sensitive to the unique needs of stalking victims. Training and education of criminal justice professionals regarding the anti-stalking legislation in their own jurisdiction as well as the Interstate Stalking Punishment and Prevention Act of 1996 (18 U.S.C. §2261) should be conducted so that these laws can be enforced more effectively and the intended protections can be afforded to stalking victims. Funding opportunities should be provided to develop innovative programs to better coordinate police, court, and victim service agencies in their handling of stalking cases.

Greater resources should be provided to victims of stalking, including education, information and guidance, counseling, and support groups. Support groups should be developed not only for stalking victims who were formerly abused by their partners, but also for stalking victims who have not been victims of domestic abuse.

#### **Future research recommendations**

The following are several suggestions for future research that should result in an even greater understanding of the offense of stalking and victims' experiences.

Additional research should include data collected from the stalkers themselves to better understand the nature of stalking. Based on the large number of victims reporting the abuse of drugs and/or alcohol by their stalkers (72%), additional research is needed to further investigate the link between substance abuse and stalking behavior. Three-quarters of the victims reported that "controlling" behavior was present in their prior relationships with their stalkers. Further research to examine the early predictors of later stalking would be helpful.

Future research on stalking victims should include victims of psychopathic and erotomaniac stalkers to better understand the uniqueness and similarities of their experiences and needs. Also, the inclusion of male victims of stalking in research would broaden our understanding of stalking victimization.

Ongoing evaluation of the impact (i.e. effectiveness) of state and federal anti-stalking legislation is necessary to determine whether it effectively and adequately redresses the harmful behavior of stalking. Victims revealed that local law enforcement personnel lacked a complete understanding of current anti-stalking legislation. Research



is needed to assess the need for education of law enforcement professionals regarding federal and state anti-stalking legislation and enforcement procedures.

The experiences of stalking victims in rural areas should be addressed to determine whether their experiences are similar to those of victims in urban and suburban areas, and to determine whether their needs are satisfactorily being met by existing services.

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<sup>1</sup> See Sohn, 1994: 204, footnote 2 for a list of most state statutes pertaining to stalking.

<sup>2</sup> This researcher realizes that males are also victims of former intimate (and other types of) stalking, however the focus of this study is on female victims because it has been established that women are much more frequently the victims of stalking than are men (see e.g. Tjaden, 1997).

<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that "former intimate" here does not necessarily imply having formerly had a sexual relationship with the stalker.

<sup>4</sup> See Sohn, 1994: 204, footnote 2 for a list of most state statutes pertaining to stalking.

<sup>5</sup> Although the "voluntary" nature of the victim's decision to remain in the situation is questionable and quite controversial, this aspect of the situation negates the prerequisites for being classified as a stalking victim.

<sup>6</sup> One variation of erotomania is deClerambault's Syndrome in which the "erotomaniac believes[s] that his fantasized object of affection *initiated* the relationship" [italics added] (McAnaney, 1993: 828).

<sup>7</sup> This researcher realizes that males are also victims of former intimate (and other types of) stalking, however the focus of this study is on female victims because it has been established that women are much more frequently the victims of stalking than are men (see e.g. Tjaden, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that "former intimate" here does not necessarily imply having formerly had a sexual relationship with the stalker.

<sup>9</sup> Because data were collected through semi-structured interviews, the same data were not available for each respondent. Therefore, data analysis is limited to bivariate statistics due to the large number of missing values when additional variables are entered into a given statistical equation.

<sup>10</sup> Percentages total more than 100% because some women mentioned two or more immediate reactions.

<sup>11</sup> The number of victims reporting changing their telephone number as a quality of life factor is less than the number reporting it as an expense. This discrepancy is due to the former being based solely upon factors that the victim reported as changes made that specifically affected the quality of their lives.

**APPENDIX D: SURVEY INSTRUMENT**

Check the appropriate response.

ID# \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age \_\_\_\_\_

2. Race

- Nonhispanic white
- Black
- Hispanic
- Asian
- Other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

3. Indicate the highest level of education completed.

- No formal education
- Some elementary school
- Completed elementary school
- Some high school
- Completed high school or GED
- Some college
- Completed 4 years of college (B.A. or B.S. degree)
- Some graduate school
- Completed M.A. or M.S.
- Completed doctoral program

4. Indicate approximate household income \_\_\_\_\_

5. Marital status

- Single, never married
- Married
- Separated
- Divorced
- Widowed



6. Current employment status:

- full-time student
- unemployed, seeking job
- full-time employment, please state occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- part-time employment, please state occupation \_\_\_\_\_
- not employed by choice

7. City and County of Residence

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## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW GUIDE

### AN EXPLORATION OF THE EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF STALKING VICTIMS:

Researcher: Mary Brewster, West Chester University

The interview is designed to be unstructured, using open-ended questions in order to obtain the most valuable information regarding the victim and her experiences. Below is a list of areas, or domains, about which the researcher will attempt to derive information. The interview will consist of general questions, followed by cues or prompts, when necessary, to extract information regarding each of the domains.

#### **A. Introduction:**

As indicated in the consent form, you are not obligated to answer any questions, nor are you obligated to complete the interview. If for any reason you would like to discontinue, simply state that and no further questions will be asked. All responses will be completely confidential. Your identity will not be revealed in research reports, etc. Do you have any questions before we get started?

#### **B. General Information**

1. Tell me about your experiences as someone who has been "stalked."

[Note: Interviewer will use following sections to elaborate upon specific areas and to address issues not raised by respondent in Part B above.]

#### **C. Relationship with the Stalker**

1. Describe your relationship to the stalker.

What was your relationship with the stalker (him)?

(e.g. someone you dated once or twice, former boyfriend, fiancé, spouse, etc.)

2. How long had (have) you known him?

#### D. Characteristics of Stalking

1. Tell me what happened.
2. What do you know about the stalker? (e.g. demographics, prior record, personality, etc.)
3. Do you know if he used drugs or alcohol? (If so, what types, amount, frequency?)
4. Why was this person stalking you?
  - a. Was he seeking revenge or reconciliation?  
What indications were there which suggested that he wanted revenge/reconciliation?
5. What types of behaviors were involved in the stalking?
  - a. Were there letters, gifts, phone calls, faxes, E-mail, visits, face-to-face conversations, following, etc.
  - b. Where did these occur?
  - c. What was the content of letters, gifts, phone calls, faxes, E-mail, or face-to-face conversations, etc.?
  - d. Was the content of the letters, phone calls, conversations threatening or amorous?
  - e. If letters or faxes were sent:  
  
Were letters/faxes typed or handwritten? If handwritten, print or cursive?  
  
Were there ever any enclosures? Describe.
  - f. Were there ever threats? If so, what were they?  
Were the threats direct, veiled, or conditional threats?  
(e.g. direct = I'm going to kill you?)  
(e.g. veiled = We were meant to be together. Who knows what might happen if you try to fight fate?)  
(e.g. conditional = If you don't go to dinner with me, I will hurt your boyfriend.)

6. How long were you stalked by this person?
  - a. How frequently were you followed, telephoned, written to, etc.? Approximately how many letters did you receive? How many phone calls? Faxes? Gifts? How often were you followed?
  - b. Is the stalking continuing today? If not, why not? (What stopped the stalker?)
7. Was there ever any violence? Can you tell me about it?
  - a. When did it take place?
  - b. What form of violence was it?
  - c. Did you attempt to fight him off?
  - d. What were the results of your attempts at self-protection?

[Interviewer should gather information about each violent incident.]

8. Did the offender involve other members of your family, loved ones, friends, coworkers, etc. (indirect victims)?
  - a. If so, in what way? (e.g. threats, etc.)

#### **E. Attempts to Discourage**

1. Did you ever try to discourage him from stalking you?
  - a. If so, how?
  - b. What effect did it have? (e.g. Made situation worse, better?)
  - c. Did you verbally request that he leave you alone?
  - d. Did you attempt to discourage him through legal means (temporary restraining orders, orders of protection, pressing charges, filing civil suits, etc.)?
  - e. Did any of the attempts discourage him? If so, which one(s)?

2. Which, if any, of the following interventions took place in terms of your stalker?

Police contact  
Arrest  
Hospitalization  
Conviction  
Incarceration  
Deportation

- a. At what point did this occur?
- b. What was the result of this intervention?

3. Did you report the stalking to the police?

- a. If not reported to the police, why not?
- b. If reported to the police, what were your expectations? What did you expect the police to do?
- c. On a scale of 1 through 5, did the police live up to your expectations? (1 = No, not at all; 5 = Yes, completely)

#### **F. Assistance from Others**

1. Did you seek help from anyone else (besides the police)?

Significant other (spouse, boyfriend), friends, parents, other immediate family members, victims agencies, victim support groups, shelters, psychologists, etc.

- a. If so, at what point?
- b. What exactly made you decide to ask others for help?
- c. How difficult was it to find the help that you needed?
- d. On a scale of 1 through 5 (1 = not difficult at all and 5 = extremely difficult) how would you rate the difficulty?
- e. Did any of these people help you to deal with the situation? If so, how?
- f. If you did not seek help (through legal or other means) why not?

2. How was your victimization handled by family?  
by friends?  
by police?  
by prosecutors?  
by judges?  
by victim counselors?  
by psychologists?

- a. On a scale of 1 through 5, how well were your needs met by each?  
(1 = None of my needs were met; 5 = all of my needs were met)  
[Interviewer: read any of the following that are relevant to the respondent.]

By family?  
By friends?  
By police?  
By prosecutors?  
By judges?  
By victim counselors?  
By psychologists?

3. The next several questions focus specifically on your experiences with the police.

- a. Focusing specifically on your experiences with the police, how quickly did they respond? (Scale 1 - 5, 1 = right away, 5 = never showed up)
- b. On a scale of 1 - 5, how polite were they towards you? (1=very polite, 5=very rude)
- c. On a scale of 1 - 5, how sympathetic were they? (1 = not at all, 5 = very sympathetic)
- d. On a scale of 1 - 5, how safe did you feel when the police were there? (1 = very safe, 5 = not safe at all)
- e. On a scale of 1 - 5, how helpful were the police? (1 = very helpful, 5 = not helpful at all)

4. Repeat b,c, and e for prosecutor, if applicable.

## G. Effects on Victim

Now I would like you to tell me about the effects that the stalking had on you?

1. When did you realize that the person was becoming a problem?
2. What were your immediate *reactions*? [e.g. nervousness, crying or shaking, anger, confusion, shock, physical illness, nausea, etc.)
3. What were the immediate and long-term *effects* of the stalking?  
How has the stalking affected your life?
4. Have there been financial costs?  
(E.g. change residence, job, car, phone number, property damage, hospital bills, time missed from work, court fees for temporary restraining orders or orders of protection)?
  - a. What was the total cost of financial damages?
  - b. Were (will) the losses (be) covered by insurance?
5. Has the stalking caused you to change your behavior or caused any inconveniences? Describe these to me.
  - a. Has it changed your security behaviors? Have you:
    - changed your activity patterns?
    - starting locking doors and windows that you have not locked in the past?
    - changed the locks on your doors?
    - placed bars on your windows?
    - installed a security system?
    - purchased a dog?
    - purchased a weapon?
      - for your home?
      - to carry with you outside of the home?
    - purchased mace or pepper spray?
    - bought insurance?
    - started leaving lights on in your home?

6. Has there been physical harm?

(e.g. bodily injury, hospitalization, etc.)

a. If so, what physical injuries have you suffered (at the hands of your stalker)?

E.g. Which of the following types of injuries did you suffer?

-knife wounds

-gun shot wounds

-broken bones or teeth

-internal injuries, knocked unconscious, concussion

-bruises, black eyes, scratches

-cuts, other than knife wounds

-other \_\_\_\_\_ (tell me about it)

b. Which of these were immediate and which were long-lasting injuries?

c. Were you treated at a dental or medical facility?

d. Were you treated at a hospital? If so, did your injuries require that you stay overnight at the hospital?

e. Did your insurance cover the dental/medical/hospital bills?

7. How has the stalking affected you emotionally?

[Researcher: Allow the respondent to answer open-ended question prior to using probes.]

E.g. stress, nervousness, distrust, suspicion, depression, anxiety, fear of being alone, fear of entering your home, fear of leaving your home, fear of going out at night, anger, memory loss, crying or shaking, confusion or state of shock, reliving the fear, diminished interest or involvement with the external world, helplessness, powerlessness, physiological disturbances (such as physical sickness or nausea, trouble sleeping, headaches, lack of appetite), other

a. When did these symptoms begin (at what point during the stalking)? When did they stop?

b. What attempts have you made to "get over" the emotional effects of the experiences?

c. Have you sought counseling? When? How frequently? Duration?



8. I am going to read a list of symptoms [Trauma Symptom Checklist, Briere & Runtz, 1989]. Please tell me how frequently you experienced each of the following during the time you were being stalked. The responses are "never, occasionally, fairly often, very often).

Trouble getting to sleep(Never, Occasionally, fairly often, very often?)

Restless sleep

Nightmares

Waking up early in the morning and can't get back to sleep

Weight loss (without dieting)

Feeling isolated from others

Loneliness

Low sex drive

Sadness

"Flashbacks" (sudden, vivid, distracting memories)

"Spacing out" (going away in your mind)

Headaches

Stomach problems

Uncontrollable crying

Anxiety attacks

Trouble controlling temper

Trouble getting along with others

Dizziness

Passing out

Desire to physically hurt yourself

Desire to physically hurt others

Sexual problems

Sexual overactivity

Fear of men

Fear of women

Unnecessary or over-frequent washing

Feelings of inferiority

Feelings of guilt

Feelings that things are "unreal"

Memory problems

Feelings that you are not always in your body

Feeling tense all the time

Having trouble breathing

Distrust/Suspicion

Depression

Fear of being alone

Fear of entering your home

Fear of leaving your home

Fear of going out at night  
Anger  
Confusion or state of shock  
Diminished interest/involvement with the external world  
Helplessness

9. What were your needs as a result of being stalked?  
[Clarification probe, if requested: What medical, psychological, financial needs were a result of being stalked? What types of support did you need?]
- Which of these was your greatest need?
  - Were your needs met?
  - If so, by whom?
10. What role did your family play in helping you to "get over" your victimization?
- What role did your friends play?
  - What role did your private therapist play?
  - What role did your victim services counselor play?
  - How helpful were each of these people, on a scale of 1 through 5 (1 = not helpful at all, 5 = extremely helpful)?  
  
Family?  
Friends?  
Private therapist?  
Victim services counselors?
11. Is there anything that would have made "getting over" the experience easier for you? What would it have been?
12. Thinking [back] about the stalking, how much would you say the incident affected you?  
(Scale of 1 through 5, 1 = A great deal, 5 = Not at all)
- How much did the stalking affect others in your household?  
(Scale of 1 through 5, 1 = A great deal, 5 = Not at all)

13. On a scale of 1 to 10, how fearful were/are you of him (the stalker)? One=not fearful at all, 10=extremely fearful) [Note: If stalking appears to have ended, *also* ask how fearful victim is now.]

14. What would you [have] like[d] to see happen to the stalker? Why? (e.g. jail for retribution or deterrence; counseling for rehabilitation; etc.)

#### **H. Other victimization experiences**

1. Have you been the victim of any other crime in the past?
2. Describe the experience to me.
3. In comparison, which was more harmful to you, the \_\_\_\_\_ or the stalking? Why?

#### **I. Anything Else**

1. Is there anything else that you would like to add that I may not have asked you about?

Thank you for taking the time to talk with me about your experiences. As mentioned earlier, this information will be kept completely confidential. Please do not hesitate to call me if you have any questions, concerns, or comments regarding this research study.

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