STALKING FACTS:
- Stalkers and victims can be of any age/race/ethnicity/nationality/religion/sex.
- Most victims are unremarkable, have no profile before being stalked, except they are overwhelmingly female.
- The vast majority of stalkers are men, and most of them stalk women. Even men are more likely to be stalked by men that by women.
- Compared to men, women are twice as likely to be stalked by strangers; 8 times as likely by intimates.
- Most stalking cases involve former intimate partners.
- The same is true for cyberstalkers, many of whom stalk in other ways.

HOW COMMON IS STALKING:
- In the U.S., one of every 12 women will be stalked in her lifetime; one in every 45 men.
- That comes to 8.2 million women stalked over their lifetimes, and 2 million men.
- 1% of all women in the U.S. are stalked every year, most by past or present intimates.
- Note: Survey only looked at women over 18.
- Stalking can last from short periods to many, many years. (Any contact with the stalker only reinforces the stalker, which court practices often exacerbate. Both criminal and family courts.)

STALKING CAN BE DANGEROUS
- 22% of all stalkers sexually assault their victims; male intimates do so at even higher rates.
- 60 - 81% of intimate male stalkers physically assault their victims, vs. 30.6% of non-intimate stalkers. (Intimate female stalkers injure far fewer of their victims - 11%, which is still dangerous.)
- Intimate cyberstalkers are also more lethal than non-intimate ones.

WHAT IS CYBERSTALKING:
Stalking by use of:
- the Internet,
- e-mail, or
- other electronic communication devices.
(May also involve snooping to track a person.)
Stalking laws vary by state, but usually involve harassing or threatening behaviors that someone repeatedly engages in. It is done to exert power & control, and to terrify.

HOW COMMON IS CYBERSTALKING?
A 1996-97 survey of coeds found that 24.7% of stalking incidents involved e-mail.
20% of kids 10-17 on-line are cyberstalked.

In early 1999, e-mail or other electronic communications constituted approximately:

- 20% of the L. A. Police Department’s Stalking & Threat Assessment Unit cases;
- 20% of Manhattan’s Sex Crimes Unit cases;
- 40% of the NYC Police Department’s Computer and Technology Unit’s cases.

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF CYBERSTALKING

- Does not involve physical contact, so perpetrator can be anywhere in the world.
- Can involve unsuspecting third parties (e.g., by posting the victim’s address/phone & inviting others to contact the victim; or impersonating the victim and asking others to contact “me”).
- Much easier to be anonymous, to use different Internet Service Providers (ISPs), different screen names, remailers that mask who the sender is, or just lie about oneself.

ABOUT MALE INTIMATE STALKERS

- Tend to be older, better educated than most criminals.
- All have personality disorders (obsessive), are narcissistic, feel devastated, annihilated, betrayed or abandoned.
- Many can’t sleep, work, eat or self-care, have limited ability to problem solve/ restricted sense of the future.
- 3 goals: reconciliation, vindication, revenge. Love as the motivation can be just as deadly as hatred.
- Jail is the only way to control revengeful stalkers because they feel justified in their behavior; may still hire killer or kill selves.

HOW STALKING AFFECTS VICTIMS

- Virtually all female victims and many males are severely traumatized. PTSD is common.
- 89% change daily activities, from moving, changing appearance or identity; 88% become cautious; 52% become easily frightened (vs. 2% prior to being stalked), 41% feel paranoid.
- 85% know that their personalities are adversely affected.
- Many fear their abusers will find or stalk them again, even years after it’s stopped.

WOMEN’S RESPONSES TO IP STALKING

1. AVOIDANCE: 40% screen phone calls, 40% leave scene, 37% stay with friends, family, 32% hide, 22% move.
2. HELP-SEEKING: 92% call police, etc.
3. SOOTHING/ COMPLIANCE/ REASONING: 90% use at least one of the following, 58% used 3+: e.g., 61% accept phone calls, 27% let him in.
4. RESISTANCE: 70% state boundaries, 40% deny entrance, 27% threaten to call police, 25% fight/struggle, 23% hang up, 19% argue with stalker, 19% yell/swear at stalker.
DUTCH, U.S. AND AUSTRALIAN STUDIES FIND

Studies of victims of all stalking crimes (not just IP)
- 78-90% get unwanted telephone calls
- 41-62% get unwanted letters
- 54-84% experience surveillance of their homes
- 68-74% are followed; 79-92% directly approached
- 41-53% are threatened with harm or death
- Medium duration of stalking: 12, 24 & 33 mos. in U.S., Australia & Holland, respectively. Range was from 1-2 mos. to 240 - 476 mos.
- Stalking varied over time. For 47% the frequency decreased, 48% stayed the same; 4% intensified. For a few it stopped for months, only to resume again.

DUTCH STUDY’S FINDINGS ABOUT VICTIMS
- (Like Australia) most found little help from mental health, police or courts: disbelieved, insufficient evidence, or therapist unresponsive or incompetent.
- Result was most victims took matters into their own hands: got unlisted phone no. (81%); relocated (44%); went underground (40%); quit job - worked less (39%) or changed jobs (21%); avoided social outings (63%); took other security measures (65%), or assaulted stalker (19%). FOR MOST, NOTHING WORKED.


PSYCHOLOGICAL FINDINGS ABOUT VICTIMS
- Amazingly, Blaauw et al found symptoms not related to how recently stalking began or if it ended. Somatic symptoms, anxiety, insomnia, social dysfunction, severe depression, suicide (31% considered or tried).
- 78% met diagnosis for a psychiatric disorder.
- Symptoms closest to psychiatric outpatients.
- Symptoms highest when followed or property stolen/destroyed (as in Australia), or recently stalked daily, 6+ protective stalking measures taken, 6+ stalking behaviors, recent stalking daily, frequency not not decreasing. Unlike Australia, IP relationship was not predictive, nor was physical assault.

Pathé & Mullen, The Impact of Stalkers on Their Victims, 170 British J. of Psychiatry 12-17 (1997).

CRIMINAL JUSTICE VICTIM EXPECTATIONS

Legal requirements: repeated/ course of conduct; unwanted; stalker intended activity and/ or that victim reasonably frightened.
CJS & juries want victim to be innocent, yet proactive re safety.
Victim’s behavior is always in evidence: no mixed messages to stalker (although elsewhere she’s told to be nice); be firm, but not angry; be reasonably afraid. Like rape
victims she must be a good victim; she is always suspect if she had an intimate relationship with him, isn’t seen as innocent or blameless. Stalkers vary their techniques and messages, so are especially confusing (want: relationship to begin/ resume, to retaliate, to prevent others from seeing victim, to know what she is doing, to frighten her, etc.); most actions have multiple messages. Romance (flowers, gifts, etc.) flatter & confuse, & often work. Women are raised to be nice, feel flattered by attention (fairy tales, movies, punished if not nice: “friendly parent” provisions, etc.).

HOW CRS DISMISSES IP STALKING VICTIMS

• Because most stalking victims feel desperate, they annoy police, prosecutors, esp. if they call them frequently.
• If she is too much of a victim, she is devalued, shamed.
• Dunn found files often characterize victims as: compliant, borderline, histrionic, combative, saintly, founded, accountable, annoying, proactive, a survivor, a “real” victim, “still” a victim, too “into” being a victim, and even not a typical victim. (p. 99).
• Prosecutors want to win cases, so seldom take cases unlikely to win. Stalking cases are notoriously hard to win (like rape ones) both because of legal requirements and expectations about victims; & some don’t know the new law adequately. Highly labor intensive cases to gather all the evidence.

Victims Need to Be Told:
• RETALIATION ONLY MAKES STALKERS MORE DANGEROUS
• COMPLIANCE ENCOURAGES STALKERS –HENCE IT ESCALATES BEHAVIORS

NEEDED PROTECTIONS FOR VICTIMS
Since further contact with the victim or children encourages the stalker: prevent further contact by:
• No mediation
• No joint/couples counseling
• No shared custody; restrict visitation.
• Stay away orders.
• Safety plan help.
• Relocation option.
• Enforce orders.
• Require specialized training for police, DAs, judges, GALs, custody evaluators, therapists, probation/ corrections.
• Remove firearms.
• Greater welfare assistance (FVO).
SAFETY PLAN FOR STALKING VICTIMS:

- Protection orders (**not** for everyone). Many copies.
- Answering machine / cell phone. Save e-mail/letters.
- Safety at work / school / church / food store, etc.
- Safety for children at schools, daycare, doctors, etc.
- Change name & Social Security nos.? **Use VINE.**
- Weapons usually backfire, get used against victim.

FEW POLICE/PROSECUTERS TRAINED TO DEAL WITH CYBERSTALKING

- Electronic communication technology makes stalking much easier, & prosecution much harder.
- Technology proficiency is critical to catch and prosecute cyberstalkers.
- Some services offer anonymous communication over the Internet.
- Some ISPs cooperate little with police, hide complaint addresses.

*Interstate Stalking Act* criminalizes crossing state lines with intent to injure or harass another and, in the course thereof, place that person or a member of that person’s family in reasonable fear of death or serious bodily injury. 18 U.S.C. § 2261A. Includes stalking via the Internet, telephone or mails. Better international laws and cooperative policing are needed as cyberstalking is often done from other countries.

All states have stalking laws, but many are inadequate to protect all intimate partners & all stalking victims; stalking should be a felony. While at least 26 states have laws that enable prosecution of some cyberstalkers, these laws are often inadequate, esp. when the stalker is out-of-state or in another country. 22% of all stalkers sexually assault & over half are violent to their victims.

Needed to Combat Stalking:

- **Specialized units** are essential for police & prosecutors to understand the seriousness of all stalking (esp. cyberstalking), be sympathetic & helpful to victims, and catch stalkers.
• **Partnerships & a community response** is needed to stop this abuse: judiciary, cyber-industry, police, DAs, educators, corrections, victim advocates, health care.
• **All** involved need special training.
• Informal police interventions often work best!

**BE REALISTIC ABOUT THERAPY:**
While some batterer programs have shown moderate success helping those who complete them, *nobody* has yet shown therapy to be effective in treating stalkers. Pretending that therapy is the answer trivializes the problem, the danger to the victim (and potential future victims, including the children), and wastes money and resources. Good research is needed; solutions are needed.