

May 2012

# Practitioner Perspectives

## Teri Faragher: President and Treasurer *OutrageUs*

*An interview with Teri Faragher, President and Treasurer of OutrageUs:*

**Q: What is OutrageUs?**

A: OutrageUs is a small, web-based non-profit that is developing multi-media resources, tools, and research-informed strategies to focus attention on some of the most misunderstood areas of partner violence, and help communities build on their strengths to stop it. Victims—and anyone who works with victims—know that trying to achieve safety through our justice system can be very difficult and frustrating. This is particularly true for victims of stalking, who often continue to be terrorized even after they reach out for help. That is why the initial undertaking of OutrageUs is The Stalking Project. We had met so many stalking survivors with very compelling stories to tell, both positive and negative, who wanted to share their experiences to help others. Luckily, we were able to collaborate with the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky to document their stories and create seven powerful mini-documentaries on stalking. Our site, [www.outrageus.org](http://www.outrageus.org), offers lots of useful tools and links for everyone, from current victims to the professionals who work with them.

**Q: Who is part of OutrageUs?**

A: We're an organization of only three people who are all employed in other positions. We each bring a different set of experiences, skills, and strengths to the table. I've been director of a local coordinating council on domestic violence in Lexington, KY, for 25 years. T.K. Logan, a researcher at the University of Kentucky, has focused on partner violence and stalking for the past decade. Anita Capillo is the director of the Lexington Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners program and has significant experience as a

domestic violence victim advocate. Our work for OutrageUs is unpaid and a labor of love.

**Q: Do you have a goal or mission that guides the work of OutrageUs?**

A: Our mission is to increase public understanding, outrage, and activism related to partner violence—violence that denies people's basic human rights to freedom and self-fulfillment—and to empower individuals and groups to create meaningful and positive change in communities, governments, and criminal justice systems to restore these rights.

**Q: How did the idea for the Stalking Project originate?**

A: T.K. and I had tried for a long time to find a way for stalking survivors to share their experiences, and Doug Boyd, Director of the UK Nunn Center, had expressed interest in documenting the personal narrative of stalking survivors as an oral history project. The three of us developed the basic concept for the Stalking Project. T.K. and I then initiated OutrageUs as a non-profit to serve as the vehicle for this and all future projects. I asked noted filmmaker Walter Brock to help us film an interview with a stalking survivor. That interview was so compelling that Walter became a part of our team and we all strengthened our resolve to see the project through.

**Teri Faragher** serves as the President and Treasurer of **OutrageUs**. OutrageUs works to develop multimedia resources, services, tools and research informed strategies to help communities build on their strengths and effectively address partner violence.

**Q: Why did you choose partner stalking as the initial focus for OutrageUs?**

A: We focused on partner stalking because it is so pervasive, dangerous, and invasive in the lives of victims, yet it is so often misunderstood, dismissed, or ignored by the criminal justice system. Victims of stalking know that they are being watched, followed, or tracked, but they never know when or how the stalker might strike. It is a 24/7 nightmare. But it can look quite different to the criminal justice system, so victims' concerns are often dismissed. If the responding officer is only looking at a single incident, rather than the pattern of behaviors that cause fear and collectively constitute stalking, it may not be viewed as criminal. The advocacy community isn't off the hook either, as we have historically not recognized stalking for what it is and have overlooked the patterns victims describe to us. OutrageUs wants to bridge the gap between what the victim experiences and how the community responds.

**Q: How much involvement do you have from the victims you work with?**

A: The survivors we interviewed have helped guide this project from its inception. All of the women we interviewed are amazing people who not only survived their respective experiences, but who have truly moved on with their lives and are currently thriving and engaged in interesting and significant work of their own. They want to encourage and empower other women who may feel defeated by their situations.

**Q: What do you think are the most pressing needs of stalking victims and how do you try to address them?**

A: I love the National Stalking Awareness Month slogan: "Know It. Name It. Stop It." I think it serves as a really good guide for identifying victims' needs. Victims need safety, but that can only be achieved if, when [victims] reach out [to us] for help and they are describing stalking behaviors, we identify it and name it. Then, we have to work with the victim to figure out what would work best to stop it. We should always offer victims help with safety planning and talk with them about safely documenting their experiences, whether or not there is currently

a stalking charge. What works to protect one victim might endanger another, so we should always have a range of options available, and tailor interventions to meet each victim's needs.

**Q: What do you hope victims, victim service providers, and communities take away from OutrageUs?**

A: Understanding, knowledge, and the desire to do more to stop stalking and other forms of partner violence. Our motto is "turning outrage into action," and that is exactly what we hope to do. The videos, tools, resources, and links on our website are designed to help people engage their communities and promote positive change.

**Q: What are some of the future plans for OutrageUs?**

A: We are hearing from more stalking survivors who want to share their stories and we plan to continue our interviews and, as resources allow, create films and spoken word pieces to bring understanding to the issue. We will also continue to develop tools and resources to stop stalking. Additionally, we have plans to address another facet of partner violence that is often ignored: sexual assault. It is one of the most hidden dimensions of partner violence, and it causes victims the greatest shame and distress. We want victims of sexual assault in the context of domestic violence to know that they are not alone, it is not their fault, and that help is available.

**Q: Do you have any advice for people who are working with stalking victims?**

A: When victims tell you about their experiences, connect the dots and identify it as stalking. Also, step back and look at your community. As an advocate or law enforcement officer or whatever capacity you work in, if you are identifying stalking, what is happening as a result of that? How is your community responding to it? In our community, it has been a long process. We realized that very few stalking charges were being brought, and very few cases were being prosecuted. So, we really started looking at that and conducted trainings with all of our community partners to get everyone on board. We are doing a much better job, but we are still working to improve.

**The mini-documentaries produced as part of the Stalking Project are available on a DVD for \$25 for one or \$35 for two. For more information and to order, please visit [www.outrageus.org](http://www.outrageus.org)**