

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL OKLAHOMA
Edmond, Oklahoma
Jackson College of Graduate Studies

Behavioral Characteristics of Stalkers Who Kill

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN FORENSIC SCIENCE

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University of Central Oklahoma

2021

BEHAVIORAL CHARACTERISTICS OF STALKERS WHO KILL

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A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE W. ROGER WEBB FORENSIC SCIENCE INSTITUTE

April 2021

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Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor Dr. John Mabry, J.D. for all his help and support while I researched a topic I found truly fascinating and interesting. This entire process has been challenging but rewarding and for that I owe thanks to Dr. John Mabry. My thesis committee, Dr. Wayne Lord and Dr. Jennifer Schmitz, were essential to this research process. I am thankful for their support, guidance, and encouragement throughout the course of this thesis. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Cynthia Murray for her assistance with my data.

I am grateful to be a part of an amazing university, The University of Central Oklahoma and the Forensic Science Institute provided the education, support and experience I was looking for in a master's program. I would also like to give thanks to the entire Forensic Science Institute faculty and staff for all their support and guidance during my master's program experience. They have pushed me to always do better and assisted me to be the best I can be, without all their help, this thesis would not have been possible.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify behavioral characteristics of stalkers who ultimately kill their targets, with the goal of creating a risk factor checklist to help identify current offenders most at risk for escalating to homicide. The study involved case comparisons of stalking-homicide cases from the United States, United Kingdom, and other Western cultures. This study examines twenty cases involving stalkers who killed or attempted to kill their victims. Stalking has evolved considerably with the introduction of new technology, yet the dangers posed by stalkers who ultimately kill their targeted victims, the data was coded, compared and analyzed to create a risk factor checklist to identify those types of offenders most likely to resort to homicide. The data was gathered from public resources and news articles. The study examined, age, race, gender, the type of stalker, the relationship between the stalker and the victim, as well as other factors preceding the death of the victims. Not surprisingly, males were found to be the most dangerous offenders the majority of the time. Of the known typologies of stalkers, only one case of the predatory stalker was found, and no cases of the intimacy seeker were found within the cases examined.

Behavioral Characteristics of Stalkers Who Kill

Introduction

A majority of the population brushes off stalking as a nuisance rather than a crime because it is not well-publicized and rarely newsworthy. Yet, every year thousands of victim's report being stalked. It is difficult to convict an individual of stalking because the act of following a person in public or sitting in a public place is equated more with constitutional rights than threatening behavior. According to the Center for Problem-Oriented Policing, stalking is often not taken seriously by law enforcement because it can involve acts that are perceived as acts of courtship.

Stalking has been recognized as a criminal act since the 1980's, but the risk of violence has caused it to evolve and gain public awareness. Criminal psychologists have recognized and sub-categorized five types of stalkers: the rejected stalker, the intimacy-seeking stalker, the incompetent stalker, the resentful stalker, and the predatory stalker. The classification and categorization of stalking has helped law enforcement agencies identify the red flags of dangerous behaviors found in some stalkers (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006). These offenders most likely know the victim, or become acquainted with them, and some eventually turn their frustrations to homicide upon the victim. The predatory stalker is the most lethal of the five sub-categories of stalkers and are most likely to become homicidal.

Nearly 1 in 6 women have experienced severe and fearful stalking and 1 in 19 men experience the same level of stalking (Department of Justice, 2012). The Bureau of Justice Statistics reports on stalking indicate that 41% of stalking victims reported stalking to the police and approximately 1 in 4 stalking victims complained of cyberstalking through email and instant messaging. Researchers at the University of Gloucestershire in Cheltenham, England studied 358

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cases of criminal homicide and found that 94% of the 358 cases involved an element of stalking of the victim (The Guardian, 2017). According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, stalking has become more concerning and more violent over the last ten years. Most Americans have heard of Rebecca Schaefer, the famous actress killed by her stalker in 1989. Schaefer's stalker, Robert Bardo, began as an intimacy seeking stalker, then became the resentful stalker and finally a predatory stalker. Bardo had stalked Schaffer for three years, Bardo watched the film, *Class Struggle in Beverly Hills*, once he saw the love scene involving Schaffer, Bardo became enraged at Schaffer. Bardo found Schaffer's address through a detective agency, rang Schaffer's doorbell then shot and killed Schaefer and then turned the gun on himself and attempted to kill himself. What red flags about Bardo went unrecognized and made him become lethal? Schaefer's murder raised awareness of stalking in America and how far it can escalate. The Schaefer case begs the question "what makes a stalker kill their victim?" Stalking celebrities stems from the attachment theory, a psychological fixation of public figures (Meloy, Sheridan and Hoffman, 2015).

While stalking is a crime in all fifty states, defining what stalking is has caused considerable debate among lawyers, sociologist, criminologist, and psychologist. Stalking is generally defined as "the intentional, repeated following of a person for the purpose of harassing the person with express or implied threats of violence or death" (Stimmel Law). The legal definition of stalking varies from state to state and varying elements must be met for a set of actions to be considered stalking. California was the first state to criminalize the act of stalking. According to the California Penal Code, Section 646.9: "Stalking and harassment: Willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another and makes credible threat with intent to place another in reasonable fear for own safety or safety of his/her immediate family" (California Penal Code 646.9). Oklahoma Statute Title 21 §1173: Stalking, defines stalking as, "Any person

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who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person in a manner that;

(1) Would cause a reasonable person or a member of the immediate family of that person as defined in subsection F of this section to feel frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested; (2) Actually causes the person being followed or harassed to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested (Oklahoma Statute Title 21 §1173).

What all stalking statutes have in common is that it is very difficult for police and prosecutors to convict offenders whose actions have yet to cross the boundary of arguable constitutionally protected activities.

While statistics on stalkers indicate an alarming trend towards violence and homicide, psychologists, and criminologists struggle with understanding why stalkers turn to violence against their victims.

Problem Statement

The literature on stalkers who kill is focused on determining the behavioral reasons as to why a stalker kills. As stalking has increased and evolved the risk factors of stalkers have become easier to recognize. The exception is for predatory stalkers; this is because predatory stalkers do not usually know their victim or desire a real relationship with them, therefore the victim does not feel afraid or fearful (Robert Muller, 2013). According to current literature, red flags for predatory stalkers are difficult to assess because after the individual kills his victim, they often kill themselves.

Previous research has addressed the history and evolution of stalking and focused primarily on the behavioral characteristics of stalkers, the psychology of stalking, and the legal definition of stalking. The research has identified five subcategories of stalkers - the rejected stalker, the intimacy-seeking stalker, the incompetent stalker, and the resentful stalker and the

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predatory stalker. These five sub-categories are considered well-established as different types of stalkers, but there remains a need for research on behavioral characteristics why stalkers kill.

Research has found that intellectual and educational competency plays a role in each of the subcategorized stalkers (Charles Montaldo, 2019), but research has not conclusively determined the reasons that escalate their stalking activities to violent conclusions. The predatory stalker usually kills his victim then takes his own life; because these individuals end up taking their own lives, behavioral insights into these stalkers state of mind remain untapped.

Stalking is a complex topic as a criminal act because despite a victim report of being harassed and stalked, law enforcement is powerless to intervene because the underlying activities of strolling behind someone in public is not a crime. Incidents of harassment and stalking have grown in numbers over the last five years and has evolved into the technology era (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). Stalking has recently been recognized as a serious crime in the United Kingdom and United States because of alarming case studies and reports.

Research Questions

1. For each of the subcategories of stalkers, do the stalkers within that category share common behavioral characteristics?
2. Are there common behavioral characteristics shared by all stalkers regardless of their subcategory?
3. Is it possible to construct a list of risk factors for stalkers who kill?

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the behavioral characteristics of stalkers with primary emphasis on stalkers who ultimately commit homicide. Specifically, the research examined stalking cases that

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have resulted in death to the target/victim. These cases have occurred in the United States and United Kingdom and sensationalized by the media. Detailed analysis of the common behavioral characteristics and similarities of stalkers was undertaken. These common behavioral characteristics formed the basis of a risk factor checklist to assess those stalkers most likely to kill their targeted victims.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there are unique characteristics of a stalker who becomes lethal which can serve as key warning signs. I utilized a behavioral assessment of a small to medium size sample pool of stalkers to identify these key warning signs. This study identified common behavioral characteristics that signaled behaviors indicative of stalkers who kill. The study examined all five typologies of stalkers and what sets each category apart.

Significance of Study

Stalking has been underestimated as a crime because it is so hard to intervene and convict the individual for the crime of stalking. The television shows have focused on stalking in a Hollywood fashion, but the increase of stalking cases portrayed in the media has led to misconceptions of stalking turned homicide. This research represents a more in-depth analysis of the behavioral characteristics of stalkers who kill. The cases of stalkers who committed homicide were examined for history and trends of stalking in the United States, the United Kingdom as well as other western cultures. This study created a risk factor checklist for evaluating future dangerousness of identified stalkers. By delving into behavioral characteristics of stalkers, we can hopefully identify those behaviors which signal an increased need for alarm. This research focused on the demographics of male stalkers but did not exclude research on female stalkers as well.

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Limitations of Study

This study will be an exploratory study of past stalking cases. The study is expected to have unavoidable limitations. The sample size is undeniably limited within the study regarding predatory stalkers. The sample size is approximately twenty to thirty cases involving stalkers who eventually killed their victim. A small sample size will make it difficult to evaluate certain existential circumstances and variables within the study. Research on a larger sample size of known stalkers would improve the understanding and assist in a better understanding of behavioral characteristics of stalkers who become lethal. Every attempt will be made to create as large a sample size as possible.

Review of the Literature

The History of Stalking

Stalking became a psychological phenomenon early as the 1950's according to the National Institute of Justice research report *Domestic Violence, Stalking and Anti-stalking Legislation* when it was recognized as a social problem and safety issue. The definitions of stalking vary from the perspectives of law, sociology, criminology, and psychology. In the twentieth century, psychologists referred to stalking as erotomania; it described the delusion of being loved by someone, often a prominent or even famous person. According to the 2016 article, *Why Definitions Matter: Stalking Victimization in the United States* by Jennifer Owens, "Stalking is difficult to define, and there is little consensus among researchers, legislators, practitioners, and even the public on what constitutes stalking" (Owens, 2016). The most generic definition of stalking is, "a course of conduct directed at a specific person that involves repeated (two or more occasions) visual or physical proximity, nonconsensual communication, or verbal,

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written, or implied threats, or a combination thereof, that would cause a reasonable person fear.”

The exact definition of stalking has yet to be confirmed but, according to the 2003 article, *Stalking: Knowns and Unknowns* by Lorraine Sheridan, Eric Blaauw and Graham Davies found a general consensus of stalking among the fifty states and the District of Columbia, “In the United States, most legislation depicts stalking as an intentional pattern of repeated or unwanted pursuit that a “reasonable person” would consider threatening or fear inducing” (Sheridan, Blaauw, and Davies, 2003). By the early twenty-first century stalking became recognized as a criminal act, therefore was statutorily criminalized. Similar policies were accepted by other countries.

Star Stalking

By the early 1990’s several incidents of stalking of celebrities by fans occurred and the reporters who covered these incidents coined the term “star stalking,” When stalking first became prominent, the emphasis was on cases in which the target was a celebrity. According to the 2006 article, *The Development and Validation of an Indirect Measure of Celebrity Stalking* by, Lynn McCutcheon, Mara Aruguete, et al., “The tendency to stalk celebrities has not been thoroughly examined. Since most stalkers personally know their victims and might even have been intimate with them at some point.” (North American Journal of Psychology, 2006).

Celebrity stalking is rare because there is little to no contact between the stalker and the victim.

Celebrity stalking is similar to other subcategories of stalking. According to the 2006 article, *Celebrity Stalking, Homicide, and Suicide* by Louis Schlesinger,

“Celebrity stalkers are similar to non-celebrity stalkers in an important way: Only a small number become violent and even fewer kill. And because the number of individuals who do act out in an aggressive way is so small, little research has been carried out on these groups of offenders.” (Schlesinger, 2006).

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Celebrity stalking is often non-violent due to the infatuation of their victim and the thrill of the hunt. Again, this serves as an example in 1989 the killing of actress and model Rebecca Schaffer by an obsessive fan, Robert Bardo. According to Schlesinger's article, Bardo obsessed over Schaffer, "after Schaefer appeared in a movie that included a bedroom scene, Bardo became incensed. He eventually located her residence, rang the doorbell, and shot and killed her" (Schlesinger, 2006).

Stalking typically occurs between people who have various relationships such as co-workers, ex-boyfriends/girlfriends, or ex-husbands/wives. Therefore, it is often unlikely that celebrity harassment and stalking escalates to an extreme level that results in homicide due to the lack of personal contact or a relationship with the individual. It is also difficult for a stalker to know their celebrity victim because most celebrities also hire bodyguards and security measures to protect them, and live in places where it is well protected, which prevents the personal contact between the stalker and the victim.

The Psychoanalysis of Stalking

The criminological attachment theory can explain why someone stalks another individual. According to the 2010 article, *Look Who's Stalking: Obsession Pursuit and Attachment Theory* by Christina Patton, Matt Nobles, and Kathleen Fox, "Attachment theory describes the ways in which an individual with a chaotic family environment in childhood may develop feelings of insecurity that may lead to increased aggression and violent behavior in adolescence and adulthood." (Patton, Nobles, and Fox, 2010). These psychological factors contribute to the motives behind stalking. The criminological attachment theory is only one theory to explain the bulk of why an individual leads a life that results in stalking.

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There are numerous psychological and clinical motivations for stalking. According to the 2012 article, *Stalking: Patterns, Motives and Intervention Strategies* by Laurence Miller, “Motivations for stalking include a delusional belief in romantic destiny, a desire to reclaim a prior relationship, a sadistic urge to torment the victim, or a psychotic over-identification with the victim and the desire to replace him or her.” (Miller, 2012). Stalking patterns and mechanisms vary but behind the motivations of stalking are the psychological diagnostic factors of stalking. According to the 2012 article, *Stalking: Patterns, Motives and Intervention Strategies* by Laurence Miller,

“stalkers who pursue strangers, including casual acquaintances or celebrities, tend more often to be characterized by a mood disorder, delusional disorder, or outright psychotic disorder. Stalkers of prior intimates are more likely to be nonpsychotic, but to have narcissistic, borderline, paranoid, or compulsive personality disorders, along with substance abuse problems, mainly involving alcohol and psychostimulant drugs such as cocaine and amphetamines.” (Miller, 2012).

Each subcategory of stalkers has different diagnostic traits that influence an individual to stalk. The predatory stalker has violent tendencies with the motive of power and control. Predatory stalking is rare and less little research regarding why they obsess, prey, and fixate on their victim only to cause harm to them.

Most stalkers have a former strain on their life that influence their morbid infatuations amongst other individuals. According to the 2011 article, *Are stalkers Disordered or Criminal? Thoughts on the Psychopathy of Stalking* by Harald Dressing, Kalus Foerster and Peter Gass,

“Morbid infatuations are characterized by: (1) an intense infatuation without the need for any accompanying conviction that the affection is currently reciprocated; (2) the object of

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the infatuation either doing nothing to encourage the feelings, or clearly and repeatedly rejecting any continuing interest or concern; (3) the infatuation preoccupying the patient to the exclusion of other interests, resulting in serious disruption of their lives; (4) the subject insisting on the legitimacy and possible success of the quest; (5) a persistent pursuit of the object of affection, often with gradually escalating intrusiveness; (6) significant distress and disturbance, usually occasioned to the object of infatuation” (Dressing, Foerster, and Gass, 2011).

These characteristics can cause a social strain on an individual leading them to the criminal behavior of stalking and a subconscious desire to have power and control over their victim, this can result in causing or inflicting pain on them.

Subcategories of Stalking

Five types of stalkers have been recognized: the rejected stalker, the intimacy seeking stalker, the incompetent stalker, the resentful stalker, and the predatory stalker. The classification and categorization of stalking is useful for law enforcement agencies to identify the red flags of behaviors found in stalkers. (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006)

The Rejected Stalker

The *Rejected Stalker* develops their disturbed behavior from rejection or unrequited love. According to the 2006 article, *Stalking* by Roberto Mester, Moshe Birger and Jacob Margolin, “This behavior could lead to acts of violence. Stalkers in this category are, on the whole, people suffering from severe personality disturbances characterized by a tendency towards dependence, suspiciousness and exaggerated narcissism. Most of them do not have psychotic symptoms” (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006). Rejected stalking arises in the context of the breakdown of

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a close relationship. Victims are usually former sexual intimates; however, family members, close friends, or others with a very close relationship to the stalker can also become targets of rejected stalking. Rejected stalkers exhibit possessive, controlling and abusive traits, similar to rapists, they have the need and desire to be in control of their victim.

The Intimacy Seekers

Intimacy Seekers desire developing a relationship and craving love. According to the 2006 article, *Stalking* by Roberto Mester, Moshe Birger, and Jacob Margolin,

“this category comprises people interested in developing relationships of love, the object of this love being the victim. Most stalkers in this group are loners and the victim is usually a celebrity or a stranger. In most cases people belonging to this category of stalkers suffer from severe psychiatric disorders. Some of them have delusions such as erotomania or unnatural infatuations.” (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006).

Intimacy Seeking stalking arises out of a context of loneliness and a lack of a close confidante. Victims are usually strangers or acquaintances who become the target of the stalker’s desire for a relationship. *Intimacy Seeking* stalkers typically exhibit a mental illness regarding delusional beliefs about the victim. These delusions about the victim can be explained through the social bond theory.

The Incompetent

The Incompetent stalkers struggle socially in groups and around people. According to the 2006 article, *Stalking* by Roberto Mester, Moshe Birger, and Jacob Margolin,

“This category comprises people with limited or undeveloped social skills, who find it difficult to comprehend the victim's rejection of their romantic overtures and instead

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interpret them as indicating a willingness to continue the relationship. People in this category do not have a serious mental disorder (such as psychosis or mood disorders) but are intellectually or socially vulnerable or have a narcissistic personality.” (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006).

The Incompetent stalks in the context of feeling alone or lust and typically fixate on strangers or acquaintances. Unlike the Intimacy Seeker, their initial motivation is not to establish a loving relationship, but to get a date or a short term sexual relationship with the victim. The contributing factor of known limitations and poor social skills can lead to a conclusion of an intellectual disability.

The Resentful

Resentful stalkers are angry, hurt, and desire revenge amongst their victim. According to the 2006 article, *Stalking* by Roberto Mester, Moshe Birger, and Jacob Margolin,

“this person stalks in order to get revenge on his victim because he feels hurt or degraded by him. This type of stalker chooses his victim from among people with whom he is acquainted and with whom he is in contact, e.g., people in the medical profession, lawyers, or people from whom he buys goods or services. From the diagnostic point of view, while some of these stalkers demonstrate psychiatric symptoms of the paranoid type, the majority are people with personalities that have paranoid traits.” (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006).

Resentful stalking occurs when the stalker feels as though they have been mistreated or that they are the victim of some form of injustice or humiliation. Victims are strangers or acquaintances who are seen to have mistreated the stalker. Resentful stalkers see and present themselves as the

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victim who is justified in using stalking to fight back against an oppressing person or organization.

The Predator

The Predatory stalker is a small group, with frequent violent and sexually abusive tendencies. According to the 2006 article, *Stalking* by Roberto Mester, Moshe Birger, and Jacob Margolin,

“the main and primary aim of this type of stalker is to assault the victim, usually sexually. These stalkers derive enjoyment from the feeling of power and control over the victim that the stalking provides. Some of these people suffer from paraphilia including sexual sadism. From the diagnostic point of view most suffer from personality disorders and choose their victims from among people not previously known to them.” (Mester, Birger and Margolin, 2006).

Predatory stalking occurs in the context of deviant sexual practices and interests. Perpetrators are usually male, and the victims are usually female strangers in whom the stalker develops a sexual interest. The stalking behavior is usually initiated as a way of obtaining sexual gratification. Out of the five subcategories, the one with the least amount of research is the predatory stalker because it is rare for a stalker to kill. Predatory stalking gratifying because they enjoy the sense of power and control that comes from targeting the unsuspecting victim. This sense of power and control mirrors the behavior characteristics of the serial killer typology of the power control serial killer, according to the 2006 article by Wade Myers, David Husted, Mark Safarik and Mary Ellen O’Toole, *The Motivation Behind Serial Sexual Homicide: Is it Sex, Power, and Control, or Anger?* defines the power control serial killer as,

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“Neither the original Krafft-Ebing definition nor the DSM criteria mention power and control or anger as elements of sexual sadism. Instead, these definitions speak to the sexually exciting qualities inherent in cruelty and the suffering of others. Likewise, the Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines sadism as, “A sexual perversion in which gratification is obtained by the infliction of physical or mental pain on others.”

Predatory stalkers are cunning, the perpetrators take their time to observe analyze their victim. *The Predatory* stalker observes the vulnerabilities of their victim and using those vulnerabilities to their advantage to seek immediate sexual gratification, with no regard to the pain inflicted amongst their victim.

Male verses Female Stalkers

When picturing a stalker, most imagine a man with sunglasses hiding behind corners. Contrary to popular belief, females stalk as well. Female stalking and criminality are rarely studied and often not understood. Most women who stalk have no history of criminal activity or substance abuse as compared to male stalkers. According to the 2008 article, *These Boots are Made for Stalking: Characteristics of Female Stalkers* by Sara West and Susan Friedman, “A great majority of the victims of female stalkers were known to them, either as acquaintances, former lovers, or family members. However, one-fifth of the victims were completely unknown to their stalkers” (West and Friedman, 2008). Although males are known to be the majority of stalkers, women carry similar behavior and mental illness traits as male stalkers do. Amongst demographic and clinical psychology research, women are found to have similar traits to male stalkers but have different demographics and personal history. According to research, female stalkers have a more intelligent and cunning approach to stalking compared to male stalkers.

Demographics

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In 2008, research was conducted on eighty-two female stalkers found in the United States, Canada, and Australia. According to the 2008 research by Sara West and Susan Friedman,

“Typically, the perpetrators were Caucasian, heterosexual, single women with a mean age of 35 (ranging from 18–58 years old). Often, these women did not have children. They appeared to be educated, with a large majority having graduated from high school and a solid minority having achieved a college or graduate degree.”

(West and Friedman, 2008)

The intelligence of these women enabled them to be more successful in the pursuit of their victims. Substance abuse by female stalkers was not common but, according to the 2008 article by Sara West and Susan Friedman,

“Reports of substance abuse were not common, but about one-third of women used substances while stalking. Available data suggested the presence of Axis I and II disorders. Twenty percent of those with Axis I disorders were diagnosed with delusional disorder. The most common Axis II diagnosis was borderline personality disorder”

(West and Friedman, 2008).

Many women who participated in this study were found to be victims of sexual and physical assault which resulted in their motives for stalking. Common motives for female stalkers include anger, obsession, feelings of abandonment, loneliness, and dependency. Just like male stalkers, females harbor the desire to have power and control over their victims as well.

Violence Among Female Stalkers

Violence amongst female stalkers seems rare but according to West and Friedman’s research, more than half of the women expressly threatened their victim and twenty-five percent

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were physically violent with their victim (West and Friedman, 2008). Rarely did these violent acts or threats involve a weapon nor did they result in injuries. According to Sara West and Susan Friedman 2008 article, “Violence was more likely if the stalker and the victim had been previously sexually intimate. In more than half the cases, the behavior increased in frequency and intensity. The perpetrators pursued their victims for an average of 22 months” (West and Friedman, 2008). Contrary to West and Friedman’s research, research was conducted on convicted female stalkers, *Female Stalkers and Their Victims*, by J. Reid Meloy and Cynthia Boyd in 2003,

“The female stalkers had contact with their victims daily (n=37, 52%), weekly (n=24, 34%), or monthly (n=10, 14%). The duration of stalking lasted less than 1 year in 23 (32%) cases; from 1 to 5 years in 38 (54%) cases; from 6 to 10 years in 9 (13%) cases; and more than a decade in 1 case.” (Meloy and Boyd, 2003)

This research concludes that female stalkers tend to observe their victims for longer periods of time, typically they are more patient and educated than male stalkers. Male stalkers are more common than female stalkers, but female stalkers are more existent than popular belief.

Predatory Stalking

Predatory stalkers are mostly male; predatory stalkers are prepared and violent towards their victims. According to the 2007 article found in Current Psychiatry journal, *Stalking Intervention: Know the 5 Stalker Types, Safety Strategies for Victims* by James Knoll and Phillip Resnick, “They stalk to discover the victim’s vulnerabilities and seldom give warnings, so the victim is often unaware of the danger. Predatory stalkers frequently suffer from paraphilias and have prior convictions for sexual offenses” (Knoll and Resnick, 2007). Predatory stalkers contain

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several traits, such as, preparing for a sexual attack, stalks to study and observe their victim's weaknesses, paraphilias, prior sexual offenses and no warnings prior to the attack.

There is little research on predatory stalking. According to the 2003 article, *When Stalkers Become Violent: The Threat to Public Figures and Private Lives* by Reid Meloy, "The data on violence during the stalking of private figures, most of whom are prior sexual intimates, describe assaults without a weapon that do not result in serious physical injury" (Meloy, 2003). Predatory stalkers are clever; they stalk their prey to observe, analyze, and understand their weaknesses and vulnerabilities, then use it to their advantage. This subgroup of stalkers is violent and plan their attack in advance and their main interest is sexually attacking their victims. In predatory stalking, typically the victim is unaware of this obsessional pursuit and fixation, therefore they do not feel scared or threatened. According to the 2016 article, *Interpreting John Fowles' The Collector: A Case Study in Predatory Stalking*" by Afra Alshiban, the case study of Fredrick Clegg is a classic example of predatory stalking.

"Clegg, a classic example of the predatory stalker, is unknown to the target. He stalks his victim for two years before kidnapping her. Furthermore, like the predatory stalker, the motivation behind his obsessive pursuit is to gain power and control over his victim. By monitoring his prey, he assumes a position of authority that enables him to devise a plan to attack her, capture her, and drive her off in his van to his remote cottage" (Alshiban, 2016).

Clegg was a predatory stalker that desired power and control over his victims. The traits of the type of women Clegg became infatuated with and stalked stemmed from his childhood and the women in his life he knew as 'bad.' At an early age, his mother abandoned him, and his aunt made it her goal to shield him from the outside world. By being shielded from the outside world

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Clegg became a classic case example of the general strain theory developed by Robert Agnew; the criminologist explain the general strain theory stemming from three categories, failure to achieve positive valued goals, the presentation of negative stimuli and removal of positive valued stimuli, from these three categories it leads to strain and frustration, following anger and other negative emotions which leads to the lack of legal coping mechanisms then ultimately results in criminal behavior. (George Higgins, Nicole Piquero and Alex Piquero, 2010). Clegg was removed of positive valued stimuli which caused strain and frustration leading to negative emotions and lack of coping mechanisms, which ultimately resulted in criminal behavior. When Clegg went on his search for women, he looked for innocent, grace-like women. According to Alshiban's 2016 article, Clegg usually held his victims' captive and controlled them by making them into the perfect housewife or mother figure. According to Afra Alshiban's 2016 article, "Among the different stalker subtypes listed by the experts is the predatory stalker, whose primary motive is power and control" (Alshiban, 2016). Predatory stalkers exhibit several diagnosed psychological disorders that vary amongst each individual who stalks. According to Afra Alshiban's 2016 article, "This group of stalkers has a "high frequency of paraphilias," mainly fetishism and voyeurism. Clegg displayed paraphilic sexual interests such as pornography, voyeurism, and hair fetishism" (Alshiban, 2016).

Case Studies

There have been several cases of stalking resulting in homicide; the question is 'why' after the effort and observation of their victim, do they end up killing their victim? Case studies and reports help us to process the perspectives on stalking and the extremes to satisfy their personal needs that individuals will go to.

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According to the 2006 article, *Celebrity, Stalking, Homicide, and Suicide* by Louis Schlesinger, “The trigger for the homicide was when A. A. discovered that B. B. had left her long- time boyfriend and had quickly become romantically involved in an interracial relationship with another musician, a relationship A. A. considered unacceptable.” (Schlesinger, 2006). According to Schlesinger’s article the stalker (A.A) had been fixated and obsessed with the rock star. After two years A.A. had plans on creating a bomb of some type to injure or kill his victim (B.B) because he was unaccepting of someone else having her. This follows the intimacy seeker, the incompetent, and the resentful typology of stalking. A.A. expected the bomb to kill his victim while he committed suicide but before the bomb was opened the FBI intervened and no one was injured.

Similar stalking and homicide cases have occurred in the workplace. According to the 2007 article, *A Case of Stalking in the Workplace and Subsequent Sexual Homicide* by Kimberley Morrison,

“Following several months of stalking a 38-year-old female, the male subject went to the woman's office after business hours and restrained, raped, and murdered her. The cause of death was multiple stab wounds. The facts of the case reveal that the subject fits a predatory-type stalker” (Morrison, 2007).

This male (Mr. D) had worked in the same building as his victim (Ms. P). Mr. D exhibited predatory type stalking, since Mr. D and Ms. P worked in different departments, he did not know his victim personally. Mr. D only saw Ms. P when he was cleaning the floors over the weekend. Mr. D was in no way threatening while observing his victim during work in the months prior to her death.

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A case report about acquaintances were reported as well, according to the 2002 article, *Stalking, Homicide, and Catathymic Process: A Case Study*,

“A 28-year-old male (A. B.) stabbed and killed a 23-year-old female (C.) whom he had been stalking for just less than a year. On the day of the homicide, A. B. approached the victim, who quickly ran away as soon as she noticed that he had a knife. But A. B. caught up with her and stabbed her in the back. She then ran into a neighbor’s house, collapsed, and was found lying dead, face down on the floor. The homicide occurred in front of C.’s boyfriend, several of his family members, and some neighbors. A. B. immediately ran across the street and stabbed himself multiple times in the abdomen and the neck area” (Schlesinger, 2002).

According to Schlesinger’s article A.B was infatuated with C. and fantasized about her. A.B. and C. met at church, A.B. learned C. had a boyfriend that day at church but assumed it was not serious and soon after began following and stalking C. A.B obsessed over C. and said that “I was supposed to be her boyfriend.” A.B. called C. at least three to five times a week to ask her on a date. After reoccurring rejection from C. A.B. began writing letters to her. This behavior and thought process follows the intimacy seeker and predatory typology of stalking.

There has been a case report regarding past intimate partners According to the 2018 HMICFRS article, *Harassment and Stalking Case Studies* addresses past intimate partners,

“Sally was in an abusive relationship for 13 years. When she left her partner, he continued to control her through access to their child. Sally decided to cut all contact with her ex-partner when she was diagnosed with a stress-related health condition. The decision to cut all contact triggered an escalation in her ex-partner’s harassment, with around 60 emails and 20 text messages a day” (HMICFRS 2018).

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Sally filed a police report and informed her ex-partner with a warning, but this only made matters worse for Sally. According to HMCIFRS article, “Her ex-partner’s behavior became more insidious, with items being left at her property, which made Sally fearful as she knew he had been to her home address. The situation escalated when Sally’s car was damaged” (HMCIFRS, 2018). After this Sally witnessed her ex-partner returning to her address and damaging her car. The police arrested and charged him with harassment, and the court issued him with a restraining order not to contact Sally and not to go to her street. The behavior of Sally’s ex-partner showed signs of the rejected and resentful stalker typology.

Conclusion

The current body of literature indicates that there has been extensive research on the history of stalking, types of stalking, the psychoanalysis behind stalking, gender differences of stalking and case reports of stalking. The exact elements of criminal stalking vary among all fifty states and signals as a gap in the research. There has been little research conducted and found on predatory stalkers and what ultimately drives them to kill their victims. Research has found that most stalkers are non-violent, but for those who escalate, the result is typically a violent confrontation with a sexual component.

Deficiencies in the Literature

The research of stalking, in particular stalkers who kill is bereft and should be expanded. The existing research on predatory stalkers is limited and places more focus on the actions that occurred prior to the crime being committed and not on the behavioral clues predictive of more violent behavior. The focus of my research is to filling-in the gaps regarding the escalation of stalkers to violence. This study will analyze the individual stalker and their actions prior to

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committing homicide. The research will compare the five different sub-categories of stalkers.

The motivation, behavioral characteristics, and disabilities will be compared to look for similarities and differences, and risk factors that point towards future violent acts.

Stalker Classifications

Stalkers demonstrate behavior that is obsessive and occasionally narcissistic. Stalking another individual becomes the offender's obsession and desire but their actions also cause psychological and physical trauma. According to Paul Mullen in 1990 he identified five types of stalkers (1999, August 1):

1. The Rejected
2. The Intimacy Seeker
3. The Incompetent Suitor
4. The Resentful
5. The Predator

Defining the Typologies

The Rejected, associated with stalking is "An individual who has experienced the unwanted end of a close relationship. When this stalker's attempts to reconcile fail, they frequently seek revenge" (Mullen, 1999). The rejected stalker has difficulty accepting that a relationship has come to an end, whether it be a friendship or relationship. The rejected stalker believes that the only way to resolve their anger and pain from the rejection is to bring equal amount of pain among the one that rejected them. Rejected stalking arises in the context of the breakdown of a close relationship, the victims are usually former sexual intimate partners. Rejected stalkers exhibit possessive, controlling and abusive traits, similar to rapists, they have

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the need and desire to be in control of their victim. Rejected stalkers also feel that their actions towards their victim makes them close again. Among this type of stalker, it was found to the rejected stalker predominantly had personality disorders (Mullen, Pathe, Purcell, and Stuart, 1999).

While Mullen is correct that the rejected stalker arises out of the unwanted end of a relationship, Robert Mester states, “This behavior could lead to acts of violence. Stalkers in this category are, on the whole, people suffering from severe personality disturbances characterized by a tendency towards dependence, suspiciousness and exaggerated narcissism. Most of them do not have psychotic symptoms” (Mester, Birger, Margolin, 2006). By comparing the two points of view, the rejected stalker can be one of the most violent types of the stalkers.

The Intimacy Seeker according to Mullen, “Identifies a person, often a complete stranger, as their true love and begins to behave as if they are in a relationship with that person. Many intimacy seeking stalkers carry the delusion that their love is reciprocated” (Mullen, 1999). Intimacy Seeker stalkers typically occur due to their loneliness and lack of close friends of family. While the victims are usually strangers, they can also be acquaintances. Within this category of stalkers, delusional disorders are most prominent in the stalker.

Mullen is correct as to the intimacy seeker is someone who is lonely and has a lack of close friends, Mester found that “this category comprises people interested in developing a relationship of love” (Mester, Birger Margolin, 2006). Victims by these types of stalkers are usually strangers or celebrities, they believe that their love for their victim is reciprocated. According to Mester intimacy seekers usually exhibit signs of mental illness regarding delusions about their victim.

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The Incompetent Suitor according to Mullen, “The incompetent Stalker hopes their behavior would lead to a close relationship, satisfying their need for contact and intimacy. However, this type of stalker acknowledges that their victim is not reciprocating their affection while they still continue their pursuit” (Mullen, 1999). These type of stalkers have been viewed as intellectually limited and socially awkward, therefore concluding to have some type of intellectual disorder. This type of stalker arises from desiring a close relationship but unlike the intimacy seeker stalker, they know that the victim’s feelings are not reciprocated but believe if they continue their actions towards the victim that a relationship would form.

Mester argues that these types of stalkers find it difficult to accept the rejection of their romantic gestures towards their victim, the incompetent suitor stalks out of feeling alone or lust, their victim is usually a stranger but unlike the intimacy seeker, they do not want a long-term loving relationship, but to get a date or start a short-term sexual relationship. This type of stalker can lead to the conclusion that they have poor social skills and the possibility of an intellectual disorder. (Mester, Birger, and Margolin, 2006)

The Resentful stalker according to Mullen, “Resentful stalker experiences feelings of injustice and desires revenge against their victim rather than a relationship. Their behavior reflects their perception that they have been humiliated and treated unfairly, viewing themselves as the victim” (Mullen, 1999). Victims of this type of stalker could be a stranger, acquaintance, or former intimate partner, who are seen to have mistreated the stalker. Resentful stalkers present themselves as the victim who is justified in using stalking to fight back against an oppressing person.

While resentful stalkers feel an injustice has been done to them, resentful stalkers are angry, hurt, and desire revenge. According to Mester, this victim stalks in order to get revenge on

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his victim because he feels degraded by them. Victims of these types of stalkers are usually acquaintances or those whom the individual buys food or services from. A majority of these types of stalker exhibit paranoid personality traits (Mester, Birger, and Margolin, 2006).

The Predatory stalker according to Mullen, “Has no desire for a relationship with their victims, but what they crave is a sense of power and control.” This type of stalker finds pleasure in gathering information about their victim and fantasizing about assaulting them physically, and most frequently sexually” (Mullen, 1999). This stalker is the most dangerous, the victims are usually strangers and are unaware that they are being stalked. This stalker arises from deviant sexual practices. Predatory stalkers are cunning, the perpetrators take their time to observe analyze their victim and use their vulnerabilities against their victim with no regard for the pain that is inflicted upon them. The predatory stalker desires power and control, much like a power and control type serial killer does and may result in death for the victim and the stalker.

Case Examples of Stalker Typologies

The Mary Griffiths and John McFarlane Case- The Rejected Stalker

In 2009, John McFarlane, 40, was stalking a harassing his co-worker Mary Griffiths, 38. McFarlane was calling and texting Griffiths repeatedly, but Griffiths rejected his advances and became furious when Griffiths posted on social media that he was “delusional” if he thought they would ever have a relationship. After that post, threatening text messages increased daily. Griffiths notified the Bury St. Edmonds, England police but had minor involvement with her case. McFarlane was receiving psychiatric help but according to his doctors they believed he was not a threat to society, but in May of 2009, McFarlane used an axe to breakthrough Griffiths back door, dragged her from her bed, began to beat her and tried to strangle her but Griffiths

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escaped out to her front yard where McFarlane shot her with a bolt gun in front of her three children, 9, 10, and 13. McFarlane was found in the garden of the house with his wrists slit and bleeding heavily. McFarlane survived the suicide attempt and was sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The Case of Priyadarshini Mattoo and Santosh Singh - The Incompetent Suitor

In 1995, Priyadarshini Mattoo, 25, was being stalked by a fellow classmate, Santosh Singh in New Delhi, India. Mattoo notified the police of being followed and threatened in public by Singh for nearly a year. Mattoo was given a security detail but there was minor involvement to stop Singh. On January 23rd, 1996 Mattoo was raped, beaten with a motorcycle helmet 14 times and then strangled with a telephone cord. Singh surrendered and was acquitted of all charges until 2006 when he was given the death sentence which was later commuted to life in prison.

The Case of Lauren McCluskey and Melvin Rowland - The Resentful Stalker

October 9th, 2018, Lauren McCluskey, 21, a University of Utah track star began being stalked by her ex-boyfriend, Melvin Rowland, 37, after McCluskey found out that Rowland lied about his name, age, and that he was a registered sex-offender. Rowland began to call and send text messages to McCluskey several times a day, Rowland also began to harass and extort McCluskey for money. McCluskey and her parents notified campus police and the Salt Lake City Police Department but according to both campus police and SLCPD there was little they could do. On the evening of October 22nd, 2018 McCluskey was on the phone with her mother when Rowland dragged McCluskey to her car and then shot her several times resulting in death.

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Rowland drove McCluskey's car back to campus but once he was reported to be seen on campus by another student he ran on foot where he later killed himself.

The Case of Theresa Saldana and Arthur Jackson - The Predatory Stalker

In December of 1980 Arthur Jackson, 46, saw Martin Scorsese's boxing biopic *Raging Bull*, which stars the Famous Actress, Theresa Saldana. After viewing this film Jackson was determined to find Saldana and kill her. Jackson was confirmed to have chronic Schizophrenia and psychotic tendencies; Jackson believed he was the "benevolent angel of death." Jackson began to write letters to Saldana as well as contacting her family. A frightening letter from Jackson stood out to Saldana and she spoke to the police regarding it, but they believed it was some type of fan and no further action was taken. In March of 1982, Jackson found Saldana's address in West Hollywood, California through a private investigator. On March 15th, 1982, Jackson waited outside of Saldana's apartment for her to come home and then stabbed her 10 times, Jackson was stopped by a delivery man walking by the assault.

Who Commits Stalking?

Each year at least 3.4 million people are stalked in the United states but only approximately half of the victims report their stalker to the police. Stalking crimes can be committed by any individual, but this study focuses on the cases where the stalker becomes lethal and kills their victim and behavioral characteristics shared among the offenders. The offenders are usually male with age ranging from 18-50 and are former intimate partners but this does not exclude fellow classmates, acquaintances, fans, or co-workers.

Stalking Charges in Oklahoma

The Oklahoma state law on stalking is defined as “any person who willfully, maliciously, and repeatedly follows or harasses another person in a manner that would cause a reasonable person or a member of the immediate family of that person to feel frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested; and actually causes the person being followed or harassed to feel terrorized, frightened, intimidated, threatened, harassed, or molested.” Stalking is initially considered a misdemeanor in the state of Oklahoma with punishments including one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine. Upon parole or probation and any violation involving stalking could result in becoming a felony, where the consequences include five years in prison, with a \$2,500 fine.

Methods

This study used a qualitative approach to better understand the psychological factors of stalking. The qualitative methodology will assist in gaining insight into the criminal behavior of stalkers and what motivates them to begin stalking and eventually kill their targets. This type of research will identify and clarify the behavioral characteristics that are commonly associated with stalking. The qualitative study will help assist law enforcement recognize red flags and risk factors of stalkers. It may also assist in the intervention of potential offenders prior to committing the act of stalking and provide needed help. This intervention will hopefully serve as a preventative measure, as it is difficult to arrest and convict many offenders for the simple acts of underlying stalking.

Sample/Participants

This study utilized cases of individuals who have stalked and killed their victims, as well as go in-depth by researching that individual’s unique behaviors. The case studies will serve to

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help understand the complex issue of stalking. The participants were not selected at random because of the qualitative nature of this study and the limited case studies. The sample consisted of twenty-one cases of stalking occurring primarily in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, and other western cultures. These cases were chosen because they met the standards where stalking resulted in murder. Cases of domestic violence and child abductions were not used in this study; this study focused on adults who stalked their victim over a period of time and killed them. The purpose was to identify, compare and contrast the motivational and behavioral characteristics associated with the stalker a stalker who killed. Data was collected and coded for each of the cases and then compared utilizing the analysis program 1B SPSS Statistics. Each stalking case includes a brief overview detailing the timeline for each case and specific behaviors preceding the stalker killing his victim.

Data Collection and Procedures

The data was obtained from public sources. This includes library materials, news media, publicly accessible databases. This study was approved by the University of Central Oklahoma Institutional Review Board (IRB) on August 15th, 2020. The information was analyzed for details pertaining to common behaviors among the subcategories of stalkers. I used public news articles and resources, then used my offender coding form to determine the characteristics of each case and characteristics. Information was also obtained by gaining access to scholarly databases on the topic of stalkers who kill. The primary focus in this study was on offender characteristics.

Offender Characteristics

1. Offender ID (Name or Number)
2. Age
3. Offender Race

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4. Gender
5. Type of Stalker
6. Relation of Offender to Victim
7. Offender Behavior or Modus Operandi
8. Victim Response
9. Police Involvement
10. Post-Offense Behavior Following the Attack
11. Individuals Involved in the Stalking
12. Offender Mental Illness
13. Duration of Stalking
14. Method of Attack
15. Collateral Victims
16. Type of Stalking Killing
17. Overkill

Attempts were made to account for any missing information on the offenders by utilizing additional references that contained relevant information. All data was thoroughly examined and compared to determine the common characteristics between the offenders. Behavioral characteristics was the primary focus for this study. All variables related to each stalker case that resulted in death was coded using the form included in Appendix A. Of the twenty cases examined, there was no resentful stalker cases and only one predatory stalker case.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed to determine if there were any common behaviors among the stalker typologies. The most common type of stalkers I found was the resentful, rejected, and

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incompetent suitor. Among these three types of stalkers, they had the most common behavioral characteristics.

The information found was researched and were inputted into IBM SPSS Statistics, a statistical programming software. The software was utilized using coded variables to look for common characteristics among the five type of stalkers. All data was thoroughly examined and coded by the researcher to determine if there was any common characteristics of stalkers who kill.

Results

Overview of Offender Characteristics

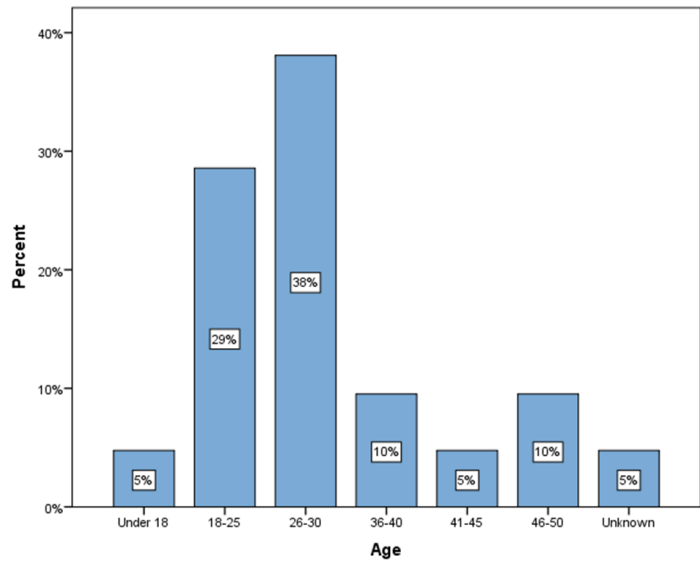
Age

The study consisted of twenty cases where the stalker eventually killed or attempted to kill their victims. In one instance the victim survived ten stab wounds, but the intent was to kill. The interval with the highest frequency was 26-30 years (8/21, 38%), 34% with age less than 26, and 25% with age greater than 30. There were 87% between the ages 18-30 whereas in the U.S. this same interval accounts for only 17%, there was 0% for ages 31-35 and ages 51+.

The majority of the stalkers were between the ages of 26-30, this is similar to serial killers who blossom. According to Vronsky's 2004 novel, *Serial Killers: The Method and Madness of Monsters*, he deduced that serial killers generally develop the personality and compulsion befitting a killer when they are young — by the time they are 14, they are basically fully formed, and they generally start killing in their late twenties (Vronsky, 2004).

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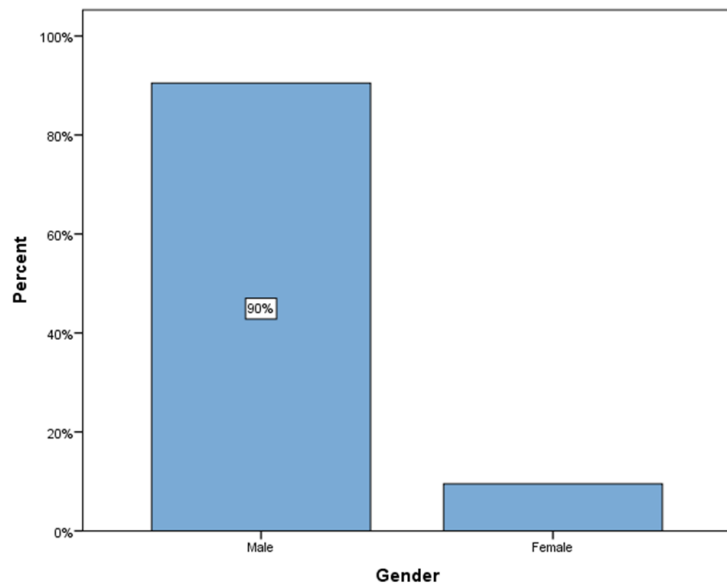
Figure 1 Offender Age



Gender

Males accounted for eighteen (90%) of the stalking cases found, whereas females accounted for two (10%) of the stalking cases. In the cases found where females stalked it was found that they stalked for over a year which compared to males the average duration of stalking was between 2-6 months.

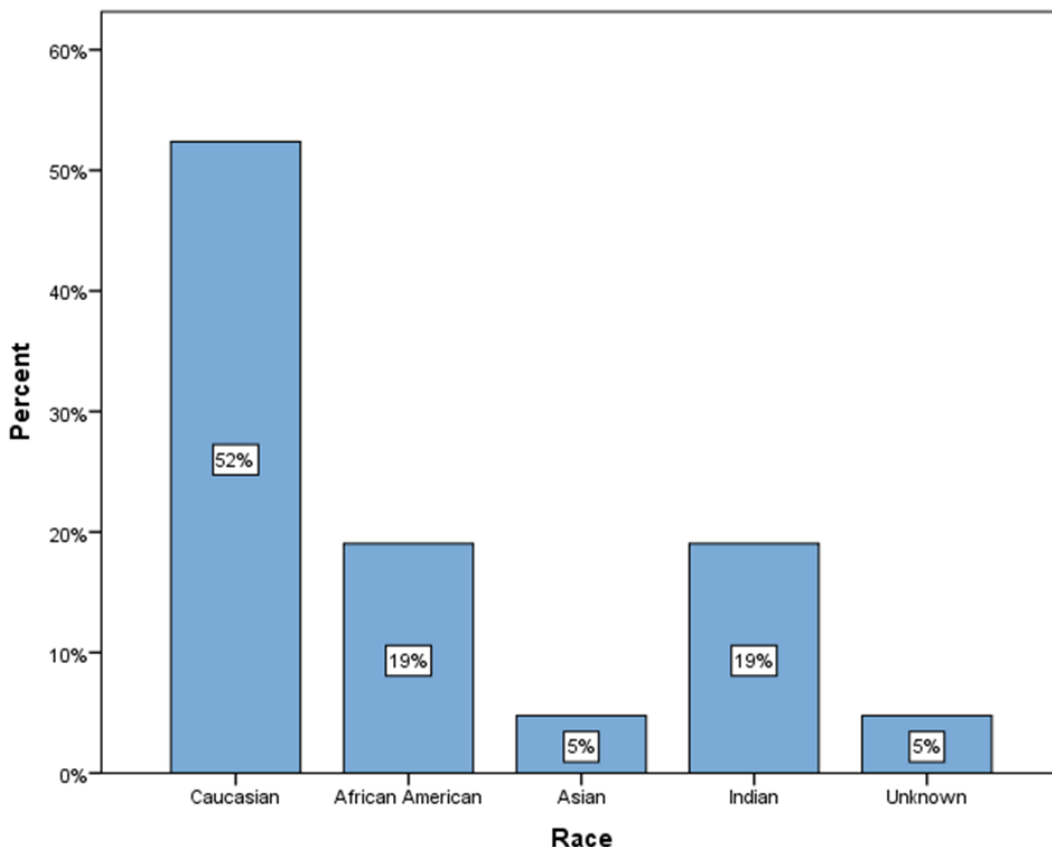
Figure 2 Offender Gender



Offender Race

The offender race varies, while Caucasian has the highest rate of (52%), African American (19%), Asian (5%), Indian (19%), and unknown accounted for (5%). Race is one of the hardest factors to determine or predict with stalking cases, because of the relationship the offender had with the victim, and the other contributing factors of their relationship before the offender killed their targeted victim. Unlike serial killers where they are more likely to target and kill an individual of their own race, with stalking it is difficult to determine due to the inconsistency of the relationship with their victim.

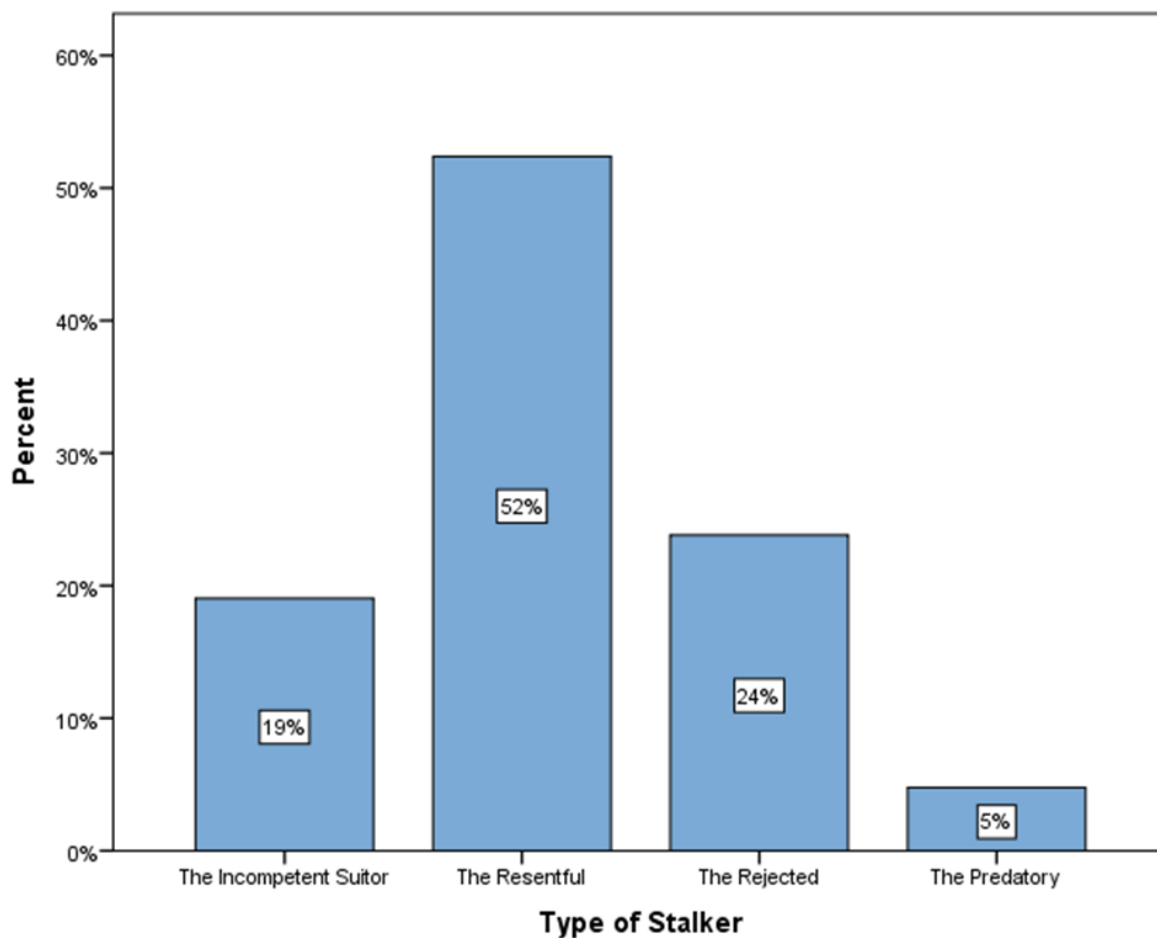
Figure 3 Offender Race



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Type of Stalker

Among the twenty cases found the type of stalker was also compared among other characteristics of the offenders. The Incompetent Suitor accounted for 19%, the Resentful accounted for 52%, the Rejected accounted for 24%, and the Predatory accounted for 5%. The research found that there were no cases of an Intimacy Seeker stalker typology and there was only one predatory stalker case.

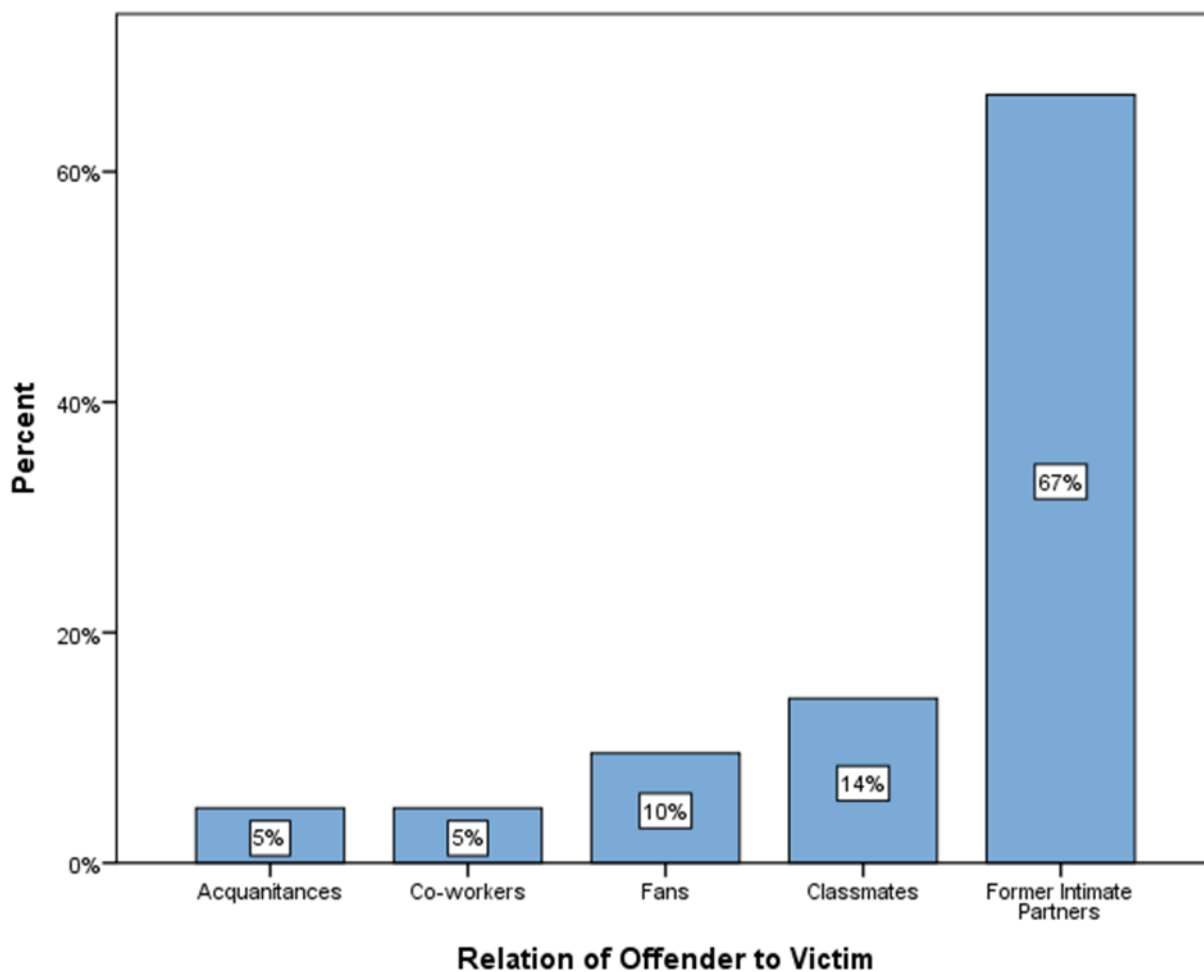
Figure 4 Type of Stalker

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Relationship between the Offender and Victim

Former intimate partners account for the highest offenders that stalked, targeted, and killed their victim (67%) and classmates (14%), fans (10%), co-workers (5%), strangers (5%). This is not surprising based on the typologies of stalkers, the rejected (24%) and the resentful (52%) are the most probable typology of stalkers that could lead to violence, this frequently occurs with former intimate partners.

Figure 5 Relationship between Offender and Victim

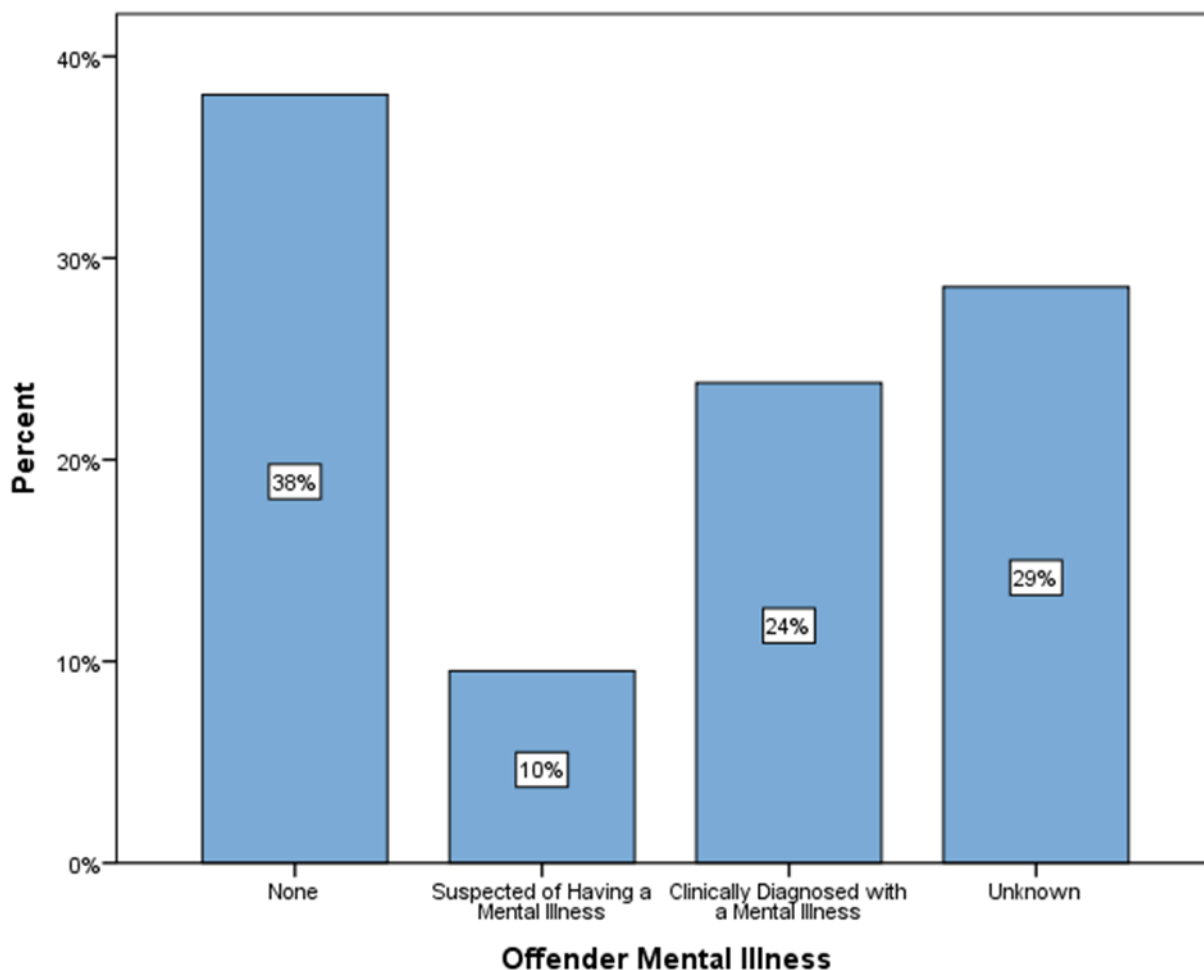


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Offender Mental Illness

Offender mental illness was the most difficult to determine out of the offender characteristics, because unless it was made public that the offender was clinically diagnosed with a mental illness (24%) or the offender was suspected of having a mental illness (10%) it was difficult to determine if the offender did have a mental illness which could have been a contributing factor as to why the offender targeted and killed their victim.

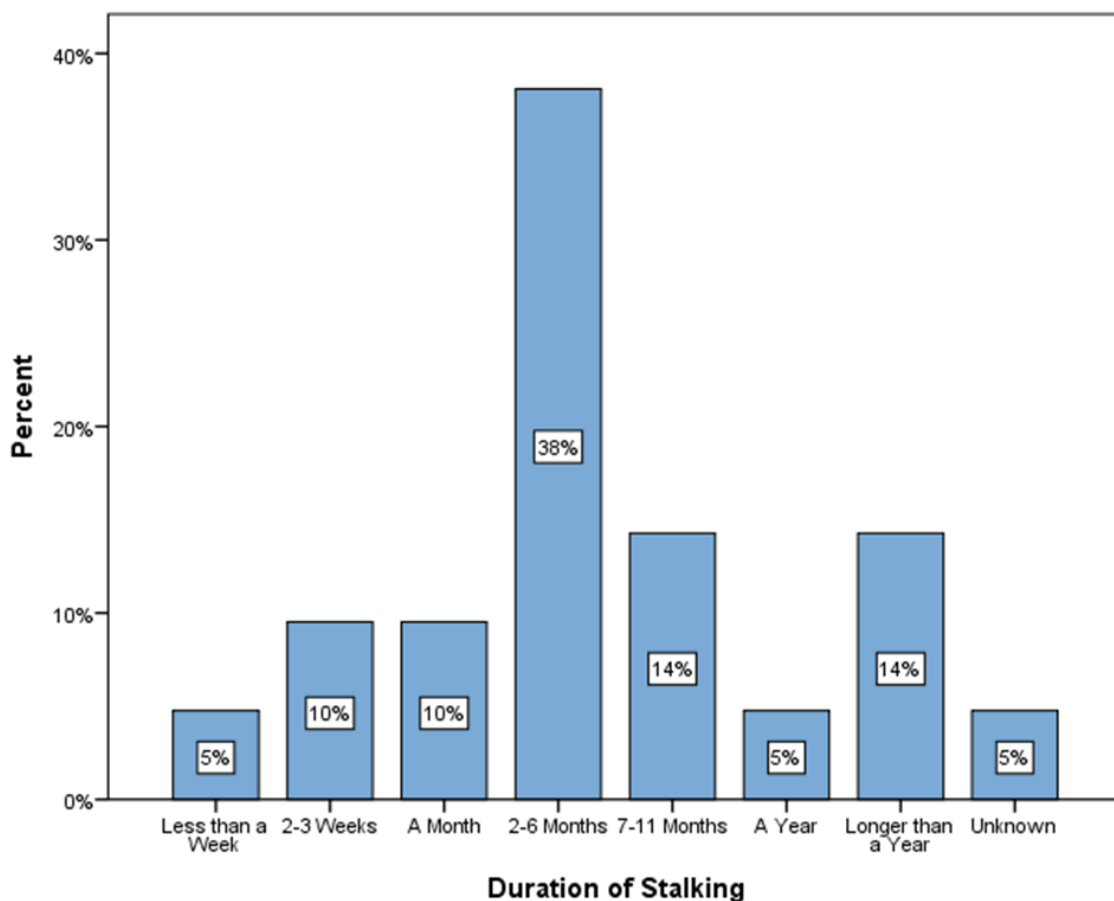
Figure 6 Offender Mental Illness



Offenders Duration of Stalking

The duration of stalking varied upon offender type as well as circumstances surrounding the situation. Two – six months duration of stalking was the largest out of the twenty cases, it accounted for 38%. The duration of the stalking is relevant to the offenders M.O., as to how the offender stalked their victim.

Figure 7 Offender’s Duration of Stalking



Characteristics of Victims

Of the 20 victims, 19 were female, 1 male. Regarding the characteristics of the victims, I observed the victim's response to the stalking, police involvement and collateral victims. In total 20 females were killed, 1 female survived, and one male was killed by their stalker. Out of the twenty cases of stalking only one had a collateral victim who died. In the case of Tracey Donnelly, 43, and her stalker Rekawt Salih, 26, Donnelly's daughter Louise, 23, was killed. Tracey Donnelly and Rekawt Salih were former intimate partners. Salih was a diagnosed paranoid schizophrenic and during a schizophrenic episode Salih inflicted more than 100 stab wounds to Tracey Donnelly in a frenzied attack and her daughter Louise had at least 70 injuries to her body, including the broken tip of the knife embedded into her skull. Salih fled the scene but was later arrested and had no recollection of the attacks.

From the twenty cases found, I researched the victim's response to being stalked, whether they did nothing, discussed it with their associates or notified the police. Victim response was observed along with police involvement: four victims (19%) did not report their stalker; eight victims (38.1%) reported their stalker, but law enforcement did not act or follow-up on the report; nine victims (42.9%) reported their stalker but there was minor police involvement.

This data suggests that 71.4% of the victims reported their stalker to the police but there was minor police involvement leading up to their death from their stalker. The tables listed on the following two pages display the victim's response, police involvement, and collateral victims.

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Table 1 Victim Response

		Type of Stalker				Total	
		The Incompetent Suitor	The Resentful	The Rejected	The Predatory		
Victim Response	None	Count	1	3		1	5
		Type of Stalker %	25.0%	27.3%		100.0%	23.8%
	Discussed with Associates	Count		1			1
		Type of Stalker %		9.1%			4.8%
	Notified the Police	Count	3	7	5		15
		Type of Stalker %	75.0%	63.6%	100.0%		71.4%
Total	Count	4	11	5	1	21	
	Type of Stalker %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Table 2 Police Involvement

		Type of Stalker				Total	
		The Incompetent Suitor	The Resentful	The Rejected	The Predatory		
Police Involvement	Not Reported by Victim	Count	1	3			4
		Type of Stalker %	25.0%	27.3%			19.0%
	Reported by Victim but Not Acted Upon	Count	1	4	2	1	8
		Type of Stalker %	25.0%	36.4%	40.0%	100.0%	38.1%
	Reported by Victim and Minor Police Involvement	Count	2	4	3		9
		Type of Stalker %	50.0%	36.4%	60.0%		42.9%
Total	Count	4	11	5	1	21	
	Type of Stalker %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

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Table 3 Collateral Victims

		Type of Stalker				Total	
		The Incompetent Suitor	The Resentful	The Rejected	The Predatory		
Collateral Victims	Target Only	Count	4	10	5	1	20
		Type of Stalker %	100.0%	90.9%	100.0%	100.0%	95.2%
	Family Members	Count		1			1
		Type of Stalker %		9.1%			4.8%
Total		Count	4	11	5	1	21
		Type of Stalker %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Characteristics of the Offenses

While not two criminal acts are ever exactly alike, research in the area of criminal profiling has revealed that similar offenders often share common behavioral characteristics, some of which are statistically significant. The twenty offenders in this study all had varying behavioral characteristics and methods of operation (M.O. or Modus Operandi) regarding how they stalked their victims. This study found that the stalking engaged in the following prior to the victims death, and in several cases more than one of these actions occurred: following, calling, emails, text messages, mail, threatening, harassing through social media, appearing at the victim's residence or business, breaking and entering into the victim's residence, loitering around the victim's residence or business, confronting the victim or their family, and contacting the victim's friends and family through various communication resources. Each of these types of actions constitute behavioral characteristics employed by each offender. The table on the

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following page represents the offender's behavioral characteristics of stalking based on Modus Operandi.

Table 4 Offender Modus Operandi

More than 1 response is possible

Offender Behavior or Modus Operandi			Type of Stalker			Total
			The Incompetent Suitor	The Resentful	The Rejected	
Following	Count	3	5	3		11
	Type_of_Stalker %	33.3%	14.7%	21.4%		18.3%
Calling	Count	1	5	2		8
	Type_of_Stalker %	11.1%	14.7%	14.3%		13.3%
Emails	Count			1		1
	Type_of_Stalker %			7.1%		1.7%
Text Messages	Count	1	6	2		9
	Type_of_Stalker %	11.1%	17.6%	14.3%		15.0%
Mail	Count		1		1	2
	Type_of_Stalker %		2.9%		33.3%	3.3%
Threatening or Confronting in Public Setting	Count	1	2	2		5
	Type_of_Stalker %	11.1%	5.9%	14.3%		8.3%
Harassing through Social Media	Count		3	1		4
	Type_of_Stalker %		8.8%	7.1%		6.7%
Comes to Residence or Business	Count		4	1	1	6
	Type_of_Stalker %		11.8%	7.1%	33.3%	10.0%
Breaking and Entering into Residence or Business	Count	1				1
	Type_of_Stalker %	11.1%				1.7%
Loiters around Residence or Business	Count	2	3	1		6
	Type_of_Stalker %	22.2%	8.8%	7.1%		10.0%
Confronts Victim or Victim's Family	Count		2			2
	Type_of_Stalker %		5.9%			3.3%
Contacts Family or Friends In-Person	Count		1			1
	Type_of_Stalker %		2.9%			1.7%
Contacts Family or Friends by Telephone	Count		2	1	1	4
	Type_of_Stalker %		5.9%	7.1%	33.3%	6.7%
Total	Count	9	34	14	3	60
	Type_of_Stalker %	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Research Questions

Within each of the subcategories of stalkers, do the stalkers within that category share common behavioral characteristics?

The five subcategories of stalkers each has their own behavioral characteristics, the research revealed that the incompetent suitors were male (100%), the offenders classmates (50%) with the victim, following (33%) was the most prevalent form of the offenders modus operandi,

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the duration of stalking 2-6 months (50%) and the offender's method of attack varied between stabbing with a bladed weapon (25%), slicing with a bladed weapon (25%), blunt force object (25%), and strangulation (25%) and half of the incompetent suitors killings had overkill (50%). The resentful stalkers in the study were found to be 25 years old or less, male, the offenders stalked their former intimate partners (82%), text messages (17.6%) were the most common modus operandi of the offense, offender stalked their victim between 2-6 months (36%), the offender's method of attack was found to be stabbing with a bladed weapon (55%) most common, in all the resentful stalker cases there were signs of overkill (100%). The rejected stalker was found to be 26-30 years old (60%), male, offenders were former intimate partners (80%) with the victim, following was the most prevalent modus operandi (21%), the duration of stalking was 2-6 months (40%), the method of attack was stabbing with a bladed weapon (60%) and in almost all the rejected stalker cases, overkill was present (80%).

Are there common behavioral characteristics shared by all stalkers regardless of their subcategory?

Regardless of subcategory, among stalkers who become lethal, it was found that former intimate partners are at most risk of becoming a victim to stalking that becomes lethal (67%). Each offender stalks their victim differently, and among the modus operandi of the stalking more than one of these actions can take place but the research revealed that following, calling, text messages, and confronting the victim in public were the most prevalent actions from the offender before the victim's death. The research also revealed that the offender's method of attack was stabbing their victim with a bladed weapon.

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Is it possible to construct a list of risk factors for stalkers who kill?

Based off the data found from the twenty cases, it can be generalized to each type of stalker, a risk factor checklist of a stalker who may become lethal can be made.

Validity of Findings

The sample size of the subject population impacts the validity of the study. The small sample size made it difficult to determine if the findings could be generalized to all types of stalkers, especially for the intimacy seeker and predatory subcategories of stalkers but the results from the four types of stalkers found in this study reinforces that it can be generalized to the five categories of stalkers. The subjects were chosen at random, but each case had to meet the standards where a stalking case resulted in death. Bias was eliminated because the cases were chosen at random. Cases where stalkers became lethal were only discarded if enough information could not be found.

Discussion

Stalking is a phenomenon that has yet to be completely understood by law enforcement, legal personnel, and clinical psychologists, and not all stalking becomes violent and results in death. Across the United States, United Kingdom and other western cultures, concerns over stalking have increased. Headline- grabbing accounts of stalking deaths have captured the attention of police and legislators who try to address and prevent the problem. While it is unlikely to prevent stalking completely, it is possible to create a risk factor checklist and identify red flags signaling when a stalker may potentially become lethal. This study researched the phenomenon of stalking by examining stalkers that killed. The twenty cases found for this study

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were analyzed for common behavioral characteristics of how each offender stalked leading up to the death of their victim as well as the behavior after their victim's death.

Limitations of the Study

The study was able to find common behavioral characteristics of stalkers who kill. However, there were several limitations with the study. The small sample size of stalkers who kill was the first limitation. With such a small sample size, it was difficult to determine if the study could be generalized to the wider population of stalkers. The second limitation of the study was that not all five subcategories of stalkers were equally represented. The study identified no cases of an intimacy seeker and only one case of the predatory stalker; having these two subcategories of stalkers limited in cases made it difficult to determine if this study could be applied to those subcategories of stalkers.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this research, there are several recommendations for future research. First, I would recommend a larger sample pool, having a larger sample pool can further the generalization towards all subcategories of stalkers. Second, I recommend finding more information and cases of the intimacy seeker and predatory stalkers, in this study, those two subcategories of stalkers were not found and limited. Third, I recommend trying to find more information on the stalkers background, such as drug or alcohol abuse and if they have been diagnosed with a mental illness, finding more information on these two behavioral characteristics can give more insight as to why an individual stalks.

Future research could also involve testing the reliability and generalization of the stalker population, and potentially, the stalkers who become lethal. It would be beneficial to use the risk

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factor checklist among the larger sample pool to determine the effectiveness and reliability of the risk factor checklist, as well as building among it.

Conclusion

The research targeted behavioral characteristics of stalkers who become lethal. Each stalker was found to either flee, surrender, attempt to kill themselves, or kill themselves after killing their victim. A majority of the stalkers were former intimate partners or classmates with their victim. I was able to identify common behavioral characteristics among stalkers but not a complete stalker profile since each stalker had a different modus operandi leading up to the death of their victim, as well as different post-offense behavior. There were not enough common behavioral characteristics to arrive at a model profile, not at all unlike school shooters.

The Lethal Stalkers Risk Factor Checklist was created to help law enforcement understand and prevent potentially violent stalkers from becoming lethal. Because stalking is such a difficult crime to curtail, the list may be useful in helping police and courts justify early intervention. The study identified additional behavioral characteristics as the sample size grew. Additional research can reinforce if the risk factor checklist is effective and if it can prevent stalkers who are escalating from

Becoming lethal.

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LETHAL STALKERS**RISK FACTOR CHECKLIST**

Several risk factors have been associated with stalkers who kill. This checklist is to be used as an investigative tool for stalkers may become lethal. This checklist is intended to assist investigators in determining whether an individual may become lethal. It is in no way to be used as a substitute for conventional investigation procedures. The total of “yes” responses indicates that a stalker is at, less concern, moderate concern, or at risk for becoming lethal towards their victim.

1. Is the individual a former intimate partner with the victim?
2. Is the individual a classmate with the victim?
3. Has there been any of the following escalations in conducted towards the victim?
- Increase number of text messages, calling, or emails
 - Continuous Following
 - Confronting or threatening the victim in a public setting
 - Continuous contact or threats via social media
 - The victim has reported the individual on at least one or more occasions
4. Has the individual been stalking the victim for two months or longer?
5. Does the individual feel rejected by or resentful towards the victim?
6. Does the individual have a history with mental illness?

Total “Yes” answers

[1 – 2]

Less Likely

[3 – 4]

Moderate Concern

[5 – 6]

At Risk

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Appendix A: Offender Coding Form

Offender Characteristics

1. Offender ID (Name or Number)

2. Age

a. 1 = Under 18

b. 2 = 18-25

c. 3 = 26-30

d. 4 = 31-35

e. 5 = 36-40

f. 6 = 41-45

g. 7 = 46-50

h. 8 = 51 or higher

i. 9 = Unknown

3. Offender Race

a. 1 = Caucasian

b. 2 = African American

c. 3 = Latino

d. 4 = Asian

e. 5 = Indian

f. 6 = Other

g. 7 = Unknown

4. Gender

a. 1 = Male

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- b. 2 = Female
5. Type of Stalker
- a. 1 = The Intimacy Seeker
 - b. 2 = The Incompetent Suitor
 - c. 3 = The Resentful
 - d. 4 = The Rejected
 - e. 5 = The Predatory
6. Relation of Offender to Victim
- a. 1 = Strangers
 - b. 2 = Acquaintances
 - c. 3 = Co-workers
 - d. 4 = Fans
 - e. 5 = Schoolmates
 - f. 6 = Former Intimate Partners
7. Offender Behavior or Modus Operandi
- a. 1 = Following
 - b. 2 = Calling
 - c. 3 = Emails
 - d. 4 = Text Messages
 - e. 5 = Mail
 - f. 6 = Threatening or Confronting in Public Setting
 - g. 7 = Harassing through Social Media
 - h. 8 = Comes to Residence or Business

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- i. 9 = Breaking and Entering into Residence or Business
 - j. 10 = Loiters around Residence or Business
 - k. 11 = Confronts Victim or Victims Family
 - l. 12 = Contacts Family or Friends in-person
 - m. 13 = Contacts Family or Friends by Telephone
 - n. 14 = Contacts Family or Friends by Email
 - o. 15 = Contacts Family or Friends by Mail
 - p. 16 = Contacts Family or Friends by Social Media
 - q. 17 = Undetermined
8. Victim Response
- a. 1 = None
 - b. 2 = Discussed with Associates
 - c. 3 = Notified Police
 - d. 4 = Obtained a Restraining Order
9. Police Involvement
- a. 1 = Not Reported by Victim
 - b. 2 = Reported by Victim but not Acted Upon
 - c. 3 = Reported by Victim and Minor Police involvement
 - d. 4 = Reported by Victim and Significant Police Involvement
10. Post-Offense Behavior Following the Attack
- a. 1 = Fled
 - b. 2 = Surrendered
 - c. 3 = Attempted to Kill Themselves

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- d. 4 = Killed Themselves

11. Individuals Involved in the Stalking

- a. 1 = Acted Alone
- b. 2 = Had Co-Conspirators

12. Offender Mental Illness

- a. 1 = None
- b. 2 = Suspected of Having a Mental Illness
- c. 3 = Clinically Diagnosed with a Mental Illness
- d. 4 = Unknown

13. Duration of Stalking

- a. 1 = Less than a Week
- b. 2 = A Week
- c. 3 = 2 – 3 Weeks
- d. 4 = A Month
- e. 5 = 2 – 6 Months
- f. 6 = 7 – 11 Months
- g. 7 = A Year
- h. 8 = Longer than a Year

14. Method of Attack

- a. 1 = Gun or Shooting
- b. 2 = Stabbing with a Bladed Weapon
- c. 3 = Slicing with a Bladed Weapon

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- d. 4 = Blunt Force Object
- e. 5 = Strangulation
- f. 6 = Vehicle Assault

15. Collateral Victims

- a. 1 = Target Only
- b. 2 = Family Members
- c. 3 = Associates

16. Type of Stalking Killing

- a. 1 = Premeditated
- b. 2 = Impulsive

17. Overkill

- a. 1 = No
- b. 2 = Yes