

Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures: A Psychological and Behavioral Analysis

*J. Reid Meloy
Lorraine Sheridan
Jens Hoffmann,
Editors*

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Edited by

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*To Janet Reid Meloy,
Mary Jane Perez Meloy,
Olivia Lindley Meloy,
Generations*

To my husband, Adrian

*To Monika,
my love,
my joy,
and my safe haven*

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Longing on a large scale is what makes history.

Don DeLillo, *Underworld*

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Foreword

An epidemic of anorexia, insomnia and acute bodily discomfort swept this nation late in 1963. One-half of its victims could not eat or sleep. If the illness from which they were suffering had been diagnosed as influenza, infectious mononucleosis or an unnamed virus, the relevance of the syndrome to an audience of conscientious physicians would be obvious. You might wonder why this syndrome of epidemiologic proportion has not found its way into the medical literature. When I add to this symptom complex the finding that more than two-thirds of those affected also were nervous, tense, and depressed, you may shift conceptually from physical pathology to psychopathology. When I tell you that this epidemic lasted about one week and began on the afternoon of November 22, 1963, you may be tempted to abandon the model of either pathology or psychopathology and, recalling that it followed immediately the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, see it instead as a widespread but normal reaction to a terrible political event.

Freedman, L. Z. (1965). Assassination: Psychopathology and social pathology. *Postgraduate Medicine*, 37 (June), 650–658

Assassinations of political leaders and public figures are, fortunately, rare events. When they occur, the magnitude of harm they cause is great.

Attacks on Presidents and other high-profile leaders in the last half of the 20th century stimulated waves of articles and books on assassination. The

assassinations of President John Kennedy, the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, and presidential candidate Robert Kennedy in the 1960s; attacks on presidential candidate George Wallace and President Gerald Ford in the 1970s; the attacks on President Ronald Reagan and Pope John Paul II; and the assassination of John Lennon in the early 1980s resulted in reams of speculation and analysis. Many efforts were historical in nature. Others focused on presumed psychopathologies of assassins and attackers and/or tried to develop typologies of persons who attack public figures. One writer even proposed retrospective psychiatric diagnoses of every American presidential assassin and attacker in the 19th and 20th centuries. But with few exceptions, until the 1990s, there was little systematic, let alone scientific, research on assassination, especially research that might inform protectors.

On July 18, 1989, Robert John Bardo assassinated actress Rebecca Schaeffer. Bardo's crime and the resulting publicity helped spark a legal reform movement that resulted in all 50 states and the Federal Government passing legislation that defined and outlawed the crime of stalking. These laws spoke to growing public, national concern about prevalence of domestic stalking (often by former intimates) and stalking by strangers.

It may fairly be said that "stalking" became the crime "celeb" of the early 1990s. The popular press literally printed thousands of articles about stalking, stalkers, and victims. Professional associations such as the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals drew hundreds to meetings and presentations about stalking. The Federal Government funded training seminars for law enforcement on how to intervene with stalking situations and large-scale studies about the prevalence of stalking. Individual researchers began systematic inquiries about stalkers and their victims.

In *Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures*, Drs. J. Reid Meloy, Lorraine Sheridan, and Jens Hoffmann attempt to bring research about stalking, threats, and attacks on public figures into the 21st century. Meloy, Sheridan, and Hoffmann have invited and collected the work of some of the most well-known clinicians, scholars, and practitioners in the fields of stalking and public figure protection (and others who are less well known).

This ambitious book covers a wide range of thinking, scholarship, and practice. The book begins with a comprehensive and thought-provoking review of what is known scientifically about public figure stalking, threatening, and attacking. It then includes contributions from professionals who have evaluated persons charged with crimes against public figures: clinicians, researchers, and current and former law enforcement professionals who have worked with organizations with investigative and protective responsibilities; and attorneys who have prosecuted these cases.

Chapters include detailed case studies, analyses of quantitative data, reflections from attachment theory and psychoanalytic thought, descriptions of law enforcement and protective organization activities, mental health and psychiatric categorizations and understandings, consideration of risk assessment

models and variables, victim perspectives, and others. Particularly welcome are contributions from European colleagues who work in these areas.

From the perspective of those trying to prevent harassment of and attacks on public officials and public figures, the identification, assessment, and management of persons who may pose risk will always be a combination of science and “art.” Better information and clearer analysis may guide and supplement the experience, intuition, and thinking of those with protective responsibilities. *Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures* is therefore a welcome and substantial, if inevitably incomplete, step in the right direction.

All in all, this book is a major contribution to a youthful and potentially significant field of research. Hopefully, it will stimulate more and better data collection, new and useful conceptualizations, and further careful study that will help keep public figures (and the rest of us) safe from unwanted contacts and potentially lethal attacks.

Robert Fein, PhD
Bryan Vossekuil

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Stalking, Threatening, and Attacking Public Figures

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Public Figure Stalking, Threats, and Attacks: The State of the Science

*J. Reid Meloy, Lorraine Sheridan, and
Jens Hoffmann*

Public figures are always at risk—whether it is a constituency that votes them in or out of office, shareholders who decide their economic benefit to the corporation, or fans who judge whether their performances merit continued and rapturous attention. On the periphery, however, resides a much smaller group of individuals who lack the ability to discriminate between their own private fantasies and the figure's public behavior, believe they are entitled to pursue the figure, and may present a risk of violence. They may feel personally insulted by perceived betrayal, be fanatically in love because of a perceived affectionate or sexual invitation, or simply be preoccupied with the daily life of the public figure. Such individuals may fixate on the public figure and do nothing more. Others communicate or approach in a disturbing way. A few will threaten. And on rare occasions, one will breach the public figure's security perimeter and attack.

Although protection of public figures has been recognized as a necessary adjunct to their daily lives for centuries, clinical and forensic research of threats and attacks against public figures is just beginning. Patterns of unwanted pursuit that threaten any individual—the crime of stalking—have received serious research attention for less than 20 years (Boon & Sheridan, 2002; Meloy, 1998; Mullen, Pathé, & Purcell, 2000), and a specific focus upon public figures as the targets of such pursuits is even more nascent. Published work on threatening and otherwise inappropriate letters toward politicians and celebrities appeared for the first time in 1991 (Dietz, Matthews, Martell, et al., 1991; Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne, et al., 1991), and an analysis of threats and attacks toward public figures did not appear until later that decade (Calhoun, 1998; Fein & Vossekuil,

1997, 1998, 1999; Fein, Vossekuil, & Holden, 1995). Work has rapidly evolved in this area over the past few years, but empirical studies are still scant, and the theory that guides data collection is quite limited (Borum, Fein, Vossekuil, & Berglund, 1999; McCutcheon, Lange, & Houran, 2002; Meloy et al., 2004). Virtually all the existing work has been done in the United States, although the Home Office in Britain commissioned an exhaustive study of approaches, threats, and attacks toward members of the British Royal Family, which was completed in 2006, along with a comprehensive analysis of attacks toward Western European politicians (Fixated Research Group, 2006; James et al., 2007, in press) (Chapter 3).

Theoretical questions that beg for empirical answers abound: How do we discriminate between those who are simply fixated on a public figure and those who will inappropriately communicate and approach? Can we identify the factors that predict an attack upon a public figure? To what degree are these individuals severely mentally ill, and what is the role, if any, of the mental health professional in such cases? What is the nexus between pathological fixations and mental illness? What is the nexus between political motivation to attack and mental illness? What role does personality disorder play in the aggression exhibited by those who intently seek contact with the public figure? Does the media and culture influence the pursuit of celebrities? Can we identify the pathway to violence of these individuals? Can we identify markers along such a pathway and estimate the speed with which the subject is moving? And how best can we assess and manage the threat such persons pose toward public figures? Such empirical questions are ripe for investigation, but also need theories and operational experience to guide their formulation. Without theory, data collection is just counting; and without data, theory is just speculation. As the great psychologist and psychiatrist Martin Orne once said, "In God we trust. All others must have data."

The purpose of this book is to advance our understanding of stalking, violence risk, and threat management toward public figures, whether they be politicians, executives, judicial officers, or a wide array of celebrities. The book is divided into three sections, which focus upon defining, explaining, and risk-managing this increasingly complex global reality. Truly public figures are few and far between, and anathema to some, but they shape and lead culture and history as they walk through time—or time walks through them. Through our invitations to the most notable researchers and operators in this specialty area, of whom virtually all accepted our offer, we have assembled a book that is the first of its kind, international in scope, and rich in both depth and complexity.

Empirical Knowns and Contemporary Theory

The boundaries of science are known, and gradually expanded, through the construction and empirical testing of hypotheses, which are based upon current theory—what is commonly understood as the scientific method. We begin

with some facts and theories concerning the state of the science in public figure stalking, threats, and attacks.

Normal and Pathological Fixations

The term fixation is from the Latin word *figo*, to be bound fast, and describes an intense preoccupation with an individual, activity, or idea. Normal fixations are readily apparent in the early stages of romantic love (Person, 1988); certain hobbies; intensely held political, social, or religious beliefs; and loyalty toward certain celebrity or other public figures (Mullen et al., in press). The basis for a fixation may be a “narcissistic linking fantasy,” a conscious belief that one has a special and idealized relationship with another person or object (Meloy, 1989, 1998). Such fantasies, in turn, may compensate for an actual life that is blighted and forlorn, and the feelings that adhere to it.

Pathological fixations, moreover, are preoccupations that are more frequent, emotionally intense, and may be incessantly pursued. They are distinguished in this context from normal fixations by two characteristics: First, the belief places upon the public figure an obligation, and the believer demands acknowledgment, what we call *entitled reciprocity*; second, a behavioral progression begins, during which the fixation alienates others, undermines social networks, and erodes finances, leaving the person often isolated and destitute (Leets, de Becker, & Giles, 1995; Mullen et al., in press; Schlesinger, 2006). Pathological fixations may not lead to communication or approach behavior, and may be known only to a few friends and family members. However, those who pathologically fixate have established a debt, and believe that payment is due.

Public Figure Stalking

Pathological fixations do not necessarily lead to stalking, which is a criminal behavior in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, Germany, and several other European countries. The exact legal description of stalking varies among jurisdictions, but typically involves three elements: a pattern of unwanted pursuit, a credible threat, and the induction of fear in the victim. Most jurisdictions must prove each of these elements to attain a criminal conviction for stalking, and hence the necessity of victim testimony at trial to prove the third element. One of the paradoxes of the crime of stalking is that the victim must be aware of the behavior, and therefore fearful, for there to be a crime.

Public figures, however, may be stalked for months before they are aware of the behavior. Access is usually exceedingly difficult for the stalker; even if the stalker succeeds in raising concern among the public figure’s security personnel, the latter may not inform the public figure of the ongoing threat. This has posed problems in the prosecution of certain public figure stalking cases, and has required that security apprise their protectee of all the details of the pursuit to establish the requisite personal fear for prosecution.¹ In other cases,

the magnitude of potential threats to the public figure, such as the President of the United States, is so enormous that it would preclude any personal knowledge unless an attack was imminent. The crime of stalking would be subsumed by both statutory and case laws.²

In this book, we have modified the third element of the crime of stalking public figures to include *concern* on the part of those responsible for their safety that a pattern of behaviors poses a credible threat. This necessarily broadens our use of the term stalking, but unhinges it from the requisite induction of personal fear in the victim.³

Threats

The role of communicated threats in public figure cases remains ambiguous in large group studies (Meloy et al., 2004), but the operational position is clear: All communicated threats should be initially taken seriously because any particular individual may act subsequent to his threat. We define a threat as “a written or oral communication that implicitly or explicitly states a wish or intent to damage, injure, or kill the target” (Meloy, 1999a, p. 90).

A few empirical studies have noted the following trends when threats toward public figures are considered:

1. In public figure studies, there is a weak correlation, if any, between communicated threats and subsequent violence.
2. Unlike prior sexually intimate stalkers who commonly threaten and physically attack their victims, most individuals who inappropriately communicate with, approach, breach, or attack a public figure do not directly communicate a threat beforehand to their target.
3. Those who breach security and do launch an attack often engage in *warning behaviors* beforehand, and will communicate their intent to third parties.
4. The published scientific study of various aspects of the form and content of threatening communications, primarily in letters, has yielded some useful predictive data concerning who will and will not approach and attack.
5. Threatening communications, moreover, may be the only source of data upon which to plan a protective response, even in the absence of the identity of the threatener (see Chapters 10 and 17).
6. Those convicted of threatening to kill anyone are at significantly greater risk of killing another or themselves, or being killed by another, especially if they are young, mentally disordered, and abusing substances (MacDonald, 1968; Warren, Mullen, Thomas, Ogloff, & Burgess, in press).

We offer the following schematic for the descriptive analysis of threats, which at present has no proven predictive value, but helps with clarity of thought,

and may guide further research. Communicated threats have a motivation, a means, a manner, and a material content.

Motivation Communicated threats are either *expressive* or *instrumental*. An expressive threat is used to regulate affect in the threatener. For example, an individual telephones his local political representative and yells at his assistant for the chronic delays in garbage collection in the neighborhood. He threatens to come down to the representative's office and dump his garbage on the property if nothing is done. He does not identify himself, and slams the phone down. He immediately feels better because he has ventilated his emotion, but then feels guilty and anxious that he might get into trouble for his outburst.

An instrumental threat is intended to control or influence the behavior of the target through an aversive consequence. For example, a man with erotomanic delusions sends a letter to a local television news anchor, telling her she better wear her blue dress on his birthday when she appears on television, or he is going to kill himself.

Means Communicated threats are conveyed through a *variety* of means, including verbalized statements, letters, e-mail, telephone, text messaging, facsimile transmission, nonverbal behavior that implies a threat, and any other vehicle that conveys to the target the intent of the message. Means are only limited by available technology, and will likely expand in concert with developments in the information technology field.

Manner Threats are communicated either *directly* or *indirectly*. A direct threat is conveyed from the threatener to the target using a variety of means. An indirect threat is usually communicated to a third person, typically someone who knows the target, or is assumed to have access to the target, with the intent that the target will be told about the threat. Any other indirect means could be utilized, including the publication of a threat in code that is disseminated to many individuals but understood only by the target's representative, or the use of a "cutout," a term borrowed from intelligence, in which a third person acts as a conduit (in this case, communicating a threat) but may not know the specific identity of the threatener or the target, and may not even understand what he or she is communicating.

Material Content Unlike the motivation (why) and the means and manner (how), material content refers to *what* was conveyed. The threat itself can have infinite variety and is usually analyzed according to form or content. Analysis at this level may range from forensic linguistics (the study of the language)⁴ to scrutiny of the threat for fingerprints, DNA, or other transfer evidence from the threatener. Two computer-based software programs include Profiler +, which purports to measure personality characteristics from language use (Herman, 2003), and PCAD 2000, which uses content analysis to identify psychological states (Gottschalk & Bechtel, 2001). Whether a threat is conditional or unconditional would also be an aspect of material content.

The International Perspective

Most stalking research has been done in Westernized developed countries, including the United States, Canada, Europe, and Australia. The majority of contemporary work on threats toward public figures has also derived from studies in the United States, particularly the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Capitol Police (see Chapters 16 and 19). Both organizations have been world leaders in both tactical and strategic approaches to threats toward public figures. This book also introduces contributions from authors based in Germany, Canada, and the United Kingdom. The Fixated Research Group commissioned by the United Kingdom's Home Office in 2002 was composed of American, Australian, and British researchers, and has resulted in the establishment of the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre in London.

There is evidence from various international sources that stalking is a part of the human condition. Studies conducted in Japan (Chapman & Spitzberg, 2003), Trinidad (Jagessar & Sheridan, 2004), and Iran (Kordvani, 2000) have made clear that cultural variations exist, but there are core stalking behaviors regardless of culture or nationality. There is also a very small amount of research that suggests that immigration may be a risk factor for stalking because of cultural disparities in the perception of social behavior (Meyers, 1998; Meyers & Meloy, 1994). This research has focused upon immigration from traditional Arabic culture to more open Westernized culture. It is unclear if comparable intercultural patterns will become apparent when the target is a public figure and the relationship is solely a product of fantasy or delusion. One of the editors of this book (LS) is currently involved in a research program that is examining perceptions and experiences of stalking in several countries, including Armenia, Indonesia, and Japan. Early analyses indicate high levels of agreement concerning what constitutes stalking, as well as similar incident rates of stalking behavior across these disparate countries and cultures.

There is anecdotal evidence that public figure stalking is becoming more international in character. Schlesinger (2006) vividly described the case of an American Hispanic man who mailed an acid bomb from the United States to the Icelandic pop singer Björk living in Britain, and then committed suicide (see also Chapter 4). A Japanese entrepreneur stalked Britney Spears and was eventually deported from the United States. The founder of the ecumenical Taizé Community Frere Roger was stabbed by a woman in Romania. The tennis star Martina Hingis was stalked by an eastern European male who was eventually tried in Florida. And in a study of erotomanic patients in a Thailand hospital (Kasantikul, 1998), the stalking of Thai celebrities was mentioned, and 1 of 20 patients had the delusional belief that he was romantically connected to a prominent Thai singer.

There is, however, simply not enough research. One study from Iran (Kordvani, 2000) asserted that local media culture is an extremely relevant factor influencing the rate of public figure stalking. Kordvani also noted that stalking of celebrities in Iran is virtually unknown because of the fact that “the

media, the television in particular, do not tend to broadcast so much news or propaganda about celebrities” (p. 6). This observation is consistent with the findings reported in this book (Chapter 6) that the frequency of appearance of the celebrity in the media is a significant correlate of stalking behavior toward that celebrity. The Fixated Research Group (2006) found a similar dynamic in their study of inappropriate communications and approaches to members of the British Royal Family, and Meloy et al. (Chapter 2) report that frequently appearing female television actors are at high risk for multiple stalkers. A media culture that idealizes being famous—and then aggressively probes for vulnerabilities in the famous—appears to be a sociocultural risk factor for public figure stalking.

The nascent quality of the research, however, should not distort the fact that operational approaches to the protection of public figures have been developing over centuries, and continue to spawn networks of private and public practitioners such as the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals in the United States and Canada (www.atapworldwide.org).

In a world of increasing global connectivity, integration, interdependence, and almost instant media saturation (see, e.g., www.tlmz.com), it is inevitable that those involved in the management of public figures will need to share information across traditional boundaries of nationality, language, culture, economic, and political persuasions. Those who target public figures are not only geographically mobile, but can easily tap into the virtual world of knowledge concerning their public target of pursuit, and utilize this knowledge in the planning of their stalking and attacking. Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne et al. (1991) first noted that a proportion of inappropriate letters sent to Hollywood celebrities were posted from countries other than the United States; current research (Fixated Research Group, 2006) has found that 10% of those who fixated on a member of the British Royal Family, and 1.8% of those who successfully breached their security, had home addresses other than the United Kingdom.

It is paramount that practitioners and researchers alike share information and expertise concerning stalking, threats, and attacks against public figures. One of the aims of this book is to facilitate and extend such cooperation internationally by defining the nature of this problem, explaining it within our current limits of understanding, and offering risk management solutions.

The Pathway to Violence and Markers Along the Route

An attack on a public figure is a low-frequency but high-intensity event. Risk assessment and risk management of such cases render traditional methods of violence prediction—the use of base rates and actuarial estimates derived from large group data—not very useful because of the high number of false positives that would be generated.

The recognition of this problem and the development of an alternative, idiographic approach to assessing risk of violence toward identifiable targets

has been a major breakthrough in this field. Dietz and Martell (1989) suggested this approach when they discerned the first warning signals that may precede an attack on a public figure. Through their anecdotal research, they suggested that emulating famous assassins, constructing a “hit list,” creating a diary documenting the stalking of a famous target, and making efforts to acquire a weapon were regular features in such cases. Fein et al. (1995) and Fein and Vossekuil (1997, 1998, 1999) systematized this approach, which has been labeled “threat assessment of targeted violence,” through their U.S. Secret Service Exceptional Case Study. They noted that the first marker is the point at which the offender decides that an attack on a public figure is the solution to his problems. Subsequent steps include the selection of a suitable target, and planning and preparation for the assault.

Borum et al. (1999) theoretically elaborated upon this functional model, stressing the dynamic, fact-based, and behavioral aspects of this approach, where the task is to identify individuals of concern who may be moving down a pathway of violence toward an identifiable target. In this approach, static factors such as demographics, and criminal, psychiatric, and drug abuse histories are minimized, while current behaviors are the focus of attention. Calhoun and Weston (2003) further advanced this work by describing in detail six markers along this pathway to violence: grievance, ideation, research and planning, preparation, breach, and attack.

Pathways to violence can be analyzed according to behavioral, cognitive, and emotional evidence. Behavioral aspects are often the most overt and address concrete actions of the subject of concern, such as researching a suitable attack location and procuring a weapon. The cognitive aspect of the pathway includes the formulation of a grievance and the use of various psychological defenses such as denial and projection to blame the target, obsessional patterns of thinking that may contain unrealistic or delusional beliefs and expectations concerning the target (Chapter 4), and certain other cognitive conditions that must be in place to warrant an attack: justification, a perceived lack of alternatives, and acceptance of the consequences of the attack (De Becker, 1997). The emotional aspect of such an attack can vary tremendously, and change over time, including states of dysphoria, anger, hatred, fear, anxiety, shame, excitement, and complete emotional detachment.

This mode of threat assessment is illustrated by a case. After the breakup of her marriage, Ms. S was diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia (Hoffmann & Sheridan, 2005). She believed that underground flesh factories existed in Germany in which humans were killed and manufactured. Jesus appeared to her in a vision, telling her that she had to stop the slaughtering (grievance). She tried to draw public attention to these outrageous events, putting up posters in the street and placing advertisements in newspapers. This strategy failed, and Jesus appeared again, cajoling her to use violence (ideation). She then developed the idea to attack a national politician in order to warn the public of the flesh factories. She phoned different party headquarters for dates and locations of the upcoming election campaign (research/planning). She applied to authorities for a gun license and tried to buy a gun in a

local Italian restaurant (preparation). Finally, she took a knife, and concealed it in a bouquet of flowers. Pretending to be a fan of a well-known political leader, she bypassed his security at a campaign rally (breach). She gained close proximity to him, and stabbed him in the neck (attack).

An idiographic approach, however, requires a sophisticated and often expensive intelligence network to be operationally successful because there are essentially no large group preventive measures—such as better mental health care for the pathologically fixated—that are advanced. Implicit in this approach is that an individual of concern can be identified in a timely manner to successfully interdict his movement along the pathway toward violence. In the case of Ms. S, she was not.

Epidemiologists note that there are two general approaches to reducing risk in a population: Identify those at highest risk and take actions to reduce their risk, or act on the population as a whole, targeting a known risk factor that will reduce the risk level in the entire population. We think these approaches complement each other, and in the specific domain of public figure threats, stalking, and attacks, they are represented by the idiographic (case study) model to identify individuals of concern and by a nomothetic (large group) model that *recognizes the high frequency of major mental illness and pathological fixation in those who pose a risk to public figures*. Our position strongly supports the value of better treatment and management of all severely mentally ill individuals in a population, even though very few will actually pose a risk to a public figure. We advocate the integration of these approaches throughout this book.

The Mode of Violence

Converging research over the past half century has continued to validate the theory that there are two psychobiologically distinctive modes of violence: affective and predatory (Meloy, 2006). *Affective violence* is characterized by autonomic arousal, anger or fear, a reaction to a perceived threat, a brevity of action due to the high state of physiological arousal, and the simple goal of reducing the threat. It is the consummate defensive violence and is also labeled reactive and impulsive by various researchers (Cornell et al., 1996; Tweed & Dutton, 1998). *Predatory violence* is characterized by the absence of autonomic arousal, the absence of emotion, and the absence of an imminent threat, and is planned and purposeful. It is the consummate offensive violence, and is also labeled instrumental and premeditated by various researchers (Barratt, Stanford, Dowdy, Liebman, & Kent, 1999; Cornell et al., 1996). The evolutionary basis of the former is self-protection. The evolutionary basis of the latter is hunting.

Stalking research has repeatedly found that violence between prior sexual intimates is typically affective; for example, an ex-husband who is stalking his former partner will likely assault her when threatened by abandonment, and will punch, choke, or slap her without the use of a weapon (Meloy, 2002; Mullen et al., 2000).

Violence toward public figures who are stalked, however, appears to be typically predatory, and a weapon, often a firearm, is utilized. This pattern was

first documented by Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999), and the contrast between public and private stalkers was noted by Meloy (2001). It was further supported by the striking contrast—and logic—when comparing the frequency of threats between those who stalk prior sexual intimates and those who stalk public figures: The majority of prior sexual intimate stalkers directly communicate a threat before they attack, while very few public figure stalkers do so before they attack (Fein & Vossekuil, 1999; Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan, & Williams, 2006) (Chapter 2).

This demarcation, however, turns out to be too simple. Empirical testing of these hypotheses suggests that the *relationship* between the stalker and his victim is the determining factor in the mode of violence (Chapter 2). When there has been a prior relationship, affective violence is significantly more likely, but predatory violence does occur. When there has been no prior relationship (this, of course, would include most public figure cases⁵), predatory violence is significantly more likely, but affective violence does occur. The following photograph illustrates an affectively violent, although ultimately futile, attempt to assault Pope Benedict XVI on June 6, 2007, by a 27-year-old German in St. Peter's Square, Rome. The Pope's spokesman, Dr. Federico Lombardi, offered both a diagnosis and a motivation at the scene: "He was clearly deranged but did not want to kill or harm the pope. He only wanted to draw attention to himself" (*New York Times*, June 7, 2007, p. A10).



Typologies

Psychologists and psychiatrists, in the tradition of most scientific endeavors, rely on typologies or classification systems to define and explain phenomena that they observe. They organize and structure complex realities, hope to reflect real differences among groups, and in case management they serve as a starting point for investigations. Typologies, however, are not *sui generis* but are dependent on the interests of the researchers, such as clinical versus operational endeavors. Stalking is no exception. There are presently at least a dozen typologies of stalkers (Spitzberg, 2007) based upon a variety of factors, including motivation, diagnosis, previous relationship with the victim, level of risk, private versus public context, or a combination of such variables (Mohandie et al., 2006). There is no “gold standard” typology at present, and professionals tend to select those that best suit their own clinical, research, or operational needs. The danger of typologies in risk assessment and case management is that a particular case may be adapted and deformed to fit a particular typological category. *The map is never the territory*. Public figure stalking typologies are beginning to be developed.

One of the most important discoveries in stalking, threats, and attacks against public figures came about through the U.S. Secret Service Exceptional Case Study (Fein & Vossekuil, 1997, 1998, 1999; Fein et al., 1995). The Exceptional Case Study documented that less than 10% of those who attacked, assassinated, or near lethally approached a U.S. public figure in the latter half of the 20th century communicated a direct threat to the target or law enforcement beforehand; and *none* who successfully attacked or assassinated did so. For the first time it was empirically documented—although it was theoretically suggested by Freedman (1971) 25 years earlier—that there may be an *inverse relationship* between those who threatened and those who attacked public figures. Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999) memorialized this finding with their assertion that *those who pose a threat may not make a threat, and those who make threats may not pose them*, implying the existence of two rather disparate groups.

Although reality turns out to be more complicated—those who threaten can also attack (Scalora, Baumgartner, & Plank, 2003), and in one study those who successfully breached security were more likely to threaten than those who just approached (Fixated Research Group, 2006)—this distinction paralleled an important conceptual leap by Calhoun (1998) and Calhoun and Weston (2003), who also posited two groups of individuals, *hunters* and *howlers*, representing a gross typology of those who pathologically fixate on public figures for a variety of reasons. Howlers were often disinterested in hunting; hunters purposefully did not howl. The howlers became a group worth studying on their own (Chapter 5).

The hunters and howlers, however, may both pose a tactical risk, and there are a few typologies that have been developed to begin to understand the motivations of these individuals (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1. Typologies and various motivations of those who approach, threaten, attack, and/or assassinate public figures

Clarke (1982, 1990): <i>n</i> = 17 assassins or near assassins of U.S. Presidents	
Type I—Self sacrifice for a political ideal	
Type II—Egocentric need for recognition and status	
Type III—Psychopathic	
Type IV—Delusional	
De Becker (1994): <i>n</i> = unknown number of public figure and celebrity stalkers	
1. Attachment seeking	
2. Identity seeking	
3. Rejection based	
4. Delusion based	
Fein and Vossekuil (1997, 1998, 1999): <i>n</i> = 83 near-lethal approachers, attackers, and assassins of U.S. public figures (1949–1996)	
1. Notoriety or fame	
2. Bring attention to a personal or public problem	
3. Avenge a perceived wrong	
4. End personal pain	
5. Save country or world	
6. Develop a special relationship with the target	
7. Make money	
8. Bring about political change	
Phillips (2006): <i>n</i> = unknown number of those who stalk and attack the U.S. President; and proposed celebrity stalking typology (2007)	
1. Resentful	1. Intimacy
2. Pathologically obsessed	2. Rejected
3. Infamy seeking	3. Predatory (sexual)
4. Intimacy seeking	
5. Nuisance or attention seeking	
James et al. (in press): <i>n</i> = 23 attackers of the British monarch or immediate family members (1778–1994)	
1. Extremely politically motivated	
2. Petitioners—delusional	
3. Pretenders—delusional	
4. Persecuted—delusional	
5. Adolescent anomie	
6. Chaotically psychotic	

(Continued)

Table 1.1. (Continued)

James et al. (2007): $n = 24$ nonterrorist attackers of western European politicians (1990–2004)

1. Extremely politically motivated
2. Intoxicated
3. Pathological fixation—delusion
4. Nonclassifiable—unknown

Fixated Research Group (2006): $n = 275$ cases randomly drawn from 5,685 files stratified according to behavior (preapproach, approach, breach) of those who pathologically fixated on members of the British Royal Family over the past 20 years, Axis III: motivation.

1. Pursuing an agenda
 2. Delusions of kinship
 3. Delusions of kingship
 4. Chaotic
 5. Amity seekers
 6. Counselors
 7. Erotomanics
 8. Suitors
 9. Entreaty for help
 10. Royally persecuted
-

Perusal of this table indicates a number of commonalities among the research endeavors: (a) all have focused on motivation, although a few have made the distinction between psychosis and nonpsychosis as an element of their types; (b) all typologies have been published in the past 20 years, although the majority have appeared within the past 5 years; (c) all the typologies are empirically based and rationally derived—in other words, they are based upon actual cases, ranging from 17 American assassins to 275 randomly selected approachers of the British Royal Family, and the actual type is formulated by the researchers' inferences rather than statistical analysis; (d) there is no interrater reliability data for any of the typologies; (e) many of the groups within each type strongly suggest a major mental disorder, a personality disorder, or both, which is consistent with clinical findings in the general stalking research (Meloy, 1998; Mullen et al., 2000); (f) the typologies and motivational schemes cover a wide spectrum of behaviors (approaching, threatening, stalking, attacking, and assassinating) and targets (U.S. celebrities, political figures in the United States and Europe, and the British Royal Family), therefore making it difficult to generalize across research efforts.

The most rigorous and complex of the types is the one generated by the Fixated Research Group (2006) because of the stratified random sampling that was utilized and the development of a multiple-axis approach. The ten types represent the motivational axis of the typology. The other two axes include the nature of the fixation (person or cause) and reality testing (psychotic or nonpsychotic). The limitation of this typology is the idiosyncratic nature of the target group—the British Royal Family—which combines their celebrity and their legal-political authority and yields a very mixed group of mad, bad, desperate, and chaotic individuals.

Typologies must be cross-validated by other independent research groups. They advance research, but most importantly, they facilitate rapid communication concerning risk prediction and risk management among those whose task it is to prevent violence toward public figures. We believe it is worth continuing to develop broad-based typologies of those who stalk, threaten, and attack public figures, with an eye toward identifying variables that discriminate among groups that most powerfully predict violence risk. Such typologies should be rationally derived, empirically tested, and dynamically open to change as data accumulate.

Political Motivation and Psychiatric Disorder

The typology table also underscores a reality often obscured by operational approaches to the protection of public figures: What appears at first to be an issue-driven and politically motivated pursuit of a public figure can hide a severe psychiatric disturbance. Both may coexist. Mullen and Lester (2006) made this point in their excellent discussion of querulous paranoia and the vexatious litigant, and in the realm of public figure stalking, politics and psychiatric disorder may compel the need for both law enforcement and mental health intervention in any one particular case.

The case of Sirhan Sirhan illustrates this point. From a political perspective, he consciously assassinated Robert F. Kennedy in 1968 because he was furious at him for voting to sell 50 Phantom Jet fighter bombers to Israel and believed he had betrayed the Palestinian cause. From a psychiatric perspective, defense experts at his trial all agreed that he was either paranoid schizophrenic, or had pseudoneurotic schizophrenia. The prosecution expert, Seymour Pollack, M.D. (Pollack, 1969a) diagnosed him with borderline schizophrenia (what is now referred to as borderline personality disorder). He wrote, “Sirhan’s motivation in killing Senator Kennedy was entirely political, and was not related to bizarre or psychotic motivation or accompanied by peculiar and highly idiosyncratic reasoning” (p. 3). In a supplemental report, he considered Sirhan a “developing paranoid personality whose assassination of Senator Robert Kennedy was motivated by political reasons which were highly emotionally charged” (1969b, p. 1). An interpretation of Sirhan’s Rorschach test employing technology unavailable in 1969 suggested a borderline personality organization with hysterical, paranoid, and dependent features, consistent with the Pollack’s findings (Meloy,

1992) (see also Chapter 7). The news media at the time worked hard to avoid characterizing this as a political assassination, which it was.

We would suggest that personality and psychopathology not be ignored, or even minimized, in the risk management of the most obviously issue-driven, political, religious, or romantically motivated case. There is a tendency for even the most seasoned professionals to normalize the most bizarre behavior—for instance, believing that “cultural differences” somehow account for severe psychopathology—especially when their exposure to such cases is the norm.

The Role of Mental Illness

Although most individuals with mental disorder are not violent, and do not attack public figures, there is substantial evidence that the majority of stalkers, attackers, and assassins are likely to have a major mental disorder, either historically or activated at the time of their attack (see Chapter 3). Media reports, however, overemphasize the importance of mental illness as the primary cause of the violent behavior, reinforcing the populist notion that, “he must have been crazy to have done that.” For instance, Link and Stueve’s (1994) large-scale representative study demonstrated that the presence of psychotic symptoms was a weaker predictor of violence than other variables including age, gender, and education.

Mental disorders differ in nature and intensity, and different mental disorders will have various relationships with violence. Some individuals are most violent when their mental disorder is untreated, while others will be sufficiently organized to commit offences only when adhering to a course of medication. The relationship between violence and mental disorder may be mediated by a variety of factors, including drug use, psychopathy, and specific symptoms such as delusions that provide a conscious rationale for acting violently.

The general literature on stalking would indicate that the question of whether individuals with particular mental health diagnoses are more likely to be violent is unclear. A recent review notes that the disorders associated with stalking occur over a wide range of diagnostic categories (McEwan, Mullen, & Purcell, 2007). It is not known how important mental disorder is as a predictor of stalking, let alone violence-related stalking activity. Taken together, the previous research findings would indicate that, en masse, those stalkers most likely to act out violently are nonpsychotic ex-partners (Farnham, James, & Cantrell, 2000). Public figure stalking data, however, indicate that despite the much lower frequencies of violence, mental illness is prominent in the history and behavior of the violent stalkers and attackers (Fein & Vossekuil, 1999; James et al., 2007, in press; Megargee, 1986; Mohandie et al., 2006; Mullen et al., in press). For instance, Calhoun’s (1998) examination of threats and violence toward members of the judiciary noted that many inappropriate communicators were irrational; Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999) found a large proportion of their sample to evidence symptoms of major mental disorder despite their operational focus; Silva and Leong (1993) discussed cases of delusional misidentification where sufferers have threatened the life of public figures; and

Hoffman (1943) assessed the histories of 53 psychotic visitors to government offices in Washington. *It appears from the extant stalking research that the likelihood of severe mental illness is greatest when there has been no previous relationship between the stalker and his or her object of pursuit.* Findings from the general stalking arena, however, will not always be applicable to public figure stalking, and this fact further underlines the need for a dedicated, cohesive literature.

Most of the general literature on stalking has so far found a negative relationship between psychosis and stalker violence. This does not, however, rule out the prospect that a positive association exists in some cases. Stalkers are a heterogeneous group that includes children, the elderly, males, females, professionals, the unemployed, the gifted, the mentally disabled, the sane, and the insane. Although stalkers will engage in similar behaviors to achieve their goals (see Spitzberg's 2002 and 2007 meta-analyses), individual motivations will differ, as will the contingent success of various interventions (Sheridan & Boon, 2000). Therefore, stalker violence will share a complex and multidimensional relationship with many variables that cannot be charted via studies that feed lists of potential correlates into basic statistical models. Indeed, when Rosenfeld and Lewis (2005) utilized a regression tree approach to assess factors associated with stalker violence, they found psychosis to be positively or negatively related to stalking violence, depending on its interaction with additional risk factors. The regression tree approach is nonlinear and is able to identify *subgroups* of individuals with varying probabilities of violent behavior.

The obvious operational difficulty is translating large group research data that relies on correlational and predictive statistics into meaningful tools that can be applied to the individual case. We stress the importance of using large group data to anchor one's assessment, but then looking at the specific relationship in the individual case between active symptoms of mental disorder that may motivate stalking, threatening, and attacking; personality disorder (especially psychopathy); contextual and situational factors (Borum et al., 1999); and violence. The theoretical stance is a recognition that both nomothetic and idiographic approaches help understand and risk manage a particular case (Chapters 3, 5, 10, 15, 17, 19, and 20). Recent research, however, has arguably shown the severe limitations of actuarial predictions in violence risk due to the extraordinarily large confidence intervals when a probability estimate of a particular group's violence is applied to an individual within that group (Hart, Michie, & Cooke, 2007).

Psychopathy

Although there continues to be controversy about whether severe mental illness increases the risk of criminal violence (Wallace, Mullen, & Burgess, 2004), there is a growing body of research that suggests that psychopathy in the mentally ill may account for these differences of opinion. When psychopathy has been deliberately measured in research concerning criminal violence and

the mentally ill, it has consistently emerged as the most significant predictor (Abushua'leh & Abu-Akel, 2006; Blum, 2004; Dolan & Davies, 2006; Fullam & Dolan, 2006; Monahan et al., 2001; Nolan, Volavka, Mohr, & Cxobor, 1999; Rice & Harris, 1995; Tengstrom, Grann, Langstrom, & Killgren, 2000). However, when psychopathy is controlled, a severe psychotic symptom complex (threat-control-override) significantly increases the risk of aggressive behavior (Hodgins, Hiscoke, & Freese, 2003). The most useful current formulation appears to be that *psychopathy may account for the largest proportion of explainable variance for the prediction of violence among the mentally ill, but active mental illness, especially certain psychotic symptoms associated with persecution, may also contribute to violence risk.*

Psychopathy among those who stalk, threaten, and attack public figures has yet to be systematically measured in any study. However, the construct, particularly when measured with tools such as the P-SCAN (Chapter 10), is being noted and recommended for inclusion in law enforcement and security operations. It is also implicit in several of the motivational typologies (see Table 1.1).

Reality Testing and Psychosis

Reality testing is the ability to differentiate between internal and external stimuli. When grossly impaired, the individual is considered psychotic: He or she is divorced from consensual reality, and has created a private, idiosyncratic, and often bizarre internal world. Psychosis, of course, can be caused by a variety of factors, including major mental disorder, drug abuse, and various medical conditions. Its common clinical manifestations are hallucinations (false sensations), delusions (fixed and false beliefs), and formal thought disorder (illogic or paralogic).

Reality testing impairments appear to be quite common among public figure stalkers and attackers (Fein & Vossekuil, 1999; Fixated Research Group, 2006; James et al., 2007; Meloy et al., 2004), although the causes of such impairments likely vary widely and have received little research attention. It appears from the research that a large proportion of public figure stalkers and attackers are psychotic at the time, but the majority are not (Fein & Vossekuil, 1999; Meloy et al., 2004; Mohandie et al., 2006). There is no demarcation between internal and external for a psychotic individual. Fantasy is reality. The personality organization from a psychoanalytic perspective would be considered psychotic (Kernberg, 1984).

Borderline Personality Organization

On the other hand, most nonpsychotic individuals who pursue, and occasionally attack, public figures may be organized at a *borderline* level of personality (Kernberg, 1984; Meloy, 1989) (see Chapters 8, 12, and 13). This is not synonymous with the diagnosis of borderline personality disorder, yet personality

disorders of various permutations will be evident—often the cluster B variety (antisocial, histrionic, narcissistic, and borderline), but occasionally cluster A (paranoid) or cluster C (obsessive-compulsive, dependent) (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). Such individuals have four domains of psychological impairment.

First, although they can differentiate between internal fantasy and external reality, they are confused about the origin of perceptual stimuli. For example, the subject may become increasingly angry at the celebrity figure for not responding to his letters, yet sense that the celebrity figure is angry at him. He then initiates ways of reconciling with, or protecting himself from, the celebrity figure.

Second, psychological defenses tend to be more primitive and immature. The celebrity may be initially idealized, and then angrily devalued when he or she does not meet the subject's expectations. Denial that there is, in fact, a growing preoccupation may be utilized to fend off confrontations by family and friends. Projection—the attribution of one's own thoughts, feelings, and perceptions to others—may provide the lens through which the stalker perceives the motivations of the celebrity and is personally disturbed by them. And projective identification, composed of both attribution and control, leaves the stalker feeling threatened by his or her own anger that he or she has attributed to the celebrity, which may motivate a first approach to quash the threat. Sometimes this anger will be displaced and projected onto a third party (a celebrity's current lover or security detail), and the stalker comes to believe that he or she must rescue the celebrity from the nefarious activities of these other individuals (Meloy, 1999b).

Third, internal representations of self and others are simplified and polarized. The celebrity is a beauty without blemish, and the stalker is his or her perfect mate. Once rejected, the celebrity is an object of derision and disgust, unworthy of any respect. These part object, or self-object (Kohut, 1971) (Chapter 8), representations usually mean that feelings will also be intense, coarse, and rapidly changing, much as one observes in a young child. The advent of whole object representations wherein others are perceived as separate, real, and meaningful individuals has not been developmentally achieved. Such mature representations are anchored in the various shades of reality, supporting the toleration of ambiguity and the experience of mixed and modulated feelings. Such is not the case with most public figure stalkers.

Fourth, attachments are insecure. There is a growing body of research that most stalkers have histories of insecure attachments, and more specifically, preoccupied ones (Meloy, 2007). Attachments are biologically based, species-specific behavioral systems that ensure proximity to the caretaker for a child, and predict repetitive attempts to form sexual and affectional relationships as an adult (Bowlby, 1979). Most human beings form attachments. The great paradox among stalkers, whether pursuing prior sexual intimates or public figures, is that they are seeking proximity to an object that continues to actively reject

them, whether personally or by proxy (attorneys, law enforcement officers, private security agents).

Copycat Effects

Imitation is a cornerstone of developmental psychology. Internalizations and identifications are important concepts in psychoanalytic theory. In 1911, MacDonald wrote in his study of attacks on public figures: "One means of protection is for newspapers, magazines and authors of books to cease publishing the names of the criminals...this would lessen the hope for glory, renown, or notoriety, which is a great incentive to such crimes" (p. 519). His early study raised two issues that are critical to understanding the power of copycat effects on attacks and assassinations of public figures. First, there is a longing to be someone special, a clinical dynamic that is a facet of pathological narcissism (Chapter 8). Second, there is the anticipation that the mass media will widely publicize the assault, transforming the attacker into a famous person. This is another aspect of pathological narcissism referred to as "grandiosity." Although empirical study of the general mechanisms of copycat crimes is very weak (Surette, 2002), anecdotal examples are legion. It would appear that relatively unusual crimes, including attacks on public figures, are particularly prone to copycat effects (Wilson & Hunter, 1983) because they accomplished in reality for the previous assassin what the aspiring assassin covets.

Dietz and Martell (1989) first noted in contemporary literature that efforts to study or emulate famous assassins as predecessors or role models may be one of several factors that predict such behavior. Fein and Vossekuil (1998, 1999) found that 44% of their sample of those who near lethally approached, attacked, or assassinated a public figure in the United States had demonstrated an intense interest in assassination, and in some cases had even corresponded with previous assassins.

John Wilkes Booth was an actor who coveted celebrity. On the night he shot President Abraham Lincoln in the Ford Theater in Washington, he gave tickets to his friends, saying that "there would be great acting" (MacDonald, 1911, p. 510). Sometimes attacks that initially appear to be motivated by political reasons are, instead, a product of media reports of another crime. Josef Bachmann fired three rounds at the leader of the left wing student movement Rudi Dutschke in Germany. This was labeled as a right wing extremist attack, but closer inspection indicated that Bachmann was inspired by the assassination of the American civil rights leader Martin Luther King (Doubek, 2003) in April, 1968. Before driving to the location of the assault, he told his colleagues, "you will hear from me; on TV, on radio and in the press" (Kellerhof, 2003, p. 73).

Modus operandi can also be heavily influenced by a previous assassin's behaviors. Robert Bardo read in a magazine that Arthur Jackson, the British man who almost murdered the American actor Theresa Saldana, had

discovered her private address by hiring a detective agency (Saunders, 1998). Bardo did the same and murdered Rebecca Schaeffer on the doorstep of her apartment, in 1989.

Screenwriters and films often unwittingly engage in this public dance of death. Paul Shafer, a Hollywood screenwriter, based his screenplay for the movie *Taxi Driver*, on the real life diaries of Arthur Bremer who had attempted to assassinate, and only crippled, Governor George Wallace of Alabama a few years earlier. John Hinckley Jr., was influenced by, and identified with, the character Travis Bickle in the movie *Taxi Driver* when he attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan in 1981. Deadly fiction imitated deadly fact, which imitated deadly fiction over the course of one decade.

And then there is the influence of literature and various internalizations, the most striking example being the intense interest in, and identification with, Holden Caulfield, the angst-ridden adolescent in the book, *Catcher in the Rye*, written by J.D. Salinger and first published in 1945. Mark Chapman was 25 years old when he killed John Lennon in December, 1980, and then sat down on the curb and was reading the book when the police arrived. Three months later, John Hinckley Jr., was 25 when he attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan. The book was found in his hotel room. Robert Bardo was 19 when he killed Rebecca Schaeffer 8 years later. He had the book in his possession at the time. These young men not only identified with the Caulfield character—his loneliness, sadness, alienation, hatred, and occasional fantasies of violence—but they also *identified with each other*, as they, in turn, sought the limelight. As Arthur Bremer had written in his diaries a decade earlier: “to do SOMETHING BOLD AND DRAMATIC, FORCEFULL (*sic*) & DYNAMIC, A STATEMENT of my manhood for the world to see” (www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/wallace/sfeature/assassin.html).

Mental Illness and Lapse of Care

A consistent finding throughout the public figure stalking, threatening, and attacking research is that mental illness, if present, has gone untreated for a period. This has been described as part of the downward spiral of these individuals' lives as they formulate an often grandiose plan to bring a notoriety to their sad existence through an attack on a public figure. This absence of mental health care is often a combination of individual noncompliance and limited public resources. Such an outcome is not the least bit surprising when it is consistently reported that half of normal individuals do not take their medications as prescribed by their physicians.

Limited public resources for mental health care have been a chronic problem for decades, and anything associated with “mental health” remains the stigmatized stepchild of modern medicine. Given the severe cognitive, perceptual, and emotional impairments that accompany mental illness, it is a wonder that individuals form a stable treatment alliance with their mental health care provider.

Noncompliance, however, does not predict an attack on a public figure, and only very few will veer in this dangerous direction. Improved public mental health care in general, moreover, would likely cast a wide enough net that a few individuals who were inclined toward a preoccupation with public figures would be dissuaded from acting out through a stable and reality-based relationship with a mental health professional.

Involuntary outpatient treatment (Meloy, Haroun, & Schiller, 1992) also offers a more specific and coercive treatment environment, while preserving most individual freedoms, for those mentally ill individuals who are less inclined to voluntarily seek treatment. Such programs target the more grossly psychotic and paranoid individuals who do not pose an imminent danger to others, but may be taking the first few steps down a pathway toward violence. Involuntary outpatient treatment has been enormously successful in the stabilization of patients in the community following a verdict of not guilty by reason of insanity (see, e.g., the Conditional Release Program in California). This model, however, is based upon tertiary care—after the fact of the felony—often a violent one. We are proposing such a model of treatment as preventive care (Mullen et al., *in press*), which would be the place of diversion for those individuals who raise concern in others because of their pathological fixations upon public figures. Such a program has been implemented in Britain (Fixated Research Group, 2006) and is called the Fixated Threat Assessment Centre.

A landmark psycholegal development 200 years ago in England was due in part to an attack on a public figure, namely his Majesty King George III. Before this case, the law did not properly distinguish “criminal lunatics” from more general “lunatics.” James Hadfield, a 29-year-old man, was found not guilty of attempting to shoot and kill the king because of his delusional state of mind when he committed the crime. His acquittal was followed by a public outcry because until this time the fate of those acquitted by reason of insanity was not prescribed and such individuals were often released into the charge of their relatives. The result of this outcry was the Criminal Lunatics Act of 1800, drawn up to provide for the indefinite detention of insane defendants. Hadfield was held in the Bethlem Royal Hospital in London until he died of tuberculosis (James et al., 2007; Moran, 1985).

Criminal Histories

Within the general stalking literature some authors have found the stalker’s criminal history to be a good predictor of violence (Mullen, Pathé, Purcell, & Stuart, 1999), although others have found it to be a weak predictor (Brewster, 2002) or a nonpredictor (Meloy, Davis, & Lovette, 2001; Palarea, Zona, Lane, & Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 1999; Rosenfeld & Lewis, 2005). This inconsistency is not surprising, given the wide-ranging methodological differences across studies, and it may be that certain types or combinations of prior criminal behavior may to some degree predict certain types of obsessional contact. The

current state of knowledge is of value but is not sufficiently sophisticated to suggest marked criminal pathways or predictors.

In the more specific evidence relating to inappropriate contact with public figures, there is some indication that violent criminal history is a reasonable predictor or correlate of approach behavior. For instance, those who sought physical proximity to federal judicial officials were more likely to have previous histories of violence than those who maintained a distance (Calhoun, 1998). Similarly, Scalora et al.'s (2002) examination of U.S. Capitol Police Threat Assessment Section files revealed that approachers had significantly more prior convictions than did nonapproachers. This was particularly marked in terms of property offences, violent offenses, and drug and alcohol charges. Even so, the majority of members of both groups did not have any known criminal history. Neither did previous convictions for harassment and making threats differentiate the groups. Vossekuil, Fein, Borum, and Reddy (2001) noted that of those who had attacked and sought to attack judicial officials, few had histories of arrest for violent crimes or for crimes that involved weapons. In their study of 83 public figure assassins, attackers, and near-lethal approachers, few had histories of arrests for violent crimes or weapons crimes, and had ever been incarcerated (Fein & Vossekuil, 1998). Mohandie et al. (2006) found that only 8% of their sample of 271 celebrity stalkers had a violent criminal history, significantly less than their other groups combined (43%).

Among 24 individuals who attacked western European politicians between 1990 and 2004, 38% had a previous conviction for a violent crime, and two additional subjects were known for their violent activities. Moreover, for six subjects their conviction history was unknown (James et al., 2007). In another study of attacks against the British monarch or immediate members of the Royal Family, 23 cases were identified between 1778 and 1994. Data were insufficient to determine histories of violent criminal behavior (James et al., in press), although there was clear evidence of psychosis in half the cases. And in the study of contemporary approaches to the British Royal Family (see Table 1.1 for typology), 24% had a criminal record and 10% had a previous conviction for violence. Moreover, of those who *successfully breached* a security perimeter, they were significantly more likely to be male (92%), to have a criminal record (37%), to be intoxicated (37%), and to not be mentally ill (74%) (Fixated Research Group, 2006).

Schlesinger and Mesa (Chapter 4) report that at least one third of their sample of violent stalkers (homicide or attempted homicide) of nonpolitical celebrity figures ($n = 16$) had criminal histories, although some data were unavailable. The operational hypothesis at this point appears to be that *violent criminal histories are present in a significant minority of public figure stalking, threat, and attack cases, but should not be assumed. However, such histories, when present, may correlate with an increased risk of a breach or attack.* Further research is needed.

Violence and Weapons

It is clear that firearms are the weapons of choice for those who assassinate public figures in the United States. In Fein and Vossekuil's (1998, 1999) study of assassins, attackers, and near-lethal approachers, 81% employed firearms and 15% used knives. Given that many public figure attacks will be predatory rather than affective in nature, it would follow that the majority of cases involve use of a firearm to increase tactical advantage (see Meloy, 2001). Dietz, Matthews, Van Duyne, et al. (1991) noted that only about 6% of those who wrote inappropriate letters to Hollywood celebrities mentioned weapons, and the majority of these never went on to approach the target. Conversely, in Dietz, Matthews, Martell, et al.'s (1991) related study of written communications received by members of the U.S. Congress, 30% of writers mentioned weapons in their missives. Mention of weapons was not, however, significantly associated with approaching the target.

In contemporary approaches to the British Royal Family, 5% carried a weapon: firearms, swords, knives, a baseball bat, a screw driver, and a razor blade (Fixated Research Group, 2006). One third of these individuals had a criminal record, and were significantly more likely to be hostile or aggressive and have homicidal ideation, but less likely to be fixated on a particular person than those who did not carry a weapon. They were also significantly more likely to be both pursuing an agenda and chaotically psychotic (see Table 1.1). They were also more likely to be assaultive, intimidating, threatening, abusive, and angry when approached by a proxy (usually security or law enforcement) than those who did not carry a weapon.

Among the 23 individuals who had attacked members of the British Royal Family between 1778 and 1994, 57% used a firearm (usually a handgun), but half ($n = 6$) were not loaded. Other weapons included knives, stones, and a brass-headed walking cane (James et al., in press). In contemporary attacks on western European politicians, 83% used a weapon, including firearms, a letter bomb, a Molotov cocktail, and a samurai sword, knives, a cosh, a photographic tripod, a liquid-filled balloon, and a powder bomb. Fatalities were caused by the firearms and knives (James et al., 2007). Of the 16 homicidal stalker attackers of nonpolitical celebrity figures in North America and Europe, 71% used a firearm and 18% used a knife. Two others used a bomb and set a fire (Chapter 4).

New research into sensational interests (i.e., interest in weapons, the occult, martial arts, the paranormal, and militaristic topics) could prove fruitful in identifying an important potential risk factor. Interest in sensational topics has been found to be related to Eysenck's psychoticism (very similar to modern descriptions of psychopathy), low agreeableness, low conscientiousness, sensation seeking, and delinquency (see Egan et al., 2005). Indeed, a number of "gun-obsessed fanatics" have attacked high-profile celebrities (e.g., Barry George, who was convicted for killing BBC presenter Jill Dando), and most of the assassins in the Fein and Vossekuil (1999) work had a history of weapons

Table 1.2. Comparison of violent behavior between public figure stalkers and prior sexually intimate stalkers: Hypotheses based on empirical evidence

Public figure stalkers	Prior sexually intimate stalkers
Violence frequency very low (2%)	Violence frequency very high (>50%)
Usually predatory mode	Usually affective mode
Major mental disorder likely	No major mental disorder likely
Weapons use, a firearm	Weapons use unlikely
No direct threat communicated to target or police beforehand	Direct threats common

use and militaristic and other sensational interests. There is a parallel finding in the adolescent and adult mass murder research (Meloy et al., 2004).

When considering likely or actual weapons usage in relation to attacks on public figures, it must be borne in mind that observable temporal trends in weapons usage exist (see e.g., Fox & Zawitz, 2003), and that people in different countries and regions will have differing access to and preference for particular weapons. *The operational hypothesis appears to be that weapons will be used in attacks on public figures, and fatalities are associated with firearms and cutting instruments.*

Table 1.2 provides a summary that compares certain aspects of violence between public figure stalkers and prior sexually intimate stalkers. Although it is simplistic, and will not apply in all cases, we hope it emphasizes the striking differences between these two groups of stalkers when they are violent.

Violence Risk Management

A principle aim of the embryonic literature on stalking, threatening, and attacking public figures is the management of risk, but the problem itself must first be identified and accepted. The literature on stalking, which has now amassed over 300 articles in the social sciences alone, reliably demonstrates that stalking is a difficult concept to define. Stalking may often consist of the targeted repetition of behaviors that are, when considered in isolation, ostensibly routine and harmless. It is the chronic and frequently unpredictable nature of stalking that instills so much fear in its victims. But how do victims decide that a stalker or otherwise inappropriate communicator is targeting them? Victim's gender may influence such decisions (e.g., Sheridan, Gillett, & Davies, 2002), as may personal knowledge of stalking (e.g., Yanowitz, 2006) and individual attitudes and occupation (Kamphuis et al., 2005). Of course, in the case of public figures, it will often not be the targets themselves who decide whether stalking is occurring. We have been involved in cases, particularly outside the United States, where security and other personnel were insufficiently informed

of the threat posed by individuals with pathological fixations and decided to ignore the problem or deal with it in-house. Such solutions may involve visiting the communicator and attempting to warn him or her off, or even allowing the communicator access to the public figure. Fortunately, teachings from the science of threat management are extending, and the need for a coordinated and consistent approach is becoming more apparent. This book provides a window into this theoretical and practical knowledge.

Traditional methods of predicting violence are being superseded by methods for managing the risk of violence. This is especially true when the targets are public figures because of the relatively low frequency of actual violence, yet the high social intensity of such a violent act. These traditional methods, which are all considered nomothetic (based upon large group data), can be divided into three groups:

1. Actuarial instruments that are based upon probability estimates of a future behavior within a group (e.g., VRAG, COVR, STATIC 99)
2. Structured professional judgment instruments that do not provide a quantitative prediction of risk, but organize data on a case according to known risk factors for violence (e.g., HCR-20, SAM, WAVR-21)
3. Other clinical instruments that happen to predict violence (e.g., PCL-R, LSI-R)

The fourth approach is idiographic (based upon individual case data) and eliminates the low base rate problem of the nomothetic instruments by focusing upon dynamic and behavioral aspects of an individual of concern (e.g., threat assessment model).

Violence is usually a choice or a decision, not an inevitable consequence of having a number of features (e.g., being young, male, unemployed, and a regular drug user). It is particularly so among public figure stalkers who are violent because of the planned and purposeful nature of most of their attacks. The risk of violence, however, is always uncertain: Even the most violent offenders choose not to be violent most of the time. We have to think about managing someone's behavior and implementing systems or interventions to address specific scenarios. If seeing the targeted celebrity out with her husband makes a particular individual engage in risky behavior, then during all public appearances of the couple, security personnel need to watch out for the particular individual. If the person is known to prefer arson as a method of getting the public figure's attention, then taking additional fire safety precautions is in order. Sometimes the best course is planning for all possible scenarios and defending against them. Human behavior is far too individualized and dynamic to just depend upon large group data; but humans also share many characteristics, some of which place them in subject pools of greater risk for certain behaviors, such as violence. The most advanced threat assessment programs are able to continuously input static and dynamic variables that emerge in new cases into their databases and therefore update their risk assessment algorithms and risk management approaches (Chapter 19).

The data in this book also make clear that every violence risk management of a threat toward a public figure must seriously consider the role of mental disorder. When assessing delusional individuals, the principle of rationality-within-irrationality (Link & Stueve, 1994) proves to be helpful for operations. This is the concept that psychotic persons behave rationally in the context of their delusional system. It is based upon the psychological premise that an individual's perception of his social world guides his or her action. For example, if a person believes that he or she is gravely threatened by a public figure because of a persecutory delusion, then violence is more likely because he or she will view it as justified self-defense (Link & Stueve, 1994). It is crucial in the process of threat assessment and risk management to understand the nature and content of the subject's internal experience, especially if there is evidence that he or she is psychotic. We can then individualize the risk management process and still apply nomothetic instruments such as the Stalking Assessment and Management (SAM), the only structured professional judgment instrument for stalking and violence yet developed (Chapter 15). Functional and behavioral approaches can then also be utilized during the real-time management of the case, applying the work of Fein and Vossekuil (1999), Borum et al. (1999), Scalora et al. (2002, 2003) (Chapter 19), Calhoun and Weston (2003), and Mullen et al. (2006) (Chapter 5).

The state of the science of public figure stalking, threats, and attacks provides a growing body of research for forensic scientists and security specialists in both the public and private sectors. It is with optimism and energy that we offer this book, and hope that it will contribute to better understanding of this global problem. Such problems, however, are ultimately always personal, and sometimes very painful, for the public figure. Katarina Witt, the two-time Olympic figure skating gold medalist, had such an experience when she was cross-examined by her erotomaniac stalker who represented himself at his trial. He had written to her, "Don't be afraid when God allows me to pull you out of your body to hold you tight. Then you'll know that there is life beyond the flesh." (*Los Angeles Times*, March 12, 1992, p. A3, as referenced in Orion, 1997).

Notes

1. The timing of this varies, but often coincides with private security deciding to involve law enforcement in the case for potential criminal prosecution.
2. The California Supreme Court opined in 1976, "We would hesitate to hold that the therapist who is aware that his patient expects to attempt to assassinate the President of the United States would not be obligated to warn the authorities because the therapist cannot predict with accuracy that his patient will commit the crime.... The protective privilege ends where the public peril begins" (*Tarasoff v. Regents of the University of California*, 17 Cal 3d 425, at 346–347).
3. The California Court of Appeal recently found in a public figure case that the victim's awareness does not have to be contemporaneous with the stalking behavior (*People v. Norman*, 75 Cal. App. 4th, 1234 [1999]).

4. SSA James Fitzgerald of the FBI Behavioral Analysis Unit 1, created in 2002, communicated threat assessment database, which currently holds over 3,000 criminally oriented communications for use in the linguistic and behavioral investigation of threats. He is currently with the Academy Group, Inc.
5. One exception are attacks on judicial officials which are predatory, but are typically perpetrated by someone who has appeared before the judicial official in a legal context, establishing a relationship which is typically quite antagonistic (Calhoun, 1998).

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