



The Psychology of Stalking

Clinical and Forensic Perspectives

1998, Pages 69-84

Chapter 4 - Psychiatric Diagnosis and the Offender-Victim Typology of Stalking

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<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-012490560-3/50023-2>

Publisher Summary

Until the early 1990s, knowledge concerning the psychology and behavior of stalkers was limited. Most people who were aware of this phenomenon probably viewed the issue in terms of an individual who repeatedly attempted to make contact with a “celebrity” for a variety of purposes. There have been several attempts to characterize the various stalking behaviors and relationships that are described in this chapter. The most fundamental aspect of these individuals is that they portray a behavior. In psychiatric and psychological disease processes, many of the symptoms are expressed in cognitive and/or behavioral patterns. Stalkers who suffer from thought disorders typically have Axis I diagnoses of schizophrenia or one of the various types of delusional disorders. This chapter highlights a watershed event that occurred in 1989 with the murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer by a stalker named Robert Bardo. In contrast to the domestic violence type case, many relationships involve nothing more than brief dating, with one of the two partners deciding not to continue the contact. A rejection, which is not handled well when a relationship ends, results in vengeance.