

Stalking



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Stalking Stalking has only recently been defined as criminal in the late 20th century. This criminal behavior can be understood better through the learning/social-learning perspective. Most individuals are not born with a tendency to be a stalker. Stalking is a learned behavior through social interaction and observation. The exception is individuals that are delusional, or diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenics. These individuals cannot be held accountable for their actions due to a mental illness. However, only a small number of stalkers fall into this category. Most stalkers have been exposed, through social interaction or observation, to factors like violence.

B Turvey (2002: 509) defines stalking as “ a crime involving the behavioral intrusion of one person in the life of another that is maladaptive.” One incident of intrusion into an individual's life is not considered stalking, multiple incidents must occur. This is why delusional or paranoid schizophrenic individuals are not the majority stalkers. In fact, delusional or paranoid schizophrenic individuals are not defined as stalkers under the law and psychological definitions (Davis, 2001: 5). These individuals are diagnosed as having a mental illness, not being a stalker.

Most stalkers live outwardly normal lives (Davis, 2001: 5). Stalkers fall into a few general categories. The majority of stalkers were in a relationship with their victim, but feel the victim has wronged them somehow. Another common stalker is the secret admirer type. A man or woman who has a crush on an individual and wants to be noticed (Davis, 2001: 5). Most stalkers are men, but women can stalk as well.

Control is a common issue with stalkers. Stalkers tend to feel out of control, so in response they try to regain that control through stalking. The first type of stalker is of a scorned lover or husband. When a spouse decides that it is

over, the stalker feels the control slipping from their hands. The same goes with the secret admirer that does not get noticed. When the secret admirer does not get noticed through normal methods, stalking makes their victims focus on them, giving them more control.

The most common stalker is one of an ex-spouse. While the man is stalking the woman or vice versa, the children are observing this behavior. In turn these children start exhibiting stalking traits (Pinals, 2007: 3). A child observing a stalking situation probably feel sympathetic with the stalker, because the stalker has the power. The child despises the victim, because the victim cannot protect themselves, much less their children. Just like child abuse is handed down from generation to generation, so is stalking.

Ultimately stalkers are unhappy with their lives. They tell themselves that if they could be romantically linked with their obsession, or get revenge upon their nemesis, they will be happy. Like with Mark Chapmans obsession with John Lennon. When he realized John Lennon was not what he envision, he killed him. Stalking takes a deadly turn when the stalker feels that the victim can no longer make them happy, or not what they expected.

Another social aspect of stalking is the media. With actresses, actors, or other public figures information readily available on television, radio, and Internet stalkers have more information. It is easier to take the stalking to the next level. The media makes stalking easy. It is easier to visualize a victim, get their phone number or address, and track their movements. Stalking is a learned behavior, whether learned from parents or media. Stalking is about control. Individuals learn control and power can be achieved by stalking. More studies need to be undertaken to better understand the behavioral learning perspective of stalking.

References

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