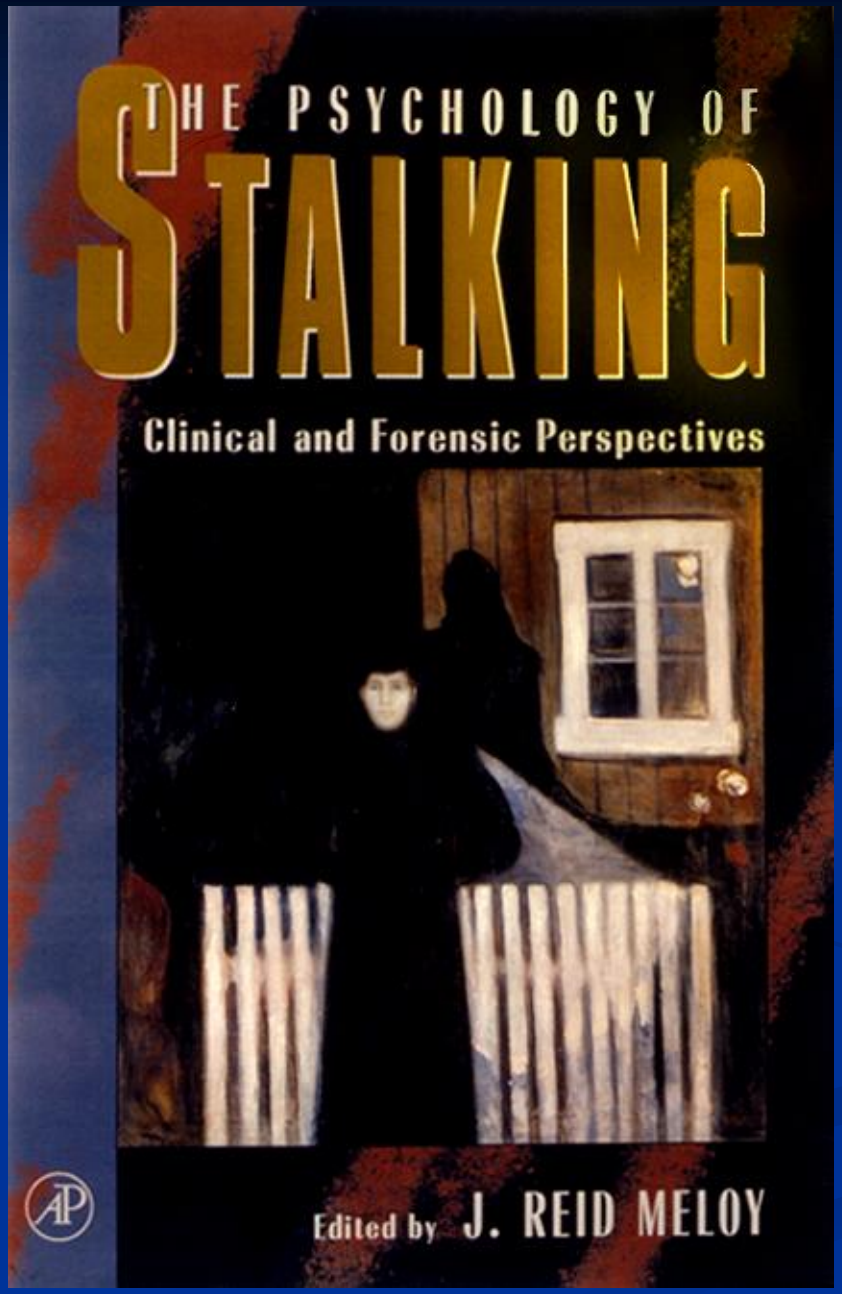
# Stalking: An old researcher looks at the newest research

J. Reid Meloy, Ph.D.

CATAP Annual Conference

Malbaie, Quebec

October 25, 2017


THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
STALKING
Clinical and Forensic Perspectives
Edited by J. REID MELOY

# New Research 2014-17 (with some deviations)

- Risk Assessment for Stalking and Violence
- Gang Stalking
- Public Figure Stalking and Attacks
- Cyberstalking
- Trolling and Harassment

****DrReidMeloy.com

If I make you
breakfast in bed,
a simple “thank you”
is all I need.

Not all this
“How did you get
in my house”
buisness

# Elements of Criminal Stalking

- Unwanted pattern of pursuit
- Implicit or explicit threat
- Induction of fear or intent to induce fear in the victim

# Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic,1989

## Unrequited Love and the Wish to Kill

### Diagnosis and Treatment of Borderline Erotomania

J. Reid Meloy, Ph.D.*

*Abstract:* The author hypothesizes that erotomania, or de Clérambault's syndrome, occurs in two forms: the clinically accepted delusional erotomania, in which patients believe that another person is in love with them; and borderline erotomania, in which no delusion is present, yet an extreme disorder of attachment is apparent in the pursuit of, and in the potential for violence toward, the unrequited love object. The author reviews the empirical literature concerning erotomania and then develops an object relations understanding of the disorder, focusing on the presence of narcissistic, hysterical, paranoid, and psychopathic traits in the erotomanic individual. (*Bulletin of the Menninger Clinic*, 53, 477–492)

You know a few things about me, dear sweetheart
Like my obsession with fantasy
But what the rabble don't yet understand
Is that fantasies become reality in my world.

John Hinckley, Jr.
(cited in Caplan, 1987, p. 62)

# Current Findings on Stalking

- An old behavior, a new crime
- Perpetrators are males, victims are females (80%)
- Age of both in 20s to 30s; but wide range (16-60)
- Prior criminal, psychiatric, and drug abuse histories
- Epidemiology (Spitzberg, 2007)
  - 8-32% women victimized during lifetime
  - 2-13% men victimized during lifetime
  - Method sensitive

# 1. Risk Assessment

- McEwan, Daffern, MacKenzie & Ogloff. J Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, 28, 38-56, 2017
- "Most stalking violence can be attributed to angry, substance-affected, threatening ex-partners who make other physical contacts with the victim during the stalking episodes" (p. 39)

# McEwan et al., 2017

- Methods
  - Retrospective design
  - Stalking, violence, persistence, recurrence
  - 157 subjects (91% male), heavy correctional
  - Referred to stalking clinic in Melbourne, 2010-13
  - 35 years old (SD=10.8)
  - 55% ex-intimates, 56% prior convictions, 64% mentally disordered
  - 85% primary victims female

# McEwan et al., 2017

- Results
  - Violence present in 27% ex-intimates, 7% other stalkers
  - 6% serious violence
  - Final predictive model for stalking violence
    - Ex-intimate relationship
    - Explicit threats (direct and leakage)
    - Property damage
    - AUC=0.74
    - At rate of 18%, absence of any one of these three predictors means no violence 90% of time

# McEwan et al., 2017

- For ex-intimates, best predictors of stalking violence are:
  - **Prior IPV**
  - Explicit threats (direct and leakage)
  - Loitering/spying
  - Property damage
  - AUC=0.78
  - 89% of ex-intimates with only one risk factor do not become violent

# McEwan et al., 2017

- Stalking persistence: prolonged stalking of same victim
  - 1 day to 17.5 years (median 12 weeks)
  - Correlates
    - **Delusions**
    - Acquaintances increased, strangers decreased
    - History of violence or sexual offending decreased
    - No difference between ex-intimates and other groups
    - Refer stranger and acquaintance cases for MI eval

# Johnson & Thompson. Psychology, Crime & Law, 2016

- Stalking persistence in 637 Australian ex-intimate stalkers
  - Self-reporting method
  - High persistence (>1 year)
    - Age >30 yrs
    - Some tertiary education
    - Higher attachment avoidance
    - No amorous motives
    - Wanted to frighten/hurt the victim
    - Angry
    - Feeling suicidal (moderate too)

# McEwan et al., 2017

- Stalking recurrence: stalking episodes distinct and multiple toward same or different victims
- Predictors
  - **Personality disorder, esp cluster B**
  - Age >30 years
  - High criminal versatility
  - Acquaintance
  - Erotomanic delusions (may be separate gp)
  - AUC=0.75
  - Three factor threshold best

# Other stalking risk studies of note

- Foellmi, Rosenfeld & Galietta (2016). Assessing risk of recidivism in individuals convicted of stalking offenses. Criminal Justice and Behavior.

  First predictive validity study of the SAM using prospective design. Average followup 2.5 years. Mixed results. Total SAM scores predicted stalking recidivism but no significant association between SAM scores and violent outcomes.

  Read carefully with sufficient consultant interpretation.

# Other stalking risk studies of note

- McEwan, Shea, Daffern, MacKenzie, Ogloff & Mullen (2016). Reliability and predictive validity of the Stalking Risk Profile. Assessment.
  - Reliability high. Predictive validity moderate, with duration of followup important. Retrospective data. Note several authors are authors of SRP; conflict noted in publication. Complex results, read carefully while sitting next to a statistician. Best predictions of stalking for those considered high risk and those who stalked new victims.

# Other stalking risk studies of note

- Hehemann, van Nobelen, Brandt & McEwan (2017). Reliability and predictive validity of the Screening Assessment for Stalking and Harassment (SASH). JTAM, 4:164-177
  - 16 item combination of SRP, SAM, and B-SAFER; moderate levels of agreement for "absolute concern" and reliability (ICC=.62). 83% sensitivity (true positive), 46% specificity (true negative): low vs. moderate/high concern and outcome. Netherlands National Police Study.

# Stalking and Violence: Cumulative Data

- Average is one third are violent
- Prior sexually intimate the most dangerous
- Private stalking: No weapon, minor injury, cars at risk as weapons and targets
- Homicide rate 0.25% (1:400)
- 80% of spousal homicide victims previously stalked by the perpetrator
- Older stalkers just as violent, but older victims not taken as seriously (Sheridan et al., 2014)

# Predicting Femicide

- Kropp & Cook, Int Handbook of Threat Assessment, 2014
  - Proprietariness (Ownership)
  - Possession or availability of firearm
  - Escalation in severity or frequency of violence
  - Mental problems
  - **Stalking**
  - Recent separation or divorce, especially first few months

# 2. Gang Stalking

- The perception and/or belief that a group of people are stalking you.

TIA
TARGETED INDIVIDUALS ASSOCIATION
Together Our Voices Will Be Heard!
We are lobbying every Government in the world to ban V2K (Voice to Skull), Gang Stalking, DEW (Direct Energy Weapons) & Mind Control!
If your a Targeted Individual, you need to join with us, together we will Beat this!
We are united in the fight , The T I A will take the fight To their doorstep, help us end it now!
Targeted Individuals Association
www.targeted-individuals.co.uk

Made with KINEMASTER
INFO WARS
Even when your sleeping.
They talk or wake you up.

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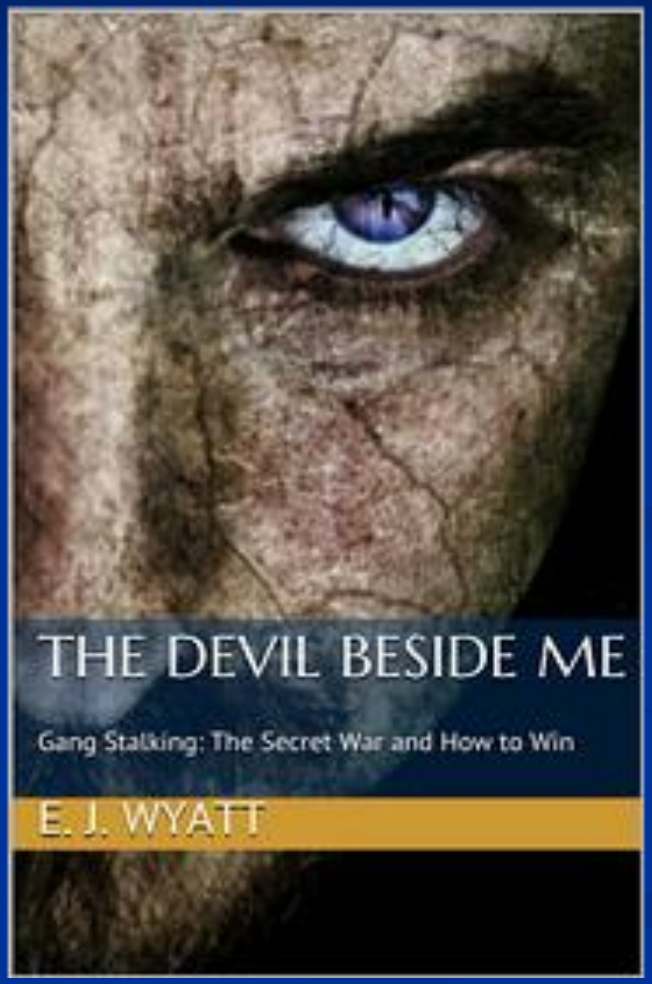
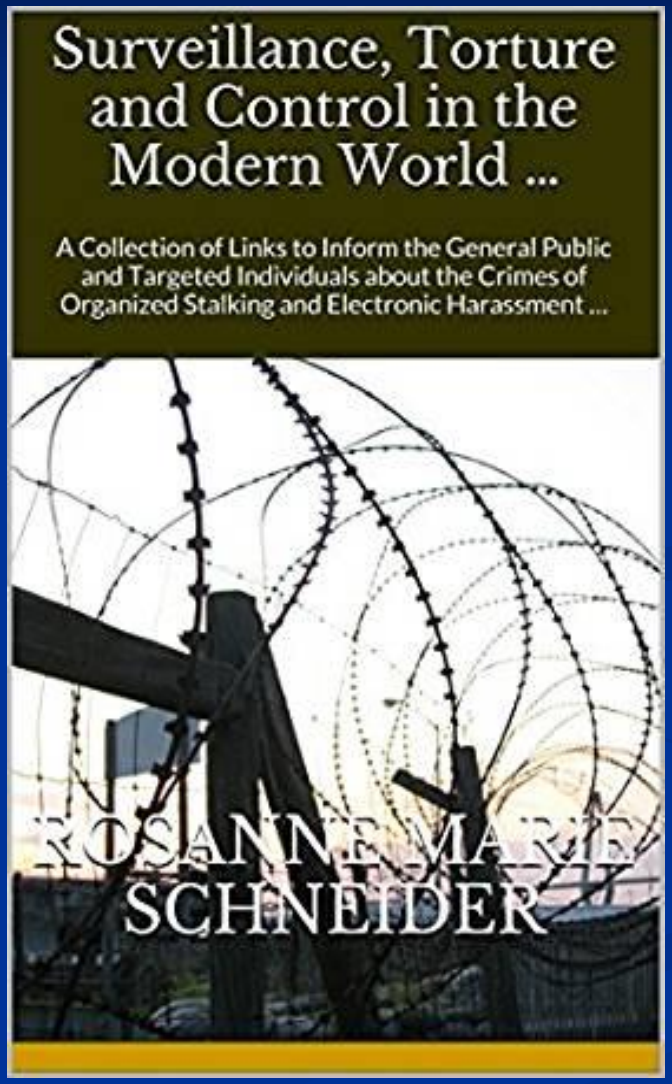



Surveillance, Torture and Control in the Modern World ...
A Collection of Links to Inform the General Public and Targeted Individuals about the Crimes of Organized Stalking and Electronic Harassment ...
ROSANNE MARIE SCHNEIDER

COERCION
DEHUMANIZATION
Do not let them deprive you of physical, moral and psychological integrity of human person
PAVLOVIAN CONDITIONING
VIRGINITY MATTERS

- Sheridan & James. J Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology, 2015, DOI: 10.1080/14789949.2015.1054857
- The first scientific study
  - Online anonymous self-report of stalking (N=1040)
  - 12.3% reported group stalking (n=128), 3+ perps
  - Compared to random sample of 128 who did not
  - 99% assignment agreement
  - Delusion: impossible, barely possible, and bizarre
  - Free text responses analyzed by two senior clinicians for delusions

# Victims of "gang stalking"

- **All those (100%) who claimed to be stalked by a group were likely delusional**; 3% of those stalked by individual were likely delusional (phi=0.962)
  - Hostile operatives in victim's workplace
  - 24 hr surveillance involving teams of men in black vans; more than 1,000 people involved
  - Family dog replaced by exact double with foul temper
  - Sexual attacks during sleep; invasion of dreams; remote enlargement of body organs

# Those stalked by a group

- Significantly older
- Significantly more likely to report continuing
- Significantly less likely to identify stalkers
- Significantly more likely to report depression, paranoia, and aggression toward others
- Significantly more PTSD symptoms
- **Significantly fewer complaints of behaviors that could produce objective evidence**

- They have their own support group online, “the targeted individuals:” a delusional echo chamber
- Sheridan received 300 threats after study published (personal communication)

# Online instructions

- Do not talk to the voices in your head.
- Your relatives may be in on it.
- Do not visit a psychiatrist!

# False victimization

- Motivation
  - Attention-seeking
  - Alibi
  - Revenge
  - Psychosis: delusions

# In my email Sept. 27, 2017

- These girls are sick. The animals sck on my bus and stalk me minute by minute and torture. This one is switching to French and is nauseating to look at. They stalk me around supermarket and anywhere else. My scarf was stolen on board the Ferry by same working class trash following and using me. I cannot go on, I cannot go on without breaking down. These animals seem to get into every damn place and find out who is who and twist all. I am sick of being harassed. They are sick.
- L. Smith

# Mullen Typology (Am J Psychiatry, 1999, 2000, 2009)

- Rejected (most violent and longest duration)
- Intimacy Seekers (longest duration)
- Incompetent
- Resentful
- Predator (most violent and sexual)
  - Good discriminant validity: employment, stalking duration, number of methods, threats, assaults, prior criminal convictions.
  - Mean age 31-41 years, 69-100% males
  - No initial interjudge reliability

# RECON Typology—Mohandie, Meloy, McGowan and Williams (J Forensic Sciences, 2006)

- Intimate (n=502)
- Acquaintance (n=129)
- Public Figure (n=271)
- Private Stranger (n=103)
  - N=1005
  - Interjudge reliability 0.95 (ICC)
  - Discriminant validity

# STALKING, THREATENING, and ATTACKING PUBLIC FIGURES

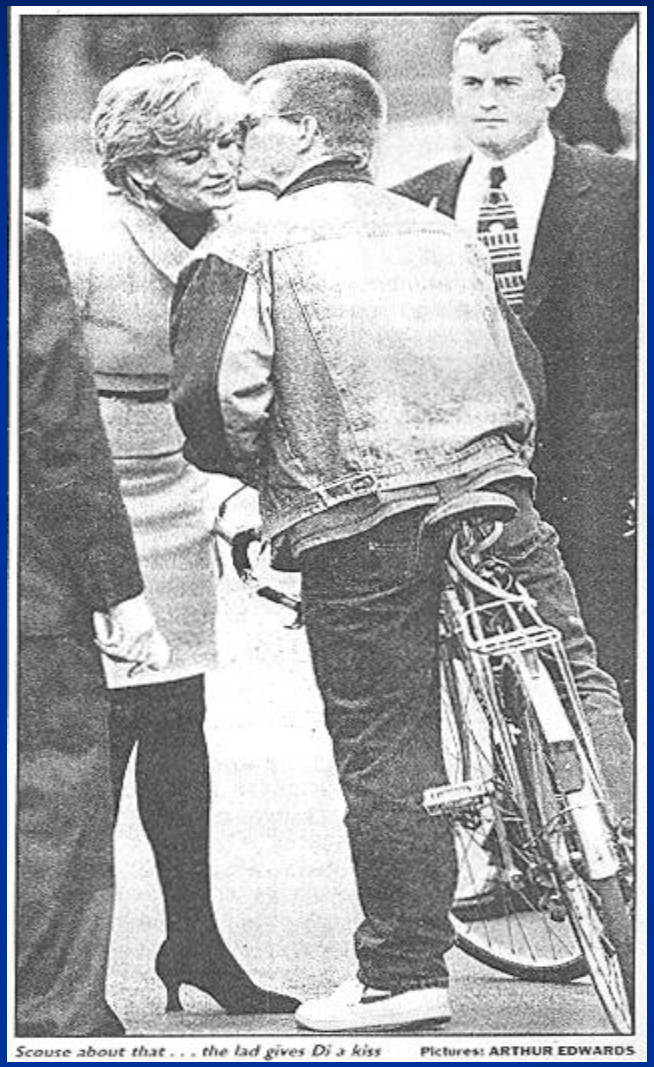
**A Psychological and Behavioral Analysis**

Edited by

J. Reid Meloy • Lorraine Sheridan • Jens Hoffmann

# 3. Public Figure Approaches and Attacks

# 3a. Problematic Approaches



*Scouse about that . . . the lad gives Di a kiss* Pictures: ARTHUR EDWARDS

Very high prevalence of (>80%) mental disorder among those who abnormally approach (US, UK, Netherlands, Sweden, Canada)
Supported by McEwan & Strand, ANZJP, 2013: stranger and acquaintance stalkers more likely to be psychotic (OR 4.4) and persistent

- Approach following abnormal communication associated with six factors:
  - **No direct threats**
  - **Exhibits severe mental illness symptoms**
  - **Multiple means of communication to target**
  - **Multiple contacts and secondary targets**
  - **Requests for help**
  - **No antagonistic communication (Meloy et al., J Forensic Sciences, 2011)**

# 3b. Public Figure Attacks

# Public Figure Attacks

- Meloy J.R. (2014). Approaching and attacking public figures: a contemporary analysis of communications and behavior. JTAM, 1:243-261.
- Revised and expanded paper originally from National Academy of Sciences, 2011, available free at www.nap.edu

# Meloy and Amman, 2016

- Public Figure Attacks in the United States, 1995-2015, Behavioral Sciences and the Law
- 58 attackers, 56 incidents
  - Males with histories of criminality and psychiatric disorder
  - Angry and personal motivation: most likely targeted politicians, athletes, and judges
  - 55% lethality risk, 5% directly threatened beforehand
  - Majority utilized a firearm
  - The "publicly intimate figure"

Missing you,
CATAP...
-with love
from Dakar
<3

# The Christina Grimmie Case

# The Pathway Warning Behaviors

- Two weeks before, Kevin Loibl buys a $15 concert ticket
- **May 25, 2016** - Loibl purchases a Glock 26 9mm handgun and after a five day waiting period picks it up on May 31, eleven days before the murder.
- **June 1, 2016** - Loibl purchases a Glock 19 9mm handgun and picks it up on June 7, three days before the murder.
- **June 9, 2016** (Day before the crime)

  Loibl gets ready to leave for the concert. He takes his friend, Cory, aside, saying "I love you, brother" and makes a vague statement that he's "ready to ascend" (A separate report says this happened 5 days before the crime.)
- He packs a backpack: toiletries, guns, a 5-inch hunting knife, and three boxes of bullets, totaling 75 rounds.
- Then he calls a cab.
- Arrives at the Courtyard Marriott in Orlando, paying cab just over $200 for a round trip and settles in his room with $16 food from hotel snack bar.

- **June 10, 2016** (Build-Up)
- 11:30am - Christina arrives
- Christina's tour bus pulls into The Plaza Live. It's the last stop on a 'Before You Exit' nationwide tour (she was the opening act), and she was looking forward to spending some time at home.
- 7:00 pm - Loibl stuffs his backpack in the hotel room safe and leaves with both guns. He straps the knife to his ankle.
- He makes his way over to the Plaza Live, stopping at an Old Navy to buy a black hat.
- 7:30pm - Concert Begins
- Loibl breezes through security, passing a sign prohibiting firearms.
- He finds a spot far from the stage, crosses his arms, and watches the concert. He wears earplugs
- 200-300 people in attendance

- **June 10, 2016**
- ~10pm - Concert ends, begin meet-and-greet
- After performing, Christina goes backstage to greet fans who had backstage passes. Over 100 people stay for the meet-and-greet.
- She says a public prayer, thanking God for helping her dreams come true.
- One-by-one, she signs autographs and takes photos with her fans near the merchandise table.
- 10:15pm - The Murder
- When Loibl approaches, Christina opens her arms for a hug. It was her trademark way to break the ice. He's wearing black jeans, a black t-shirt, and a red, white and blue long-sleeved shirt.
- Loibl pulls out one of the guns and fires. Four times. One bullet goes through her head and the other three, into her torso.
- Loibl turns towards the exit to run, but Erin Westfall is standing in front of the door. Christina's brother, Marcus, tackles Loibl to the ground.

- Fans start screaming and running to the exits. Pandemonium.
- Marcus and Loibl continue to scuffle on the floor.  Loibl breaks free and pulls out the second gun. Marcus thinks, “this is the end.”
- Loibl shoots himself in the head.

- 10:24pm - Orlando Police Department receives multiple 911 calls
- A doctor who was there to pick up his daughter from the concert rushes to the scene.
- Loibl is already dead. Christina is barely hanging on. He performs CPR.
- 11pm - Emergency crews rush Christina to Orlando Regional Medical Center where she is pronounced dead.
- Aftermath
- While investigating Loibl's hotel room, the cab driver returns to pick him up. Investigators learn that he paid for a round trip (perhaps he hadn't come with the intention of killing himself).

# Warning behaviors? (Meloy et al., 2011)

- Pathway
- Fixation
- Identification (as her boyfriend)
- No known leakage
- No known direct threat
- No known last resort
- No known novel aggression
- Possible energy burst

# Loibl's fixation

- Shows little interest in girls before discovering Grimmie on YouTube in 2015.
- Prepares to meet her: loses 50 pounds, gets LASIK eye surgery, whitens teeth, and gets hair implants.
- Learns she is a devout Christian, and considers joining the faith.
- Father says never diagnosed with MI, and never threatened to harm himself or anyone else.

# Fixation

- **Best Buy employees tease him about his internet crush on Grimmie. They show him a photo of her with her producer boyfriend and that enraged him (Grievance = loss, humiliation, anger, and blame)**
- He brags to coworkers about playing online games with Grimmie, but doubtful.
- April 2016, Cory Dennington tells her boss about Loibl's unhealthy obsession. Nothing boss could do.

# The importance of *fixation* (Mullen et al., 2008, J Forensic Psychiatry and Psychology)

- Pathological fixations are obsessive preoccupations which result in deterioration of subject's intimate, social, and occupational life
- They focus upon a *person* or a *cause*

# Frequency of Fixation Warning Behavior in Targeted Violence

- Public figure attackers in U.S. (n=18) 78%
- Western European attackers of politicians (n=24) 54%
- German public figure attackers (n=14) 100%
- German school shooters (n=9) 100%
- European individual terrorists (n=22) 100%
- U.S. and European lone actor terrorists (n=111) 77%
- Intimate partner homicide offenders (n=70) 93%
- School threateners (n=31) 16%

# What is associated with "fixation"?

- Obsessively and irrationally pursuing a highly idiosyncratic personal grievance or cause
  - Death or serious injury 0.54 phi
  - Attacker a loner 1.0
  - Warning behaviors shown 0.76
  - Definitely psychotic 0.76
  - Definitely deluded 0.76
    - James et al., Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica, 116:334-344, 2007

# Loibl Early history

- Mother commits minor crimes, also assaults him and brother with frying pan, breaks brother's arm at home.
- Commits suicide when Loibl 21 years old, blames himself since he encouraged her.
- Physical fights with father's new girlfriend, Dawn.
- Drops out of college; plays World of Warcraft obsessively.
- Dawn files DV charges against his father.
- Didn't get along with father.
- Would isolate in room, covering windows with aluminum foil to block out light.
- ****Violence, suicide, family instability, failures in love and work (academics)**

# 4. Cyberstalking

- Targeting of a specific person
- Behavior occurs over time
- No reliable estimates of prevalence exist
- No study of offenders who had been evaluated
- No comparative forensic studies

# Cavezza & McEwan. Psychology, Crime and Law, 20:955-70, 2014

- Compared 36 cyberstalkers (who also stalked terrestrially) with age and gender matched sample of 36 terrestrial only stalkers (37 years, 94% male).
- Demographic, clinical, and behavioral characteristics

# Findings

- Similarities (no significant differences)
  - Education level
  - Employment
  - History of threats (8% vs. 11%)
  - History of violence (31% vs. 50%)
  - Majority diagnosed with personality disorder or problematic personality traits (Cluster B likely)
  - Targeted women for 36-37 weeks (median duration)
  - Violence toward victim (5% vs. 17%)

# Findings

- Significant differences
  - Cyberstalkers are usually ex-intimates (72% vs. 44%)
  - More likely to have a restraining order
  - Less likely to engage in a physical approach
  - More likely to explicitly threaten (14% vs. 7%)
  - Majority of cyberstalkers also engaged in terrestrial stalking
  - Directly communicate to resume relationship, or
  - Use internet to inflict psychological and reputational harm on target

# Online disinhibition effect

- Anonymity
- Invisibility
- Asymmetric communication
- Solipsistic introjection—assign a voice or image to another person
- Dissociative imagination—rules don't apply
- No authority or status inequality
- Lack of sensory stimuli leading to increased fantasy

# Takeaway

Terrestrial stalkers who do not use the internet to stalk are more similar than different when compared to cyberstalkers who also will engage in terrestrial stalking. Risk assessment and management likely similar once motivation and diagnostic information is formulated.

"RESTRAINING ORDER?"
DON'T YOU MEAN "LONG DISTANCE RELATIONSHIP?"

*"What sort of flowers say, 'I promise to obey the restraining order'?"*

# 5. Trolling and Online Harassment

# The Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002)

- Machiavellianism (Christie & Geis, 1970; Mach IV)
- Narcissism (Raskins & Hall, 1979; NPI)
- Psychopathy (Hare, 1985; SRP)
- Positive correlations 0.25-0.50

# Moderately correlated, but not equivalent (Paulhus & Williams, J Research in Personality, 36:556-563, 2002)

# The Dirty Dozen

- Jonason and Webster. Psychological Assessment, 22:420-432, 2010.

# Narcissism

- I tend to want others to admire me.
- I tend to want others to pay attention to me.
- I tend to expect special favors from others.
- I tend to seek prestige or status.

# Psychopathy

- I tend to lack remorse.
- I tend to be callous or insensitive.
- I tend to not be too concerned with morality or the morality of my actions.
- I tend to be cynical

# Machiavellianism

- I have used deceit or lied to get my way.
- I tend to manipulate others to get my way.
- I have used flattery to get my way.
- I tend to exploit others towards my own end.

# The Dark Tetrade

- Narcissism
- Psychopathy
- Machiavellianism
- **Sadism**

# Short Sadistic Impulse Scale

## (O'Meara et al., Psychological Assessment, 23: 523-531, 2011)

- People would enjoy hurting others if they gave it a go.
- Hurting people would be exciting.
- I have hurt people because I could.
- I wouldn't intentionally hurt anyone.
- I have hurt people for my own enjoyment.

# SSIS (contd)

- I have humiliated others to keep them in line.
- I would enjoy hurting someone physically, sexually, or emotionally.
- I enjoy seeing people hurt.
- I have fantasies which involve hurting people.
- Sometimes I get so angry I want to hurt people.

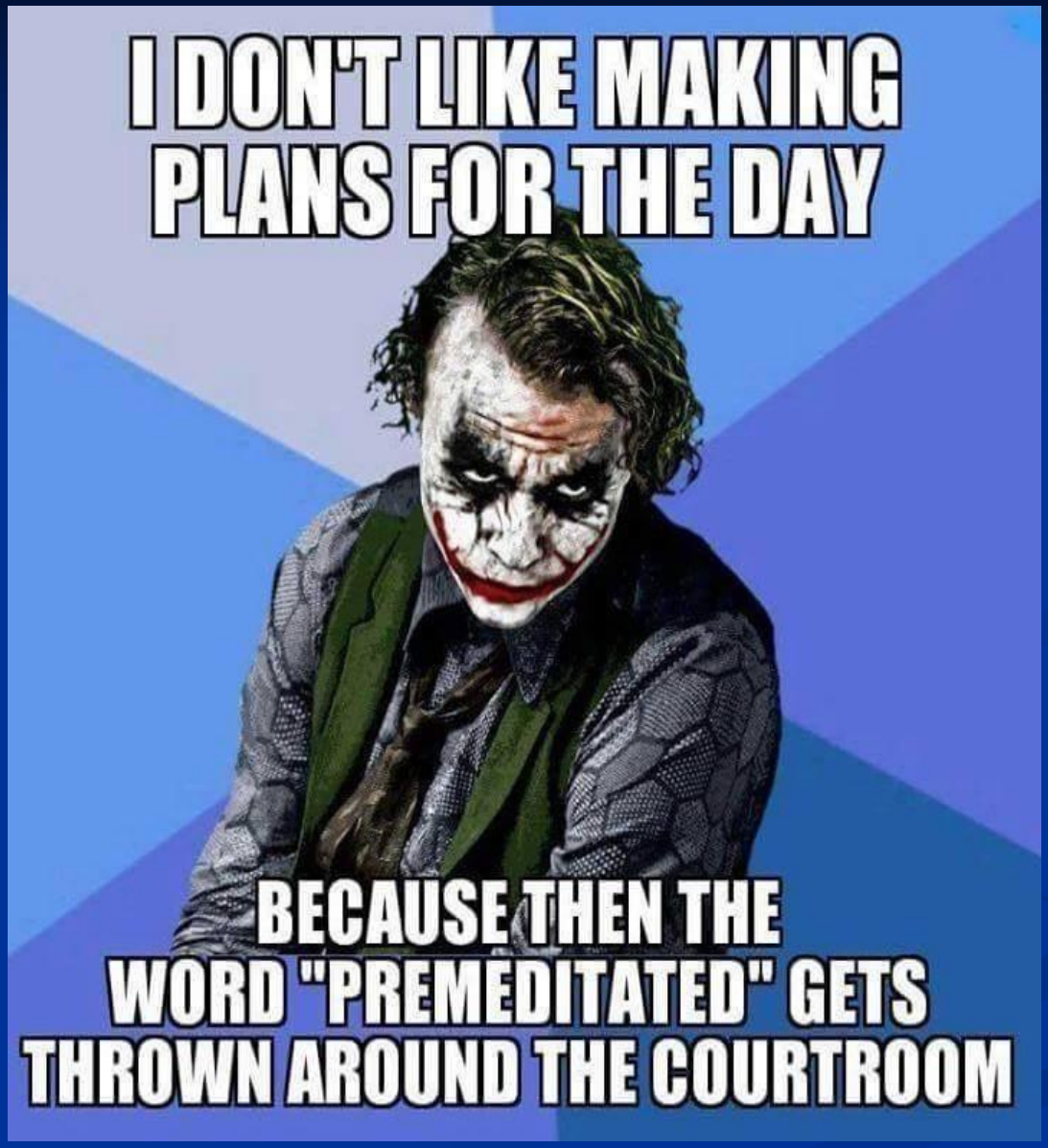
# Buckels, Trapnell & Paulhus. Personality and Individual Differences, 2014

- Trolls just want to have fun
  - 2 surveys of internet users
  - N=1215
  - Self report measures for the Dark Tetrade

# Buckels et al.

- Preferred commenting activities
  - Debating issues
  - Making new friends
  - Chatting
  - Trolling
  - Other

  - Trolling: "behaving in a deceptive, disruptive, or destructive manner for no apparent instrumental purpose." The jokester villain, the Trickster, the Joker

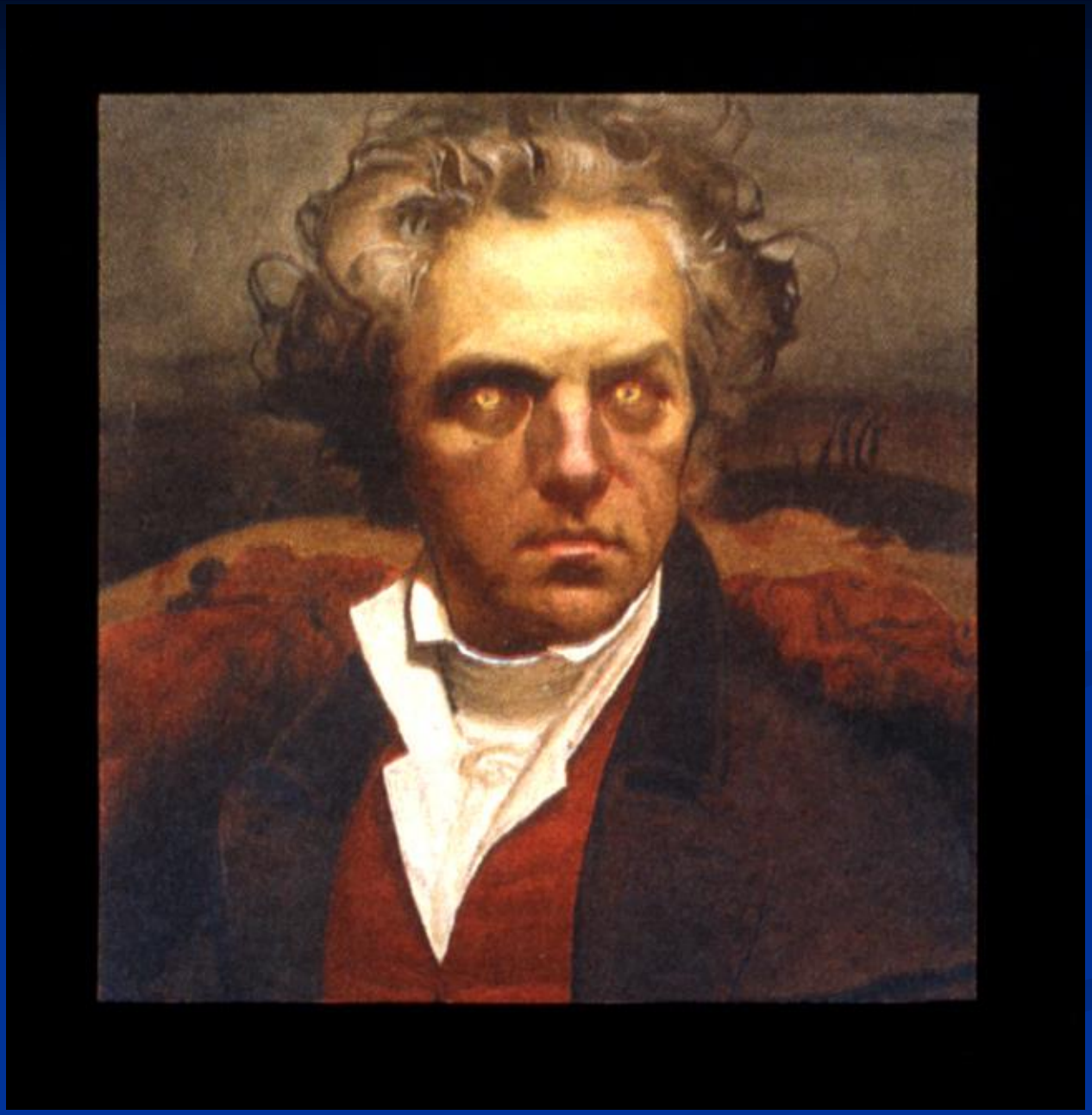

I DON'T LIKE MAKING PLANS FOR THE DAY
BECAUSE THEN THE WORD "PREMEDITATED" GETS THROWN AROUND THE COURTROOM

# Results

- Trolling frequency correlated with:
  - Sadism (strongest)
  - Psychopathy
  - Machiavellianism
  - Sadism and Machiavellianism were unique predictors of trolling enjoyment.

*Trolling is done because it is pleasurable for the everyday sadist.

- “Online identity construction may be important to examine in research on trolling, especially in terms of antisocial identity and its role in trolling behavior. The troll persona appears to be a malicious case of a virtual avatar, reflecting both actual personality and one’s ideal self. Our research suggests that, for those with sadistic personalities, that ideal self may be a villain of chaos and mayhem – the online Trickster we fear, envy, and love to hate: the cyber-troll.”



# Other Studies of Note

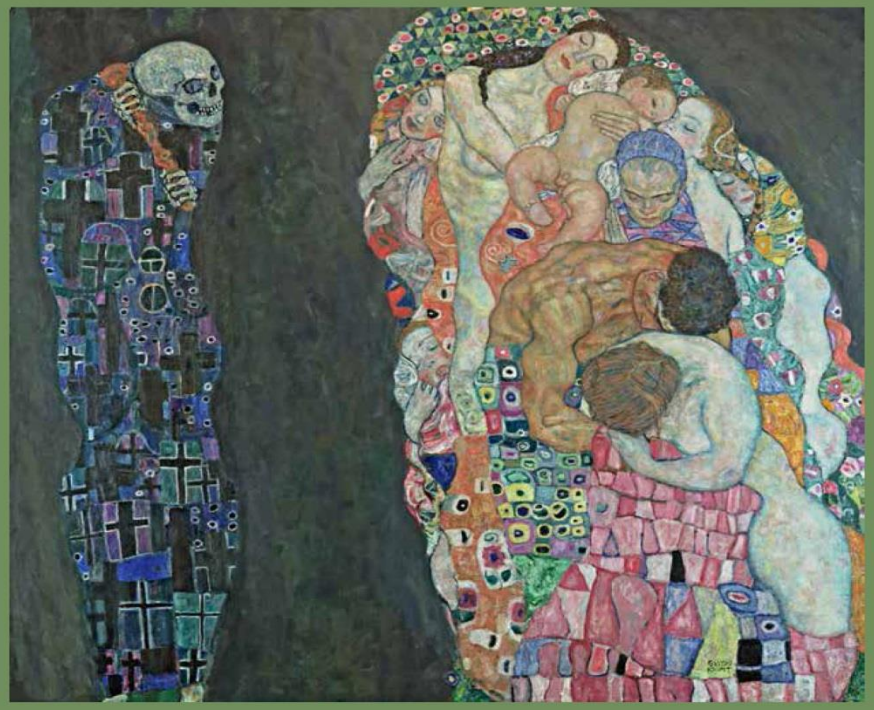
- Storey, Hart & Lim. Serial stalking of mental health professionals. JTAM, 4:122-143, 2017

- Sheridan, Scott, Archer & Roberts. Female undergraduates' perceptions of intrusive behavior in 12 countries. Aggressive Behavior, 2017

  *higher gender inequality and "parasite stress" levels correlated with more acceptance of male monitoring and less acceptance of uncommitted sexual relations: evolutionary protection

# Other studies of note

- Ybarra, Langhinrichsen-Rohling & Mitchell. Stalking-like behavior in adolescence: prevalence, intent, and associated characteristics. Psychology of Violence, 7:192-202, 2017
  - N=1,058 adolescents. Very common (one third), but usually no malicious intent; most common hyperintimacy and intrusive pursuit. Lack of skill development in relationship formation and dissolution. Self-report study.



# INTERNATIONAL HANDBOOK OF THREAT ASSESSMENT

EDITED BY **J. REID MELOY** AND **JENS HOFFMANN**

OXFORD

# Thank You!

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