

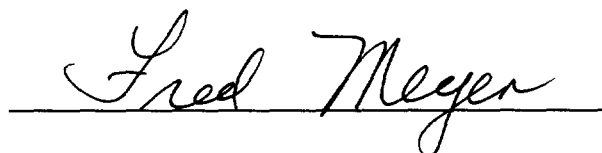
Stalking: Is There a Safe Place?

An Honors Thesis (HONRS 499)

by

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A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fred Meyer". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line.

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Purpose of Project

During the 1993 session of the Indiana General Assembly, I served as media intern for the Senate Democrat Caucus. During that session, many important bills were passed. However, the stalking legislation seemed the most popular for legislators to support. So, when it came time for me to pick a topic for my project, I decided to create an educational video on the Indiana General Assembly and to focus on the issue of stalking. This video explores the psychological aspects of stalking, the process the legislation went through to be passed and finally an analysis of the successes and problems with the law. This video is intended to be an educational supplement to the study of the policy-making process in Indiana.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Finally, a special thanks to Jeff Hinkle. Mr. Hinkle, a friend and fellow student for assisting me in the technical aspects of editing.

Stalking: Is There a Safe Place?

Ext. Bedroom. Young woman dialing phone. She then begins a conversation with a friend.

Stalking Victim  
(calm, yet unhappy)

Hey, how are you doing? Yes, I finally broke up with him. Well, you know he was just getting a little over protective, just too possessive and making me feel a little uncomfortable. Well I think he took it o.k. We'll just wait and see. You know, one other thing about this guy, he always wore this cowboy hat. It was just too big for his head. It wasn't cool. We'll I just need to get on with my life. I think it will work out in the end. It's for the best. Well, thanks for supporting me and I'll talk to you later. Bye.

Ext. Outside young woman's apartment. Door has note posted saying "Miss Me?!" Woman leaves apartment and sees note.

Ext. Driveway. Young woman walks to her car and sees the stalker across the street.

Narrator

Stalking became a growing phenomena in the 1980's. The

first national attention to the problem came in 1989 when Rebecca Schaffer, an actress known for her role in "My Sister Sam" was murdered by a stalker. The media picked up the story and began to bring the stalking problem to the public. It is estimated that seventy-five to eighty percent of stalking victims are stalked by someone they once dated or their ex-spouses. These are people who know their daily routines, habits and their fears.

Ext. Young woman's office at work. Phone rings. It's the stalker.

Stalking Victim  
(angry)

Hello? Hello? Why are you calling me at work? Look, I just think it's better for both of us. Did you leave that message on my door? Why did you do that? Look, it's over. O.K.? I really don't think you should be calling me at work. Bye.

Ext. Outside Ball Gymnasium. Young woman walking on campus and is followed and confronted by the stalker.

Narrator

Psychologists have termed the symptoms a stalking victim goes through as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or PTSD. PTSD was first associated with Vietnam veterans who were actively involved in combat. Since then it has been discovered that there are other things which can cause

this disorder such as a natural disaster, battery, rape and other violent crimes. Many believe stalking can be included in this category. The first symptom of PTSD is hyperarousal. This is when your entire nervous system goes on red alert. You become aware of your surroundings and constantly scan the area for danger. The next symptom is intrusion. These are flashback experiences of the trauma. This can happen in the form of nightmares or something in the environment triggers it. The third symptom is constriction. This is when the victim feels powerless and your body goes into total surrender.

Ext. Outside Muncie City Hall and Police Department.

Narrator

The issue of stalking raised some serious public policy question. Stalkers could not be handled by law enforcement officials unless the stalkers committed some overt act, such as physically harming the victim, although public attention becomes more intense when a celebrity is the victim of a stalker, the majority of victims are ordinary Americans. One study has estimated that one in twenty persons will be stalked during their lifetime.

Ext. Outside Statehouse -- Indianapolis.

Narrator

California, in response to the media attention of four stalking slayings, was the first state to implement a stalking law in 1990. Since then almost every state has passed a stalking law. The Indiana General Assembly dealt with this very topic during their 1993 session. The legislation, Senate Bill 97, represented an attempt to establish stalking as a punishable offense.

Ext. Senate chambers with Senator Merritt.

Narrator

The author of Senate Bill 97, Senator James Merritt from Indianapolis, helped to push the bill through.

Insert Video Clip: Merritt interview "...for victims who are followed or intimidated." (0:15)

Ext. Outside Statehouse -- Indianapolis.

Narrator

The Indiana General Assembly often has interim study committees which meet between session to study areas which need legislative reform. The Criminal Law Study Commission began to study the stalking issue in 1992.

Insert Video Clip: Merritt interview "...at least they put the project forward." (0:19)

Insert Video Clip: Hand interview "...to come in line with Michigan's bill." (0:34)

Ext. Statehouse with Harrison Hand

Narrator

The bill was approved by both houses but different versions were passed in each house. Therefore, a conference committee was created to work on a compromised version.

Insert Video Clip: Hand interview "...labor against big business that nearly killed it." (1:42)

Ext. Statehouse chambers with Senator Merritt.

Narrator

Some stalking laws in other state were criticized for attempting to limit an individual's right to free speech such as with protestors.

Insert Video Clip: Merritt interview: "...freedom of speech." (0:13)

Insert Video Clip: Modesitt "...than stalking." (0:18)

Ext. Outside Statehouse -- Indianapolis.

Narrator



The bill which came out of the conference committee was approved by both houses and then signed into law by Governor Evan Byah. But what does Indiana's law contain.

Insert Video Clip: Modesitt "...threatened." (0:20)

Ext. Outside Delaware County Justice Center.

Insert Audio Clip: Modesitt "...what are the penalties.:" (0:07)

Ext. Delaware County Superior Court #2 Courtroom.

Insert Audio Clip: Modesitt "...now we've solved our problem." (0:05)

Narrator

The new law is less than a year old and problems can already be seen.

Insert Video Clip: Modesitt "...pursue." (0:37)

Ext. Outside Munice Police Department.

Narrator

The next question we must ask is "Has the law been effective?"

Insert Video Clip: Modesitt "...keeping people from coming forward." (0:41)

Ext. Outside Indiana General Assembly.

Narrator

What does the future hold for Indiana's stalking law?

Insert Video Clip: Merritt interview "...beef up the penalties."  
(0:12)

Ext. Young woman's living room. She looks up phone number and dials phone.

... Narrator

The current stalking law is a good start; however, it is far from a solution. If you find yourself in this type situation. Let the Police know, insist on help and tell them everything. The more informed they are the better they are the better they will be able to help you.

Stalking Victim

Hello? Is this the prosecutor's office? Yes, I like to speak to someone about filing stalking charges against my ex-boyfriend. Yes, I got a protective order. He's violated it twice now. I've also kept a log of all the phone calls he's made. Some are on the answering machine. I kept the tape of those. He's called me about 28 times in the last three weeks. He's left notes on my door. He's also following me to work and around town. Sure, I'd love to come in this afternoon. Thank you very much.

Ext. Munice Police Department. Young woman walking into building.

Written and Directed  
by  
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Narration  
by  
Monica DeHart

Dramatization Actors

Stalking Victim  
Stalker

Lisa Aspacher  
Monica DeHart

Faculty Advisor  
Dr. Fred Meyer

The director would like to thank the following:

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