

Stalking

Four out of five stalking victims are women. By comparison, 94 percent of the stalkers identified by female victims and 60 percent of the stalkers identified by male victims were male. (*Violence Against Women Grants Office. (1998, July). Stalking and Domestic Violence: Third Annual Report to Congress Under the Violence Against Women Act, p. 10, citing the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.*)

Of women who had been stalked by former husbands or partners, 21 percent said the stalking occurred before the relationship ended, 43 percent said it occurred after the relationship ended, and 36 percent said it occurred both before and after the relationship ended. (*Ibid.*)

With respect to stranger and acquaintance stalking, 1.8 percent of all U.S. women, compared with 0.8 percent of all U.S. men, have been stalked by strangers; and 1.6 percent of all U.S. women, compared with 0.8 percent of all U.S. men have been stalked by acquaintances. (*Ibid., p. 12*)

When asked about their perceptions of why they were stalked, 21 percent of stalking victims said it was motivated by the stalker's desire to control, or instill fear, in the victim. Only 7 percent of victims said the stalkers were mentally ill or abusing drugs or alcohol. (*Ibid., p. 14*)

Researchers estimated that approximately 1 million women and 400,000 men are stalked each year in the United States. (*National Institute of Justice. (1997, November). "The Crime of Stalking: How Big is the Problem?" Bulletin, citing The National Violence Against Women Survey, sponsored by National Institute of Justice & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*)

About half of all female stalking victims reported their victimization to police and about 25 percent obtained a restraining order. Eighty percent of all restraining orders were violated by the assailant. About 24 percent of female victims who reported stalking to the police, as compared to 19 percent of male victims, said their cases were prosecuted. Of the cases in which criminal charges were filed, 54 percent resulted in a conviction. About 63 percent of convictions resulted in jail time. (*Ibid.*)

Most victims knew their stalker. Women were significantly more likely to be stalked by an intimate partner -- a current or former spouse, co-habiting partner, or date. (*Ibid.*)

Stalkers made overt threats to about 45 percent of victims; spied on or followed about 75 percent of victims; vandalized the property of about 30 percent of victims; and threatened to kill or killed the pet(s) of about 10 percent of victims. (*Ibid.*)

In most cases, stalking episodes lasted 1 year or less, but in a few cases, stalking continued for 5 or more years. When asked why the stalking stopped, about 20 percent of the victims said it was because they moved away. Another 15 percent said it was because of police involvement. Also, stalking of women victims often stopped when the assailant began a relationship with a new girlfriend or wife. (*Ibid.*)

About one-third of stalking victims reported they had sought psychological treatment. In addition, one-fifth lost time from work, and 7 percent of those never returned to work. (*Ibid.*)