

MENTALLY DISORDERED OFFENDERS IN PURSUIT OF  
CELEBRITIES AND POLITICIANS

Park Elliott Dietz, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.

Threat Assessment Group, Inc.

Newport Beach, CA

Daniel Allen Martell, Ph.D.

Nathan Kline Institute, New York University

New York, NY

October 15, 1989

National Institute of Justice Grant No. 83-NI-AX-0005

Final Report

Copyright © Park Elliott Dietz, 1989

This project was originally funded by a grant from the National Institute of Justice to the University of Virginia (Grant #83-NI-AX-0005) under the project title "Violence and Mental Disorder: The Choice of Public Figures as Victims." Additional sources of financial support were the Center for Advanced Studies, University of Virginia, for Dr. Dietz's Sesquicentennial Associateship; Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center, New York, NY, for a research leave for Dr. Martell; the Academic Computing Center at the University of Virginia and at New York University for computing resources; and the Threat Assessment Group, Inc., Newport Beach, CA, for the development of risk factor scales and preparation of the report.

Principal Investigator

Park Elliott Dietz, M.D., M.P.H., Ph.D.

Los Angeles Research Team

J. Douglas Crowder, M.D.

Park Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.

Daniel Allen Martell, Ph.D.

Daryl Matthews, M.D., Ph.D.

Tracy Stewart, M.A.

Cindy Van Duyne, M.A.

Janet Warren, D.S.W.

Washington Research Team

J. Douglas Crowder, M.D.

Park Dietz, M.D., Ph.D.

Lisa Hovermale, M.D.

Deborah Levin

Daniel Allen Martell, Ph.D.

Daryl Matthews, M.D., Ph.D.

Robert Sammons, M.D.

Tracy Stewart, M.A.

Janet Warren, D.S.W.

This is a study of mentally disordered subjects who seek contact with public figures. Their pursuit of those public figures poses obvious problems for public figures and those who seek to protect them, and much of this report addresses these issues. Special mention must be made here, however, of one of our most striking findings: the persons most at risk of violence from the individual mentally disordered person who pursues public figures are not the public figures or their protectors-- assuming they have the necessary security arrangements-- but rather the private citizens who are the family members and neighbors of the mentally disordered subject. For public figures, the risk is magnified by the volume of pursuers they attract, but the fact remains that the individual subject is more likely to kill someone close to home than the public figure he pursues.

The work reported here began with a proposal in September 1983, submitted with the encouragement of John Monahan, Richard Bonnie, and Henry J. Steadman. The study drew inspiration from the Institute of Medicine (1981) report on Research and Training for the Secret Service: Behavioral and Mental Health Perspectives. Most important for our purposes was the suggestion of Frank Zimring that investigators explore "proxy measures" to compensate for the inability to study such rare events as assassinations. Although we did not explore the particular proxies he suggested, our concept of studying physical approaches as a

proxy for violent physical approaches may have borne fruit, which the reader will have to judge.

Dr. Dietz's interest in this topic heightened during his participation in the evaluation and trial of John Hinckley, Jr., for the crimes committed during the attempted assassination of President Reagan. When the study began, Dr. Dietz was a professor of law and psychiatry at the University of Virginia and Medical Director of the Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy. Dr. Martell was at the time a graduate student in the Department of Psychology at the University of Virginia. Both have now moved on, Dr. Dietz to a consulting practice in Newport Beach, CA, and Dr. Martell, whose dissertation was based on this project, to New York University, the Nathan Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research, and Kirby Forensic Psychiatric Center, all of New York, NY.

Many people besides the authors of the report play important roles in a study of this magnitude, scope, and duration, and it is fitting to give some indication of their contributions. The bulk of the work on which this report is based was done by the research teams listed above. As the literature was being reviewed and the instruments being designed, important contributions were made by J. Douglas Crowder, Daryl Matthews, Tracy Stewart, and, most of all, Janet Warren, who showed boundless energy and enthusiasm in the most trying of circumstances.

The data were collected and coded by the teams as listed above, but the two individuals to whom fell the

onerous task of keeping track of everything that was happening and insuring minimal disruption to our host sites were the case managers, Cindy Van Duyne in Los Angeles and Deborah Levin in Washington. Lisa Hovermale and Robert Sammons took time from their busy schedules as forensic psychiatry fellows to work on the coding of cases from the Washington sample.

A great deal of the statistical analysis reported here was conducted by and under the supervision of Tracy Stewart who succeeded in contending with an enormous set of variables. In later stages of the analysis, Charles D. Parry and Peter Rousseau made major contributions.

The editing of case histories began with the work of Olivia Grayson and ended with the work of Herbert C. Thomas.

For the intellectual work of understanding what our data mean, Dr. Dietz has relied heavily on the sound judgment and broad knowledge of Daryl Matthews and of John Monahan.

Gavin de Becker was instrumental in focusing the interest of the National Institute of Justice on the problem of public figure victimization. Our study of subjects pursuing public figures in the entertainment industry would not have been possible without his willingness to make his files available to us under conditions protecting the confidentiality of his clients. Beyond this, however, he admitted us to an alien culture where he taught us the language and mores, explained the artifacts, and introduced

us to the inhabitants. A pioneer in threat assessment himself, he nonetheless lent his complete support to an effort that could have validated or invalidated his own techniques.

The United States Capitol Police likewise made possible our study of subjects pursuing Members of the United States Congress. Sgt. Mike Jarboe and other members of the Intelligence Unit were generous with their time and interest.

Secretaries usually get last mention in acknowledgments, but not this time. Linda Moubray and Diane Cronk, at the University of Virginia School of Law, endured the excruciating experience of transcribing scores of hours of dictation of psychotic ramblings, venomous diatribes, and obscene proposals.

The grant was administered through the Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy of the University of Virginia, where Elaine Haddon, Barbara Brown, and, Lynn Daidone protected the principal investigator from the forms he would never have completed and everyone else from the effects of uncompleted forms. Lynn Daidone worked magic in meeting our needs, from audio tapes that stayed intact to paying for an air conditioned dressing room trailer for the coders to work in when heat exhaustion threatened our deadlines.

Students assistants who contributed to the project in other ways included Kimberly DeBerry and Kirstin Rowe, of

the Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, and Betsy Barrett, Nancy Cox, John L. Daugherty, Lisa Welsted, Nancy Diamond, Amelia L. Bland, Carol Raper, Michael Regier, Conrad Schneider, and John Wallace of the University of Virginia School of Law.

Finally, we thank our Project Monitors at the National Institute of Justice, Annesley K. Schmidt and Bernard Auchter, and the Project Advisory Board, listed on the following page, whose advice at the Project Advisory Board Meeting held at the FBI Academy, Quantico, Virginia, on April 15-16, 1985, was critical to insuring that no stone was unturned.

A few stylistic conventions should be mentioned. First, except when referring to individuals, we use masculine pronouns to refer to subjects because 80 percent or more of the subjects in each sample were male. Second, as much to simplify the headings of tables as for any other reason, we often use the term "celebrity" to refer to public figures in the entertainment industry and the term "politician" to refer to Members of the Congress of the United States. Third, we use the term "approach" in a precise manner defined where the concept is introduced, but we use the term "pursue" to refer to a broader class of behaviors that includes writing letters, telephoning, and visiting. We might with equal accuracy have used the term "harass" in place of "pursue," except that both the subject and the public figure experience the phenomenon as pursuit;

only the public figure recognizes it as harassment. The Advisory Board brought to the project a wealth of experience and knowledge concerning criminal investigation, mentally disorder offenders, violence research, and clinical psychopathology.

#### PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Gavin de Becker, President, Gavin de Becker, Inc., Studio City, CA

Roger L. Depue, Ph.D, President, The Academy Group, Manassas, VA (former Chief of the Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA)

SSA John Douglas, Instructor, Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

Supervisory Special Agent Robert R. Hazelwood, Faculty, Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

John Monahan, Ph.D., Professor of Law, Psychology and Legal Medicine, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA

Supervisory Special Agent, Robert K. Ressler Faculty, Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

Walt P. Risler, Ph.D., Indiana University at South Bend, South Bend, IN

Annesley K. Schmidt, Office of Research Programs, National Institute of Justice, Washington, DC (grant monitor)

Henry J. Steadman, Ph.D., Director, Evaluation Unit, New York State Department of Mental Health, Albany, NY

Janet Warren, D.S.W., Institute of Law, Psychiatry and Public Policy, Blue Ridge Hospital, Charlottesville, VA

Supervisory Special Agent James Wright, Behavioral Sciences Unit, FBI Academy, Quantico, VA

Two members of the Board were unable to attend the meeting:  
Daryl B. Matthews, M.D., Ph.D., Lihue, Hawaii  
H. Stuart Knight, former Director of the United States Secret Service, Washington, DC

## CONTENTS

### Preface

#### PART I. INTRODUCTION

1. Public Figure Pursuit as an Unexplored Social Problem  
Attacks  
Approaches: The Prerequisite to Attacks  
Letters: Early Warning Signals?  
Summary  
Notes
2. Previous Research and Theory  
Prediction of Violence  
Personal Documents as Objects of Research  
Threat Assessment  
Summary  
Notes
3. Research Methods  
Selection of Data Collection Sites  
Gavin de Becker Archives  
United States Capitol Police Archives  
Summary

#### PART II. PURSUIT OF HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES

4. Subjects Who Write to Celebrities  
Mental health history  
Psychotic Psychopathology  
Psychotic Illness  
Personality Disorder  
Basic Psychological Features  
Social Characteristics  
Summary
5. The Volume and Form of Odd Communications to Celebrities  
Volume of Communications  
Form of Communications  
Enclosures  
Summary
6. The Content of Odd Communications to Celebrities  
Perceived relationships to the celebrity  
Thematic content  
Message and threats  
Summary
7. Approaches Toward Celebrities  
Appearance and Movements of Subjects  
Interventions  
Approaches  
Summary

8. Which Subjects Approach Celebrities?
  - Mental health history
  - Basic Psychological Features
  - Social Characteristics
  - Volume of Communications
  - Form of Communications
  - Subjects' Perceived Relationship with the Celebrity
  - Thematic Content
  - Appearance and Movements of Subjects
  - Additional Analyses
  - Summary

PART III. PURSUIT OF POLITICAL FIGURES

9. Subjects Who Write to Political Figures
  - Mental health history
  - Psychotic Psychopathology
  - Psychotic Illness
  - Personality Disorder
  - Basic Psychological Features
  - Social Characteristics
  - Summary
10. The Volume and Form of Odd Communications to Political Figures
  - Volume of Communications
  - Form of Communications
  - Enclosures
  - Summary
11. The Content of Odd Communications to Political Figures
  - Perceived relationships to the political figure
  - Thematic content
  - Messages and threats
  - Summary
12. Approaches Toward Political Figures
  - Appearance and Movements of Subjects
  - Interventions
  - Approaches
  - Summary
13. Which Subjects Approach Political Figures?
  - Mental Health History
  - Signs and Symptoms of Mental Disorder
  - Diagnosis
  - Basic Psychological Features
  - Social Characteristics
  - Volume of Communications
  - Form of Communications
  - Subjects' Perceived Relationship with the Politician

Thematic Content  
Appearance and Movements of Subjects  
Additional Analyses  
Summary

PART IV. PREDICTING APPROACHES

14. Prediction of Approaches to Public Figures  
Risk Factors in the Entertainment Industry  
Risk Factors in the Political Arena  
Generalized Risk Factors  
Validity of the Risk Factor Scales  
Discriminating Power of the Risk Factor Scales  
Other Efforts to Predict Approaches  
Summary

PART V. CONCLUSIONS

15. Overview of the Research  
The Pursuit of Public Figures  
Special Patterns in the Pursuit of Public Figures  
Predicting Approaches and Predicting Violence  
Limitations of the Research
16. Implications and Recommendations  
The Need to Share Intelligence  
The Need for Early Warning Systems  
Threat Assessment and Preventive Intervention  
Cultural Factors Contributing to the Problem  
Future Research Needs

Bibliography

APPENDICES

1. Code Forms and Code Books used in the Study of the Gavin<sup>o</sup>  
de Becker Archives
2. Reliability of Measurement
3. Measurement of Psychopathology
4. Code Form and Code Book used in the Study of the United  
States Capitol Police Archives
5. Martell DA: Predicting Potentially Dangerous Approaches  
Toward Public Figures From the Writings of Mentally  
Disordered Individuals
6. Robinson AJ: A Remedial Approach to Harassment

## CHAPTER 1

### PUBLIC FIGURE PURSUIT AS AN UNEXPLORED SOCIAL PROBLEM

Persecuted paranoiacs not only write to the papers, compose pamphlets, write to the Public Prosecutor, but take their own steps to murder; they not only write love-letters to famous people but will attack the supposed mistress in the street. . . .

--Karl Jaspers (1923)

Public figures are besieged by a constant onslaught of unwanted attention from mentally disordered persons in search of identity, love, power, relief, and-- most of all-- contact. Within this population of mentally disordered persons in pursuit of public figures are those who do and would assassinate presidents, Members of Congress, governors, the leaders of social movements, and entertainment celebrities. The public learns of all of the killings, some of the attacks, and hardly any of the enormous volume of letters, telephone calls, and visits that warn of impending attacks or, to be more precise, would warn if they were made known to the appropriate parties and if those parties could discern which among the many letters, calls, and visits are predictive of attacks.

Those who pursue public figures-- and from whose ranks we maintain most assassins are drawn-- have been all but neglected by the research community, despite the enormity of the problem and the considerable interest scholars and

researchers have taken in assassination. The exception to the rule of neglect lies in the empirical studies of psychotic visitors to the White House (Sebastiani and Foy, 1965; Shore et al., 1985, 1989) and other government offices (Hoffman, 1943).

We conducted empirical investigations of two populations: those who pursue celebrities in the entertainment industry and those who pursue Members of the Congress of the United States. We give descriptive statistics for representative samples of these persons and their behaviors, and we explore which features of letters indicate greater or lesser risk of the subject attempting to gain physical proximity to the public figure, where an attack becomes possible.

Our logic is this:

- (1) Most if not all attacks to date on American public figures by the mentally disordered were preceded by pre-attack signals in the form of threats, inappropriate communications, or inappropriate visits concerning some public figure, but these signals were not necessarily detected, reported to the relevant parties, or correctly interpreted.

- (2) Each instance in which a public figure has been injured or killed by a mentally disordered person has occurred when the subject and public figure were in close physical proximity.
- (3) Mentally disordered persons approach public figures at rates much higher than the rates of attacks.
- (4) Mentally disordered persons communicate with public figures at rates much higher than the rates of physical approach.
- (5) A behavioral science capacity to predict from their communications who among the mentally disordered will approach a public figure would assist in the prevention of attacks on public figures by making subject-specific interventions possible.

In this chapter, we introduce the reader to the kinds of attacks, approaches, and communications that concern us, using case examples.

#### ATTACKS

Table 1 gives examples of attacks on public figures in the United States that fulfill the following criteria:

- (1) The assailant was mentally disordered.
- (2) The attack would have been foreseeable if pre-attack signals had been reported and interpreted without error.
- (3) A public figure was injured in the attack.

The pre-attack signals issued by these offenders were chiefly inappropriate communications to some public figure, inappropriate visits to some public figure, or statements to third parties of their intention to harm some public figure. Note that in many instances, the public figure who was contacted, visited, or threatened was not the one who was later attacked and injured. Moreover, the communications to third parties were not always made known to the future victims or those who protect them. Finally, even those instances in which pre-attack signals were reported to those who most needed the information did not necessarily lead to a valid interpretation of the signal.

The predictive portion of our research was aimed at improving the interpretation of signals: in the first instance by providing tools for the assessment of written communications; in the second instance by redefining a physical approach as a important signal in itself. This latter point reflect the observation that every instance in which a public figure has been injured by a mentally disorder offender occurred when the assailant managed to get

in close physical proximity to the public figure. The greatest distance of any of the attacks in Table 1-1 is Oswald's 88-yard rifle shot.

Inspection of Table 1-1 reveals an increasing rate of such attacks. There have been as many injurious attacks on public figures by the mentally disordered in the last 25 years as there were in the preceding 175 years.

In addition to the cases listed in Table 1-1, there are armed attacks in which the public figure was not injured but which are otherwise similar inasmuch as the assailants were mentally disordered and issued pre-attack signals. Five examples that are already known to the public are the attempts on the life of President Jackson by Richard Lawrence in 1835, on President Nixon by Samuel Byck in 1974, on President Ford by Lynette Fromme, on President Ford by Sara Jane Moore in 1975, and on actor Michael Landon by Nathan Trupp in 1989 (during which two guards were shot and killed at Universal Studios). Neither Byck nor Trupp achieved proximity to their intended victims during the crimes. Other examples have never been released to the public.

We know that several of the assailants who eventually succeeded in injuring a public figure had stalked them previously while armed, but had not acted because of circumstances they saw as unfavorable. It is likely that there are many such instances that are never detected.

Other instances of attacks on public figures by mentally disordered offenders have not been included in Table 1-1 because information is not available on whether their attacks were preceded by the types of signals our research suggests are important (as opposed to the threats to the eventual victim that tend to be recorded by journalists and historians). These include the attacks on President McKinley by Leon Czolgosz, President-Elect Franklin D. Roosevelt by Giuseppe Zangara, President Truman by Oscar Collazo and Griselio Torresola, civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., by Izola Curry and James Earl Ray, President-Elect John F. Kennedy by Richard Pavlick, and Governor of Alabama and Presidential candidate George Wallace by Arthur Bremer.

Finally, we note that there are certain unsolved attacks on public figures that might have been the work of mentally disordered offenders, including the 1968 Molotov cocktail attack on the home of Presidential candidate Ronald Reagan and the murders of actress Thelma Todd and actor Bob Crane. The murders of Virginia Rappe, Carl Switzer, Ramon Novarro, and Marvin Gaye are not included in this analysis because each was allegedly killed by an intimate. Actor Sal Mineo and Director Pier Paolo Pasolini were each killed by more typical criminals with whom they appear to have had illicit dealings; civil rights leader Malcolm X and radio

talk-show host Alan Berg were each killed by groups as opposed to individual assailants.

Although there are cases for which this remains to be determined, every instance of a public figure attack by a lone stranger in the United States for which adequate information has been made publicly available has been the work of a mentally disordered person who issued one or more pre-attack signals in the form of inappropriate letters, visits, or statements that concerned some public figure. This is not to say that those signals were either received, or, if received, correctly assessed, by those with the greatest need for the information. Jodie Foster could not have known to notify the Secret Service of the letters and calls she was receiving from John Hinckley any more than the Secret Service could have known to notify the Lennon Sisters about Chet Young's threats to the President.

The behaviors that we are referring to as pre-attack signals-- threats, other inappropriate communications concerning public figures, and inappropriate visits to public figures-- are far more common than attacks. The challenge is to make use of these signals in a manner allowing for the early recognition of subjects at particularly high risk of making attacks, and it is this challenge that our research addressed.

## APPROACHES: THE PREREQUISITE TO ATTACKS

The late NBC anchorwoman Jessica Savitch once reported that her mail often came from people "who make up whole lives built around me that have no bearing on reality." Once, she says, a man wrote to her stating that he'd attack Vice-President Bush or Secretary of State Haig to get her attention. He followed that letter with a visit to NBC's studios in New York where he snuck past the guards and entered Savitch's office. Though Savitch was startled, she feigned gladness at seeing him and, casually making her way to the door, shut him in and ran for help. (Rovin, 1984, pp. 88-89.)

With rare exceptions, a physical approach is a prerequisite to a public figure attack. Such approaches occur at much higher rates than attacks, in part because of the security precautions taken by many of the public figures at highest risk of attack. The occasional approach becomes known to the public when the press learns of a public incident or court proceedings, but the vast majority remain outside the public eye.

A few of the approaches without attacks that have had public notice are Arthur Bremer's stalking of President Nixon; John Hinckley's multiple visits to Yale in pursuit of Jodie Foster, to Dayton and Nashville in pursuit of President Carter, and to Blair House in pursuit of President-Elect Reagan; an approach to actress Farah Fawcett during a stage performance; and a variety of approaches to singer Ann Murray, talk show host David Letterman, actor

Michael J. Fox, singer Michael Jackson, and actress Justine Bateman.

A substantial part of our research was directed toward the prediction of approaches such as these from the subjects' letters and other written communications. We studied representative samples of 150 approaches to public figures (107 in the archives of Gavin de Becker and 43 in the archives of the U.S. Capitol Police) by mentally disordered persons who also communicated in writing. Descriptive statistics regarding these approaches are provided in Chapters 7 and 12, but to illustrate the kinds of behavior we were studying, we offer here a selection of 20 examples taken from the Gavin de Becker archives and the Capitol Police archives (each of which is described in Chapter 3).

To protect the identity of all parties, in these and other examples we have changed all names, dates, places, and other potentially identifying information while remaining faithful to the important facts. Where subjects are quoted, the quotations are not corrected for grammar, spelling, or other errors unless otherwise noted, but pseudonyms are used and the names of businesses, streets, cities, states, and other potential identifiers have been replaced.

Example 1

A man staked out a female entertainer's home and observed her in her yard with her cats. He shot a mountain lion,

skinned it, and made it into a rug, which he personally delivered to the celebrity's residence with a note stating: "I shot this because it was beautiful like you."

Example 2

A man wrote to a Member of Congress that if he received no response, he would assume it had been arranged for him to address the Senate for a minute the following Tuesday. On that date, he arrived at the Member's office and requested a gallery pass. A few months earlier he had been arrested for unlawful entry when he entered White House by mingling with the U.S. Marine Band, gave himself a private tour, and said he wanted to see the swearing-in ceremony.

Example 3

A subject made several visits to a female performer's residence, where he had been arrested by security personnel. He claimed to be concerned about the performer's health and wanted to give her a health-promoting device. Despite his arrest, he returned five days later, leaving rosary beads at her door. He returned again later that day, and when police attempted to arrest him, he resisted and had to be physically subdued. He was charged with trespassing and assault. Three months later, he returned to her residence again in hopes of having breakfast with her, and again was arrested.

Example 4

A man went to the service entrance of the home of a Member of Congress and demanded entrance to see the Member's wife. He was denied entry and directed to the front door, where the doorman took a letter from him. The letter asked that the Member serve as an intermediary "taking testimony of references and witnesses to outstanding character."

Proposed witnesses included his Cub Scout den mother and a school crossing guard familiar with his work as a corporal on the school patrol force.

Example 5

The subject traveled some 250 miles on several occasions to stalk a female entertainer. He delivered notes to the gate of her home, stating that "the songs you sing have had a strange effect on me." He camped out for two weeks on a hill overlooking her property. Several months later, he returned and was found walking on the celebrity's estate. He stated he was having mental problems and had to speak with her. Refusing to leave, he had to be arrested.

Example 6

A man with previous arrests for threatening the president and for communicating threats through the mail visited the office of a Member of Congress on three consecutive days. On the third occasion, he was "loud and belligerent" in his demand to see the Member about "protection from the C.I.A.

spies." He delivered a letter containing many references to assassination, such as: "JOHN WILKES BOOTH REAGAN THE BLOOD'S ON HIS HAND AS HE SETS UP A FOURTH REICH IN A ONCE NOBLE LAND . . ."

Example 7

The subject entered two different residences of a female entertainer and was ultimately arrested by police near her primary residence. Doctors interviewing him at a hospital noted his references to a "lifelong destiny" and plans to fulfill the prophecy by sending the celebrity to heaven. They noted he was able to appear normal and was judged to be clever, but was unshakable in his delusions regarding the celebrity.

Example 8

A subject loitering outside the office of a Member of Congress would not leave when asked to do so by police. He claimed to have been sexually assaulted in the Hart Senate Building by a man he named. He stated that if that man "or Andropov or any of their homosexual friends" touched him, he would "destroy them completely." The subject stated he had met the Member Congress while both were sleeping on the street. On another occasion, he left a letter at the same Member's office complaining about sexual harassment: ". . . Keep him away-- your associates are intimidated by him your female staff seduced and your policies have been altered

behind your back. If he makes a pass at me again, I'll probably be writing from jail." A month later he was again loitering in the hallway, entering twice to seek assistance in returning to his home state. The next month he delivered another letter to security personnel stating he did not intend to harm anyone and did not carry weapons, adding, "P.S. Perhaps, if staffing allows, it would be good to post security guards on each floor."

Example 9

A man claiming he was responding to instructions from God, who directs all his actions, visited a music studio and said, "The Lord has asked me to get \$25,000 from [the celebrity]. If I don't get it, I will burn the studio." He appeared at the home of the composer of the album in production, where he was arrested by waiting police officers upon accepting an envelope from security personnel. Even from jail, he continued to call and threaten.

Example 10

A former mental patient approached a Member of Congress who was travelling in his home district for the purpose of delivering a package containing the subject's writings about traitors, assignments the man had been on in the Middle East, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, an offer to brief a member of the National Security Council on the situation, praise for the Member's stance on military spending, a dated

"Special Long-Range Weather Report," the resume of an executive of an important military contractor, a letter to the director of the C.I.A., a letter to a staff member for the National Security Council, and a memorandum to the President of the U.S. Another letter to the President sought clearance to fly into a combat zone to "interview all the generals and write you a report . . . on who will make the best President."

Example 11

A man traveled from another country in pursuit of a film star and broke into her unoccupied home, believing that God had ordered him to take the star to heaven. Soon after his release from jail, he broke into a second home owned by the star and later trespassed at her manager's home. He sent drawings depicting a knife entering a heart, and he violated a court order by trespassing at the home the star was occupying. He said he was there "to serenade you and me to Kingdom Come." Arrested by security personnel, he was eventually deported.

Example 12

A woman called the U.S. Secret Service upon her arrival at Dulles Airport, complaining that her boyfriend, a Member of Congress, was not there to meet her. She took a taxi to his home, but found no one there. Four days later, she again took a taxi to his home, pried open a window, and entered.

This set off an alarm. She had brought her luggage. When the police arrived, she told them she had permission to use the home because the Member was her boyfriend: "We're engaged to be married." She was arrested and charged with unlawful entry. Two years later she returned to Washington by plane and told her taxi driver that she had come to assassinate both the Member of Congress whom she had earlier planned to marry and a state Governor. The next day she left a note for the Member in which she stated, "I've come home to stay with my children! Thank you for sending one of your aids out to see me, hope to meet you and the children soon. Love, Mom." Ten years later she was still writing, telephoning, and visiting on a regular basis.

Example 13

A combat veteran caused a disturbance at a public performance of a singer. He was observed behaving strangely during the performance, and the ushers confiscated wine from him. He mounted the stage, speaking to the singer. He was already on parole for a brutal murder committed years earlier.

Example 14

A woman who believed the C.I.A. was "shooting" her with "sex rays" travelled furiously in a seemingly random pattern for years in an effort to avoid "Government persecution." She sent long explanatory letters to almost every Member of the

House and Senate and to several Hollywood celebrities, asking for relief.

Example 15

A man who believed God had directed him to be with a television star travelled several hundred miles to be near her. He telephoned and visited her management agency, where he was arrested by security staff. Later, he located the celebrity's home and set up camp in the surrounding woods. Security personnel tracked him to his campsite, where they found the subject wearing a crown and in possession of a crude weapon fashioned from two rock connected by a length of rope. He was arrested and hospitalized, but the hospital released him in a matter of days. He immediately returned to the star's home with a pocket full of ammunition, which he threw at a security person. He was again arrested for trespassing.

Example 16

A man who had caused a disturbance at the campaign office of a Member of Congress was later questioned by police in connection with trespassing at the film set of an actress he believed was to become his "First Lady." He had travelled 3,000 miles in pursuit of her. Two years later, he began to pursue a young male film star, with whom he sought a sexual relationship. He had to be asked to leave the offices of the star's manager.

Example 17

A man tried to buy property overlooking the beach house of a male celebrity. He had a history of multiple arrests, was known to possess guns and knives, and was discovered to have drawn diagrams of the angles of fire for a sniper attack on the celebrity's home.

Example 18

A former professional man who had written to two Members of Congress in the past visited a third Member's office and left a letter alleging that he had been double-crossed by a local prosecutor in a plea bargain arrangement. He had sent copies of the letter to other Members of Congress and major news media. The next morning, the Capitol Police were informed by the police department in the city where the plea bargain had been arranged that an informant had learned of the subject's intention to arrive at the Member's office early that day and, if he did not get satisfaction concerning his state legal problems, to "pull a gun." The subject had told the informant he would shoot it out rather than go to jail. There was an outstanding warrant for the subject. Later that day, the subject attempted to gain entry through the visitor's entrance, where he was arrested for possession of an unregistered firearm.

Example 19

The subject followed a female performer through several states while she was on tour. He was arrested at one

concert where he proclaimed, "I'm thy Lord. Worship thou me . . . No woman should be above a man. Anyone who gets in my way I'll simply put to sleep." He also made reference to a .357 Magnum, saying "I learned to freak people out. As long as they allow me to touch them, there is a chance they might be saved before they die."

Example 20

A man who believed himself the son of a television star was known to the Secret Service and other federal authorities. He caused a disturbance in the office of a Member of Congress and pursued several entertainment figures. He believed that he shared a unique blood type with a second television star that made them immune to the "Klingon and Nazi plot" to conquer the world with mind control chemicals. He was later a suspect in a product tampering case.

Obviously not all approaches are equally dangerous, but it is impossible to know how often violence would have erupted in the absence of security precautions. On many occasions, preventive intervention and fortuitous circumstances have interrupted these tragedies in progress. One case about which we are free to speak because of criminal prosecution and prior media disclosures illustrates this point most poignantly:

An obviously psychotic man from Louisiana, wrote two letters to a major entertainment celebrity. A

year later, he escaped from a mental hospital and traveled 1,500 miles to the celebrity's home. His nocturnal efforts to enter the property were detected by security personnel, and his continuing efforts to pursue the celebrity were stymied. In July of 1983 he composed a "hit list" naming members of his family, a U.S. Supreme Court Justice, and the celebrity. He murdered his mother, father, and three other relatives. A survivalist who was familiar with weapons, he had told relatives the celebrity was evil and should be killed. Through the cooperation of Gavin de Becker, Inc., the homicide investigators, and law enforcement officers in Washington, D.C., the killer was arrested two weeks later a few miles from the Supreme Court building.

Approaches are a prerequisite to attacks; therefore, the prediction of approaches would assist in the prediction of attacks. Both the population of mentally disordered persons who attack public figures and the much larger population of mentally disordered persons who approach public figures are characterized by high proportions of persons who write inappropriate letters to public figures. It is those letters to which we now turn.

#### LETTERS: EARLY WARNING SIGNALS?

The successful actor, musician, or vocal artiste, the circus rider, the athlete, and even the criminal, often fascinate the [young] miss as well as the maturer woman. At any rate women rave over them, and inundate them with love letters. . . . Singers of renown easily touch woman's heart. They are overwhelmed with love letters and offers of marriage. Tenors have a decided advantage.

--Richard von Krafft-Ebing (1906)

We studied inappropriate letters sent to public figures by representative samples of 300 subjects (214 in the archives of Gavin de Becker and 86 in the archives of the U.S. Capitol Police) who sent inappropriate written communications, mostly letters, to public figures. The means by which these letters came to be archived is described in Chapter 3. Here, our task is to give the reader a sense of the materials with which we working. Examples of letters from each archival source are given here to illustrate something of the range of materials studied. Note, however, that the two populations differed in ways elaborated in Chapter 15 that are not necessarily reflected in these examples.

As with the approach examples, all identifying information has been deleted or replaced in the excerpts that follow.

Example 1

I am afraid I made a mistake when I told you I was your father. Some guy showed me a picture of you and your father standing together when you got your award.

I was so proud when I thought I was your pop. I guess that means that my daughter aint your sister either.

. . . I asked your manager to borrow \$10,000 I hope she lets me have it.

Before I go I just want to say that the only reason I thought I was your pop was because I used to go with a person that looked like you.

Love forever

Example 2

The man who sent the following letter happened at the time to live in the same building as a man who writes particularly vicious letters to multiple celebrities:

hello darling this is youre New friend . . . we will be soon together for our love honey, I will write and mail lovely photo of myself okay. I will write to you Soon, have a lovely Easter time hoping to correspond. . . . here is a postcard for you . . . honey how are you doing . . . wishing to correspond with you Soon . . . hoping we do some camping and Barbecueing Soon okay.

Example 3

A man who had repeatedly requested an appointment with the President wrote to another political figure:

. . . LET US BE BOLD AND MAKE THAT APPOINTMENT AGAINST THE EXPECTATION OF THE CIA! IF WE ALWAYS DO WHAT THE CIA TELLS US, BOTH THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LEADERSHIP AND DEMOCRACY WILL BE ABOLISHED. BEING SUPERPOWER IN MILITARY WILL NOT BE REAL. LET US INCREASE THE TRUST AND HOPES OF THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD TO THE WHITE HOUSE! I could never imagine that the Yankees be so much coward. PLEASE BE BOLD!

Two weeks later, a Capitol Police officer responding to a suspicious person call found the subject sitting in the offices of a Member of Congress. A secretary informed the officer that the subject was acting suspiciously, appeared to be mentally ill, and was wanted by the Secret Service for questioning in connection with threats to the President. The subject admitted writing letters to the White House and

various Cabinet members. He had with him a typed letter accusing the C.I.A. of conspiring to keep him from getting a job, turn his co-workers against him, cause him to be expelled from graduate school, end his relationships with women, and isolate him from society. According to the postscript, every Member of Congress had already received the letter. The subject had also been investigated for threats to the Director of the C.I.A., which agency the subject believed was committing various crimes and forcing his wife to have sexual relations with animals.

One week later, the subject wrote to the Capitol Police:

I was tired and hungry therefore, I was waiting in the office of [the Member] for someone to promise any type of help. Luckily two nice polices of the Congress came according to my expectation. I did appreciate their attitude as well as your very friendly behavior. . . .

Example 4

From a letter to a television personality:

. . . I would like to Have lots of pictures of you sex symBol woman like you are all the times if you don't mine at all if you take off your clothes for me and I can see wHat you Got to the world then ever that love any How I would like to know How long is your Breast anyHow I would like to know How much milk Do you carry in your Breast anyHow I would like to know How far Does your Breast stick out on you anyHow I By playBoy Books all the times . . . I would like you to put up your legs and take pictures of you in the nude . . . I would like Have larGe pictures of you in the nude lots

of them then ever were so I will take with me and have lots of womens in tHe nude I like sex symBol womens to look at all the times.

Example 5

From a letter to a Member of Congress:

Subject: Covert CIA Company and America's Last War . . . I am sending you my favorite album. It was written to my life at the time, December 1981. Song number 1 after I had lost \$1,000,000 in the cattle market, number 2 after I lost my girlfriend, number 3 after I lost my wife and number 4 my prayer to the Lord. I am also sending the 45 record, Day of Decision. It was a Gold Record in 1966. . . . I wish to submit for your consideration a specific proposal relative to organizing and providing start-up funding for a company described as follows (I believe our goals of building a stronger nation and better world are totally consistent with your goals): . . . The organization of the American Trading Company is made up of three divisions, Arms, Export, and Cocaine. . . .

From a second letter by the same subject:

Goals in My Lifetime 1. Be the top CIA agent for the U.S. 2. Lead 5th Marines Raider Battillion in the last war in Nicagra and Cuba. 3. Lead a Batallion or Division in Isreal's last war. 4. That no one in the U.S. or Isreal goes to bed hungry 5. Retire start a family & raise at least 5 kids.

Example 6

A man who harassed an actress (pseudonym Kristina Bouchard) with telephone calls, letters, and visits for more than three years repeatedly professed his love for her, yet threatened to harm her at a public appearance and to shoot

guards at her home. In one of his calls to her agency, he announced a date on which he would visit the town where she lived and the name of a bar where he insisted she meet him. He left his telephone number. Excerpts from the return call:

. . . Tell Kristina to be there. If she ain't there I'm going to come looking for her at her house. I don't care what she's doing, if she's not there I'm going to be in your office on Monday . . . I'm moving into her house and you can flat-ass arrest me for that. . . . If you've heard of me before and it was something illegal I'd worry about it if I were you. . . . You tell [her manager] if he doesn't bother to come see me I'll bother to come see him. . . .

#### Example 7

. . . In fact, if you would push for the inevitable just a little harder and pass legislation changing the name of the democratic party to the liberal- communist alliance, we just might get to our communistic equality more quickly than the third worldists have planned for us. . . . The white finally asks for his right to be put to death by the government before he does something he and others will be appalled at-- an act almost as heroic as those of Oswald, and Ray!

#### Example 8

A mental patient who had escaped from hospitals reputedly stole a gun which he used it to steal ammunition. He believed actress Kristina Bouchard (a pseudonym) was being starved by police. In an incident separate from the gunfight mentioned in this excerpt, he committed a murder for which he was convicted.

Kristina Bouchard,  
 please disregard the other letter (I sent in  
 January) I sent to you. Disregard this letter if  
 you are married or have a boyfriend, as I don't  
 want to break up an existing relationship. I  
 would like to be one of the following to me; (a) a  
 lover, (b) a girlfriend, or (c) a wife. I want it  
 to be a forever thing, if we have faith in each  
 other, and don't cheat. You must fulfill the  
 following; (1) you must be a vegetarian (2) you  
 must not have another boyfriend. (3) You must not  
 hold hands or do anything beyond that point, with  
 another, unless I give you permission (4) I  
 believe in birth control devices and (fetus  
 removal) abortion, to take the fear away from  
 women, so they can have a complete orgasm. Men  
 never have to worry, because they, don't have the  
 baby. (5) You must not wear pants, unless the  
 temperature drops below 50 degrees F. or you  
 engage in hazardous work (like coal mining). (6)  
 You can view pornographic movies.

. . . I was in a gunfight with the police,  
 because I thought you didn't have to eat food. I  
 was real sick (crazy) at the time. I was  
 arrested, but should be getting out soon. I'm in  
 a hospital; for observation. I was wounded as was  
 one policeman. We are both okay now. A bystander  
 was wounded by another policeman.

. . . I'm a vegetarian. I believe the  
 slaughter of innocent animals is a crime against  
 humanity. . . .

Kristina Bouchard, last chance. Let's sit in  
 a little room together. Let's drive to the end of  
 the world. Let's look in each others eyes. Let's  
 magnetically attract each other from close up.  
 Let's talk till we want each other more than  
 anyone else. . . . I believe we can have a good  
 life together. Please call, write or come here by  
 October 3rd or else I'll have to look for someone  
 else. . . .

#### Example 9

A subject sent the following letter to the wife of a  
 Member of Congress, asking that she bring it to the  
 attention of her husband and a second Member of Congress.

The communication was typed on an oversized piece of paper. On the same page, he had pasted reduced photocopies of letters from the Member to the Subject and from the subject to postal authorities along with copies of certified and registered letter receipts.

. . . I WAS FRAMED! I WAS FRAMED! I WAS FRAMED--  
 YES FRAMED BY\*\*\*\*\*MONEY\*\*\*\*\*AND \*\*\*\*\*  
 POWER\*\*\*\*\*OF\*\*\*\*\*THE\*\*\*U.S.P.S.\*\*\*\*\*  
 MONOPOLY\*\*\*!!!!!!! JUST FOR AND ONLY FOR APPEARING  
 IN THE PUBLIC USPS LOBBY, JULY 23, ]987 and just  
 FOR BEING INTERESTED-- 10:45 A.M.-- IN ACCEPTING  
 MY CERTIFIED AND REGISTERED MAIL . . .

Example 10

A young man wrote to an actress:

. . . I hate to trouble you with my problems, but I have a few. You see, I'm being harassed by this wall that . . . controls [most of the state]. Myself, I am a cat, yes really. Believe it or not, this wall is trying to frame me and put me in jail. You see I'm just a helpless image, and I control more than one wall. Nine I think. Please get in touch with me, because I know who L-7 is.

Sincerely

Tommy

Alias -- The LINE

Address

P.S. I am Round

But I don't know how long

I can last.-- H.E.L.P.

A month later, Tommy wrote that he was actually a dragon born from a cat, ending his letter with an invitation:

P.S. . . . I'll spet you don't know what would happen if You skinned a person and ate him.

If you come bring some big people with you, I've had this urge to eat my best friend for the past nine years.

Example 11

A subject with a history of civil commitment to mental hospitals who claimed to be a weapons expert wrote to a Member of Congress, in which he refers to a television network anchor (pseudonym Mickey Flanahan):

. . . I am demanding the unconditional arrest and impeachment of the President of the United States.  
 . . . I have been the victim of a very serious radio communications breach of security. In the spring of 1976, the Department of Justice bugged my home and transmitted (audio only) to XYZ television studios, where the evening news show was being broadcast. One day I mischievously directed the anchor, Mickey Flanahan, to blink his eyes. Mickey Flanahan had so much trouble with his eyes blinking that it was uncontrollable. I am sure millions of people witnessed this occurrence. Before long, news reporters everywhere were blinking their eyes intentionally. The XYZ evening news show was not the only show I frequented. I have found that I am on the air during most local and national, live television broadcasts. I have been on the air in other countries. I have definitively been on the air with the President of the United States through these illegal means. This is why I am demanding the unconditional arrest and impeachment of the President of the United States. . . .

Three years earlier, he had sent a letter to the House Sgt. at Arms office on the same theme:

I was also on the air at many other local, national, and non-commercial stations. According to one source, I was patched into the VHF emergency broadcast system. This illegal

transmitting would have been apparent to XYZ's Pacific standard time viewing audiences. I have been on the air almost five years via police monitoring or wiretapping. . . . Communists, in comparison, are never subject to such restraints and harassment.

Example 12

A woman sent a Christmas card to a famous actor (pseudonym Frank Serbio) stating: "Thanks for giving me Jason a beautiful bundle of joy. Merry Christmas Frank." Enclosed with the card was a photograph of her son. Six weeks later, she sent a second letter to Serbio's wife asking forgiveness for the Christmas card and suggesting that Frank had been "hurt" because she had told "people all over the world" about their son. She wrote:

I know that Jason is my beautiful baby and that Frank is the daddy. I never been in love and I always been a queen . . . I don't know much of anything other than the fact that I love my son and Frank very much. I don't know very much about life I was never told about life or how to love or be loved. . . . I know that I don't deserve a man like Frank. I know that I hurt him so much by writing to people all over the world about his son. . . . Tell Frank to come get Jason and take him Home with you and the boys.

Thanks, love, . . .

Example 13

A woman repeatedly wrote, called, and visited the offices of a Member of Congress. Excerpts from two of her many letters:

Now if you can tell me that my ex-husband didn't get mauled by a bear, I'll tell you that things are not true but you can't. And I'll tell you this if you think things are bad now just wait. Because this is suppose to be a nation under God and I know what happened and so does he.

\* \* \*

It will be one year since I have seen my Daughter Lilian. Now Generally I don't Lose my tempor But when I do I start to slam things. Last summer went Fishing . . . slamming Fish on Lilian's Birthday (February 19th). I Know a lot of People . . . Now Rumors have it they are doing quite well Financially (money wise) Because of what they did to ME. All I could Do was think I'll wait one year and if I don't get Lilian Back-- slam-- I'll destroy them. slam. Because what happened to me was true-- slam-- They called me a Liar-- slam-- and if I have to slam-- I'll destroy them All-- slam-- Because the system cannot it any more-- slam-- man has no Feelings For nature they destroy it For the Almighty Dollar-- slam-- If they take away my Food source I take away theirs, etc.--slam Now I can say what will happen this month But I can surely tell you what will happen next month if I don't got my Daughters Back. . . .

#### Example 14

A letter to a famous singer:

You undoubtedly know of me yet you are not totally aware yet.

Many thoughts flash across your mind concerning me as well as yourself; you often think life were you and I is for everlasting. Well so do I; I must however speak truthfully. I have never thought of you in a bad way, (it isn't that sex is bad I just felt funny saying in a sexual manner so I said in a bad way). To make a long story short I was merely a fan of yours collecting all kinds of data concerning you. . . . [I]t was like you use to come and visit me when I was a little boy. I will state the time; it was around 1970 or it could have been 1968 any way between these years you came to see me. . . .

Some how I do not know how but you became one with me . . . my mind is tormented by night by

day. . . . I am writing this to find you to establish some link of communication between us. It is an surety that some how some way we come to know each other; for a reason that is; I keep hearing these voices stating things about us; . . . I and you if you are vaguely aware like I think you are destine to become man and wife.

I know you think me crazy and then again I know you don't because you are aware of me. So do me a favor answer this letter and tell me what you know; I made little mistakes on this letter because my hands were shaking and I am a little nervous. My only wish is that I had more information where I could speak a little clearer which is why I'm writing to get that information; so please answer. . . .

P.S. Are they saying you're gonna be the wife of God or the Satan or the wife of both and are they saying that I may truly both of them; well . . . it is true and you and I that long ago are one. Please write soon; o' yes for me you do have a preture don't you; please send that to; both of them; you do want me to see don't you. . . .

See you soon

Love

Oh, some more . . . you were told of future events and you know just like I do we both will suffer for what is to come our way . . . now let us plan for that day when Death should befall me and yet I shall rise and you are there to comfort me; for us both that day forward there is no Death ever again . . . you want it just as I do; even worst than I do; you want it . . .

#### Example 15

The following excerpts from a letter to a Member of Congress from a woman who also telephoned frequent warnings contained references to so many public figures that we use numbers instead of pseudonyms to avoid adding to the confusion. Public Figure #1 is an actor, #2 a television newsman, #3 a second Member of Congress, #4 a financier, #5

a second actor, and the Chief Executive Officer of a major corporation.

Over the weekend I was being told alot that you want to marry me and was being told this yesterday (3/19) also during the Telethon. So I said I think I'll marry Public Figure #1, I think I ll marry Public Figure #1. Then I saw a knife turn into a gun. A little later I saw Public Figure #1's penis jump out. A little later I said I m going to marry Public Figure #1. then (I just heard gun) I saw (I m seeing Lesbian) a point of an iron stab me in the corner of my eye (just saw Lesbian again). 7:50 PM I saw a razor blade and [the Member] and am still wondering about how Public Figure #2 killed (I just heard Public Figure #3) Public Figure #4. I'm hearing that Public Figure #5 made \$60,000,000 last year. It makes me wonder why he makes so much while I'm not allowed to make anything and am being killed all the time. . . . (While writing this I looked in the mirror and saw (I heard here saw my face smashed) my hand with the pen in it stab myself in the eye. After this they said they're going to kill Public Figure #3. . . . (while typing this letter Public Figure #2 just called me bitch ) . . . 9:30 PM-- I'm hearing . . . that Public Figure #2 is hurting many people in California. While hearing this I was smashed in the teeth by a baseball bat. I think Public Figure #2 is also trying to kill Public Figure #6 because I was thinking of why he didn't answer my letter in which I asked him for help being that I'm supposed to be Joan of Arc reincarnated and he is French (I thought he might help me) when I saw a gun in my sex organs. . . .

The excerpts given above convey something of the range of materials studied, but do not begin to convey the persistence of these subjects. To illustrate that, we give somewhat lengthier excerpts from the communications of a man whose correspondence was voluminous.

A man remained pathologically focused on actress Rita Sonata for at least a decade. He traced the origin of what he called his "obsession" to a letter he had received from Ms. Sonata thanking him for a gift he had sent her. John had not only attended many of Ms. Sonata's performances, sitting on one occasion in the first row, but wrote repeatedly of traveling to Ms. Sonata's state to see her. He arrived at her home at least once, but his attempts to make contact with Ms. Sonata were unsuccessful.

Interestingly, John's roommate was pathologically focused on another celebrity, and the two men tried to buy a gun when they learned that she was to be married. John and his roommate were evicted from their apartment because of "the ritualistic burning of the clothes of one of their girlfriends in front of the apartment."

John wrote:

I had to run up to the newsstand to see if I could find any new pictures of you . . . I'm going . . . to find you as soon as I get my car. Which will be within two months. Please don't do anything foolish between now and then. I'm going to be so perfect for you. And believe me I have no hang-ups about changing my name to yours. . . .

A subsequent letter described his having traveled more than 1,000 miles to attend one of Ms. Sonata's public appearances. After the performance, he chased her limousine as it left the area. John traced the history of his focus in a letter:

Dear Rita,

My life is turning into kaos. It is becoming more and more difficult to face each day knowing that the most important thing in my life may never become a reality. . . .

It is such a simple request. And yet it means so much to me. It has become my reason for living. An obsession, with no end in sight. It all started somewhere back in 1974. . . . While watching television, one particular actress used to come on the air that sent a chill through my body. It was like I had been taken over by another force. The face was so beautiful.

. . . It was the face of an angel. I felt it just wasn't fair. . . . I never got you out of my system. Your face and smile brighten up each and every day. You have become a symbol of what life should be. Yet your still just an image on my television, or a picture on my wall or a voice doing an interview on my radio. Even still you touch me in a way no one has ever been able to. You've brought out emotions that I never thought I had. One day I decided that dreams don't come true unless we help make them happen. I realize that you aren't going to come looking for me. So, I'm going to have to go looking for you. Please don't be frightened. I am not a nut. I've just fallen in love with the image that you project.

. . .

In another letter he made plain the extent of his devotion:

. . . Meanwhile, the obsession grew. My collection of pictures became overwhelming. My bedroom looks like a shrine. And I now own three copies of all your magazine covers. I also own three copies on video of every movie you ever made.

All this brings us to the present. I'm now planning my trip to [your state]. . . . All I want to do is say hi! and to talk to you for five minutes. So please, if I should meet you, talk to me for awhile. Take time out to fulfill a dream.

Even more revealing was the scrapbook John forwarded, telling his story in text and photographs. He described his initial acquisition of Sonata's videotapes if Sonata's movies and posters, the first of her live appearances he had attended, and an event that caused him to think of her more:

I had a steady girlfriend at the time. I really did love her. . . . But that was not good because she left me for another guy at the end of the year. I was very sad. I started thinking about you. . . . I was lonely. I started thinking about you more and more. I was collecting pictures of you and reading all I could find out about your life. I started writing letters. Your wonderful movies kept me from being lonely. You seemed to be speaking to me!

He recounted having obtained her autograph and provided a snapshot he had taken of her that day:

There she was, the lovely Rita Sonata! I wanted to come down and meet you, but it was an invitation only promo for the big wigs. . . . You did look up at us a few times and smile. When you got up to leave I rushed over and you signed my photograph "To John, Love, Rita." Then I gave you the necklace. You thanked me and made your way, escorted, to the elevator.

Later that year he went to one of Ms. Sonata's charity appearances. He was not sure, but thought he saw her wearing the necklace he had given her. The great prize in John's scrapbook was a letter from Rita Sonata. Apparently he kept the original for himself when he sent the book, for a photocopy had been attached to a page. In the margin he

wrote: "This really made my day." As it turned out, Rita Sonata had been wearing his necklace during the charity event.

Dear John:

Sorry for the delay in answering your letter, however I've just come back to town. Thank you for the lovely necklace. It was quite thoughtful of you. To answer your question, yes I was wearing it during the fund raiser.

My best wishes to you and once again thank you for your thoughtfulness.

Love, Rita

Six years later, he was still writing of his many efforts to get closer to Ms. Sonata, as well as what he perceived to be encouraging responses from Ms. Sonata and her staff.

I was at six of your appearances this year. In New York I sent flowers to your dressing room. I had flowers placed in your limousine (hopefully) in Chicago and Philadelphia. I sat front-row center in New York. . . . I really thought I was going to get to meet you then! You waved to me from your limo at Logan Airport. (Why couldn't you stop just one minute and talk to me? The place was deserted except for a man, a woman and me). I also went to both of your Los Angeles appearances. But except for being in the first row in New York, I loved being with you in Boston the most.

. . . I sent you flowers backstage and also had a gift, but was unable to give it to you. . . . You looked my way many times during the show. (I was seated to your right. I was next to the railing at the side of the stage in plain sight. . . .) You even waved to me and smiled. I waved and called out to you. I love you Rita!

Having been thanked for sending flowers, John continued to send flowers as well as letters. On one occasion he was seen leaving a dozen red roses at the gate of Ms. Sonata's home. A note accompanied the flowers: "There's nothing that will ever be enough to repay you for all that you've given me. Many thanks and much love." He offered his name, home address, and telephone number. He regularly included in his letters this information and the notation that he lived near an airport. He wanted Ms. Sonata to know it would not be inconvenient for her to drop by. Another letter seemed a transparent attempt to manipulate her into responding, even if only with a signature:

Dear Rita,

I have been a devoted fan of yours for nine or ten years. I have all of your magazine covers . . . . I also have 78 hours of video and over 250 square feet of pictures (not including the 250 pictures from your stage performances), of you. To say I care a great deal about you would be quite an understatement. I was lucky enough to be at eight of your appearances, from New York to L.A. . . .

It has taken two years to find out your address. . . . I also know that you value your privacy. So if you would rather I didn't write you at this address, please sign and send back the enclosed postcard and I will not write to you anymore. . . .

John's need for a response was a constant, unifying theme. With a Valentine's Day card, in which he pleaded for a chance to meet Ms. Sonata, he included a stamp, presumably for her to use for her reply. In a greeting card

proclaiming his love, he founded a suicide threat on Ms. Sonata's failure to write him.

Dear Rita,

. . . The last few weeks I gave an honest attempt to find someone to replace you. Someone tangible, someone who would listen and respond, someone I could actually feel and touch, and hear their voice and feel their emotions.

It didn't work. But it made me realize that I love you but can't live without anything in return. No response not even an acknowledgement that I exist so to make a long story short. You win! I think it's time to call it a lifetime. 33 years is probably too long for me to live anyhow.

But thank you for all the joy and happiness I've gotten from you through all the years. And I'm sorry I wasn't able to give back to you what you deserve.

Goodbye  
My eternal love,

The final mailing in John's file was a Valentine's Day card. In it he looked back on Ms. Sonata's letter from a decade earlier:

Dear Rita,

We should be together. I'm the one who really loves you. Why didn't you ever give me a chance? I wrote you so many times these past ten years. I wanted to see you so much. I would give anything to be with you. I've sent you flowers every year but this one, but what's the use? I've sent you many things to show I care for you and I have never received an answer except in 1975. Why did you leave me alone. I love you Rita. I am so hurt.

Love forever, John

Three years after this letter, he had not committed suicide. Other letter writers had, however.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter, we have sought to introduce the reader to our topic by providing examples of attacks, approaches, and communications toward public figures. We have also introduced the purposes of our study of mentally disordered persons who pursue public figures through letters and visits. These purposes are (1) to provide quantitative descriptions of representative samples of these persons and their behaviors and (2) to explore which features of letters indicate greater or lesser risk of the subject attempting to gain physical proximity to the public figure, where an attack becomes possible.

Table 1-1-- Examples of attacks in which a mentally disordered offender injured a public figure after giving a pre-attack signal (see text)

Victim	Offender	Year
Abraham Lincoln President	John Wilkes Booth	1865
James A. Garfield President	Charles J. Guiteau	1881
William McKinley President	Leon Czolgosz	1901
Theodore Roosevelt Former President and Presidential candidate	John Schrank	1912
Huey Long Governor of Louisiana	Carl Austin Weiss	1935
Eddie Waitkus Baseball player	Ruth Ann Steinhagen	1949
John F. Kennedy	Lee Harvey Oswald	1963
Robert F. Kennedy U.S. Senator and Presidential candidate	Sirhan Sirhan	1968
William Lennon Lennon sisters' father	Chet W. H. Young	1969
Jim Hicklin Radio personality	Edward Taylor	1973
John Lennon Singer	Mark David Chapman	1980
Ronald Reagan President	John W. Hinckley, Jr.	1981
Theresa Saldana Actress	Arthur Jackson	1982
Rebecca Schaeffer Actress	Robert John Bardo	1989

## CHAPTER 2

### PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND THEORY

The research reported here is the first quantitative study of a representative sample of harassing and threatening communications to public figures. Indeed, it may be the first quantitative study of this scale ever conducted of any kind of threatening or harassing communications, for we have searched in vain for comparable research concerning obscene telephone calls, bomb threats, death threats, product tampering threats, arson threats, terrorist threats, or any other kind of naturally occurring harassment or threats. What does exist is research on simulated threats, theory on simulated threats, and a bit of data on a few kinds of threatening communications. This work is reviewed here to the extent necessary to provide the context for our research, but there is not much to be said on the state of prior research.

We include here a brief review of a related subject, the prediction of violence. The bulk of this chapter, however, concerns the methodological tradition in which we follow, namely the use of personal documents as a source of research data.

### PREDICTION OF VIOLENCE

One obstacle impeding the development of predictive models for violence is the rarity of violent incidents.

This may appear counterintuitive in a world seemingly overwrought with violence, but as a statistical matter, the rate of violent incidents per 100,000 population per year is too low to permit particular incidents to be readily predicted in a reliable statistical fashion. Statistical predictions of low base-rate events have been prone to serious errors in classification accuracy. Often, false positive and false negative predictions outnumber true "hit" rates (Meehl, 1954; Monahan, 1981).

Here, we explore an alternative approach to address the low base rate problem in the prediction of violent behavior. The approach entails operationalizing "proxy" measures for violent behavior: events with significant potential for dangerousness that occur with greater frequency in naturalistic settings, and hence might be measured with greater predictive accuracy.

This represents a move away from an attempt to predict specific violent behaviors towards a focus on the broader concept of dangerousness. Shah (1981) defines dangerousness as an increased probability (when compared with others) to engage in dangerous or violent behavior. This shift toward thinking of relative risk may yield greater applied potential for successful prediction.

This approach is consistent with persuasive arguments (Monahan, 1984; Monahan and Klassen, 1982; Shah, 1981) that

it is necessary to take account of the environment as well as the individual to advance the present state of prediction research. One goal, then, might be to define a situational or environmental context that is necessary in order for dangerous or violent behavior to occur. This does not mean that violence would always occur in this context, but rather that the behavior to be predicted is impossible or improbable outside this context.

Barring rare exceptions, to become a physical threat to a public figure, a subject must first achieve physical proximity to the public figure or the environments in which that person lives or works. If it were possible to predict from letters written to public figures which persons could be expected to attempt to gain proximity, i.e., to "approach," then subject-specific interventions become possible to prevent attacks on those public figures. An important thrust of the research reported here is to examine the feasibility of such a predictive process.

#### Clinical Prediction of Dangerous Behavior

Although the literature on the clinical prediction of dangerousness has never focused on the use of personal documents to predict dangerous behavior, it has been concerned with several related issues. A review of the literature in the area is beyond the scope of this report, but is readily available in Monahan's (1981) influential

monograph and from other sources (Monahan, 1984; Steadman, 1980). The broad areas which existing studies have considered are illustrative of the current state of empirical knowledge.

With respect to the prediction of violent behavior by the mentally ill, most studies have attempted to predict which mental patients would become violent while in a mental hospital (e.g., Convit et al. 1986; Klassen and O'Connor, 1984; Hedlund et al. 1973; Dietz, 1981; Dietz and Rada, 1983; Ionno, 1983), or which patients might be violent after release into the community (e.g., Klassen and O'Connor, 1985; Thornberry and Jacoby, 1979; Steadman, 1977; Steadman and Cocozza, 1974; Cocozza and Steadman, 1974).

A principal focus of studies of violent criminal populations has been the prediction of violent recidivism (Kozol, Boucher, and Garofalo, 1972; Wenk, Robison, and Smith, 1972). Other research areas involving the prediction of violent behavior include: (1) childhood predictors of adult violence (e.g., Lefkowitz, et al. 1977; McCord, 1979; Wolfgang, Figlio, and Sellin, 1972); (2) situational correlates of violent behavior (e.g., Monahan and Klassen, 1982; Levinson and Ramsey, 1979; Strauss, Gelles, and Steinmetz, 1980); and (3) studies that examine the reliability and validity of dangerous behavior predictions (Webster, et al. 1984).

### Clinical Versus Actuarial Prediction

Monahan (1981) pointed out the critical distinction between clinical and actuarial or statistical types of prediction (after Meehl, 1954). He noted that these two types of prediction are conceptualized as differing along two dimensions: the kind of data employed and the methods used to produce a prediction from the data.

It may be useful to distinguish the data and the methods of prediction as separate factors altogether (cf. Meehl 1954, p. 18). This would result in four "pure" kinds of prediction:

1. Statistical data combined statistically (e.g., age, sex, etc., in an actuarial table). Insurance company life-expectancy tables operate in this manner.
2. Statistical data combined clinically. (e.g., a psychologist gives a prediction after looking at psychological test scores).
3. Clinical data combined statistically. (e.g., the probabilities of violence are attached to given psychiatric diagnoses).
4. Clinical data combined clinically. (e.g., persons in certain diagnostic categories are assumed to react violently when their manhood is threatened.) Many psychodynamic predictions function in this manner. (Monahan, 1981, p.97.)

Monahan (1981) summarized common flaws of previous research that should be avoided in studies attempting to predict dangerous or violent behavior. One major weakness is the lack of specificity in defining violence. Carefully defining the criteria of what one seeks to predict is critical to successful prediction. A second problem has

been the marked tendency to ignore the statistical base rates with which violence occurs in the target population. A third weakness lies in the reliance on "illusory correlations" (Chapman and Chapman, 1969; Hartogs, 1970), predictions based upon variables assumed to be related to violence, but which in reality are either not correlated or are correlated to a lesser extent or in a direction opposite to that reported. Finally, Monahan (1981) suggested that the failure to consider the interaction of the person and the environment (i.e., the situational contexts in which a given person is likely to behave violently) has impeded attempts at successful prediction. Taken together, Monahan suggests that these weaknesses have contributed to the inability of behavioral scientists to break the "sound barrier" of a .40 correlation in efforts to predict dangerous or violent behavior.

Later in this chapter, when we examine threat assessment efforts, we have occasion to return to some of these predictive issues.

#### PERSONAL DOCUMENTS AS OBJECTS OF RESEARCH

[I]f the language of personal documents can be shown to enhance understanding, power of prediction, and power of control, above the level which man can achieve through his own unaided common sense, then these documents must be admitted as a valid scientific method."

--G.W. Allport (1942)

The principal data source used for the quantitative research reported here is spontaneously occurring written communications, chiefly letters, sent to public figures by strangers, most of whom were mentally ill. The use of personal documents as a data source for quantitative research is not novel, but rather has a rich history. Documents rank with interviews and observation as one of the three primary sources of data for researchers and the only source that can be used for past events without surviving witnesses (Richardson et al. 1965).

Our use of documents for a new purpose, however, was chiefly for reasons of ethics and economy. Although a few of the persons whose letters we studied had been publicly identified in connection with criminal charges or civil commitment proceedings, the majority were at liberty in the community and had not been publicly identified as mentally ill, dangerous, or criminal. Even if it were ethically appropriate to contact them for interviews, doing so could have had unanticipated and unwanted consequences, such as reinforcing delusions of a relationship with the public figure or even provoking some to violence. Even if these and other ethical concerns had not precluded interviews, it would not have been economically feasible to conduct interviews of hundreds of persons dispersed worldwide.

We were not disappointed in our expectation that letters would provide a window into the minds of their authors. To provide the intellectual context of the current effort, we review here the uses of personal documents in behavioral research and clinical practice.

#### Early Uses of Personal Documents for Research

The earliest study of personal documents that we have identified is particularly germane in that it was a study of letters written by the mentally ill. On the Writing of the Insane was published in 1870 as a 24-page monograph by Dr. G. Mackenzie Bacon, Medical Superintendent of the Cambridgeshire County Asylum. Only four copies are known to remain of this work.

Bacon examined patients' writings for both oddities of handwriting and oddities of content. He observed that letters may reveal psychosis where conversations do not, and he suggested that the clinical course could be monitored by examining patients' writings. Bacon identified several features of the writings of his insane patients, including repetition of the same sentences, writing every second or third word in capitals, use of "unmeaning marks and strokes," and filling up every corner of the paper. Bacon was greatly impressed by the usefulness of patients' writings to the clinician:

. . . Writing is, of course, the direct reflection of a person's mind, except in cases where there is a deliberate purpose to mislead or conceal, and from its permanence is sometimes more valuable than the fleeting impression produced by actions or spoken language. (P. 6).

\* \* \*

The letters of the insane are worth study-- as the most reliable evidence of the state of the patient's mind for the time being; they are a sort of involuntary photograph, and for this reason it is often useful to make patients write, as well as converse with them when investigating cases of lunacy. (P. 9.)

\* \* \*

. . . . no description can convey so good an idea of the patients' minds as their own expression of their thoughts. (P. 11.)

Gordon W. Allport, more than any other individual, is responsible for drawing attention to the rich potential of personal documents for research. His monograph, The Use of Personal Documents in Psychological Science (Allport, 1942), prepared for the Social Science Research Council, was the first systematic effort to consider the need for studying subjective experiences as reflected in personal writings. Allport insisted on the application of scientific methods to the study of personal documents such as autobiographies, diaries, letters, verbatim recordings (e.g., of confessions, interviews, or dreams), and questionnaires.

Allport traced the emergence of scientific interest in personal writings to the late nineteenth century, when psychologists and others were interested in individual differences and the methods of phenomenology and introspection and when the breakdown of Victorian

inhibitions permitted the expression of intimate feelings in letters, diaries, and autobiographies. This was a time when such scholars as Krafft-Ebing (1881) and Lombroso (1891) relied heavily on case reports and autobiographical materials and when such authors as Dostoevsky and Melville were developing the "psychological novel" as an important fictional form.

Allport distinguished between the "critical" and "uncritical" use of personal documents. The uncritical use of personal documents refers to the largely phenomenological concern with the immediate, subjective, and graphic portrayal of the "mental life" of the subject. This approach is characteristic of the early uses of personal documents in the behavioral sciences. In contrast, critical (or experimental) use reflects a later concern with the scientific standards of sampling, validity, observer reliability, and objectivity.

Studies that to Allport represented the "uncritical" use of personal documents include some of the most notable works in the history of the behavioral sciences. William James' Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), for example, is based on a large collection of autobiographical reports on religious experiences gathered by Starbuck (1899). G. Stanley Hall's study of the experiences of adolescents used diaries and autobiographies (1904). He

drew upon the writings of such notables as Goethe, Helen Keller, and John Stuart Mill. Sigmund Freud did not find personal contact necessary to diagnose or analyze someone, as reflected in his writings based on documents from Goethe (Freud, 1924) and the autobiographical writings of the paranoid Schreber (1926), among others. Although not cited by Allport, the most extraordinary published set of psychological inferences drawn from written documents may be Freud's (1910) analysis of the psychosexual development of Leonardo da Vinci on the basis of a brief childhood memory scribbled in the margins of one of Leonardo's notebooks, together with historical facts.

As uncritical studies of personal documents were becoming increasingly popular and important, researchers began to pay more attention to applying scientific methods to their study. Thomas and Znaniecki (1920) initiated the critical era with their sociological treatise, The Polish Peasant. This classic study used "personal life-records" such as diaries to study the social structure, mores, and values of Polish peasant life. Thomas and Znaniecki proclaimed such personal life documents as the "perfect" raw material for social scientists and began to address the methodological problems involved with such an undertaking, noting both the difficulty in obtaining a sufficient sample of materials to draw inferences about a social group and the

enormous work necessary to characterize a population adequately by analysing such materials.

Their work served as an impetus for others to consider the methodological problems involved in the study of personal documents. Blumer (1938) criticized Thomas and Znaniecki by stating that the documents employed, taken individually, would fail to meet scientific criteria of representativeness, reliability, and validity. Yet Blumer recognized that when personal documents exist in sufficient numbers they can create a scientifically acceptable preponderance of the evidence.

Attention to scientific concerns reached a new plane with the publication of Stouffer's (1930) work on the reliability and validity of judges' ratings of autobiographical writings on prohibition. Stouffer had four judges rate 238 topical autobiographies with respect to the writer's attitude toward prohibition. He obtained a reliability coefficient of  $+0.96$  by averaging the intercorrelations between each pair of judges with every other pair on the basis of their composite ratings of the autobiographies. Noting this high inter-rater reliability, he examined validity by comparing the judges' composite ratings with data from questionnaires collected from the writers themselves. This comparison yielded a validity coefficient of  $+0.86$  when corrected for attenuation.

Stouffer was thus the first to conclude that judges are able to agree in their ratings of personal writings and with independent sources of information concerning the attitudes of the writers. Other studies early established that reliable judgments could be made on the basis of writings produced on demand (Cavan et al. 1930) and naturally occurring diary materials (Cartwright and French 1939).

Despite the large quantity of research that has now been done on personal documents, quantitative studies of letters are not particularly common. Among early studies were Kahle's (1931) study of the relationship between female inmates and their families based upon incoming and outgoing letters and Baldwin's (1940) study of letters written by a widow during the last eleven years of her life measuring the frequency with which pairs of ideas were related in the widow's mind, from which it proved possible to deduce meaningful psychological insights into her abnormal attachment to her son. Perhaps the best known research drawing upon letters is Allport's (1965) Letters from Jenny, a book based on a series of 301 letters sent by a woman to two young friends between 1926 and 1937. The letters trace the course of her life from age 58 until her death at 70, revealing the story of her relationship with her son.

Modern Analyses of Personal Documents for Research

Behavioral scientists have continued to study personal writings even though interest in some types of documents peaked in the 1940s. "Uncritical" analysis of personal documents continues to flourish not only in journalism, but also in psychohistory, psychobiography, and clinical interpretation of personal writings. At the same time, there have been substantial developments in the evolution of "critical" or scientific methods. These include research techniques such as content analysis, which aim to improve the reliability and validity of inferences made from such materials, and specialized fields of study such as psycholinguistics (Deese, 1965; Aaronson and Rieber, 1979; Rickheit and Bock, 1983) devoted to psychological aspects of language use.

Today, the predominant technique for studying written material is content analysis. "Content analysis" refers to any of a variety of techniques for making inferences based on the systematic and objective analysis of specific characteristics of a document or communication (Stone et al. 1966; Krippendorff, 1980). Some of the early studies of personal documents might be considered content analysis by contemporary standards, but since the 1940s the trend has been toward more objective and systematic techniques that lend themselves to statistical analysis. Commonly, the

frequencies of certain terms, ideas, or emotional reactions are tabulated, often with some attempt to rate the degree of expression of feelings evinced in the text (Chaplin, 1975).

Content analysis emerged from the field of journalism around the turn of the century, concurrently with the study of personal documents in psychology. At that time, mass production and distribution of newspapers was beginning, and the quantitative analysis of subject matter categories across large volumes of print became of interest to those concerned with newspapers' impact on public opinion. Early examples of "quantitative newspaper analysis," are the works of Speed (1893), Wilcox (1900), Street (1909), Fenton (1910), and Mathews (1910), culminating in the work of the sociologist Willey (1926). The study of newspapers remained the predominant application of content analytic technique for 40 years.

Beginning in the 1930s, social scientists brought richer theoretical orientations and more rigorous statistical tools to content analysis. In sociology, methods were developed to analyze data generated by survey research and polling techniques (Lippman, 1922; Simpson, 1934; Woodward, 1934). In psychology, Allport and Faden (1940) used content analyses to assess systematic bias, objectivity, fairness, and "balance" in newspaper coverage (see also Janis and Fadner, 1965). In political science,

content analysis was applied to public messages, as exemplified by the study of U.S. Presidential inaugural addresses (McDiarmond, 1937; Elliott, 1937).

The first large-scale application of content analysis was the "propaganda analysis" conducted during World War II (Institute for Propaganda Analysis, 1937; George, 1959). This application relied on analyzing intercepted broadcasts to predict events within Nazi Germany and to assess the effects of military actions on "war mood." After WW II, content analysis became integrated into many disciplines, due in considerable measure to the integrative work of Berelson and Lazarsfield (1948) and of Berelson (1952).

Psychologists began to use personal documents to study personality (Allport, 1942; Dollard and Mowrer, 1947; Mahl, 1959), motivational, psychological, or personality characteristics (Allport, 1942; Baldwin, 1942; White, 1947), communication, particularly within groups (Bales, 1950), and the results of projective personality techniques, such as the Thematic Apperception Test (TAT) (Atkinson, 1958; McClelland, 1953, 1961). Although not always thought of as content analysis, content coding for specific themes became a predominant method in the clinical interpretation of the TAT. Examples of commonly coded themes include ambiguity (Kenny, 1961; Murstein, 1963), psychological "needs" for achievement, power, aggression, nurturance, or sex (Murray,

1951, 1971; Campus, 1974, 1976; Stein, 1963; McClelland and Atkinson, 1948; McClelland et al. 1953), and themes reflecting interpersonal behavior such as dominance, hostility, conformity, or generosity (Leary, 1957).

In what may be the only recent study of letter writing, Homzie et al. (1984) investigated letter-writing differences for clues to the relative social status of the writer and recipient. They identified two variables (formality and identification) that correctly classified 76 percent of their sample of letters as to the relative status of the intended recipient.

#### Psycholinguistic Analysis

As computers became available in the late 1950s, interest grew in their application to content analysis. Traditional content analysis typically relied on trained coders to analyze large amounts of verbal material. Coders become quickly fatigued, bored, or frustrated by the tedious nature of the task; individual biases cause fluctuations in inter-rater reliability; and a single coder might vary coding practices over time and with experience. The use of computer technology to code data for content analysis surmounted these human error problems. The computer could handle large amounts of data quickly, accurately, reliably, and objectively.

Early applications of computer-assisted "text processing" included the construction of concordances for

the Dead Sea Scrolls and St. Thomas Aquinas' Summa Theologica (Tasman, 1957) and an analysis of 4,000 Chereemis folktales (Sebeok and Zeps, 1958). The particular applications of interest here, however, are in the domain of psycholinguistic research, which often employs content analysis as a methodological tool (Deese, 1981; Aaronson and Rieber, 1979; Rickheit and Bock, 1983).

Linguistics is distinguished from content analysis by the fact that the former is guided by more rigid syntactic parameters. The content analyst is concerned with meaning and uses whatever is at hand to identify conscious and unconscious intentions. Linguists, however, restrict their formal conclusions to those based solely on the information contained in language structure. The fields of psycholinguistics (Aaronson and Rieber, 1979; Rickheit and Bock, 1983; Rieber and Vetter, 1979) and sociolinguistics (Labov, 1972; Sanchez and Blount, 1975) are rich with theory and applications that might have direct bearing on the assessment of communications to public figures.

Early psycholinguistic analyses, as reflected in the work of Deese (1965), focused on the word as the basic unit of language. Later work in the area moved beyond the word to consider the structure of sentences (Chomsky, 1965; Fillmore, 1968), and psycholinguists now grapple with analyses of discourse or units of language beyond the

sentence (Peterson and McCabe, 1983; Deese, 1981; Stein and Glenn, 1979).

#### Clinical Uses of Written Documents

Psychiatrists and psychologists have, of course, long recognized that the disordered thinking of psychotic patients is as apparent in the content of their writings as in their speech, and others since Bacon (1870) have recognized that the mentally ill sometimes write in a peculiar form as well. For example, one of the standard psychiatric textbooks includes three plates reproducing writings by paranoid schizophrenic patients, noting such features as the repetition of phrases, the use of a private writing code, a "punctuation mannerism" (a comma after every clause), and a "writing mannerism" (writing only on the corners of the pages while leaving the center blank) (Slater and Roth, 1968, plates VI-VIII).

Content analysis of the verbal productions of medical and psychiatric patients is an active area of current research (see, e.g., Gottschalk et al. 1986). Scales have been developed to measure a variety of psychological traits and states, including hostility, anxiety, hope, depression, social alienation/personal disorganization, and cognitive impairment, and many of these scales have been validated in multiple samples (Gottschalk, 1986).

Despite the foregoing, as of this writing the only routine clinical use that psychiatrists make of their

patient's writings is to ask patients to write one or two sentences from memory as a test for various forms of aphasia (Taylor et al. 1987) or delirium (Wise, 1987). In one study, for example, 33 of 34 acutely confused, delirious patients showed impaired writing, evidencing tremor, illegible scribble, letter malalignment, line disorientation, misspelling, or linguistic errors (Chedru and Geschwind, 1972).

Many therapists read at least some of the writings brought to them by patients and some even assign journal writing tasks to patients, but the use, if any, made of these productions is highly individualized. In contrast to the treatment setting, in the forensic setting writings often provide essential evidence, though here, too, the use, if any, made of writings is highly individualized. In short, despite the development of content analytic techniques for research purposes, writings by the mentally disordered are not yet routinely assessed by mental health professionals.

#### THREAT ASSESSMENT

The concept of assessing the validity or meaning of threatening communications must be as old as threats themselves, but the effort to develop a scientific approach to threat assessment is a more recent phenomenon. The term

"threat assessment" is used in the intelligence, law enforcement, and security communities to encompass a variety of activities, including tasks that might be more precisely described under other names, including:

(1) Vulnerability assessment, i.e., efforts to determine the vulnerability of various sites or procedures to criminal action or other disruptive events. Thus, for example, some security and law enforcement professionals use the term threat assessment to refer to (a) surveys of which of a corporation's multiple plants are most vulnerable to labor disputes, natural disaster, or other challenges, (b) evaluations of the vulnerable points in a VIP's itinerary, or (c) studies of the vulnerabilities in an overall security plan. Similarly, the spatial segments around a vehicle have been described as "threat zones" for officers approaching subjects in vehicles, referring to the greater vulnerability of the officer who approaches from the front or side than from the rear (Remsberg, 1986). A somewhat similar use of the concept of "threat" is reflected in the designation of "threat levels" of body armor by the National Institute of Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, which issued standards under which body armor that stops .22, .25, .32, and some .38 caliber ammunition is designated "Threat Level I," that which stops 9mm, .45 ACP, and .357 Magnum is "Threat Level II," and so on.

(2) Intelligence collection, i.e., the development of information about potential adversaries. For example, Kupperman (1982) describes threat assessment as the collection of intelligence on terrorist organizations and technologies that may be used by terrorists in future incidents.

(3) Emergency triage, the rapid determination of the severity of an urgent situation. For example, Cadwell (1983) uses the terms "threat analysis" and "determination of threat level" to refer to procedures whereby the guards at a nuclear facility decide how to respond to various types of alarm signals that have been activated. Self defense and firearm writers sometimes use the term threat assessment to describe the process of deciding whether to shoot or not shoot an assailant. In a related usage, the Threat Management Institute, regularly advertises in American Handgunner magazine that they offer "Defense Firearms Training," "Teaching Reality in Threat Management."

(4) A combination of the above. For example, Siljander (1980) describes threat assessment as the effort to determine both the visibility, value, and vulnerability of potential targets and the identity, motives, and capabilities of potential attackers (p. 7), and this is the same range of activities covered under the threat assessment rubric by Blackstone Associates in their analysis of

terrorist risks in particular countries (see, e.g., Blackstone Associates, 1979). Fischer (1983) describes four approaches to "nuclear threat assessment," by which he means techniques for assessing relative capabilities of the U.S. and the Soviet Union for nuclear warfare, including intelligence collection, predictive simulations, and inferences about Soviet behavior on the basis of Soviet military doctrine.

As illustrated by the foregoing, the concepts of "threat assessment" and even "threat" are used inconsistently even among those in the law enforcement, intelligence, and security communities, not to mention the varied uses in other spheres of life. Many writers use "threat" as a synonym for "danger" or "risk." In the research reported here, the term "threat" was used to mean an expression of an intention to harm, but as our results make clear, this is not a useful conceptualization. "Threat assessment" can only have maximal value if applied to a much broader class of inappropriate communications and behaviors than that limited group that constitute formal threats. Our concept of "threat assessment" is the analysis of communicative behavior for four specific purposes:

- (1) Identification: The specific identity and location of the author of the communication.<sup>1</sup>

- (2) Description: The motives and characteristics of the the communicator.
- (3) Prediction: The probable future behavior of the communicator.
- (4) Prevention: The options available for minimizing the risks of adverse outcomes.

Threatening and other inappropriate communications pose dilemmas to their recipients and to those responsible for protecting the recipients. These messages may be an end in themselves or may be warnings of future harm. In threat assessment the analyst attempts to draw specific inferences concerning the author of a communication from an examination of the text of messages and all other available data, to make predictions about the subject, and on the basis of these inferences and predictions, to suggest options to reduce the risk of harmful outcomes. There has been little scholarly commentary, let alone empirical research, on the assessment of naturally occurring threats or inappropriate communications.

#### Social Psychology Experiments

While there is a sizable body of work on simulated threats, it is largely irrelevant to our purposes. A few examples of the "threats" used in such simulation experiments will illustrate the point:

- (1) a statement that one's summer camp sports team will probably lose the series (Pepitone and Kleiner, 1957)
- (2) a comment made by an authority figure that a group discussion "should not continue," this being construed as an external "threat" to the group (Lauderdale et al. 1984)
- (3) a message while playing a game as a requirement for a psychology course that "If you do not make Choice 1 on the next trial, I will take 10 points away from your [score on the game]" (Nacci and Tedeschi, 1973; Schlenker et al. 1970; Tedeschi et al. 1980)
- (4) a message while playing a game that, "I'll make sure you are fined 40 cents if you don't choose the vinegar concentrate" (Heilman, 1974)
- (5) a message given to a student imagining collaborative work on a class project requiring joint research: "If you do not agree to work on my topic, you will have to write up the final report" (Rubin and Lewicki, 1973).

The most ominous threats employed in experiments consist in an expectation of receiving a harmless electric shock at the hands of a fellow college student enrolled in the experiment (Taylor et al. 1976). In simulation experiments, the "threat" is designed by the experimenter, who studies the effect of this manipulation on cooperativeness, compliance, aggression, emotions, or other behaviors, attitudes, and feeling states.

Even where experiments of this kind have produced consistent findings that may be generalizable to naturally occurring threats, the findings are not useful for our purposes because the results inform us only of the responses of recipients of threats, not the identity, description, or

future conduct of threateners. Those interested in the behavior of the recipients of threats and their likely responses under various conditions will, however, find useful concepts and propositions in the experimental literature. Milburn and Watman (1981) have prepared a useful summary of such work through the 1970s, and Breznitz (1984) has reviewed the effects of repeated false alarms on the recipients of threatening information.

The one concept in the experimental social psychology literature from which we borrowed in constructing our instrument on threats was the distinction between noncontingent and contingent threats (Tedeschi, 1970), the latter of which were termed conditional threats by Fillenbaum (1976).

#### Psycholinguistic Threat Assessment

Linguistic techniques, particularly content analysis, provide one set of tools for evaluating threatening communications. The intellectual background of content analysis and psycholinguistics were reviewed in Chapter 2, and here we review applications of these strategies to threat assessment. Psycholinguistic studies of coercive communications, including threats, have been the province of Miron and his colleagues (Miron and Pasquale, 1978; Miron and Douglas, 1979; Miron and Goldstein, 1979; Miron and Reber, 1978), and it is Miron's work that is the focus of this review.

Case examples of the successful use of purportedly "psycholinguistic" methods used to assess threats have been offered by Miron and Douglas (1979). These psycholinguistic methods are primarily content analyses carried out with the aid of the General Inquirer and a specially developed threat dictionary. Threatening messages are fed directly into the computer, and the "profile" of the message that the computer outputs is then used to make judgments concerning the viability of the threat. Miron is said to have used this technique in investigations of nearly 1,000 threats, including those in such famous cases as David Berkowitz ("Son of Sam"), the Los Angeles "Hillside Strangler," and the serial murders of young black children in Atlanta (Rice, 1981).

Miron first achieved national attention for his work on the Patricia Hearst case. Working with transcripts of the seven tape recordings sent by the Symbionese Liberation Army, Miron prepared several reports for the FBI in which he correctly identified the individual identifying himself as "Cinque" as Donald DeFreeze, correctly predicted that Patricia Hearst would join the SLA and participate in criminal activity with them, and predicted that the group was ultimately suicidal and would eventually place themselves in a situation in which they would martyr themselves in a shootout with police.

In another case, Miron analyzed communications received from an unidentified skyjacker who was threatening a flight from New York to Geneva, Switzerland. He was able to identify the subject as "a German-born male of at least 50 years of age who had immigrated to the United States as an adult and had resided in this country for at least 20 years" (Miron and Douglas, 1979). In this case, Miron believed that something in the subject's personality compelled him to leave clues as to his identity in his messages. Miron deciphered a cryptic code that the perpetrator left at the conclusion of an extortion note, translating it into the message, "FBI, I'm JK JK." Examining the passenger list for the flight, Miron matched the profile and initials with one of the names on the list. Investigation of that person's history revealed that he had written and signed his name to a number of similar messages in 1969, and subsequent content analyses of those messages indicated that this was the same individual. Clues gleaned from these messages were then used to suggest an optimal approach for handling the situation with minimal risk.

In a case involving the Los Angeles Police Department, Miron was asked to help identify a subject who had made several television appearances claiming to be a member of the police force who had knowledge of police "death squads" which assassinated minority citizens. Content analyses of

these broadcasts narrowed the field of suspects from 7,000 men down to 5 choices. "Based only on the speech of this man, the report was able to identify his place of birth, age, education, background, and location of residence over the last five years, in addition to those purely psychological factors which motivated him" (Miron and Douglas, 1979: p. 4). Further descriptions of these and other investigations can be found in Miron and Douglas (1979) and Rice (1981). Unfortunately, these publications do not indicate which of the correct inferences were based on the application of formal psycholinguistic techniques and which were logical deductions, other forms of inference, intuition, or "lucky guesses." In order for the technique to be subjected to critical scrutiny and replication, it must be described, and this is not done in these writings.

The sole piece of published empirical research that deals directly with the analysis of coercive communications is Miron and Pasquale's (1978) work examining the Symbionese Liberation Army tapes, data from Samuel Byck (a skyjacker), and data from David Meirhofer (a serial murderer). This research is particularly relevant to understanding Miron's approach, as the study presents the empirical factors that he has developed as the foundation of his threat analysis technique.

In order to adequately assess the Miron and Pasquale (1978) study, it is necessary to have some background in the

relevant analytic techniques, which is offered here in summary fashion. Before undertaking our own research, we had to reach a judgment as to whether to follow in Miron's footsteps or to change course entirely. We ultimately decided to pursue a different route, and that decision can only be understood through a rather detailed review of the Miron technique, which in 1984 first seemed the best available route toward scientific threat assessment.

Two principal approaches exist to computational content analysis: (1) artificial intelligence approaches, and (2) thesaurus and dictionary approaches. Artificial intelligence approaches aim at representing human intelligence in a computer program. Its hope is to provide an understanding of human cognitive processes, to design mechanical devices (expert systems) to assist man in difficult decision or control processes, and to generalize intelligence beyond human limitations (Lindsay, 1963; Rieger, 1978). Artificial intelligence approaches have not yet been developed in the area of threat assessment.

The thesaurus and dictionary approaches are similar in that each uses single words or short strings of characters as the basic unit of analysis. Key terms are marked or "tagged" within the text. These tags are then classified, and the frequency of their occurrence is tabulated. The thesaurus approach is exemplified by a program called VIA

(Sedelow, 1967), which uses existing thesauri (e.g., Roget's University Thesaurus or Webster's New Dictionary of Synonyms) and their groupings of words into general categories of shared meaning. The most widely used dictionary approach is probably the General Inquirer.

In 1961, Stone and Bales independently developed the General Inquirer, a sophisticated computer program devoted entirely to content analysis (Stone et al. 1962). The General Inquirer has been used to explore personality characteristics reflected in written documents (Paige, 1966) and to study psychotic language (Maher, 1966). The program has also been used to study genuine versus simulated suicide notes (Ogilvie et al. 1966). Because this is the program used by Miron and Pasquale (1978) it is treated in some detail here.

The General Inquirer accepts either raw or "preedited" text, which is usually keyed directly to tape or punched on cards. Over 90 percent of the studies that have used the program have used raw input data (Stone et al. 1966), and this also appears to be the procedure used by Miron in threat assessment (Rice, 1981). Tape recordings of oral threats are transcribed, and then handled in the same fashion.

While manual preediting has not generally been done, it can greatly influence the outcome of a computerized content

analysis. It consists of a number of conventions for treating the data before computer entry. The first of these conventions involves imbedding symbols into the text to assist the computer in "seeing" the structure and punctuation of the text (e.g., two periods to mark the end of a sentence, two commas in place of quotation marks, "\$" in place of "?," and symbols to mark the end of a paragraph or who is speaking in a conversation. A second convention involves identifying proper names and pronouns so the computer will be able to identify the referent (e.g., to distinguish the city of Buffalo from an animal). Abbreviations are spelled out and special definitions (such as those for slang) can be added. Finally, some rudimentary conventions have been developed to help the computer recognize elementary syntactic relationships ("who is saying what to whom") and methods to associate a modifier with its correct referent within a sentence. All of these conventions are discussed in great detail by Stone et al. (1966).

Manual preediting offers a number of advantages in improving the limited ability of the computer to extract accurate and valuable information from text, but it also presents significant problems. First, there is a trade off between the amount of additional information that can be retrieved and the costs to the user in speed and efficiency,

which are the greatest advantages of computer text processing. Also, the process of manual preediting erodes the level of objectivity achieved, another important advantage to the computer method. Computerized content analysis has pronounced limitations in understanding the complexity of human communication, yet the efforts required to improve these abilities may reduce the very advantages of the computer: efficiency, speed, and objectivity.

Use of the General Inquirer involves three basic components. The first component is the input text data. The second is a specially composed dictionary designed to tap the dimensions of interest to the researcher. The third is an algorithm that scans the text, compares the words and context of the input text data with the dictionary, and performs intricate sorting and counting manipulations.

The program first distills words in the text to their roots or "word stems." This means removing suffixes from words so as to simplify the construction of dictionaries. Thus "killer," "kills," and "killing," are all identified as KILL. The program then identifies a word stem by a one-to-one match with the dictionary entries. The word is "tagged" and tabulated in predefined categories. These categories are used as a representation of the word or are used in conjunction with the original word in subsequent analyses. After tagging and categorization, several types of analysis

can be performed, from simple frequency counts and lists to complex statistical manipulations.

The General Inquirer's value is a function of the completeness and organization of its dictionary, which represents a complex classification scheme based on certain semantic criteria (Kaplan and Goldsen, 1965). Content analysis dictionaries only resemble standard dictionaries insofar as they are concerned with descriptions or meanings of words. Beyond this, the resemblance diminishes, as content analysis dictionaries attempt to distinguish a specific meaning for a given word "by a semantic classification indicating the relevance of the particular words to a social science theory being used by the investigator" (Stone et al. 1966, p. 135). The original dictionary (Stone et al. 1966; Miller, 1969) was based largely on Bale's (1950) Interaction Process Analysis, and is called the Harvard Psycho-Sociological Dictionary. This dictionary has since been enlarged and modified to meet a variety of research needs, including threat analysis (Miron and Pasquale, 1978).

Miron and Pasquale (1978) constructed an 85-category "threat analysis dictionary" drawn from the Harvard-Psycho-Sociological IV-3 Dictionary (Stone et al. 1966; Miller, 1969), plus categories that they devised that relate specifically to threats. The computer dictionary is able to

ascertain the difference between homo-orthographic forms by scanning the way in which the word or phrase is used in the text. The word "pig," for example, can be initially assigned to the category of HUMILIATION rather than as a farm animal by examination of the preceeding words for membership in the category INSTITUTION. Hence, "fascist pig" and "corporate pig" are people, while "delicious pig" and "roasted pig" are animals. Further tests of more distant words surrounding the ambiguous word are then made so that collocations such as "The fascists will be roasted pigs when we're through" are correctly assigned (Miron and Pasquale, 1978).

Miron and Pasquale (1978) developed 80 text segments that formed the data base. These segments were drawn from the actual threatening messages from the SLA members, Byck, and Meirhofer, as well as samplings from American television and the text of a popular novel. These data were input to the General Inquirer with the Threat Analysis Dictionary. The frequencies of occurrences of words assigned to each of the 85 categories were tabulated, and then correlated with each of the other categories in an 85 x 85 matrix. The resultant correlation matrix was then subjected to a principal components analysis in order to identify "the essential attributes or central themes contained in the messages."

Note that the stability of this solution is limited by the inadequate size of the sample of messages in the data base ( $N = 80$ ) relative to the 85 variables of interest. Hence, the validity and general applicability of the solution is questionable. Further, principal components analysis is widely recognized to yield generally uninterpretable results, and is more appropriately employed as a data reduction technique (Joreskog and Sorbom, 1979; Klienbaum and Kupper, 1978). Yet Miron and Pasquale (1978) "boldly suggest" that the three dimensions uncovered by their analyses "can be applied to other terrorists" as well as a "wide range of communication behavior." This claim is unjustified because this solution would, at a minimum, require a reliable replication on a large ( $N = 400$ ) independent sample, preferably using a "true" factor analysis algorithm (e.g., maximum likelihood estimation) that yields generally interpretable results.

The pattern that emerged from their analysis is considered by Miron and Pasquale (1978) to represent the structural content of threatening messages, and has been subsequently used by Miron in his applied threat analyses. This structure consists of three principal components that he has named Impotence-Denial, Destructive Reaction, and Affiliative Need. These three accounted for 80 percent of the variance of 80 related messages. Miron proposes that

these factors account for the motivations of those persons who would use coercion.

According to Miron and Pasquale (1978, see esp. pp. 113-114):

The essential characterization of what one means by a terrorist act, the illegitimate use of coercion as against legitimized and sanctioned force, may well reside in the degree to which the act is motivated by perceptions of impotence and the absence of positive affiliative identifications. The normal person copes with feelings of powerlessness by denying that powerlessness. We found that powerlessness is closely associated with denial, the two invariably are connected. But when denial of our powerlessness is not sufficient to cope with increasing assaults on our perceptions of our own worth, and in the absence of affiliative support, some may choose to lash out in angry, destructive resentment. Those without any vestige of socially sanctioned power or relatedness may choose to destroy the society which has denied them their significance and identity (Miron and Pasquale, 1978, pp. 113-114).

To make sense of the empirically derived factors, Miron and Pasquale turn to familiar psychological constructs for names and, in the quoted passage, speculate on their interrelationships. Thus, what begins empirically is given meaning through psychodynamic speculation.

#### The Status and Promise of Linguistic Threat Analysis

As our research design was being planned, the "state-of-the-art" technology for the assessment of threats was the application of sophisticated computer programs to analyze the text of threatening messages (e.g., Miron and Douglas,

1979; Miron and Pasquale, 1978; Rice, 1981). This computer-assisted content analysis had all the trappings of scientific objectivity, yet its practitioners acknowledged that it was still closer to art than science (Rice, 1981; Miron and Douglas, 1979).

Computer assisted content analysis of threatening messages has never been demonstrated to be of use in determining which threats are genuine and which are mere gesticulations. This method only generates rudimentary "profiles" of a given communication's textual/syntactical content. Interpretation of this profile and assessment of the viability of the threat are still left to "expert" human judgments. Despite the aura of objectivity that this method radiates, the actual prediction process still relies on subjective assessments. Computerized content analysis should be viewed as one source of data available to the threat analyst in forming his subjective opinion of a given threat.

A variety of areas of psycholinguistic research have as yet unexplored potential to assist analysts of harassing and threatening communications. To give just 10 examples of research with possible applications:

- (1) measures of "tension" in written documents (Dollard and Mowrer, 1947)
- (2) measures of "powerful" versus "powerless" speech patterns (Erickson, 1978)
- (3) measures of assertive, passive, and aggressive

- speech patterns (Gervasio et al. 1983)
- (4) measures of the feeling states of juvenile delinquents (French, 1980)
  - (5) the recognition of language patterns reflecting individual perceptions of cultural and societal variables related to violence (Witucki, 1971)
  - (6) measures of verbal aggression as reflected in the use of pejorative epithets (Driscoll, 1981)
  - (7) measures of the grammar used in lying (Epstein, 1982)
  - (8) indications of social and geographic origins from speech style (Labov, 1972; Giles and Powesland, 1975)
  - (9) patterns of speech indicative of schizophrenia (Werner et al. 1975)
  - (10) patterns of speech indicative of psychosis (Maker, McKeon, and McLaughlin, 1966)

In sum, there appear to be a number of as yet unexplored applications of linguistics to threat assessment. Attention to these areas of inquiry may add to the data generated by content analysis and provide a more substantial basis for objective uses of psycholinguistics in threat assessment.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has touched on some of the previous work on which ours builds. We have briefly reviewed work on the prediction of violence, which, although not the thrust of our research, poses identical problems. In greater depth, we reviewed the history of the use of personal documents in research, for it is here that we have attempted to be methodologically innovative. We introduced the concept of

threat assessment, explaining the inconsistent uses of this concept in current parlance, and offering a new definition of the enterprise. Finally, we explored in some depth the use of psycholinguistic techniques to analyze threatening communications, concluding that despite the promise of these techniques, this was not the path we thought most profitable to follow.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> In behavioral identification it is the content of the communication and its gross form that provide important behavioral clues, either suggesting the characteristics of the unknown threatener or narrowing the field among identified suspects. In contrast, the questioned document examiner relies primarily on physical features of the communication to identify the class of physical objects through which it was created, to determine whether two or more communications were created by the same individual, or to determine whether particular objects were used to create a particular communication. In practice, both sets of techniques are often of great importance to an investigation.

It is worth noting that the field of questioned document examination has gone well beyond the traditional capacities for the identification of cursive handwriting, standard typewriting, paper, and ink. Successful identifications have been made of communications created through handprinting (Armistead, 1984), printwheel typescript (Behrendt, 1988), office copiers (James, 1987), computer printers (Winchester, 1981), and even tapes produced by label makers (Mason and Grose, 1987). For overviews of this work, see Hilton's textbook (1982) or review article (1988).

CHAPTER 3  
RESEARCH METHODS

This chapter provides a complete accounting of the methods used to collect quantitative data from two data sources: the archives of Gavin de Becker, Inc., containing unsolicited communications sent to celebrities, primarily in the entertainment industry, and the archives of the Intelligence Unit of the United State Capitol Police, containing unsolicited communications sent to Members of the Congress of the United States (Senators and Congressmen).

SELECTION OF DATA COLLECTION SITES

We established three criteria for the selection of sites at which data would be collected for this research. These criteria were:

- (1) Storage of over 1,000 case files of harassing and threatening communications,
- (2) Centralized storage of original letters from a subject and any investigative information developed about that subject, preferably in the same file, and
- (3) Willingness to participate in the study.

At the outset, we would have preferred to study a random sample of all harassing and threatening

communications in the United States, but this was impossible because of the lack of any repository of such materials. While in theory it would have been possible to generate a grab-bag sample of communications to various parties that had been investigated by a sample of police departments, few police departments store their reports on such cases separately from the reports for all other investigations. Thus, it would have been very expensive to retrieve these files, and even then we would have had no means of determining the representativeness of the sample. Solicitations of materials from the general public would have been even more expensive and would have posed other problems. The ultimate focus on communications to public figures reflects the fact that only public figures (or, as we have learned, famous entities) attract so many inappropriate communications that a few locations have developed storage facilities. The requirement that at least 1,000 cases be on file reflected our concern that it be possible to select a random sample of cases that would represent a larger universe.

The requirement that the materials be stored in a single location and preferably a single file was based solely on the need for economy in collecting data. While the F.B.I. was very cooperative with our effort and generous in its assistance, the storage of case files of the kind of

interest made it impractical to use F.B.I. files. A centralized collection of threat letters at F.B.I. Headquarters in Washington, D.C., was made available for the research, but the investigative materials related to the letters were stored at F.B.I. field offices throughout the U.S. and its territories. Had we needed only a few dozen complete files, it would have been reasonable to gather them in one location for study, but because we planned to draw a sample of several hundred cases it would have taxed the generosity of the F.B.I. toward the research to assemble all of these files under one roof.

Another F.B.I. resource, the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime at the F.B.I. Academy at Quantico, Virginia, had a variety of relevant case files under its roof. These were stored among files on many other kinds of cases, in many instances related to ongoing investigations, and were by no means a random selection of such materials, having been referred to Quantico because an investigator somewhere had reason to believe that specialized behavioral science consultation could assist the investigation.

Another logical source of material for the research would have been the United States Secret Service. In fiscal year 1982 alone, the Intelligence Division of the U.S. Secret Service opened approximately 5,000 new cases concerning individuals thought to warrant investigation to

determine if they pose a danger to a Secret Service protectee (Fein, 1984). Unfortunately, the Secret Service declined to participate at the time the research sites were being selected. Other federal agencies with experience in threatening communications, such as the U.S. Marshals Service, the U.S. Postal Service, the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Department of State, and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission were not approached because their jurisdiction was considered too specialized for our purposes.

The two sources that met all three of our criteria were Gavin de Becker, Inc., and the U.S. Capitol Police. Because the research was exploratory, with little prior research to guide our selection of variables, we began by reading large volumes of material in the Gavin de Becker archives in order to gain familiarity with the types of materials and range of issues we would be studying. Initial drafts of data collection instruments and of the research design were critiqued by a panel of experienced threat analysts, researchers, and clinicians at a Project Advisory Board meeting at the F.B.I. Academy. The instruments were pretested with materials in the de Becker archives and revised before formal data collection was begun. The findings from research in the de Becker archives were used to reduce dramatically the scope of the data collection

instruments so that a much streamlined data collection effort was possible in the Capitol Police archives.

#### THE GAVIN DE BECKER ARCHIVES

The research reported in Chapters 4 through 8 is based on information contained in the archives of Gavin de Becker, whose Los Angeles based corporation provides security consultation services to public figures, including some of the most famous individuals in the entertainment world. Unlike traditional security firms, Gavin de Becker, Inc., has developed extensive archival files on individuals who write, telephone, visit, or otherwise threaten clients. These files are maintained for operational purposes and are in constant use for determining high risk subjects in particular geographic areas and for assessing the danger that particular individuals pose to clients of the firm.

In order to gauge the representativeness of the sample of these files studied, it is necessary to describe the origins of these files and the sampling strategy employed. We also describe here some of the basic characteristics of the sample.

#### The Origins of the de Becker Archives

Gavin de Becker, Inc., distributes guidance to its clients on which mail to refer for assessment. The guidelines are given to those most likely to be the first to open mail addressed to the celebrity. At the time of the study, this guidance consisted of the following criteria:

GAVIN DE BECKER INCORPORATED

## PROFILE MATERIAL CRITERIA

The kinds of material that should be forwarded for assessment include communications that make reference to:

- >> A SPECIAL HISTORY SHARED WITH THE PRINCIPAL
- >> A SPECIAL DESTINY SHARED WITH THE PRINCIPAL
- >> A DIRECT COMMUNICATION (belief that there is direct communication between the Principal and the writer, one or two ways)
- >> RELIGIOUS AND HISTORICAL THEMES INVOLVING THE PRINCIPAL (including when the writer admonishes the Principal to change his/her lifestyle)
- >> DEATH, SUICIDE, WEAPONS, etc.
- >> EXTREME OR OBSESSIVE LOVE
- >> OBSESSIVE DESIRE TO CONTACT THE PRINCIPAL (including plans for meeting, interest in home address, etc.)
- >> A DEBT THAT IS OWED TO THE WRITER BY THE PRINCIPAL (not just money but any type of debt)
- >> THE PRINCIPAL IS SOMEONE OTHER THAN HIMSELF/HERSELF (an imposter, a historical figure, the writer's spouse or relative, etc.)
- >> PERSONS WHO HAVE BEEN ATTACKED IN PUBLIC (Lincoln, John Lennon, Sadat, Kennedy, et al)
- >> PERSONS WHO HAVE CARRIED OUT ATTACKS AGAINST PUBLIC FIGURES (Oswald, Hinckley, Sirhan, et al)
- >> MENTAL ILLNESS (psychiatric care, anti-psychotic medication, etc.)
- >> BODYGUARDS, SECURITY, SAFETY, DANGER, etc.

Beyond these general categories, please include anything that is disjointed in content, sinister, or otherwise questionable. This should include bizarre or unreasonable solicitations. Material from writers who send many letters after getting no response should also be passed on to us even if each of the letters appear normal.

The criteria above should also be applied to cards which arrive with flowers, telephone messages, or any other type of communication from members of the general public.

Those letters which are identified as inappropriate and referred for assessment are collected, catalogued according to writer, and filed in the de Becker archives along with other investigative information for use as intelligence and as evidence. This firm has amassed an extraordinary collection of these materials (estimated at 143,000 items of correspondence as of this writing).

### The Celebrities

All of the celebrities with whom the subjects had communicated are persons of national or international stature. Some communications to other public figures in the political or business worlds were included in the sampling universe, but the few that fell in the statistical sample were rejected and replaced unless a celebrity in the entertainment world was of concern to the subject.

The sampling universe contained sizable collections of case files for 22 public figures, with a few cases represented from each of a larger number of public figures. In the sample of 214 cases selected, many of the letters had been directed to three particular public figures, who were the primary focus of attention of 44 percent, 23 percent, and five percent of the subjects in this sample.

Variations in the numbers of cases directed to particular public figures are a function not only of the number of subjects who write to a particular figure, but

also a function of the length of time that materials directed to them have been archived and the sensitivity of the screening procedures used to refer cases for assessment. Thus, the longer such files had been maintained for a particular public figure and the lower the threshold of screening personnel for referring a communication for assessment, the larger the number of cases available for study who had written to the particular public figure.

#### Challenges to Representativeness

Despite the guidance given to mail-screeners for the identification of inappropriate letters, there are several factors contributing to irregularities in the referral of letters.

First is the fact that letters that are written are not necessarily received by those who have been trained in the screening procedure. Letters to celebrities are received not only by their secretaries, agents, and managers, but also by studios, fan clubs, performance venues, television stations and networks on which they have appeared, companies with which they worked years previously, and a host of other locations. Moreover, because many of the letter writers of interest are mentally ill, they may send letters meant for Hollywood celebrities to the White House, the Kremlin, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the C.I.A., the F.B.I., other public figures, and anywhere and anyone else imaginable.

Others forget to address, stamp, or mail their letters. The proportion that are eventually received by the trained mail screeners is unknown.

Second, even the mail that makes its way to the relevant people (such as the celebrity's manager, secretary, fan club, or mail service) may go unopened. The volume of "fan mail" received sometimes exceeds the capacity of a celebrity's staff to screen it, and some public figures direct those who work for them not to bother opening unsolicited mail. Under these conditions, communications that should be referred to de Becker personnel for assessment may not be referred on a timely basis or may never be referred at all.

Third, even that mail which reaches trained screeners and is read is not handled uniformly. Those who screen the mail vary in their sensitivity at recognizing inappropriate communications.<sup>2</sup> Like others without formal training in psychopathology, some no doubt have difficulty perceiving subtle abnormalities in communications. Besides variations between screeners, an individual screener's sensitivity may vary over time. For example, we would expect that the sensitivity increases in the wake of tragedies such as the John Lennon murder.

While we have no illusions about the completeness of the files available, we have no reason to doubt that they

are representative of inappropriate letters to similar public figures that might be gathered in the same way. The only systematic biases that we have reason to suspect are that (1) the most severely disorganized letter writers may be under-represented because they more often fail to mail, address, or stamp their communications, (2) the most subtle degrees of inappropriateness are probably under-represented because they do not meet the screener's threshold for referral, and (3) the most overtly threatening, ominous, and fear-arousing communications are probably over-represented. But these biases would occur anywhere one tried to collect data from pre-screened inappropriate mail referred to a central location.

#### The Sampling Universe

Persons who seek inappropriate contact with public figures do so in multiple ways, the most common of which are written correspondence, telephone calls, and efforts to visit (physically approach) the public figure. (Other, much less common methods are sending flowers or other gifts without writing a note, sending an emissary to deliver a message or gift, and paid advertising.)

Because an important goal of our research was to predict from letters which subjects would physically approach the public figure, sample selection was done in two stages. The sampling universe was those cases in which a

letter writer had been on file for at least six months (allowing subjects an opportunity to attempt an approach). While the minimum amount of time a subject had to be on file to be admitted to the study without having approached was six months, some cases had been on file for over five years.

A subject was classified as "approach positive" if he or she was known to have (1) personally gone to a location believed to be the home of the celebrity, (2) personally gone to any agency believed to represent the celebrity (including business agents, personal agents, employers or employees of the public figure), (3) personally gone to a location believed to be the home or business address of any acquaintance, friend, relative or intimate of the celebrity, (4) personally approached within five miles of any of the above locations with the expressed intent of seeing, visiting, or confronting any of the above parties, (5) traveled more than 300 miles to see the celebrity or any of the above parties, even in a public appearance, or (6) behaved in any manner out of the ordinary at any public appearance of the celebrity.

The fifth element of this definition requires explanation, since some ordinary fans travel more than 300 miles to see their favorite performers. The decision to include this element is based on the reasoning that anyone writing a letter odd enough to have been referred for

assessment has differentiated himself or herself from the ordinary fan by writing the odd letter.

A subject was classified as "approach negative" if he or she had sent inappropriate materials to the celebrity through the mail, delivery persons, or common carrier, but had not met any of the above elements of an approach-positive case. A subject who had written and who also approached the public figure in a public and appropriate way such as attending a concert or other public appearance would still be classified as approach negative if the subject did not travel more than 300 miles to see the celebrity and had behaved appropriately at that appearance.

On January 27, 1985, a computerized index was generated of all of the cases that were then encompassed in the de Becker archives. At that time, the archives contained files on 1,559 subjects. Of these, 263 subjects were indexed as having already made an approach. In the process of working with the archives, an additional seven approach-positive subjects were identified (either because they approached between January 27, 1985, and the time of coding or because they had been mistakenly indexed as approach negative). Of the total number of 270 known approach-positive subjects, 61 had sent no known mailings and 39 were lost to the study either because the indexed approach could not be confirmed or because the case file could not be located. Thus, the

final number of approach-positive subjects studied was 231, of whom 170 sent mailings. A total of 1,330 approach-negative subjects was available for sampling, but not all of these subjects had written (58 had come to attention solely on the basis of telephone calls). Table 3-1 summarizes these features of the sampling universe.

Note from Table 3-1 that of the 1,561 cases on file, 231 or 15 percent were known to have approached. Some of these cases came to attention only because of an approach and were not known to have written or telephoned. Among 1,442 subjects for whom letters were on file, 170 or 12 percent were known to have approached.

Ideally, we would like to have been able to study the entire universe of cases listed in Table 3-1, but there practical reasons for not doing so. Subjects who only telephoned were not studied because there were too few such cases on whom useful data were available. Of the 58 subjects in this category, tape recordings of telephone conversations were available for very few because the states in which many of the calls were received prohibit the recording of a telephone conversation without the consent of both parties and because some of the calls were received at locations where such calls are received too infrequently for anyone to have even considered the issue of taping. Although we did not study telephone callers who did not

write, it is worth noting that of 66 such subjects, eight (12 percent) approached. This is identical to the percentage of all letter writers who approached.

Subjects who approached without having ever written a letter were not studied (except recording descriptions of their approaches) because useful data were available on too few of them. Even though information sources comparable to the letters did not exist for these cases, it would have been desirable to compare at least their demographic characteristics with those of letter-writing approach-positive subjects, but the available data did not permit even such basis comparisons as these. Five of the 61 subjects who approached without writing had telephoned.

We did study a representative sample of the remaining 1,440 cases, i.e., a representative sample of all of the letter writers, who constituted 92 percent of the subjects on file. All approach-positive letter writers were selected for study, and an equal-sized sample of approach-negative letter writers was selected according to a stratified random sampling procedure. The stratification procedure was necessary because of an important difference between approach-positive and approach-negative cases that we discovered early in our research: on the average, approach-positive subjects write more letters than approach-negative subjects. (The implications of this difference are

discussed below, after showing the magnitude of the difference.)

#### The Need to Control for Number of Communications

To examine the relationship between approach status and number of communications, it was necessary to determine the number of communications for a random sample of letter writers who approached and a random sample of letter writers who did not approach. A "communication" was defined as the delivery of any written information or item to an agent of the celebrity. While in most instances this corresponded to such customary communications as a mailed letter, greeting card, telegram, or postcard, it also included the delivery of flowers or other gifts, diaries, scripts, or other writings, and single packages containing multiple letters or postcards, whether delivered by a U.S. Postal worker, common carrier, delivery service, or messenger service. Each of these was counted as a single communication. We did not count visits as communications to avoid confounding the dependent variable of approach with the independent variable of number of communications. Telephone calls, which are of course communications in every other sense, were treated as a separate variable. When discussing the number of communications that a particular subject caused to be delivered, we are using the specific meaning described here. For the sake of brevity and to make it clear that telephone

calls were not counted as communications, we also use the terms "letters" or "mailings," even though not all communications were letters or were mailed.

Table 3-2 gives the distribution of number of communications on file for the 231 approach-positive cases in the archives and for a random sample of 170 approach-negative cases from the archives (these data include both letter writers and non-writers). Among approach-positive cases, the mean number of communications per subject was 9.9 (S.D. = 22.0); among approach-negative cases, the mean was 4.3 (S.D. = 14.1). This difference was statistically significant ( $p < .005$ ;  $t = 2.8$ ,  $df = 338$ ).

The finding that approach-positive cases had sent significantly more communications raised an important challenge to our research plan, for we wanted to search the communications for evidence of a large number of features which we reasoned might more commonly be found among those who had a larger body of communications on file. The fact that those who write more than one letter were more likely to approach than those who wrote only once meant that if we had sampled randomly from all positive and negative cases in the sampling universe, we might have had many spurious findings of differences between positives and negatives that were in fact merely correlates of the number of mailings. We reasoned that the larger the number of mailings, the more

likely a subject would be to have reported various facts for which we sought evidence.

To more formally state this hypothesis: the higher the number of communications available for assessment, the greater the amount of information available; the greater the amount of information available, the more evidence would be found for any trait or state measured. To test this hypothesis, we determined whether there was a significant correlation between two measures of the volume of material available for assessment, on the one hand, and four measures of the amount of information abstracted by coders, on the other.

The two measures of volume of material that we used were: (1) the total number of items of correspondence on file from the subject and (2) the total number of pieces of paper on file that had been sent by the subject. The four measures of the amount of information abstracted by coders were: (1) an index (which ranged from zero to seven) measuring how many of seven variables characterizing subjects' appearance were mentioned in letters (height, weight, hygiene and grooming, hair color, hair style, facial hair, and eye color); (2) an index (which ranged from zero to seven) measuring how many of 13 variables concerning prior antisocial behavior were mentioned in letters (juvenile behavior problems, poor work record, poor

parenting skills, illegal occupation, multiple arrests, jail or prison confinement, fire setting, repeated physical fights or assaults, use of aliases, reckless driving, escape from confinement, tattoos, and commission of a felony); (3) the total number (which ranged from none to 41) of stressful life events mentioned by subjects, which was measured by having the coders keep a running tally of those events on a standardized checklist; and (4) an index (which ranged from zero to 39) of the total number of signs or symptoms of mental disorder that coders identified as being evidenced in letters (the 77 signs and symptoms listed in Appendix 4).

If our hypothesis is correct, there should be a positive correlation between each of the two measures of the amount of material available for assessment and each of the four measures of the amount of information abstracted by coders. The correlations are reported in Table 3-3, which confirms the hypothesis in each case. These correlations confirm the importance of controlling for the number of communications on file in selecting the sample of cases to be studied, as they illustrate that the more communications available from a subject, the higher the number of various kinds of features that can be identified from their letters.

#### Sampling Procedure

To avoid the artifacts that would have resulted from a random sample of approach-negative cases as a result of

their average smaller amount of material available for assessment, we stratified all letter writers into strata based on the total number of letters on file from the subjects. We randomly selected 107 approach-positive letter writers to study, determined their distribution by number of communications, and then randomly sampled from the pool of approach-negative letter writers until 107 had been selected that had a similar distribution by number of communications.<sup>3</sup>

The total number of subjects in this stratified random sample is 214, of whom 107 were approach positive and 107 approach negative at the time of data collection. The success of the matching procedure is verified by the fact that the mean number of communications did not differ significantly between positive (8.4 mailings) and negative cases (8.2 mailings) in the sample. The results of the matching procedure are also illustrated in Table 3-4.

### Instruments

The instruments developed for this research were first drafted by the research team in its weekly meetings, at which participants presented the results of library research on such diverse topics as dangerousness among mental patients, standardized instruments for assessing psychopathology, typologies of human emotions, research on suicide notes, and even research on graphology. The effort

centered in particular on insuring that any variable that had ever been shown to be predictive of violence be included and that the best available coding system be used for those variables that had been the object of prior research. Much of what we wished to study had not been the object of quantitative research in the past, however, so it was necessary to devise new classifications for many variables, as evidenced in both the coding forms and code books in Appendix 1.

After drafts of the instruments had been created, they were presented for brainstorming and discussion at a Project Advisory Board meeting held at the F.B.I. Academy Behavioral Science Unit (now a part of the National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime) at Quantico, Virginia. The Advisory Board members (listed in the Preface) contributed not only their critiques, but also their hypotheses, developed over many years of collective experience in criminal investigation and consultation, public figure protection, and research in criminology, sociology, psychology, and psychiatry. Based on the criticisms and ideas of the Advisory Board, the instruments were extensively revised and redesigned. Another round of revisions occurred after a pretest of the instruments during coder training, and even during the coding process new codes and clarifications were added as unanticipated questions

arose. Each change to the coding procedure was immediately announced, added to all code books, and posted, occasionally requiring that case files be revisited to correct earlier codes that were inconsistent with the change.

Separate instruments were developed for collecting "objective" data (e.g., frequency counts of words, sentences, or enclosures) and "subjective" data (i.e., data requiring judgment, attention to content, or some trained clinical evaluation). These instruments were further specialized for application to either a single communication or to the entire file of communications from a given subject. A fifth instrument, Form C, was used to collect data on each threatening statement identified in any of the subject's communications. A sixth instrument, Form D, was used to collect data on each known approach of a subject. Table 3-5 highlights the differing foci for the six instruments. Each instrument is described below and reprinted with its code book in Appendix 1.

Form A1: Quantitative Data for the Entire Case: One Form A1 was completed for each of the 214 cases sampled. This form was designed to measure objective, quantitative variables representative of the entire file of material from a given subject. The resulting data are largely frequency counts and include: (1) the number of mailings received; (2) the number of pieces of paper in the file; (3) the time

span over which the communications were written (in the case of multiple letter writers); (4) the number of states or countries from which postmarks originated and home state of the subject; (5) the frequency of various types of enclosures; and (6) evidence of dramatic changes in handwriting over time in the communications.

Form A2: Quantitative Data From Individual Mailings:

This form was designed to gather objective, quantitative data from selected individual mailings. One Form A2 was completed for each mailing selected for individual coding (which varied from one to three, as described below). The variables measured included: (1) how the subject identified himself (name, address, aliases); (2) the form of the greeting and closing, use of postscripts, and the manner in which the subject addressed the celebrity; (3) the format of the text on the page; (4) characteristics of the paper and ink used; (5) significant handwriting changes and a few graphological characteristics (e.g., t-crossings); (6) the number of words in the mailing; (7) the average number of words per sentence (four representative sentences were selected, counted, and the totals averaged); and (8) the number of enclosures in various categories.

Form B1: Qualitative Data for the Entire Case:

Parallel to Form A1, one Form B1 was also completed for each case. Form B1 is the longest (21 pages) and most exhaustive

instrument employed. It was designed to record a broad range of qualitative and subjective information about the life history and current behavior of the subject. Data derived from the subject's own writings were recorded separately from data derived from other sources so that it would be possible to examine the validity of self-reported data where both sources were available.

Form B1 covered: (1) demographic characteristics; (2) social background (family, criminal, mental health, occupational, and military histories); (3) self description (e.g., physical characteristics, socialization, and locus of control); (4) stressful life events in the preceding year (assessed by the PERI life events scale of Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend (1978)); (5) somatic symptoms (drawn from the SCL-90 of Derogatis (1977)); (6) emotional states evidenced; (7) mental health history (past hospitalizations, diagnosis, medications); (8) sexual history and paraphilias; (9) psychopathology (following DSM-III criteria, coded as suggested by Spitzer et al. (1985) for the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-III); (10) travel and mobility; (11) political variables; (12) coded identity of public figures whom the subject had harassed or threatened; (13) communication media used; (14) perceptions of relationship to the public figure; (15) themes mentioned once, repeatedly, or obsessively; (16) security interventions; and (17) approach status data.

Form B2: Qualitative Data from Individual Mailings:

As with Form A2, Form B2 was completed for selected individual mailings. Its variables included: (1) graphological indices; (2) form, structure and organization of text; (3) social propriety of the letter; (4) stressful life events and symptoms; (5) emotional states; and (6) content of the mailing (number of threats, themes, travel, roles, and degree of insistence).

Form C: Threat Coding Form: Form C was completed each time a coder identified a threat in any of the materials read. As described in greater detail in Chapter 6, threats were operationalized as occurring in one of three logical forms: (a) direct, (b) conditional, and (c) indirect or veiled. The variables measured by Form C include: (1) the medium of the threat (written, telephonic, face-to-face); (2) whether or not the threat was made anonymously; (3) the number of threats identified in the specific letter being coded; (4) a verbatim quotation of the threatening passage; (5) classification of the form of the threat (direct, veiled, or conditional); (6) conditions to be met if the threat was of the conditional form; (7) who would carry out the threat; (8) the target of the threat, (9) the harm threatened; and (10) and the viability of the threat (ratings of plan, means, and opportunity).

Form D: Approach Data: For each approach-positive case, one Form D was completed for each approach identified.

This form was designed to measure characteristics of the approach, the subject's behavior during and immediately following the approach, and the actions taken by others, including security personnel, in response to the approach. The variable categories include: (1) the approach "type" (public or private, appropriate or inappropriate); (2) ecological features (date, time, lighting, weather, physical setting, persons present in the social environment); (3) organization, plan, and characteristics of the approach (means and distance of travel, weapons, ruses and other techniques, crimes committed); (4) subject characteristics at the time of the approach (hygiene and grooming, mental state, behavior); (5) responses to the approach (disposition of the subject, subject's response to intervention); and (6) other descriptive data (e.g., statements made by the subject during the course of the approach).

#### Confidentiality

All project staff with any access to information on the celebrities or subjects signed contracts with Gavin de Becker, Inc., assuring the confidentiality of the materials that were made available for the research. Because no photocopies of case materials could be removed from the project site, it was necessary that all data be collected at the offices of Gavin de Becker, Inc.<sup>4</sup>

To protect the identities of both subjects and celebrities, all data were recorded on coding instruments in

coded form, using unique numerical identifiers for both subjects and celebrities. In preparing case histories, pseudonyms were developed for both subjects and celebrities, and all references to persons, places, films, records, television shows, and other products and events that could identify the persons involved were replaced with such designators as "[the subject's brother]," "[another celebrity]," or "[a current television series in which the celebrity stars]."

#### Training of Coders and Pretesting

Data were collected by a team of seven researchers who traveled to Los Angeles for training and coding. They included three psychiatrists (two of whom also hold Ph.D.s in sociology), one doctor of social work, and three doctoral candidates in clinical and community psychology. One of the doctoral candidates served as a case manager, organizing materials, selecting the sample, and controlling the flow of case files. This same person coded two-thirds of the quantitative (objective) data (Forms A1 and A2), which did not require that the coder be blind to approach status. The other six members of the research team coded the more qualitative (or subjective) data on Forms B1, B2, C, and D.

All coders were trained in the use of the coding instruments. Three case files from the sampling universe were coded independently by all coders, who then returned

for a group discussion of the coding of each variable. Any coding decision on which fewer than 80 percent of the coders gave identical codes was discussed, and the source of disagreement was resolved with discussion, instruction (particularly with respect to psychopathology), changes in the code form, or the creation of decision rules or new codes that were added to the code books. By the second training case, the proportions of variables unanimously coded were 88 percent for Form B1, 86 percent for Form B2, and 72 percent for Form C. A third case was coded solely for training purposes, and training continued in the initial phase of generating data on inter-rater reliability.

#### Measurement of Reliability

To measure the inter-rater reliability, 20 cases were randomly selected to be coded by all six of the coders who collected data on Forms B1, B2, C, and D. These were completed as the first ten cases coded by each coder and the last ten cases coded by each coder. The first 10 reliability cases were used for additional training and pretesting of the instruments. Reliability data were tabulated, and each item with agreement below 80 percent among the six coders was discussed and either rejected, revised, or clarified. Discussion followed the coding of each case, and this served as an important part of the training process.

The instruments revised on the basis of these pretests (three training cases and the first 10 reliability cases, completed by six coders) were used to collect the final data. The data collected during the coding of reliability cases were included in the study by using the modal score among the six coders for the data entered for each of the 20 reliability cases.

Inter-rater reliability was calculated for 812 of the variables on Form B1 and for 92 of the variables on Form B2 (excluding identifying codes, rank-ordered variables, variables for which all data were missing, and other items for which the calculation would have been inappropriate). These data are reported in Appendix 2 and reflect levels of inter-rater agreement that would generally be considered excellent.

For the 812 variables on Form B1, agreement among the six coders ranged from 64 to 100 percent. For the 415 variables measured from letters only, the level of agreement was between 60 and 70 percent for three and between 70 and 80 percent for 19; the level of agreement was between 80 and 100 percent for 393 (95 percent of the variables). For the 397 variables measured from letters plus all other sources, the level of agreement was between 60 and 70 percent for 10 and between 70 and 80 percent for 25; the level of agreement was between 80 and 100 percent for 362 (91 percent of the variables).

For the 92 variables on Form B2, agreement among the six coders ranged from 70 to 100 percent. Nine variables had a reliability between 70 and 80 percent, and 83 variables (90 percent of the variables) had reliabilities between 80 and 100 percent.

#### Data Collection

To blind the coders to the approach status of cases during coding, the case manager located all case materials in the de Becker archives, drew the sample, and prepared the case files for coding. As mentioned in the description of instruments, Form A2 and Form B2 were completed on the basis of single letters. Form A2 was completed by the case manager, Form B2 by the coder. If there was only one letter in case file, these forms were completed for that letter. Where multiple letters were available for coding, the particular letters on which these forms were filled out were (1) the earliest letter available, (2) where possible, that letter written nearest in time to 30 days prior to the first known approach, and (3) where possible, that letter which immediately preceded the first known approach. The purpose of studying the pre-approach letters was to determine whether multiple letter writers showed some detectable change in their letters preceding an approach that could help predict approach behavior. This issue was explored in detail by Martell (1989), which study is attached as Appendix 5.

Obviously the second and third types of letters existed only in approach-positive cases, and even among these there were not always letters that could be determined to have preceded the first known approach (either because there were no such letters on file or because the necessary information on timing of the letter or the approach was missing). To preserve the blinding of coders, a similar number of randomly selected letters was flagged in the approach-negative cases.<sup>5</sup>

The effort to study the features of pre-approach and post-approach letters was unsatisfactory because it was so often impossible to determine the date of the first known approach and because of the small number of cases in the sample that had letters written within the 30 days prior to the first approach. Nonetheless, this elaborate, encoded system for flagging letters for study did assist greatly in keeping coders blind as to whether they were coding the first letter or a subsequent letter.

Cases were assigned randomly to coders, who were blind to all aspects of the case at the time it was assigned. Coders began each case by completing Form B2 for each of the one to four flagged letters. When these were completed, the coder was free to read the remaining letters in the file that had been written by the profile. A column of Form B1 headed "From Letters" was completed on the basis of these

data alone. Then and only then was the coder free to read investigative memoranda, interview transcripts, official records, and the de Becker computer file on the case. The coder then completed another column of Form B1 headed "Other Sources," basing this information solely on the sources of information other than the subject's writings. When these steps were completed, the coder spoke to a case agent about the case and completed Form C for each threat identified and Form D for each approach identified. (Coders were permitted to begin filling out Forms C and D as they came upon information, but the coding of B forms was done strictly in the prescribed sequence.)

As coding proceeded, a few cases that fell in the sample were found to be unsuitable for the research because there was nothing inappropriate in the subject's communications. Such cases were replaced.

#### Letters as Sources of Information

Even though subjects did not report everything one might wish in their letters, they reported a remarkable range of information, albeit inconsistently. Coders made many judgments about the presence or absence of particular attributes, and the raw data available to them in making these judgments varied widely in quantity. Coders were instructed that it was unnecessary to read more than 50 communications before completing the basic instrument

describing features of the subjects, but there were only three cases in which coders stopped reading at the 50th communication.

To show the variability in the extent of available information, Table 3-6 shows the distribution of numbers of mailings read by coders at the time they completed Form B2 for each case. The range was from one to 91 (mean = 7.9; S.D. = 14.2 ). Although some of the cases with only a single mailing were rich in biographical detail, others consisted of no more than a greeting card or postcard with some written message. At the other extreme are cases in which subjects seemed to go on for years expressing every thought that entered their minds.

#### Other Sources of Information

The other sources of information available for some but not all cases are referred to in the remainder of this report as "investigative sources of information." These often included information from public records such as department of motor vehicle records, official criminal history (from states in which this information is public), and newspaper stories about the subjects. The second most common type of information had been developed through telephone (or occasionally face-to-face) interviews with subjects, members of their families, of their associates, or with mental health or law enforcement familiar with the

subject. A third source of information was direct observation of subjects in the course of an approach or at the time of various interventions. In rare instances, legal proceedings had made available such documents as psychiatric reports, hospital records, or police reports.

#### Missing Data

The nature of the data sought and the data sources were such that data were often missing for particular variables. In both the text and tables that follow, percentages are based only on subjects for whom data were available. The missing data problem in this study is more intense than in many other kinds of research because we were making a first attempt to determine how much could be learned from communications written to strangers. With no way to know in advance how much information the subjects would report, it was inevitable that we sought information on some variables about which information was rarely given. Many of these variables were dropped from the analysis, and this is not always noted in the text.

With no previous comparable research to guide us, we knew at the outset that we would be attempting to gather data on a much larger number of variables than would ultimately be useful. We also knew that the chances of finding significant differences between groups solely by chance would be affected by the large number of variables in

the study. Still, it seemed best to us for this first study of these materials to be overly broad at the outset and to discard what proved useless and prune the instruments before beginning work at our second data-collection site.

The easiest decision with respect to data reduction was to discard from analysis all variables that occurred in less than five percent of the sample. Although in some instances the frequency of such variables is reported in the text, none of the comparisons between approach-positive and approach-negative cases is based on such low frequency variables. Before dropping variables from the analysis, we made every effort to create a useful variable by combining categories, creating additive scales, and other variable transformations. For example, coders recorded any mention of weapons in the categories of handgun, shotgun, machine gun, bomb or incendiary device, or other weapons, but these occurred only for the categories of handguns (seven cases), rifles (two cases), bombs or incendiary devices (two cases), and other weapons (seven cases). For purposes of comparing approach-positive and approach-negative groups, these specific weapon categories were collapsed to a single category of mentioning any weapons, which had occurred for 13 subjects, barely exceeding the greater than five percent rule for discarding variables.

Variables that appear in the data collection instruments in the appendices but which are mentioned

nowhere in the text are those which were too low in frequency to be useful for analysis, either because the true rate of occurrence was low or because the information was rarely provided in subjects' letters or available from other sources, and those that could not be measured with an acceptable level of reliability.

#### Multiple, Serial, and Mass Public Figure Harassment

Subjects who harass or threaten one public figure are at risk of harassing or threatening another public figure. The 214 subjects in the statistical sample from the entertainment industry were primarily concerned with 22 public figures at the time of at least one of the writings studied, but many wrote to multiple public figures, both serially and simultaneously. Thirty-eight subjects (18 percent) were simultaneously harassing a second public figure; 12 subjects were harassing a third public figure, four subjects a fourth public figure, two a fifth, and two a sixth. In addition to the 22 public figures with whom they were primarily concerned, the subjects in our sample volunteered the names of 14 other public figures whom they had also harassed. These subjects had harassed at least eight political figures, one of whom had been written to by at least 13 of our subjects and another by 10. (Subjects mentioned other public figures in addition to those whom we knew they were harassing, and this is dealt with in Chapter 6.)

Where a subject had communicated with more than one public figure, it was necessary for us to select one as the primary object of the subject's attention, so that questions about perceptions of relationship, stalking the celebrity, and so on could be answered with respect to a particular celebrity. This selection was usually based on obvious security concerns, for example giving higher priority to Celebrity A, whom the subject had aggressively attempted to meet, than to Celebrity B, whose agent had received a polite visit from the subject seeking the home address of Celebrity A. When in doubt, highest priority was given to celebrities who had been approached with highest frequency or who had received the largest number of communications. In a few cases, the choice would have been arbitrary and was made randomly.

#### THE UNITED STATES CAPITOL POLICE ARCHIVES

The research reported in Chapters 9 through 13 is based on information contained in the archives of the U.S. Capitol Police in Washington, D.C. This police department has jurisdiction on the government property housing the Capitol, the senate and congressional office buildings, and related property. In addition to all of the other responsibilities of any urban police department, however, the Capitol Police have the challenge of providing or coordinating security for

a constantly traveling, high visibility group of men and women serving as U.S. Senators and Congressmen. The task of investigating and managing cases in which subjects harass or threaten Members of Congress falls to the Capitol Police.

The methods used to study cases from the files of the Capitol Police were much more straightforward than those used in the original exploratory study of the cases in the entertainment industry. Drawing on experience from the earlier study, the sampling procedure, instruments, and data collection were all streamlined.

#### The Nature of the Capitol Police Archives

At the Intelligence Unit of the United States Capitol Police, files are divided into three categories: terrorists, groups (a mixture of protest groups and organized crime), and individuals. We studied only the files on individuals. Due to limited storage capacity and the voluminous correspondence from some subjects, these files had been "pruned" in some instances, usually by discarding the oldest materials and such bulky items as treatises on the subject's inventions, views on metaphysics, or proposals for universal peace, war, economic growth, love, mind control, and other matters. While it is impossible to quantitatively assess the impact of such pruning on the data collected, the fact that this occurred only for voluminous cases and our observation from the de

Becker archives that multiple letter writers tend to be highly repetitive causes us to not be particularly concerned about these missing materials for our purposes.<sup>6</sup>

### The Political Figures

Each Member of Congress has had to take a public position on such charged issues as abortion, gun control, capital punishment, gay rights, aid to the Contras, and military spending, and each has at some point had to vote against one or another of the constituencies who follow every bill affecting business, labor, farming, veterans, minorities, the poor, the disabled, the mentally ill, and every other imaginable class of Americans. Even the most politically adroit cannot fail to alienate large numbers of onlookers. It should thus come as no surprise that Congress receives a steady stream of hostile and inappropriate mail, telephone calls, and visitors.

### Challenges to Representativeness

Cases come to the attention of the Capitol Police chiefly through reports made by Members of Congress and their staff members. Other cases are reported by workers of every description on the grounds of the Capitol complex, by other law enforcement agencies, and by a variety of third parties. A decision to report a case to the Capitol Police reflects a variety of factors, including the potential reporter's perceptions of the seriousness of the case,

personal danger, and duty, knowledge of the availability of this resource, willingness to become involved, and other factors. All of the possible sources of bias identified for referrals to the de Becker archives are expected to apply here, too, with a few differences.

Whereas the communications in the de Becker archives had been referred mostly by those who work for 22 particular entertainers, there are 535 Members of Congress (100 in the Senate and 435 in the House of Representatives), each of whom has staff members working both in their home districts and at the Capitol. To personally train all of these staff members on procedures for referring cases to the Capitol Police would be an enormous undertaking which would no doubt increase the work load of such cases beyond the point that the current budget would support.

Although "overheard threats" do not comprise a large fraction of reports to the Capitol Police, they are more common here than in the entertainment industry and less common here than among Secret Service cases. This reflects both varying degrees of willingness to make such reports and the varying degrees of sophistication necessary to do so. Every telephone operator and police dispatcher in America knows who to call to report a threat to the president; many can and do determine how to report a threat to a Member of Congress; but comparatively few manage to report a threat to an entertainer.

### Sampling Procedure

The sampling procedure used here was greatly simplified from that used earlier. Cases were randomly sampled from the complete universe of case files until we had selected 50 approach-positive cases in which at least one item of correspondence was on file and 50 approach-negative cases in which at least one item of correspondence was on file. These 100 cases constitute the sample for purposes of determining whether number of communications was associated with approaching the politician. When this was proved to be true (see Chapter 13), a stratified random sample was selected from among those 100 cases, resulting in a sample of 86 cases. These included 43 approach-positive cases and 43 approach-negative cases, matched for number of communications. The remaining 14 cases were coded, but not included in the study. Instead, they were used to test the success of the predictive scales developed (see Chapter 15).

### Instruments

For this study, the multiple coding forms and code books used in studying the de Becker archives were reduced to a single coding form and code book (contained in Appendix 4). This form contained all of the variables that the analysis of entertainment industry data indicated were of value for descriptive purposes or which differentiated approach-positive from approach-negative cases.

Many variables were eliminated which had shown no variation or inadequate coder reliability. Some variables, such as mention of weapons, were retained despite low frequency of occurrence because of their obvious importance to those assessing the credibility of threatening communications. In some instances, variables were reformulated to correspond to variable transformations that had proved desirable in working with the entertainment industry data. For example, instead of coding the form of a threat (direct, veiled, or conditional) for each of up to ten threats, as had been done earlier, the coder determined on the basis of all known threats whether any were direct, any veiled, and any conditional. A few new variables were added that are specific to public figures in the political arena. By eliminating and recoding variables, the total number of variables on which data were collected was considerably reduced.

#### Confidentiality

All information on the identity of subjects and the Members of Congress and other political figures with whom they were concerned were removed from case files before coding began to insure confidentiality. In this instance, the case manager photocopied the file, deleted identifying information from the photocopy, and presented the "sanitized" copy to Intelligence Division officers for

inspection before removing the now anonymous materials from the premises. To avoid losing important information, the case manager coded each deleted passage, for example by indicating that a deleted name was that of another Member of Congress, the President of the United States, a Supreme Court Justice, a Hollywood celebrity, or a television news anchor, or that a deleted passage referred to a bill before Congress, a magazine, a television show, a group to which the subject belonged, and so on. Geographic information was always encoded because of the possibility that it would be taken as an indication of the Member's district.

#### Training of Coders and Pretesting

Coders were trained as in Los Angeles, using group discussions of coded test cases as the basis for acquiring a shared understanding of the instruments. Six of the eight coders had also coded data in Los Angeles, and the other two were psychiatrists completing fellowships in forensic psychiatry.

#### Measurement of Reliability

No new calculations of inter-rater reliability were made, for each variable either had been previously subjected to such analysis or was identical in form to those used in the earlier study. Although the elaborate procedures used to examine inter-rater reliability in coding cases from the de Becker archives were not repeated, two cases files that

had been used in training and coded by all but two of the coders were sent to a missing coder (who had also coded in Los Angeles) for blind recoding. His coding was identical to that of the modal scores of the other six coders for these two cases.

#### Data Collection

Coding of the Capitol Police data was done in two stages. The case manager coded all of the variables that required no clinical judgment, while clinicians coded all of the clinical variables and those requiring analogous judgments. The instrument and code book are provided in Appendix 4 and show the delineation between nonclinical and clinical variables.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has described the selection of research sites and the nature of the case files available for study through Gavin de Becker, Inc., and the United States Capitol Police. For each data source, we described the origins of the materials studied, the development of research instruments, the sampling procedures used, the training of the research team, the methods by which data were collected, the reliability of the data, and the procedures used to insure confidentiality.

Three samples were selected on which the findings in Chapters 4 through 15 are based: (1) 214 subjects who wrote

to celebrities in the entertainment industry, including a random sample of 107 subjects who had approached the celebrity and a stratified random sample of 107 subjects who had written the same numbers of letters but who did not approach, (2) 86 subjects who wrote to Members of Congress, including a random sample of 43 subjects who had approached the politician and a stratified random sample of 43 subjects who had written the same numbers of letters but who did not approach, and (3) a non-random sample of 14 subjects who had written to Members of Congress, half of whom approached, for use in testing the success of predictive instruments.

Important empirical findings reported in this chapter are:

(1) Even for the two data bases studied, which are the best organized, centralized data bases of their kind that we could identify, there was considerable irregularity in the referral of cases from those who learn of mentally disordered persons who write, call, or visit.

(2) Of 1,442 reported cases in the entertainment industry for whom letters were on file, at least 170 or 12 percent had attempted an approach.

(3) Of 231 subjects who had approached celebrities and whose files were available for review, at least 170 or 74 percent had also written.

(4) Although the ratio of telephone callers to letter writers was small, information from telephone calls was much

more often lost because it was not recorded or otherwise documented. Yet 12 percent of those who telephoned but did not write attempted an approach.

(5) Subjects who attempted to physically approach a celebrity had written an average of 9.9 letters apiece, while those who did not approach had written an average of 4.3 letters, a difference which was statistically significant.

(6) Twenty-seven percent (58 of 214) of the subjects who wrote to celebrities were multiple public figure harassers who had also harassed another public figure. Nine percent (20 of 214) were serial public figure harassers, who had harassed between three and six public figures. An uncounted number were mass public figure harassers, who simultaneously sent their communications to multiple public figures. Their victims included other celebrities in the entertainment industry, politicians, journalists, sports figures, corporate executives, and others.

Data on the subjects who wrote to Hollywood celebrities are reported in Chapters 4 through 8. In Chapters 4 to 6, approach-positive and approach-negative subjects are treated together. Chapter 7, concerning approaches, deals only with approach-positive cases. In Chapter 8, the approach-positive cases are compared with approach-negative cases. In these comparisons, all tests of statistical significance use an alpha level of .05.

Data on the subjects who wrote to Members of Congress are reported in Chapters 9 through 15. In Chapters 9 to 11, approach-positive and approach-negative subjects are treated together. Chapter 12, concerning approaches, deals only with approach-positive cases. In Chapter 13, the approach-positive cases are compared with approach-negative cases. In these comparisons, all tests of statistical significance use an alpha level of .05.

Chapters 14 and 15 concern the development of scales for distinguishing letter writers who approach from those who do not, using data from both the entertainment and political samples.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>The term "principal" is widely used in V.I.P. protection circles to refer to the client to be guarded. The research team adopted the term during the course of the project to facilitate communication with practitioners, but have used more specific terms in this report of the research to avoid confusion for readers unfamiliar with the jargon.

<sup>2</sup>Persons seeing communications such as those received here (e.g., the secretaries to agents and managers of public figures) use a variety of terms to describe such cases. In the files we studied, for example, we found secretarial references to the letter writers as "nuts," "nut," "sort of sick," "sick," "weirdo!", "crazy," "crazy!!", and "a new one." Typical statements in the notes of the secretaries are:

Here is a nut we heard from several years ago

. . .

\* \* \*

Don't like the sound of this guy . . . I think he should be put in kook file.

<sup>3</sup>In practice, this was a rather complicated process because there was no preexisting count of the number of communications. The strata could not be finalized until all the approach-positive cases had been sampled and counted, but to keep the coders blind it was necessary to be coding positive and negative cases simultaneously.

Thus, the strata gradually solidified as sampling and coding progressed. For each randomly selected case, it was necessary to count the number of communications to determine whether it fell into a stratum for which the quota had been filled already.

The process by which the approach-negative cases was selected was as follows: Beginning with the first case on the randomized list of negative cases, the number of mailings in each was counted and checked against the number-of-mailings strata to determine if an approach-negative case of this length was needed for the study. This process was continued until the quota for each stratum had been filled. This required examining many more than 100 negative cases, as a much smaller percentage of negative cases than of positives had a large number of mailings. The number of mailings for the first 170 negative cases examined were recorded for use in a quantitative test of our hypothesis that approach-positive letter writers tend to write a larger volume of letters. In those instances in which a recount of the number of mailings or the discovery of misfiled mailings led to a change in the "match," the case was placed in the appropriate category and replaced. Thus, the "match" was corrected for errors as we proceeded.

We would advise anyone who undertakes similar research

to complete sample selection before beginning coding. As our research team was 3,000 miles from home when we discovered the need for controlling for number of communications, we had no choice but to go forward with simultaneous sampling and coding.

<sup>4</sup>This occasioned some memorable experiences: the need to pass a security check point to use the bathroom, the desire to make peace with the guard dogs, the occasional emergency which discharged a stream of black limousines, and the occasional encounter with a celebrity. One Saturday during training, when clip-board wiewling coders were comparing their judgments on a test case in the apartment building spa; passers by stopped to ask if we were rehearsing for a movie. For two weeks when the heat became intolerable in the converted gymnasium where we worked, we rented an air-conditioned mobile home used as a dressing room for on-location movie productions. Each experience of this sort contributed to the sense that we doing anthropological field work in a most extraordinary culture.

<sup>5</sup>In practice, the coders were directed to the particular letters to be coded by 3M "Post-it" notes protruding from the files which bore a complicated code known only to the case manager indicating approach status, time sequence, and whether the letter had been mailed or hand-delivered. This system kept coders blind to the approach status of the

cases as they coded them, for equal proportions of negative and positive cases had one, two, or three specific letters flagged. The coding of the flags kept coders blind to which of the three letters on a given case they were coding at any time.

<sup>6</sup>Had we attempted to study changes in letters over time in this sample, as was done for the celebrity case data (Martell, 1989), the loss of older documents would have posed a more serious problem.

---

Table 3-1-- Cases on file in the de Becker archives as of January 1985, by letter writing and approach status as determined in July 1985

---

Modes of communications	N	(%)
Telephone call only	58	(4)
Approach without letter	61	(4)
Letter without approach	1,272	(81)
Letter and approach	170	(11)
TOTAL	1,561	(100)

---

Table 3-2-- Number of communications on file for a random sample of all cases in the sampling universe

Number communications	(n = 231) Approach positive	(n = 170) Approach Negative
0	61	Not studied
1	75	117
2	19	17
3 - 5	23	17
6 - 12	24	10
13 - 50	21	6
51 - 150	8	3

Table 3-3-- Correlations between amount of material available for assessment and amount of information abstracted (N = 214)

Variable pair	Pearson's r	p
Total number of mailings and		
Appearance index	0.30	p < .001
Antisocial index	0.35	p < .001
Number of stressful life events	0.36	p < .001
Number of signs or symptoms	0.53	p < .001
Total number of pieces of paper and		
Appearance index	0.33	p < .001
Antisocial index	0.41	p < .001
Number of stressful life events	0.41	p < .001
Number of signs or symptoms	0.61	p < .001

---

Table 3-4-- Number of communications on file for cases in the stratified random sample selected for statistical analysis

---

Number communications	Approach positive	Approach Negative
1	45	45
2	15	12
3-5	17	17
6-12	14	15
13-50	13	13
51-146	3	5

---

---

Table 3-5-- Division of variables among six coding instruments

---

Variables	Data source for form	
	Entire file	Single letter
Objective	Form A1	Form A2
Subjective	Form B1	Form B2
Threats	Form C	
Approaches	Form D	

---

---

Table 3-6-- Number of Communications Read  
by Coders in Completing Form B1

---

Number of communications	N	(%)
1	89	42
2	27	13
3	15	7
4	10	5
5	11	5
6	5	2
7	3	1
8	6	3
9	5	2
10-19	18	8
20-29	10	5
30-39	5	2
40-49	2	1
50-59	5	2
60-99	3	1

---

## CHAPTER 4

### SUBJECTS WHO WRITE TO CELEBRITIES

The most striking feature of the inappropriate communications to celebrities that we studied is the obviously high prevalence of mental disorder among the subjects. Even to the untrained eye, many of the communications are obviously the product of disordered minds, as evidenced by such features as bizarre handwriting, bizarre thoughts, and bizarre enclosures. All of these and many other features are described in this and succeeding chapters, but the reader will be better able to appreciate the significance of the observations by beginning with the formal evidence of mental disorders occurring in this population. We therefore begin with some of the more conclusive evidence of mental disorder and of the types of mental disorder evidenced.

Throughout this chapter, the sample is the stratified random sample of 214 subjects who wrote inappropriate communications to public figures in the entertainment industry (the selection of which is described fully in Chapter 3).

### MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY

As mental disorder is evident in many of the subjects' writings, it was of interest to determine the extent to which they revealed their history of mental health treatment. A total of 41 subjects (19 percent) volunteered

that they had received some form of mental health treatment, whether outpatient treatment or hospitalization.

#### Outpatient Mental Health Treatment

Fourteen subjects (six percent) mentioned they had ever received outpatient psychotherapy. Ten of these subjects had been treated on an outpatient basis by a psychiatrist, and 11 mentioned that medication had been prescribed for them.

#### Psychiatric Hospitalization

Thirty-three subjects (15 percent) reported having undergone psychiatric hospitalization, and at least 18 of these suggested they had been hospitalized more than once. Investigative sources indicated that an additional eight subjects were known to have been hospitalized who did not mention this in their writings. Thus, a minimum of 41 subjects (19 percent) had undergone psychiatric hospitalization. Only 16 subjects expressed their attitude toward treatment, and among 12 of these the attitude was unfavorable.

#### Suicide

Ten subjects either threatened suicide in their letters or mentioned that they had threatened suicide. Three subjects mentioned having attempted suicide. A total of 24 subjects (11 percent) made any mention of suicidal thoughts, intentions (including threats), or attempts.

## PSYCHOTIC PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

The standardized diagnostic manual at the time of data collection was the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd ed. (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), also known as DSM-III. After gaining familiarity with the types of materials to be studied, we generated a lengthy list of signs and symptoms of mental disorder from among the many listed under the diagnostic criteria in DSM-III. The criteria selected for inclusion were those that applied to mental disorders which we hypothesized (on both theoretical grounds and our preliminary review of materials in the sampling universe) would be present in this sample and which we hoped could be reliably ascertained from written communications. Thus, the list of signs and symptoms with which we worked did not include all of the criteria necessary to make formal psychiatric diagnoses, because some elements of diagnosis, such as the duration of particular symptoms, were so unlikely to be specified in subjects' communications that we did not attempt to code them. (Appendix 3 sets forth details on the methods used to measure psychopathology and gives the complete frequency distributions for all signs, symptoms, and coder diagnostic impressions.)

Delusions

The aspect of psychopathology that most greatly shapes the content of subjects' communications to celebrities is

the presence of delusions, i.e., false beliefs resulting from mental illness. Subjects had a variety of delusions that included the conviction that they had some special relationship to the celebrity (e.g., marriage, kinship, friendship, etc.), that the celebrity could rescue them from their persecutors, that the celebrity was persecuting them, and many other convictions that, if true, would explain their communications. Thus, for example, if a subject really were a particular celebrity's daughter or lyricist, it would be appropriate for her to write to her mother or client. But not all of the delusions observed were such as to explain (in the mind of the subject) the purpose of writing. Examples of delusions that even if true would not account for their communications were complaining to an actress that a government agency was controlling one's thoughts and berating an actor because the subject believed his own wife was having an affair with a neighbor.

A total of 140 subjects (65 percent) were rated as evidencing delusions. The distribution of delusions, classified into traditional categories, is given in Table 4-1. Note that grandiose delusions were far more common than persecutory delusions in this population. This is as expected, for delusions of special relationship with a famous person are by definition grandiose, and this was a frequent element among the delusions of these subjects. Both grandiose and persecutory delusions are classified as

paranoid delusions; only eight subjects showed evidence of persecutory delusions without also showing evidence of grandiose delusions.

Two types of delusion, generally considered rare, were observed among these subjects. Erotomanic delusions were identified for 35 subjects, 30 of whom believed that the celebrity loved them, and 11 of whom believed that they were married to the celebrity. The Capgras delusion, the conviction that someone has been replaced by an imposter, was observed in four cases. In one of these, the subject believed that the celebrity had been replaced by an imposter; the other three believed that someone else had been replaced.

#### Hallucinations

A total of 25 subjects (12 percent) reported any hallucinations. The specific types of hallucinations reported are shown in Table 4-2. Coders reported experiencing some difficulty in distinguishing delusions from hallucinations in the subjects' writings, because subjects did not always report whether or not obviously psychotic beliefs arose from seemingly sensory experiences.

#### Thought Disorder

One hundred thirteen subjects (53 percent) had some evidence of thought disorder. The particular features of thought disorder identified in their communications are shown in Table 4-3.

In this sample, where there were few subjects with evidence of organic mental disorder, the two principal sources for thought disorder were schizophrenia and mania. While both formal thought disorder and clanging commonly occur in both conditions, the other three features of thought disorder-- poverty of content, perseveration, and neologisms-- are more characteristic of schizophrenia. Thus, we calculated the proportion of subjects who evidenced one or more of these three symptoms. Sixty-two cases (29 percent) evidenced one or more of these.

#### Psychotic Features

One hundred fifty-four subjects (72 percent) had at least one of the key psychotic features listed in Table 4-4. The presence of one or more of these three features-- delusions, thought disorder, or hallucinations-- is necessary for a diagnosis of any psychotic condition.

#### PSYCHOTIC ILLNESS

The signs and symptoms for which we collected data in greatest detail were those characteristic of the mental disorders that we had noted in our preliminary review of communications. Thus, we do not have detailed data on all the signs and symptoms of all possible psychiatric disorders, but only those that we had reason to believe would be prevalent among the subjects. Nonetheless, there were few instances in which coders believed that significant

signs or symptoms were evidenced in letters but unrepresented on coding forms. In this section, we present the data on those signs and symptoms characteristic of particular psychotic illnesses and estimate the prevalence of these illnesses among the subjects according to standardized diagnostic criteria.

### Schizophrenia

The diagnosis of schizophrenia according to DSM-III criteria requires the presence of at least one of the features listed in Table 4-5 and the absence of certain other mental disorders. The table show the distribution of the individual features among the subjects. After excluding subjects who had the full manic or depressive syndrome or a diagnosis of organic mental disorder or mental retardation, 105 subjects (49 percent) met the DSM-III criteria for a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

### Mania

Features of mania were noted in a great many more subjects than could be diagnosed as manic. The features and their distribution in the total sample are shown in Table 4-6. DSM-III requires the presence of a period of elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and also at least three of the other features given in Table 4-6 (four if the mood is only irritable). In addition, DSM-III requires the absence of schizophrenia, delusional disorder, and organic mental disorder. Seventeen subjects (eight percent) met DSM-III criteria for a diagnosis of mania.

### Major Depressive Illness

For a diagnosis of major depressive illness, DSM-III requires a two-week period of feeling depressed, sad, blue, low, hopeless, or irritable and also four out of eight additional features. The distribution of all of these features is presented in Table 4-7. DSM-III also requires the absence of schizophrenia, delusional disorder, and organic mental disorder. Three subjects (one percent) met DSM-III criteria for major depressive illness.

### Bipolar Disorder

Subjects who have experienced both a manic episode and a major depressive episode are properly regarded as suffering bipolar disorder (once known as manic-depressive illness). Only one subject met the criteria for bipolar disorder; this subject is not included in the totals for mania or major depressive illness.

### Delusional Disorder

From the available data, we were also able to calculate how many subjects met DSM-III criteria for paranoid disorder (now known as delusional disorder, which term we use here because it is less subject to misunderstanding). This diagnosis requires (1) the presence of (a) persecutory delusions or (b) delusional jealousy, and (2) the absence of (a) hallucinations, (b) the primary features of schizophrenia (as listed in Table 4-5), (c) the full depressive syndrome, and (d) the full manic syndrome.

Although there were 45 subjects (21 percent) who had persecutory and/or jealous delusions, most of these subjects also suffered other symptoms that led to exclusion from this diagnostic category. Five subjects (two percent) met DSM-III criteria for delusional disorder. (By the revised criteria of DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1987), however, a higher proportion of subjects would have met this diagnosis, particularly in light of the high prevalence of erotomanic delusions among the subjects).

#### Schizoaffective Disorder

DSM-III provided no criteria for the diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, as the condition was only then being described and studied. To estimate the prevalence of this disorder among the subjects, we relied upon the criteria given in DSM-III-R. Twenty subjects (nine percent) evidenced both one of the key features of schizophrenia (given in Table 4-5) and either the full manic syndrome or full depressed syndrome, after excluding subjects with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or organic mental disorder.

#### PERSONALITY DISORDER

Personality disorders are conceptualized as enduring patterns of responsiveness to the environment that are maladaptive for the individual, impairing occupational or social functioning. They may and often do coexist with the mental illnesses described in the preceding section.

Personality disorders are not episodic in nature, but rather are characteristic of the long-term functioning of the individual. In rating evidence of the features of personality disorders from written communications, coders were instructed to seek evidence of longstanding personality characteristics that were present independently from episodes of psychotic illness.

#### Narcissistic Personality Disorder

The features of narcissistic personality disorder that were coded are given in Table 4-8, along with their distribution among subjects. DSM-III seems to require all of four listed features and at least two of four other listed features for this diagnosis to be made. More recently, in DSM-III-R (American Psychiatric Association, 1987), these requirements have been changed so as to require the presence of at least five of nine listed features. The wording of the features has been changed somewhat in the revision, making it impossible for us to precisely track that version. To estimate the prevalence of narcissistic personality disorder in the sample, we required the presence of two of the first four features and two of the second four features listed in DSM-III. (The first and second groups of features are given in Table 4-8.) Twenty-nine subjects (14 percent) met this standard for a diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder.

### Histrionic Personality Disorder

For a diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder, DSM-III requires the presence of behavior that is overly dramatic, intensely expressed, over reactive, calls attention to the subject, or reflects a craving for excitement and also at least two of five other features. Only three of these latter five features were included in the coding instrument, and these are given in Table 4-9. Twenty-five subjects (12 percent) met DSM-III criteria for a diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder.

### Borderline Personality Disorder

Features of borderline personality disorder identified among the subjects are shown in Table 4-10. A DSM-III diagnosis of the disorder requires the presence of at least five out of eight features. Three of these eight features could not be studied from written communications, so we required the presence of three out of the remaining five features to estimate the prevalence of the disorder among the subjects. Seven subjects (three percent) met this standard for borderline personality disorder.

### Schizotypal Personality Disorder

A DSM-III diagnosis of schizotypal personality disorder requires the presence of four out of eight features in the absence of schizophrenia. Two of these eight features could not be studied from written communications, so we required the presence of three out of the remaining six features and

the absence of schizophrenia in estimating the prevalence of this disorder. The six features are given in Table 4-11, with their distribution in the sample. Fifteen subjects (seven percent) met this standard for a diagnosis of schizotypal personality disorder.

#### Antisocial Personality Disorder

It was not possible to reliably ascertain the prevalence of antisocial personality disorder in the sample, largely because of the rarity with which subjects volunteered sufficient information about their childhood and adolescence (during which period antisocial behavior must be present in order to make the diagnosis). Later in this chapter, however, we do present the available information about antisocial behavior.

#### Other Symptoms

Defining substance abuse as either frequent drinking or drug use; recurrent intoxication, binge drinking, alcoholic blackouts, shakes, or DTs; social or legal problems related to substance use; or use of illegal drugs, we were able to identify 12 subjects (six percent) as substance abusers on the basis of their letters.

Among both subjects with the diagnoses given above and those without were those who evidenced preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession. Subjects were regarded as evidencing preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession only if there was both evidence of repeated mention of

particular content areas ("themes," as described in Chapter 6) and evidence that the subject "can't stop thinking about someone or something." Subjects so classified include those merely preoccupied, those with an overvalued idea, those obsessed, and those with delusions. Because we have data on the presence of delusions, we are able to isolate a class of subjects who were not deluded, but who did evidence preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession. With the available data, however, we cannot distinguish among preoccupation, overvalued ideas, and obsessions.

Although coders were instructed regarding the psychological concept of intrusive or unbidden thoughts characteristic of obsessional disorders, a rigorous definition of obsession includes criteria that go beyond the data routinely available from subjects' writings, including such subjective (phenomenological) elements as finding the obsessional thought undesirable, insight into the senselessness of the obsession, and efforts to resist the experience (see Reed, 1985, pp. 4-7). Our data do not permit examination of these aspects of experience for all of the subjects who were considered to have evidenced "preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession."

An overvalued idea is an "unreasonable and sustained belief or idea that is maintained with less than delusional intensity" (American Psychiatric Association, 1987, p. 402). It is distinguished from preoccupation in its

unreasonableness and from obsession in that the subject does not recognize the senselessness of the idea or resist it. Our impression is that much of what would uncritically be regarded as obsession among these subjects would more accurately be regarded as overvalued ideas. Reed (1985) offers a useful description of overvalued ideas:

[O]ver-valued ideas are beliefs which preoccupy and dominate an individual to an unusual and uncalled-for degree. Such beliefs are often untenable, or at least implausible, though, unlike delusions, they are understandable in terms of the subject's personality and background. And, again unlike delusions, however nonsensical they are, they may be shared by others. They are usually isolated ideas or theories, which do not spring from any philosophical stance or system of religious or political belief. Yet they are held with total conviction and intense affect. The affect leads the holder to devote his energies to the propagation of his idea and to proselytizing activity which bemuses or irritates others. The holders of over-valued ideas range from normal people with "bees in their bonnets," through cranks, pressure-groupers, and street-corner speakers, to the founders of cults and the wildest fanatics. (Pp. 8-9.)

Among the subjects who had none of the diagnoses reported above, there were 18 who had at least one psychotic symptom. These subjects, who had delusions, hallucinations, thought disorder, or a combination of these, but who did not meet the DSM-III criteria for any of the psychotic disorders, are diagnosed as having a psychosis not otherwise classified. Six of these subjects had preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions in addition to the psychotic feature. Among the 49 subjects who had neither any of the

above diagnoses nor any psychotic feature, 14 had preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions.

#### Other Psychopathology

Thirty-five subjects (16 percent) had none of the above diagnoses, no psychotic features, and no preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions. For this group, the only diagnostic impressions available are those of the coders. The coder diagnoses could not be confirmed according to DSM-III criteria either because data on the necessary signs and symptoms were not collected or because the features necessary to meet the criteria were not evidenced in sufficient number. Nonetheless, the coders' impressions are the best available characterization of these otherwise undiagnosed subjects. According to the coders, these subjects included 10 with narcissistic personality features; four with mixed personality disorders in the borderline, histrionic, narcissistic, antisocial cluster; three who were mentally retarded; two with antisocial personality disorder; one with schizotypal personality features; one with depression; and 14 subjects with no diagnosis.

#### Summary of Diagnostic Findings

Table 4-12 summarizes the diagnostic information given above for all subjects. By far the most common diagnosis was schizophrenia, evidenced by 49 percent of the subjects. In descending order of frequency, the other psychotic disorders occurring among more than five percent of the

subjects were schizoaffective disorder (nine percent), mania (eight percent), and psychosis not otherwise classified (eight percent). Fewer than five percent of subjects met criteria for major depressive illness, bipolar illness, or delusional disorder. The nonpsychotic disorders evidenced by more than five percent of the subjects were: narcissistic personality disorder (14 percent), histrionic personality disorder (12 percent), schizotypal personality disorder (7 percent), and substance abuse (6 percent). Fewer than five percent of the subjects met criteria for borderline personality disorder.

#### BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES

##### Intelligence

The intelligence of each subject was estimated as being in one of three groups: low IQ, estimated in 28 cases (13 percent); neither notably low nor notably high, estimated in 157 cases (73 percent); or high IQ, estimated in 29 cases (14 percent).

##### Emotions Expressed

The subject's emotional states were rated on a three-point scale (no evidence, some evidence, or clearly evident). The decision to code the "emotional clusters" described in Table 4-13 was made after many agonizing discussions of the best means of rating emotional expressions in personal documents. In the end, the Project

Advisory Board was given a lengthy list of descriptive terms for emotions from a standard thesaurus and asked to group conceptually related clusters. The results of this task were then discussed by the group until consensus was reached as to the number of distinguishable emotional clusters that might realistically be coded from the kinds of materials available for study.

Eight emotional clusters were coded, and subjects varied considerably in the patterns of emotional expression observed. As shown in Table 4-13, the emotional cluster evidenced by the largest number of subjects was "love, adoration, affection," evidence of which was found in the communications of 81 percent of the subjects. The second most common emotional cluster identified was "despair, depression, hopelessness," which was observed among 46 percent of the subjects. Table 4-13 gives the distributions for each of the eight emotional clusters.

#### Stressful Life Events

The total number of stressful life events reported by subjects in their letters ranged from none to 41, with a mean of 1.4 (S.D. = 3.04). No stressful life events were reported by 115 subjects (54 percent); 44 (21 percent) reported one; and 55 (26 percent) reported two or more.

#### SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The most incomplete data for the entire study were those basic facts about individuals that are universally

collected in interview research, such as race, employment, and marital status. Had data on such variables been sufficiently complete, we would have explored the relationship between such variables and other topics of interest. Besides being incomplete, however, we also suspect considerable bias in the reporting of these data. For example, we suspect that subjects were more likely to mention their race if black and their marital status if married. Thus, we place no confidence in the generalizability of those variables mentioned in this section for which we have data on only a small proportion of the sample.

#### Demographic Information

The subjects ranged in age from 14 to 74 according to available information, with a mean age of 32.3 years and a modal age of 25 years. The sample included 174 males (85 percent) and 30 females., reflecting both the fact that most such letters are written to public figures of the opposite sex and the fact that the two public figures with the largest volume of cases in this sample were women.

For cases in which valid data on race were available, 50 percent of the subjects were white, but all of the most problematic cases who were a continual source of harassment, stalking, and visits were white. Of 66 subjects for whom religious affiliation was known, 35 percent were Protestant, 17 percent Catholic, eight percent Jewish, five percent

Eastern religions, and 36 percent affiliated with other religions.

Educational attainment was known for only 54 subjects, and among these was higher than found among most patient populations, with 63 percent having attended at least some college. Marital status was known for only 87 subjects, 80 percent of whom were married. Sixty-nine subjects mentioned whether they had children. Of these, 23 percent had one or more and 77 percent had none. Of 75 subjects for whom current living arrangements were known, 36 percent lived alone, 17 percent had no fixed address, 17 percent lived with both parents, 13 percent with their mothers, five percent in prisons, four percent in mental hospitals, four percent with their spouses or lovers, and three percent with their children.

#### Family, Social, and Employment History

Only 53 (25 percent) of subjects reported whether they had served in the armed forces, and of these 21 (10 percent of the total sample) reported being veterans; only one subject reported having seen combat.

Fifty-three subjects (25 percent) gave enough information for coders to rate their highest known occupational status. Of those who could be coded, four (eight percent) had never been employed; five (nine percent) were unskilled employees; six (12 percent) were manual workers; 13 (25 percent) were clerical or sales workers or

technicians; 21 (40 percent) were administrative personnel or owners of small independent businesses; and four (eight percent) were higher executives or professionals.

Coders rated 27 subjects (13 percent) as socially isolated, 28 (13 percent) as socially integrated, and the remainder (74 percent) as not being notably isolated or integrated. Nonetheless, 47 subjects (22 percent) wrote about feelings of loneliness.

Small numbers of subjects gave detailed information about their families of origin. For example, six percent reported significant behavioral pathology in biological relatives, and eight percent reported significantly impaired relationships with the family of origin. Small numbers also expressed their feelings toward their parents. For example, four percent expressed anger or other negative feelings toward their fathers, and an equal number expressed affection or other positive feelings toward their fathers. Two percent expressed anger or other negative feelings toward their mothers, and five percent expressed affection or other positive feelings toward their mothers.

#### Delinquency and Criminal History

As noted above, subjects did not often volunteer information about their childhood or adolescence, making it impossible to reliably estimate lifetime prevalence of antisocial behavior among the subjects. The completeness with which subjects reported adult antisocial activity is

unknown, but as shown in Table 4-14, there were subjects who volunteered such discrediting information about themselves. It is important to point out, however, that single instances of antisocial behavior and even criminality may be the result of psychotic illness, particularly such features as a poor work record or use of an alias. Thus, the delinquent and criminal behavior known among these subjects may or may not be indicative of antisocial personality disorder or career criminality; available data provide no reliable means of distinguishing which of the self-reported antisocial acts among these subjects derived from "madness" and which from "badness."

Coders were asked to identify up to three felonies known to have been committed by the subjects, distinguishing information learned from their letters, on the one hand, from information learned from investigative sources, on the other. Based solely on the subjects' letters, only four reported committing felonies, including one murder, one sex crime (not including rape), one property crime, and one drug crime. Investigative sources, however, revealed a felony history for 16 subjects (seven percent of the sample). Although not all of their felonies were identified, those that were included murder, forcible rape, or other violent offenses (two subjects), potentially violent offenses (e.g., threats, simple assault) (three subjects), sex crimes (not including rape) (three subjects), arson (one subject),

property crimes (four subjects), drug crimes (two subjects), and other crimes (one subject). Criminal record checks were available for only a small proportion of subjects, so the true number of felons may be considerably higher than these data suggest. The data do, however, indicate that only one-fourth or fewer of felons reveal this fact in their letters.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on the subjects who wrote to celebrities, reviewing their signs and symptoms of mental disorder, the types of mental disorders they evidenced, and their psychological and social characteristics.

To identify particular forms of psychopathology among the subjects and measure its prevalence, we devised a strategy for diagnosing mental disorder from written communications that makes use of rigorous diagnostic criteria of the kind now required of psychiatric researchers (as opposed to the more impressionistic approach to diagnosis that characterized psychiatric research until the mid-1970s). This strategy required that trained coders rate the presence of particular signs and symptoms evidenced in the subject's communications. Instead of relying on coder's impressions of diagnosis, however, we subjected the observed signs and symptoms to the same decision-making logic used for formal diagnosis in clinical research. Despite the fact that some signs and symptoms must be vastly under-

represented in letters, and therefore undetectable in most cases (such as psychomotor retardation or odd speech), it was possible to detect high rates of a great variety of signs and symptoms among these subjects.

Important empirical findings reported in this chapter are:

(1) The high prevalence of mental disorder among these subjects is immediately apparent to anyone who examines their correspondence from such obvious features as bizarre handwriting, bizarre thoughts, and bizarre enclosures.

(2) Although the subjects evidenced very high rates of serious mental illness, only 19 percent of the subjects volunteered that they had received some form of mental health treatment. Of the 16 subjects who mentioned their attitudes toward treatment, three-quarters expressed unfavorable opinions.

(3) Eleven percent of the subjects mentioned that they had thought about, threatened, or attempted suicide.

(4) Sixty-five percent of the subjects evidenced delusions (most often grandiose delusions of a relationship with the celebrity), 53 percent evidenced thought disorder, and 12 percent reported hallucinations.

(5) Overall, 72 percent of the subjects evidenced one or more psychotic symptoms.

(6) Two supposedly rare symptoms occurred more often in this population than has ever been reported previously.

Sixteen percent of the subjects had erotomanic delusions, a form of psychopathology that has always been considered rare and has certainly never been observed in as many as five percent of a patient population. (Of 35 subjects with erotomanic delusions, 30 believed that the celebrity loved them, and 11 believed that they were married to the celebrity). The Capgras delusion-- the conviction that someone has been replaced by an imposter-- occurred in two percent of the subjects. One subject believed that the celebrity had been replaced by an imposter; three others believed that someone else had been replaced.

(7) The most common diagnosis was schizophrenia, evidenced by 49 percent of the subjects. Other psychoses identified were schizoaffective disorder (nine percent), mania (eight percent), delusional disorder (two percent), major depressive illness (one percent), bipolar disorder (one percent), and psychosis not otherwise classified (eight percent).

(8) The most common personality disorder diagnosis among these subjects was narcissistic personality disorder, found among 14 percent. Other personality disorders identified were histrionic personality disorder (12 percent), schizotypal personality disorder (7 percent), and borderline personality disorder (3 percent). Six percent of subjects were recognized as substance abusers.

(9) Twenty-three percent of the subjects could not be given a formal diagnosis or determined to have psychotic

symptoms, but all except six percent of the subjects evidenced multiple signs and symptoms of mental disorder in their letters.

(10) Considering the fact that signs and symptoms of mental disorder were being detected solely from letters written by the subjects and that in some cases the available sample of writing amounted to no more than a few words, it is extraordinary that 72 percent of the subjects could be determined to be psychotic and that 94 percent could be determined to suffer from some mental disorder. These data firmly establish that it is the mentally disordered who send inappropriate, harassing, and threatening communications to celebrities.

(11) Eighty-one percent of the subjects expressed love, adoration, or affection in their letters, greatly exceeding any other type of emotional expression. Despair, depression, or hopelessness was expressed by 46 percent; desperation or recklessness by 34 percent; happiness, contentment, or joy by 32 percent; hatred, aggression, or malice by 25 percent; suspiciousness or distrust by 25; condemnation, desire for revenge, or punitiveness by 22 percent; and jealousy or covetousness by seven percent.

(12) The subjects ranged in age from 14 to 74, with a mean age of 32 and a modal age of 25.

(13) The sample included 174 males (85 percent) and 30 females.

(14) Seventeen percent of the subjects were known to have used an alias.

(15) The most incomplete data of the study were those for demographic and social characteristics other than age and sex (race, religion, education, marital status, military service, occupation, others in the household) and for information about the subjects' families of origin, relationships with parents, and delinquent behavior during adolescence. Letters such as those we studied are not an appropriate source for studying these variables, despite the fact that small numbers of subjects volunteered great quantities of information on these topics.

(16) Twenty-two percent of the subjects wrote about feelings of loneliness.

(17) Only two percent of the subjects mentioned that they had committed felonies in the past, but eight percent were known felons.

In the next chapter, we examine the communications these subjects sent to the celebrities.

---

Table 4-1-- Delusions noted among the subjects, based on evidence in their communications to celebrities

---

Type of delusion	N	(%)
Any grandiose delusion	129	(60)
Grandiose	107	(50)
Special importance to the celebrity	104	(49)
The celebrity loves the subject	30	(14)
The celebrity is married to the subject	11	(5)
Causing newsworthy events	5	(2)
Any persecutory delusion	45	(21)
Persecution by the celebrity	7	(3)
Persecution by anyone else	41	(19)
Capgras (someone replaced by imposter)	4	(2)
Any paranoid delusion	137	(64)
Any grandiose delusion	129	(60)
Any persecutory delusion	45	(21)
Jealous (believes real or delusional sexual partner unfaithful)	5	(2)
Religious	33	(15)
Referential	38	(18)
Any bizarre delusion	18	(8)
Being controlled	12	(6)
Thought broadcasting	3	(1)
Thought insertion	6	(3)

---

Table 4-1-- (CONT.)

---

Type of delusion	N	(%)
Thought withdrawal	2	(1)
Any other delusion	35	(16)
Nihilistic	8	(4)
Somatic (bodily)	6	(3)
Other	22	(10)

---

---

Table 4-2 Types of hallucinations  
identified in subjects' communications

---

Hallucination	N	(%)
Auditory	19	(9)
Visual	11	(5)
Olfactory	1	(<1)
Tactile	1	(<1)
Gustatory	0	

---

---

Table 4-3-- Evidence of thought disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Formal thought disorder <sup>1</sup>	106	(50)
Poverty of content	42	(20)
Perseveration	41	(19)
Clanging	24	(11)
Neologisms	17	(8)

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes markedly illogical thinking, flight of ideas, loose associations, or incoherence.

---

Table 4-4-- Evidence of key psychotic symptoms identified in subjects' communications

---

Psychotic symptoms	N	(%)
Any delusion	140	(65)
Any thought disorder	113	(53)
Any hallucination	25	(12)

---

---

Table 4-5-- Evidence of schizophrenia identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Bizarre delusions <sup>1</sup>	18	(8)
Somatic, grandiose, religious, nihilistic, or other delusions without persecutory or jealous content	76	(36)
Delusions with persecutory or jealous content accompanied by hallucinations of any type	12	(6)
Auditory hallucinations	19	(9)
Incoherence, marked loosening of associations, markedly illogical thinking, or marked poverty of content of speech associated with at least one of the following: (a) inappropriate affect or (b) delusions or hallucinations	99	(46)

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes delusions of being controlled, thought broadcasting, thought insertion, and thought withdrawal.

---

 Table 4-6-- Evidence of mania identified in subjects' communications
 

---

Feature	N	(%)
Elevated, expansive, or irritable mood	45	(21)
Feels euphoric	33	(15)
Irritable mood	20	(9)
Inflated self-esteem (grandiosity, which may be delusional)	144	(67)
Any grandiose delusion	129	(60)
Inflated self-esteem not due to delusions	40	(19)
Overly talkative	48	(22)
Abnormally high level of activity in work, sex, or social relations	24	(11)
Short attention span, easily distracted	12	(6)
Decreased need for sleep	7	(3)
Feels thoughts are racing	7	(3)
Excessive involvement in activities with a high potential for painful consequences which is not recognized	4	(2)
Foolish investments or purchases	3	(1)
Buying sprees	1	(<1)

---

Table 4-7-- Evidence of depression identified in subjects' communications

Feature	N	(%)
Feels depressed, sad, blue, low, hopeless, or irritable for at least two weeks	44	(21)
Poor or increased appetite or significant change in weight	6	(3)
Poor appetite or significant weight loss	3	(1)
Increased appetite or significant weight gain	3	(1)
Insomnia or hypersomnia	14	(6)
Trouble sleeping	13	(6)
Sleeps too much	1	(<1)
Psychomotor retardation (moves too slowly)	0	(0)
Loss of interest or pleasure in former activities or decrease in sex drive	9	(4)
Loss of interest or pleasure in former activities	5	(2)
Decrease in sex drive	5	(2)
Fatigue, loss of energy	5	(2)
Feels worthless, excessively guilty	18	(8)
Feels unable to think or concentrate	10	(5)
Thoughts of death or suicide	24	(11)
Thoughts or wishes of death	17	(8)
Thoughts of suicide	13	(6)

---

Table 4-8-- Evidence of narcissistic personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
<b>First group of features:</b>		
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	95	(44)
Preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love	72	(34)
Desires constant attention and admiration	8	(4)
Responds to criticism, defeat, or inattention with indifference or marked shame or rage	9	(4)
<b>Second group of features:</b>		
Sense of entitlement	76	(36)
Interpersonal exploitativeness	36	(17)
Relationships alternate between idealization and devaluation	26	(12)
Lack of empathy for others	42	(20)

---

---

Table 4-9 -- Evidence of histrionic personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Ideas are overly dramatic, intensely expressed, over reactive, call attention to writer, or reflect a craving for excitement	59	(28)
Egocentric, self-indulgent, and inconsiderate	53	(25)
Vain and demanding	61	(29)
Suicide threats or attempts	23	(11)

---

---

Table 4-10 -- Evidence of borderline personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger	23	(11)
Pattern of intense unstable personal relationships	22	(10)
Uncertainty about identity in several areas	16	(7)
Impulsiveness in at least two potentially self-damaging areas	9	(4)
Physically self-damaging acts or suicide attempts	4	(2)

---

---

Table 4-11 -- Evidence of schizotypal personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Magical or superstitious thinking or peculiar beliefs <sup>1</sup>	92	(43)
Social isolation	34	(16)
Believes others are talking about him	17	(8)
Thought content is digressive, vague, overelaborate, circumstantial or metaphorical	48	(22)
Significant unwarranted suspiciousness or mistrust	46	(21)
Inappropriate affect	23	(11)

---

<sup>1</sup> This feature was often coded as present for subjects who were frankly deluded.

Table 4-12 -- Diagnoses by DSM-III Criteria

---

Diagnosis	N	(%)
Schizophrenia	105	(49)
Mania	17	(8)
Major depressive illness	3	(1)
Bipolar disorder	1	(<1)
Schizoaffective disorder	20	(9)
Delusional disorder	5	(2)
Psychosis not otherwise classified	18	(8)
Narcissistic personality disorder	29	(14)
Histrionic personality disorder	25	(12)
Borderline personality disorder	7	(3)
Schizotypal personality disorder	15	(7)
Substance abuse	12	(6)

---

---

Table 4-13-- Emotional states expressed in subjects' communications to celebrities

---

Emotional cluster	Some Evidence		Clearly Evident		Total	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Love, adoration, affection	59	(28)	115	(54)	174	(81)
Despair, depression, hopelessness	54	(25)	44	(21)	98	(46)
Desperation, recklessness, nothing to lose	43	(20)	29	(14)	72	(34)
Happiness, contentment, joy, seeming peace of mind	48	(22)	21	(10)	69	(32)
Hatred, aggression, malice	32	(15)	22	(10)	54	(25)
Suspiciousness, distrust	28	(13)	25	(12)	53	(25)
Condemnation, revenge-seeking, punitiveness	21	(10)	25	(12)	46	(22)
Jealousy, covetousness	8	(4)	7	(3)	15	(7)

---

Table 4-14-- Past antisocial behaviors reported by subjects in their communications to celebrities

Feature	N	(%)
Juvenile behavior problems	8	(4)
Poor work record <sup>1</sup>	15	(7)
Poor parenting skills	1	(<1)
Illegal occupation	1	(<1)
Multiple arrests	6	(3)
History of jail or prison	8	(4)
History of fire-setting	0	
Repeated physical fights/assaults	2	(1)
Use of aliases <sup>1</sup>	36	(17)
Reckless driving	1	(<1)
Escape from custody or elopement	3	(1)
History of committing a felony (based on letters)	4	(2)
History of committing a felony (based on investigative files)	16	(7)

<sup>1</sup> Although any of the features in this table may occur in psychotic persons as well as criminals, "poor work record" and "use of aliases" are particularly likely to be confounded with psychosis in this sample. These features are not necessarily signs of a persistent pattern of antisocial behavior.

One of the strangest fans I ever heard about actually mailed herself to me! It could have been a disaster, because I was gone for the weekend. It must have been horrendous being stuck inside that box. I don't know how long it took her to realize no one was going to open. She finally clawed her way out!

--Burt Reynolds, in his Introduction to The Hollywood Walk of Fame, 1987, p. xi.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE VOLUME AND FORM OF ODD COMMUNICATIONS TO CELEBRITIES

In this chapter we examine the volume and form of the communications directed toward celebrities by the subjects described in the preceding chapter. In addition to the quantity and duration of mailings, we look at the identifying information given by subjects, the materials used, the appearance of the communications, and enclosures.

### VOLUME OF COMMUNICATIONS

#### Quantity

The number of communications sent or delivered by each subject to the celebrity was determined not only for the cases included in the statistical sample, but for a random sample of all of the cases in the Gavin de Becker archives at the time the sample was selected. This number ranged from zero to 150. (Cases with thousands of mailings also occur, but none fell within the random sample.) The mean number of communications sent or delivered for the total population was 7.1. (The distribution by number of mailings is shown in Table 3-2 in Chapter 3.)

The total number of mailings for the subjects selected for the sample ranged from one to 146, with a mean of eight letters per subject. Ninety (42 percent) had a single mailing, 27 had two mailings, 14 had three, 11 had four, and nine had five. One hundred fifty-one subjects (71 percent) had five or fewer mailings. Twenty-four subjects (11 percent) had 20 or more mailings; eight (4 percent) had 50 or more; and only one had over 100.

Individual mailings varied substantially in length, from a single postcard or preprinted greeting card to lengthy tomes, thereby affecting the total quantity of information on particular subjects. One measure of the amount of information provided by subjects is the number of pieces of paper they had sent. This ranged from one piece of paper to 2,014, with a mean of 35.0 (25.7 without the most extreme case) and a median of 6.5 pages. Fifty percent of the subjects had six or fewer pages; 10 percent had more than 80 pages. The number of words in the subject's first letter ranged from 0 to 6,475, with a median of 198 words. The median length of second letters was 228 words, and of third letters 240 words. The average sentence length ranged from 0 to 137 words, with a median of 14 words per sentence.

As expected, for subjects with more than one communication there was a statistically significant association between the total number of communications and the time span in months over which the subjects attempted to

communicate with the celebrity (Chi-square = 19.87, d.f. = 1;  $p = 0.002$ ). A high number of mailings was associated with a long duration of communication.

#### Duration

For subjects who sent more than one mailing, the time span between the earliest and the most recent mailings ranged from less than one month to 91 months, with a mean of 17.3 months (S.D. = 18.1). The distribution of duration of correspondence in months was skewed by some extremely persistent letter writers, so the more appropriate measure of central tendency is the median, which was 11 months.

### FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS

#### Identifying Information

Subjects tended to give ample identifying information about themselves. 180 (84 percent) gave their full name, 171 (80 percent) gave an address, and 204 (95 percent) gave some identifying information in their first known mailing. Only 10 (five percent) of the letter writers maintained complete anonymity.

#### Addressees

One hundred eighty-three (86 percent) of the subjects addressed their first mailings to the celebrity, 9 (four percent) were not addressed to any individual, nine (four percent) were addressed to a spouse, friend, or relative of the celebrity, four (two percent) were addressed to a

secretary or other administrative staff member of the celebrity, three (one percent) to the producer, television show, television station, or record company with which the celebrity was affiliated, three (one percent) to some other person, two (one percent) to the celebrity's manager, and one (less than one percent) to the celebrity's agent.

### Geography

The subjects in this sample were based in 37 states, the District of Columbia, Canada, West Germany, England, France, and the Philippines. Forty-four percent of the sample lived in California, New York, and Texas.

One hundred sixty-eight of the subjects (85 percent) mailed their communications from a single state, province, or foreign country; 24 had postmarks from at least two different states, provinces, or countries; and five from three or more. The presence of multiple postmarks is generally an indication of the subject's mobility, for none of these subjects is known to make use of remailing services or similar techniques for concealing their location. Depending on the intervals between mailings, postmarks can also be an indication of the subjects' travels.

In a few cases in the statistical sample and in others studied as case histories, patterns of seemingly random travel were evident from the postmarks alone. Based on the content of their letters, some of these subjects were engaged in a delusional search for the celebrity (described

further in Chapter 6), while others traveled hither-and-yon as they became increasingly frantic to find the celebrity, to escape their persecutors, or for unexplained reasons.

#### Means of Communication

At least twelve percent of the subjects had used some means other than mailed letters in their efforts to contact the celebrity from a distance, including telephone calls and telegrams. Because it is not always possible to determine that a caller is the same person as a letter writer, and because information on telephone calls does not always make its way to case files, we suspect that the true proportion of subjects who communicate through multiple media is much higher than the twelve percent measured. (Cases that did not fall in the sample had also placed classified advertisements, sent delegates to visit the celebrity, published books through vanity presses, and, in one instance, hired a billboard.)

Among the 107 approach-positive cases in the statistical sample, there were only 37 subjects whom we could be absolutely certain had mailed an inappropriate communication that was forwarded to Gavin de Becker, Inc., in advance of the subject making his or her first known approach. The chief source of uncertainty in the remaining cases was a lack of information on the date of the first approach or the date of receipt of a letter. (This generally occurs when there is a substantial delay in an

agent, manager, or secretary notifying the de Becker staff about a subject, as for example, when a particularly ominous letter prompts someone to refer a case, recalling only that the subject had been a regular writer and occasional visitor.) In the remaining 70 approach-positive cases, there were 43 who as far as could be determined had hand-delivered their first known communication. Among both these 43 and the other 27 approach-positive cases for whom a pre-approach mailing not could be verified, it is possible that pre-approach mailings existed but were not received, not forwarded, or not dated adequately to determine that they preceded the first known approach. (This issue is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3, where data are presented for the sampling universe as a whole.)

#### Paper and Ink

In their first known mailings, 59 (28 percent) used lined paper; 50 (24 percent) used plain paper; 31 (15 percent) used stationery; 21 (10 percent) used preprinted greeting-type card; 18 (eight percent) used unprinted, quality stationery; 9 (four percent) sent a photocopy; eight (four percent) sent some combination of the above types of paper; five (two percent) used postcards; five (two percent) used inappropriate stationery or paper (e.g., with obscene printed language); and 7 (three percent) used other forms of paper.

Ninety-eight (46 percent) of subjects used black ink or typewriting, 84 (39 percent) blue ink or typewriting, 10

(five percent) were indiscernible because only a photocopy was available, seven (three percent) were in pencil, seven (three percent) were in red ink or typewriting, four (two percent) used more than one color, five (one percent) were green, and one (less than one percent) used some other combination.

### Handwriting

The largest number of subjects (105 or 49 percent) handwrote their first known communications; 57 (27 percent) handprinted their letters, 36 (17 percent) sent typed letters, 11 (five percent) used a combination of the above, three (one percent) used only commercial greeting cards without adding text, and, contrary to popular stereotypes, only one (less than one percent) sent a letter which had been cut and pasted from printed matter. Of 179 subjects whose first letters contained handwriting, 20 (11 percent) showed changes in their handwriting within the first letter. Of 118 subjects who sent more than one handwritten communication, 41 (35 percent) showed discernible changes in handwriting over time.

### Propriety

While 129 subjects (60 percent) used appropriate greetings in their first known communications, 29 (14 percent) used the celebrity's name by itself, 26 (12 percent) used no greeting, 19 (nine percent) used an overly familiar term, eight (four percent) used a greeting which

was inappropriate for other reasons, and three (one percent) used some attention-getting phrase (e.g., "Hi"). One hundred fifty-three (72 percent) of the subjects greeted the celebrity informally (e.g., by first name), 28 (13 percent) addressed the celebrity formally (e.g., "Dear Mr. Jones"), 26 (12 percent) did not address the celebrity at all, and six (three percent) used an idiosyncratic or bizarre epithet. While 148 (69 percent) of the subjects used a reasonably appropriate form of closing on their first known communications, 50 (23 percent) used inappropriate forms of closing, 11 (five percent) used no closing, and 5 (two percent) ended the letter idiosyncratically.

Overall politeness was rated for each subject. As shown in Table 5-1, 80 percent of subjects were rated as showing "ordinary politeness" or as being "somewhat polite." Ten percent were rated as "inconsiderate, rude," five percent as "vulgar, lewd, obscene," and five percent as "very polite."

#### Appearance and Format

Twelve subjects (six percent) used idiosyncratic spelling, and 37 (18 percent) used idiosyncratic punctuation. Individual characters were bizarrely formed in the writings of 25 subjects (12 percent of the total sample and 14 percent of the 178 subjects who did not type their letters). Only two subjects had so obviously attempted to disguise their handwriting that this was noted by coders who

had no special training in recognizing such efforts. Twenty-one subjects (ten percent) made excessive revisions to their letters. The writings of 24 subjects (eleven percent) contained text that was notably off-center on the page. Postscripts were used by 111 (52 percent) of subjects in their first communications.

We used a variety of measures of disorganization in the form of the subjects' writings. The direction of lines of text on the paper was rated as representing one of four classes: horizontal (88 percent of subjects), slanted upward from left to right (five percent), slanted downward from left to right (three percent), or undulating or wavy (four percent). Evidence of poor planning of space on the paper was rated as representing one of four classes: none (74 percent); minimal (17 percent), moderate (eight percent), or "utter chaos" (one percent). Finally, a rating of overall disorganization was used that required coders to record how many of the following three elements were evident: disorganized use of space, disorganized use of paragraphs, and use of multiple colors. Ratings of the subjects on this scale are given in Table 5-2, which shows that 71 percent had none of these features, 22 percent had one, seven percent had two, and one percent had all three.

## ENCLOSURES

Even the dolt tries his hand at poetry when in love.

--Krafft-Ebing, Psychopathia Sexualis, 1906, p. 11.

One-hundred seventeen subjects (55 percent) provided enclosures with their communications. These ranged from the innocuous (e.g., business cards) to the bizarre (e.g., semen, blood, or a dog's head). The specific types of enclosures that were most prevalent were photographs of the subject (18 percent) and poetry written by the subject (15 percent). The distribution of enclosures is shown in Table 5-3. Some specific categories of enclosures were sent by subjects that merit mention even though they are included within the broader categories in Table 5-3. These included: poetry (32 subjects), biological materials (14), items of value (eight), personal documents such as a Social Security card or birth certificate (seven), tape recordings (six), self-addressed reply envelopes (six), books (six), receipts (five), bills (four), copies of letters (four), resumes (four), maps (three), stuffed toys (three), things such as pebbles or dirt (three), and drugs (one).

While these categories convey something of the diversity and inappropriateness of the enclosures subjects sent, they do not begin to convey the challenge these enclosures pose to analysts seeking to understand the meaning of communications from a particular subject. To

provide the reader a glimpse at this complexity, we provide here a sampling of enclosures from the universe of cases from which the sample was selected:

Dog teeth  
 2 sleeping pills  
 A bed pan  
 A syringe of blood  
2150 A.D. by Thea Alexandre (a science fiction novel about "macro-philosophy . . . a mind expanding exodus from the imperfect today into a better tomorrow.")  
 Animal fecal matter  
 Copies of Playboy magazine  
 Subject's birth certificate  
 A tape recorder  
 Utility bills  
 3 live rifle cartridges  
 Copies of Natural History magazine  
 Mailing labels addressed to the subject  
 A tape of the subject speaking to the celebrity in a halting manner with music in the background  
 A small wooden box of sea shells stamped:  
     APPROVED  
     SECRET  
     URGENT  
 A toy submarine  
 A facsimile bomb  
 A bottle of urine  
 Cocktail napkins and matches from bars and restaurants in the Los Angeles area  
 A disposable lighter from a television studio  
 Pubic hair  
 A coffee mug with a network logo  
 A drivers license  
 U.S. currency  
 Copies of Texas Monthly magazine  
 A half eaten candy bar  
 A one liter bottle containing a whistle and keys with labels indicating that they fit the garage, front and back building doors, locks on an apartment door, and a mailbox  
 9 placards bearing photographs of the celebrity and the subject and a narrative description of their relationship  
 Plastic bags containing semen  
 Pieces of torn cardboard bearing doodles  
 Cigarette coupons  
 Pieces torn from magazines, including an

advertisement for vintage handguns on which the  
 subject has circled the kit for an 1860 Colt  
 Army .44 caliber percussion revolver  
 5 one cent stamps  
 The subject's passport  
 A cashier's check for \$2,000  
 28 identical photographs of the subject  
 57 Ohio state lottery tickets  
 8 tubes of red lipstick from various manufacturers  
 A sample tube of toothpaste  
 A disposable razor  
 A motorcycle  
 A pad of blank paper  
 A deposit slip and three personal checks: two  
 blank, one made out to the celebrity for \$1.00  
 A pack of cigarettes  
 3 ballpoint pens  
 6 comic books: Wonderwoman, Superboy, Supergirl,  
Superman Family, Krypton Chronicles, and Betty &  
 Veronica  
 A small stone  
 4 \$100 bills of play money  
 A Snoopy thermometer  
 A genuine diamond ring  
 A bottle of Estee Lauder "Youth Dew" spray  
 An advertisement depicting an attractive young  
 woman above whom subject wrote, "my girl friend"  
 A Rubic's Cube key chain  
 A pencil  
 An employment application listing the celebrity as  
 the subject's spouse  
 Medical photographs of corpses with the  
 celebrity's face pasted on the corpses' torsos.  
 A photograph of the celebrity's home  
 A tape of the subject singing along with a record,  
 interspersed with passages in which the subject  
 speaks to the celebrity  
 A shampoo coupon  
 25 drawings and water color paintings, mostly of  
 faces or eyes  
 A jewelry box containing two black capsules and a  
 small gold and onyx charm  
 9 60-minute cassette tapes in which the subject  
 describes his dreams and drones on endlessly  
 about the same themes as found in his letters  
 ("paradise people," "saucer people," and  
 "recording people")  
Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures by  
 Mary Baker Eddy, inscribed to the celebrity  
 "with all my love"  
 A live .22 Long Rifle cartridge  
 2 candy wrappers

A baby t-shirt bearing the words, "If you love me  
 don't feed me junk"  
 Lists of songs played on the radio and the times  
 they were played  
 3 playing cards  
 Blood-smearred paper  
 A map of the subject's home town  
I Gave God Time by Ann Kiemel Anderson, inscribed  
 to the celebrity with the message:  
 I'm still stuck on you. . . . Still  
 believe I'm your Husband!!!

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter, we examined the volume, duration, and form of communications to celebrities, including enclosures sent by the subjects. Important empirical findings reported here are:

(1) Subjects in the sample averaged eight letters apiece, with a range from one to 146 letters, though other subjects were known to have sent thousands of communications. 58 percent of subjects sent two or more communications.

(2) The quantity of material sent by subjects ranged from one to 2,014 pieces of paper, and the length of the first available letter from subjects ranged from 0 to 6,475 words.

(3) Serial letters tended to increase in length with time. The median number of words per letter was 198 for first letters, 228 for second letters, and 240 for third letters.

(4) Subjects in the sample who wrote multiple letters averaged a duration of 11 months of correspondence (not counting one subject who wrote for more than seven years.)

(5) As expected, the greater the time interval over which subjects wrote, the larger the number of communications they had sent.

(6) Ninety-five percent of subjects gave their name, address, or both in their first known communications; only five percent remained completely anonymous.

(7) Eighty-six percent of the first communications were addressed directly to the celebrity, and the remainder were addressed to the celebrity's spouse, friend, relative, secretary, staff members, producer, television show, television station, record company, manager, or agent, or to no one in particular.

(8) Subjects in the sample were based in 37 states the District of Columbia, Canada, West Germany, England, France, and the Philippines.

(9) Twelve percent of subjects mailed materials from two or more states or countries, indicating mobility.

(10) At least 12 percent of subjects telephoned, sent telegrams, or used some method other than mail to communicate with the celebrity from a distance. (Among the more creative efforts were classified advertisements, sending delegates to visit the celebrity, publishing a book through a vanity press, and hiring a billboard.)

(11) Because of irregularities in the preservation of communications by those who initially receive them, letters delivered prior to any approach were documented as having

been on file for only 37 of the 107 approach-positive letter-writing subjects in the statistical sample (35 percent).

(12) Fifty-one percent of the subjects wrote their first known communications on tablet-like paper, and the remainder used a variety of papers that included stationery, pre-printed greeting cards, photocopies, postcards, or a combination of these.

(13) Forty-nine percent of subjects hand wrote their first known communications; 27 percent hand printed their letters, 17 percent sent typed letters, five percent used a combination of the above, one percent used only commercial greeting cards without adding text, and, contrary to popular stereotypes, less than one percent sent a letter which had been cut and pasted from printed matter.

(14) In their first known communications, 40 percent of the subjects used inappropriate greetings or none at all, 72 percent addressed the celebrity too informally, and 31 percent used inappropriate closings or none at all. Ten percent of the first letters were rated as inconsiderate or rude and five percent as vulgar, lewd, or obscene.

(15) Inappropriate features in the appearance of the letters included disorganized use of space, paragraphs, or both (29 percent), idiosyncratic punctuation (18 percent), slanted or undulating writing (12 percent), bizarrely formed characters (12 percent), off-centered text (eleven percent),

excessive revisions (ten percent), idiosyncratic spelling (six percent), multiple colors of ink (two percent), and inappropriate paper (two percent).

(16) Fifty-five percent of the subjects sent enclosures with their communications, ranging from the innocuous (e.g., business cards) to the bizarre (e.g., semen, blood, or a dog's head). The most common types of enclosures were photographs of the subject (18 percent) and poetry written by the subject (15 percent).

In the next chapter, we examine the verbal and thematic content of the communications sent to celebrities.

---

Table 5-1-- Politeness of communications to celebrities

---

Politeness	N	(%)
Very polite	10	(5)
Ordinary politeness, somewhat polite	171	(80)
Inconsiderate, rude	22	(10)
Vulgar, obscene, lewd	10	(5)

---

---

Table 5-2-- Ratings of overall disorganization of the form of the communication among the communications to celebrities

---

Rating <sup>1</sup>	N	(%)
0	150	(71)
1	46	(22)
2	14	(7)
3	2	(1)

---

<sup>1</sup> This rating is based on the number of the following elements observed: disorganized use of space, disorganized use of paragraphs, and use of multiple colors.

Table 5-3-- Enclosures sent to celebrities

Enclosure	N	(%)
Subject's creative efforts <sup>1</sup>	50	(23)
Photograph of subject	38	(18)
Media clippings and photographs <sup>2</sup>	13	(6)
Other apparently homemade photographs <sup>3</sup>	22	(10)
Commercial pictures <sup>4</sup>	13	(6)
Valuables and commercial materials <sup>5</sup>	12	(6)
Business cards	17	(8)
Other business-like enclosures <sup>6</sup>	24	(11)
Religious or mystical materials	14	(7)
Bizarre materials <sup>7</sup>	16	(8)
Other	41	(20)

<sup>1</sup> Includes drawings, poems, tape recordings, and literary works (including poetry or lyrics within a letter).

<sup>2</sup> Includes photographs of the celebrity from the media.

<sup>3</sup> Includes only those which could have been taken by the subject; excludes photographs of the subject or celebrity.

<sup>4</sup> Includes commercial drawings, stickers, and seals.

<sup>5</sup> Includes items of value and books.

<sup>6</sup> Includes literature explaining businesses and self-addressed replies.

<sup>7</sup> Includes biological materials (blood, semen, hair, dog head), personal documents (social security card, driver's license, birth certificate), drugs, pebbles, dirt, seeds, and similar objects.

## CHAPTER 6

### THE CONTENT OF ODD COMMUNICATIONS TO CELEBRITIES

The content of the communications from subjects to celebrities is the focus of this chapter. First we look at the subjects' perceived relationships with the celebrities, particularly the roles in which they cast themselves and the celebrities. Next we examine the particular themes about which the subjects wrote. Finally we consider the subjects' messages, including threats.

#### SUBJECTS' PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIPS WITH CELEBRITIES

There can be no true friendship except  
between equals; friendship is unthinkable with a  
drudge, a slave, a drone.

--Hagstrum (1984)

Although the subjects had no personal relationship whatsoever with the celebrities to whom they wrote, many believed that there was a personal relationship, often an important one. In order to evaluate the nature of the perceived relationships, we developed the concept of roles adopted by the subjects and the parallel concept of roles in which subjects cast the celebrities. The use of the role concept stems not from the theatrical nature of the celebrities' careers, but rather from the use of the term in social psychology. The reader schooled in psychopathology will understand that most of the role relationships

perceived by subjects are the product of mental illness, but not all of the roles reflect delusions.

Other concepts developed to explore the perceived relationships between subjects and the celebrities to whom they wrote were "patronage," which we defined behaviorally, and "idolatry," defined as idolization or worship of the celebrity.

### Roles

Coders were trained to identify "roles" assumed by the subjects in their correspondence with celebrities. The list of roles from which these were selected was generated by reading hundreds of letters to determine the general types of roles in which persons writing inappropriate letters to celebrities tended to cast themselves, and coders were free to identify new roles and add them to the list as coding proceeded. For each subject, the coder rated up to three roles in which the subject cast himself or herself. Table 6-1 shows the distribution of roles identifiable in the subject's writings.

The most prevalent of the inappropriate roles in which subjects cast themselves were those of friend, adviser, or acquaintance (41 percent), spouse, would-be spouse, or suitor (30 percent), and lover or would-be lover (25 percent). Smaller numbers of subjects cast themselves as business associates and collaborators (15 percent),

religious advisers, prophets, and saviors (15 percent), enemies (five percent), persons with special powers (five percent), family members (four percent), and rescuers (one percent).

The subjects often cast the celebrity to whom they were writing in a role other than that of a performer or celebrity who was a stranger to the subject. In many instances, these roles were reciprocal to those assumed by the subjects (e.g., subjects assuming the role of a suitor or would-be spouse often cast the celebrity in the role of a potential spouse), but this was not necessarily the case.

As with the subjects' own roles, coders were asked to identify the predominant or primary role in which the celebrity was cast, and also any secondary or tertiary roles assigned by the subject. Table 6-2 shows the distribution of these roles. The most prevalent of the inappropriate roles in which subjects cast the celebrities were those of friend or acquaintance (36 percent), spouse, potential spouse, or suitor (27 percent), and lover, potential lover, or would-be lover (26 percent). Smaller numbers of subjects cast the celebrities as business associates or collaborators (14 percent), rescuers or benefactors (10 percent), beneficiaries (eight percent), family members (six percent), or enemies (four percent).

Coders rated whether the nature of the role in which the subject cast himself changed over time. Of 156 cases in

which there were either multiple mailings or variously dated materials within a single mailing, coders rated 47 (30 percent) as showing a change in roles and 109 (70 percent) as showing no change in roles.

### Patronage

A concept developed for this project is that of the degree of "patronage" of the celebrity exhibited by subjects. This was rated according to a three-point scale, defined as follows: (1) Minimal patronage: this level of patronage appears essentially normal; i.e., attends movies, local concerts, speeches; collects books/records; votes in elections; (2) Moderate patronage: this level of patronage appears somewhat out of the ordinary, i.e., extensive collections, seeing public appearances several times within one year, some evidence of extensive travel to see the celebrity, campaigning, fund raising, circulating petitions; and (3) Maximal patronage; this level of patronage is clearly extraordinary, i.e., devoted room, shrines, multiple trips of extraordinary distances to see public appearances, plus significant devotion of time on a daily basis to behavior directly related to obsession with the celebrity. Rated according to this scale, 146 of the subjects (69 percent) evidenced minimal patronage, 45 (21 percent) moderate patronage, and 21 (10 percent) maximal patronage.

Idolatry

Coders were asked to judge whether the subject "ever idolized or worshipped someone." One hundred twenty-three subjects (58 percent) were judged to have done so. All but four of these idolized the celebrity to whom they had written. Of the 119 who idolized the celebrity, 16 also idolized a second person.

## THEMATIC CONTENT

Subjects wrote to celebrities about a variety of personal concerns and public issues. In an effort to capture the diversity of these themes, we developed lists of themes that we had observed among the writings initially examined. Coders noted which among the themes on these lists were mentioned by subjects. In addition, we examined which themes were mentioned repetitively as an indication of the intensity of subjects' concerns with particular themes. Another measure of intensity was desirable that would be independent of particular themes, and for this purpose we used ratings of the subjects' degree of insistence. All of these measures are dealt with in this section.

Mention of Particular Themes

Table 6-3 shows the proportions of subjects who ever mentioned particular themes related to public figures, assassins, political issues, or political parties. The most

important finding here was that 36 percent of the subjects mentioned some public figure other than the one to whom they had written. One third of the 73 subjects who mentioned a public figure other than the one whose mail led to their inclusion in the study mentioned multiple public figures. Table 6-4 shows the distribution of the number of other public figures mentioned, which ranged from zero to 49, with a mean of 2.4 (S.D. = 7.2).

As expected, neither political issues nor political parties or groups were salient themes in the writings of very many of these subjects, as shown in Table 6-3. A total of 29 subjects (14 percent) mentioned any political issue, party, or group. Of these, 26 expressed political sentiments, the intensity of which was rated as minimal (two cases), moderate (18 cases), or extreme (6).

Repetitive Themes, Preoccupations, Overvalued Ideas, and Obsessions

One of the more striking findings from this research is the high proportion of subjects who were excessively focused on particular themes. Of the 214 subjects, 204 (95 percent) repeatedly mentioned a particular theme. Table 6-5 shows the distribution of these themes. To evaluate a theme as "repeatedly mentioned," the coder needed only to note two or more mentions of the same theme within the total body of available communications from the subject. In contrast, a

judgment that the subject had "ever been preoccupied or obsessed with someone or something" required evidence that the subject "can't stop thinking about someone or something." (See the discussion of preoccupations, overvalued ideas, and obsessions in Chapter 4.)

One hundred thirteen subjects (53 percent) repeatedly mentioned love, marriage, or sexual activity, and 194 (91 percent) repeatedly mentioned the celebrity or another public figure. One hundred ninety-six subjects (92 percent) repeatedly mentioned something about the world of Hollywood (celebrities, entertainment products, or becoming a celebrity).

One hundred eighteen subjects (55 percent) evidenced preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession regarding someone or something. (These concepts are treated in detail in Chapter 4. Here, the term "preoccupied" is used to indicate this entire class of ideation.) The distribution of the subjects' preoccupations is given in Table 6-5. Thirty-one subjects (15 percent) were preoccupied with love, marriage, or sexual activity; 108 (51 percent) were preoccupied with the celebrity or another public figure; and 111 subjects (52 percent) were preoccupied with the world of Hollywood (celebrities, entertainment products, or becoming a celebrity).

Degree of Insistence

Subjects varied in the degree of insistence communicated in their writings. We assessed several different aspects of insistence by coding whether each was present in a subject's communications. The distribution of these findings for first known communications are shown in Table 6-6. Eighteen percent of subjects communicated that their concerns were of extreme importance, great consequence, or grave; 14 percent begged or implored; 13 percent demonstrated fanaticism or zealotry; eight percent demanded or ordered the celebrity to take particular actions; and eight percent communicated a sense of urgency or emergency.

## MESSAGES AND THREATS

Wants and Desires

In their letters to celebrities, most of the subjects sought something. Among the expressed desires that are most obviously inappropriate were requests for marriage (15 subjects), sexual contact (11), rescue or assistance (10 cases), a visit from the celebrity at the subject's home (10), valuable gifts (nine cases), having children with the celebrity (six cases), and in one case a pornographic photograph of the celebrity illustrating the subject's fetishistic interests.

Table 6-7 shows the expressed desires of the subjects in their first communications. Note that up to three desires were coded for each subject, so the numbers total more than 214.

#### Emotional Provocation

In pretesting, it was noted that some subjects sought to evoke emotional responses from their intended readers. To capture this aspect of their behavior, coders rated whether each subject had attempted to instill, evoke, or provoke any of seven types of emotional response. By far the most prevalent was the effort to instill feelings of love, observed in the writings of 86 subjects (40 percent). In order of decreasing frequency, the other emotions subjects sought to evoke were worry or anxiety (26), fear (26), shame (22), upset (21), sexual excitement (19), and anger (8).

#### Cryptic Content

Twenty-eight percent of the subjects used unclear, cryptic, encoded, esoteric, or veiled references in their writings that made them difficult to understand. The particular kinds of information that the coders thought would have been helpful in understanding what the subject was trying to communicate included knowledge of the celebrity's products (11 percent), religious history (eight percent), symbolism (two percent), the occult (one percent),

mythology (one percent), numerology (one percent), and astrology (less than one percent).

### Sexual Content

The writings of 67 subjects (32 percent) gave evidence of sexual arousal or responsiveness, for example, in mentioning masturbation or describing sexual interests. Fifty-six (26 percent) specifically wrote about sexual arousal or responsiveness involving the celebrity. Fifty-one subjects (24 percent) specifically expressed their own sexual interest (as distinguished from romantic interest) in the celebrities to whom they wrote. Three subjects identified themselves as homosexual and five as bisexual. One subject reported transsexualism, and seven were judged to be confused about gender identity.

The manner, if any, in which each subject mentioned any of a lengthy list of normal and abnormal sexual behaviors was coded. The only sexual behaviors mentioned by more than five percent of the subjects were vaginal intercourse (18 subjects) and fellatio (12 subjects). For these, as for other sexual behaviors, the subjects mentioned them in a variety of contexts. For example, in the case of vaginal intercourse, four mentioned it as a disapproved activity, two mentioned it in a juvenile manner, seven mentioned it as a pleasant fantasy, and five mentioned having engaged in it. Other sexual behaviors were mentioned by smaller numbers of

subjects: masturbation (9), cunnilingus (7), anal intercourse (7), rape (5), sexual activity with children (4), making another person suffer (3), use of pornography (3), partialism (3), use of fetishes (2), exposing his or her own genitals (2), writing "dirty" letters (2), being humiliated, beaten, or otherwise made to suffer (2), being bound (1), use of sexual devices (1), peeping on strangers (1), rubbing or touching strangers (1), binding another or seeing someone bound (1), dressing in clothing of the opposite sex (1), and sexual activity with animals (1).

#### Threatening Content

Defining a "threat" as any offer to do harm, however implausible, coders identified threats in 49 (23 percent) of the cases and no threats in 165 cases. As shown in Table 6-8, 22 subjects (10 percent of the sample and 45 percent of the threateners) made only one threat, and 27 subjects (13 percent of the subjects and 55 percent of the threateners) made two or more threats. The largest number of threats made by any one subject in the sample was 14. The mean number of threats per threatener was 2.80 (S.D. = 2.99).

Threats were classified according to whether they were direct, veiled, or conditional. These three forms of threat were defined as follows:

Direct threats: straightforward and explicit statements of an intention to commit harm which do

not state conditions that might avoid the harm (e.g., "I'm going to kill you").

Veiled threats: indirect, vague, or subtle statements suggesting potential harm which do not state conditions that might avoid the harm (e.g., "There's no saying what might happen").

Conditional threats: statements portending harm and specifying either conditions to be met in order to avoid the harm or conditions under which the threat will be carried out; usually such threats use the words "if," "if not," "or," "or else," "unless," or "otherwise."

Among the 49 threateners, 13 subjects (26 percent) made direct threats; 19 made veiled threats (39 percent); and 35 made conditional threats (71 percent). The threateners averaged nearly three threats each, so it is not surprising that some made more than one type of threat.

Taking threats as the unit of analysis (rather than subjects), we coded a total of 135 threats, of which 28 were direct (21 percent), 34 veiled (25 percent), and 73 conditional (54 percent). The distributions of these are given in Table 6-9, which reports the numbers and percentages of threateners who made particular numbers of each type of threat.

To explore the nature of the conditions that subjects set forth for averting the threatened action, we looked at the conditions set forth to avert the 73 conditional threats made by these subjects in any of their writings. These data are shown in Table 6-10. Note that the most common demand-- found in 69 percent of the conditional threats-- was for personal attention. Next in frequency was a demand for influence or power over the celebrity, found among 51 percent of the conditional threats. Only nine percent demanded materials of financial value. Thus, these conditional threats vary in demand-- but not in form or impact on the victim-- from traditional extortion threats.

Eighteen threateners (37 percent of all threateners) made 47 threats (included in the totals above) which were implausible because they were curses or hexes, evidenced a psychotic notion of causation, or were technically impossible. Examples of such threats from various subjects are:

I don't know what else to tell you. I've warned you. Repent and accept Christ before the hour of God's Wrath upon the world arrives. It will be a Holocaust like the world has never seen.

\* \* \*

No mercy shall be shown to those we leave behind, neither by the beast nor by us when we return to pull the beast off the other. All those ruled by Satan who are alive when we come back are our enemies, as they have already killed off any who would not accept the world of the beast or the number of his name.

\* \* \*

You better not get your hair cut because if you  
do-- Jupiter will collide with Mars.

\* \* \*

I will subjugate all forces of nature and cruel  
mankind.

\* \* \*

I feel that you are in danger with you [sic] new  
boyfriend . . . if he has brown eyes. I lost my  
only brother whom was married to a brown eyed  
girl.

\* \* \*

May the veins in your legs get darker, bluer, and  
uglier; and bigger; and hideous--like your  
repulsive body.

\* \* \*

Write that letter to me God Damn It or else I'll  
have you all fornicating with Ubangies before I'm  
through with you--and I mean it!!

\* \* \*

My People are out to kill all Gays & Lesbian Women  
all over the world all Gay men who Do Not Work In  
Show Bussiness [sic] & also Lesbian Women who Do  
Not Work In Show Bussiness [sic] will also Be  
Killed.

Five subjects made threats that were statements of a  
desire or intent to exert influence through lawful means but  
that from their context were nonetheless threats. For  
example, various subjects wrote:

I want you to know I will never have a wife & kids  
if you won't be my bride for I will be in mourning  
for you the rest of my life and there's a good  
chance I will end up a bum on the street . . .

\* \* \*

I realize that you aren't going to come looking  
for me. So, I'm going to have to go looking for  
you. Please don't be frightened. I am not a nut.

\* \* \*

There is nothing more important than you. All  
those who get in my way will pay dearly. I will  
get the ultimate revenge. Someday, walking  
through the door with you on my arm. That's how  
they will pay. I shall beat them at their own  
game.

\* \* \*  
Feelings toward you have turned to hostility and  
you'll be out a home and family, and I'd take  
sadistic pleasure in that. If you don't keep in  
touch with me. . . . I will lose interest in you.

\* \* \*  
I saw your movie you looked at me at the last of  
the picture, now I am going to do something else  
with my time. This was not in this letter last  
time! You will see.

Threats were rated for the presence of evidence of plans, means, or opportunity to carry out the threat. For nineteen subjects, the threat was accompanied by evidence that the subject had a plan to carry it out. Ten subjects made threats that were accompanied by some evidence that the threatener had the means to carry out the threat. Twelve subjects made threats that were accompanied by some evidence that the threatener had an opportunity to carry out the threat.

Volunteered information on plans, means, or opportunity helps those assessing threats to evaluate the credibility of the threat. For example, a vague, implausible plan lowers credibility, while a detailed, plausible one enhances credibility. Because of the potential importance of these variables, we created a scale to measure these aspects of credibility. This threat credibility scale assigns each subject a score based on whether any threat is accompanied by evidence of a plan (worth one point), evidence of means (one point), or evidence of opportunity (one point). Thus,

subjects' scores range from zero to three on this scale. In this sample, 22 subjects (45 percent of threateners) scored greater than zero on this scale: eleven scored one, three scored two, and eight scored three.

The distribution of the targets of subjects' threats is shown in Table 6-11. The most common target of the threats was the celebrity (16 percent of all subjects). Other targets, in order of decreasing frequency, included: the subject himself or herself; a group of people; an intimate or property of the celebrity; another public figure or another public figure's intimates, protective detail, or property; or the subject's own intimates or property.

Although most subjects indicated that they would carry out the threats themselves, others indicated that the threats would be executed by unspecified parties or by God. Table 6-12 shows the proportions of subjects who named various executors of their threats.

Among subjects who threatened to assassinate or kill someone, the most frequently named target of the death threat was the celebrity to whom the communication was addressed. As shown in Table 6-13, death threats were also directed to the subjects themselves, other public figures, someone around the celebrity, or others.

In addition to death threats, subjects threatened a variety of other types of harm, including non-lethal threats

of personal injury, threats to harm loved ones or associates, or threats to destroy property. Twenty-six subjects (12 percent) directed such threats toward the celebrity, and one subject did so toward other public figures. Three subjects (one percent) directed such threats toward themselves, and nine subjects (four percent) toward a person or group other than a public figure or themselves. The specific actions threatened are shown in Table 6-14.

#### Announcements of Events Concerning the Celebrity

Twenty-four subjects (11 percent) announced a specific location where something would happen with respect to the celebrity. Twenty-two subjects (10 percent) announced a specific time when something would happen with respect to the celebrity.

#### Weapons

Thirteen subjects mentioned a weapon. Seven (three percent) mentioned handguns. Other weapons were mentioned by smaller numbers of subjects: rifle (two), bomb or incendiary device (two), and weapons other than firearms or explosives (seven). None of these subjects specified that they possessed or had access to these weapons, but other subjects in the sampling universe had done so.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter we examined the content of subjects' communications to celebrities. In particular, we looked at

the subjects' perceived relationships to the celebrities, the thematic content of their communications, and the messages and threats they communicated.

Important empirical findings reported in this chapter are:

(1) A majority of subjects cast themselves in roles that on the surface would seem benevolent to the celebrities: friend, adviser, or acquaintance (41 percent), spouse, would-be spouse, or suitor (30 percent), and lover or would-be lover (25 percent). (As discussed and illustrated elsewhere in this report, however, many of the most dangerous subjects are those whose psychopathology causes them to believe they have an established, mutually beneficial relationship with the celebrity.)

(2) Only five percent of the subjects postured themselves as enemies of the celebrities to whom they wrote. Other subjects cast themselves as business associates and collaborators (15 percent), religious advisers, prophets, and saviors (15 percent), persons with special powers (five percent), family members (four percent), and rescuers (one percent).

(3) Although there were exceptions, most subjects cast the celebrity in roles reciprocal to those in which they cast themselves. Thus, these roles, too, were mostly such as to appear beneficent. For example, 36 percent of

subjects regarded the celebrity as a friend or acquaintance, 27 percent as a spouse, potential spouse, or suitor, and 26 percent as a lover, potential lover, or would-be lover.

(4) Smaller numbers of subjects cast the celebrities as business associates or collaborators (14 percent), rescuers or benefactors (10 percent), beneficiaries (eight percent), family members (six percent), or enemies (four percent).

(5) The roles in which subjects cast themselves were stable in 70 percent of the cases in which multiple samples over time were available.

(6) Ten percent of the subjects demonstrated extraordinary levels of patronage through such behaviors as devoting a room or shrine to the celebrity, taking multiple trips of extraordinary distances to see public appearances, and devoting significant time on a daily basis to behavior directly related to their interest in the celebrity.

(7) 58 percent of the subjects were judged to have idolized or worshipped someone, almost always the celebrity to whom they wrote.

(8) 36 percent of the subjects mentioned some public figure other than the celebrity to whom they had written. The number of other public figures mentioned ranged from none to 49, with a mean of 2.4. This finding is one of several indications of one of our most important findings: subjects who harass or threaten one public figure are at risk of harassing or threatening another public figure.

(9) 95 percent of the subjects repeatedly mentioned particular themes, most often something about the world of Hollywood (92 percent), the celebrity or another public figure (91 percent), or love, marriage, or sexual activity (53 percent). Only 13 percent repeatedly mentioned perceived injustices.

(10) 55 percent of the subjects evidenced preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession. The topics on which they were pathologically focused included the world of Hollywood (52 percent), a public figure (51 percent), and love, marriage, or sex (15 percent).

(11) 18 percent of subjects communicated that their concerns were of extreme importance, great consequence, or grave; 14 percent begged or implored; 13 percent demonstrated fanaticism or zealotry; eight percent demanded or ordered the celebrity to take particular actions; and eight percent communicated a sense of urgency or emergency.

(12) Subjects' expressed desires included having face-to-face contact with a celebrity (40 percent), getting a response by mail or telephone (39 percent), getting information to someone (22 percent), marrying or having sex or children with a celebrity (13 percent), being rescued or assisted (five percent), or being given something of value (four percent)

(13) Emotions that subjects seemed to want to evoke among celebrities included: love (40 percent), worry or

anxiety (26), fear (26), shame (22), upset (21), sexual excitement (19), and anger (8).

(14) Twenty-eight percent of the subjects used unclear, cryptic, encoded, esoteric, or veiled references in their writings that made them difficult to understand, but the only type information that would have helped in deciphering the meaning of more than 10 percent of the subjects would have been knowledge of the celebrity's films, records, and performances. Expertise in religious history would have been useful in deciphering eight percent of the subjects' letters, but technical aspects of symbolism, the occult, mythology, numerology, and astrology were each mentioned by fewer than three percent of subjects.

(15) Thirty-two percent of subjects wrote about sexual activities, spanning a variety of normal and deviant sexual interests. Twenty-four percent specifically expressed their own sexual interest in the celebrities.

(16) Twenty-three percent of subjects made at least one threat, broadly defined, and 55 percent of the threateners made two or more threats. The mean number of threats per threatener was 2.8.

(17) Among the 49 threateners, 13 subjects (26 percent) made direct threats; 19 made veiled threats (39 percent); and 35 made conditional threats (71 percent)

(18) Of 135 threats, 28 were direct (21 percent), 34 veiled (25 percent), and 73 conditional (54 percent).

(19) Subjects making conditional threats sought to extort personal attention (69 percent), and influence or power (51 percent); only nine percent demanded materials of financial value.

(20) Of 135 threats, 47 (35 percent) were implausible because they were curses or hexes, evidenced a psychotic notion of causation, or were technically impossible.

(21) Nineteen subjects gave evidence that they had a plan to carry out their threats, ten that they had the means to carry out their threats, and twelve that they had the opportunity to carry out the threat.

(22) Threats were directed primarily toward the celebrities to whom the subject wrote or those around the celebrities, but were also directed toward the subjects themselves, other public figures, or private citizens.

(23) Most subjects indicated that they would carry out the threats themselves, but others indicated that the threats would be executed by unspecified parties or by God.

(24) Four percent of all subjects threatened to kill the celebrity. Others whom the subjects threatened to kill were other public figures, people around the celebrity, themselves, and others.

(25) Subjects threatened a variety of other types of harm, including non-lethal threats of personal injury, threats to harm loved ones or associates, or threats to

destroy property. These, too, were directed primarily toward the celebrities to whom the subjects wrote, but also toward other public figures, those around public figures, the subjects themselves, and private citizens.

(26) Eleven percent of the subjects announced a specific location where something would happen to the celebrity.

(27) Ten percent of the subjects announced a specific time when something would happen to the celebrity.

(28) Six percent of the subjects mentioned a weapon.

The following chapter explores the approaches subjects made toward celebrities.

---

Table 6-1-- Roles in which subjects cast themselves in relation to the celebrities to whom they wrote

---

Role	N	(%)
Friend, adviser, or acquaintance	88	(41)
Spouse, would-be spouse, suitor	65	(30)
Lover or would-be lover (sexual)	54	(25)
A special fan	47	(22)
Appropriate (one of many fans or stranger)	37	(17)
Business associate, collaborator	32	(15)
Religious adviser, prophet, or savior	31	(15)
Someone with special powers	11	(5)
Enemy (includes assassin, persecutor, and condemning judge)	10	(5)
Family member (child, parent, or sibling)	9	(4)
Rescuer	3	(1)

---

---

Table 6-2-- Roles in which subjects cast the celebrities to whom they wrote

---

Role	N	(%)
Appropriate (stranger)	179	(84)
Friend or acquaintance	77	(36)
Spouse, potential spouse, suitor (marriage)	57	(27)
Lover, potential lover, or would-be lover (sex)	55	(26)
Business associate, collaborator	29	(14)
Rescuer, benefactor, or potential benefactor	22	(10)
Beneficiary	17	(8)
Family member (child, parent, or sibling)	12	(6)
Enemy (includes persecutor and conspirator)	9	(4)

---

Table 6-3-- Themes mentioned in subjects' communications

Themes	N	(%)
Any other public figure	78	(36)
President Kennedy	5	(2)
President Reagan	13	(6)
President Carter	11	(5)
John Hinckley	4	(2)
Other assassins	3	(1)
Other	73	(34)
Any political issue	23	(11)
Nuclear war/power	5	(2)
Economy	4	(2)
Middle East	5	(2)
Central America	2	(1)
Iranian hostages	2	(1)
Racial issues	3	(1)
Other legislative issues	2	(1)
Other	12	(6)
Any political party or group	13	(6)
Republican	4	(2)
Democrat	6	(3)
Nazi	5	(2)

Table 6-3-- (Cont.)

Themes	N	(%)
Socialist	0	
Communist	1	(<1)
Other	2	(1)

---

Table 6-4-- Number of public figures mentioned in subjects' communications

---

Number of other public figures mentioned	N	(%)
0	140	(66)
1	27	(13)
2	11	(5)
3	7	(3)
4	3	(1)
5	7	(3)
6-10	7	(3)
11-20	3	(1)
21-30	3	(1)
31-40	3	(1)
41-50	2	(1)

---

Table 6-5-- Themes repeatedly mentioned by subjects

Theme	Repeatedly mentioned		Preoccupied with	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
The celebrity	189	(88)	105	(49)
Other public figures	62	(29)	20	(9)
Entertainment products	73	(34)	13	(6)
Love, marriage, romance	98	(46)	24	(11)
Sexual activity	41	(19)	11	(5)
Union with the celebrity	50	(23)	22	(10)
Becoming a public figure	17	(8)	5	(2)
Injustice to self	28	(13)	5	(2)
Law enforcement, security, intelligence, or military	22	(10)	1	(<1)
Violence or aggression to self or others	35	(16)	4	(2)
Rescue of the celebrity	7	(3)	1	(<1)
Politics or government	27	(13)	5	(2)
Religion	64	(30)	20	(9)
Mysticism	12	(6)	7	(3)
Occultism	10	(5)	6	(3)
Science fiction or fantasy	8	(4)	0	
Racial issues	8	(4)	1	(<1)
Other	33	(15)	8	(4)

---

Table 6-6-- Features of insistence in the subjects' first communications

---

Features	N	(%)
Extreme importance, of great consequence, or grave	38	(18)
Begging, imploring	30	(14)
Fanatical, zealous (ideological commitment)	28	(13)
Urgent, emergency	18	(8)
Demanding, ordering	17	(8)

---

---

Table 6-7-- Subjects' expressed desires in their first communications to celebrities

---

What is Sought	N	(%)
Marriage, sex, or having children	28	(13)
Other face-to-face contact	86	(40)
A response by mail or telephone	84	(39)
To get information to someone	48	(22)
Rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	24	(11)

---

---

**Table 6-8-- Frequency of threats per subject**

---

<b>Number of threats</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
0	165	(77)
1	22	(10)
2	10	(5)
3	8	(4)
4	2	(1)
5 or more	7	(3)

---

Table 6-9-- Distribution of various types of threats among the 135 threats contained in the communications of 49 threateners (percentages refer to total number of threateners)

Number of threats	(N = 28)		(N = 34)		(N = 73)	
	<u>Direct</u>		<u>Veiled</u>		<u>Conditional</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
0	36	(74)	30	(61)	14	(29)
1	9	(18)	15	(31)	18	(37)
2	2	(4)	2	(4)	8	(16)
3	1	(2)			4	(8)
4						
5					4	(8)
6			1	(2)		
7					1	(2)
8						
9			1	(2)		
10						
11						
12	1	(2)				

Table 6-10-- Conditions specified by 35 subjects for averting the threatened harm (N = 35 conditional threateners)

Condition	N	(%)
Personal attention <sup>1</sup>	24	(69)
Gaining influence or power <sup>2</sup>	18	(51)
Gaining something of financial value	2	(6)
Other demands (including those unstated)	3	(9)

<sup>1</sup> Includes: "write to me," "call me," "meet me," "marry me," and "acknowledge me."

<sup>2</sup> Includes: "change your product or ways," "deliver my message," and "stop doing what you're doing."

---

 Table 6-11-- Targets of any of the subjects' threats
 

---

Target	N	(%)
The celebrity	34	(16)
A significant other or property of the celebrity	7	(3)
Another public figure, a protective detail, or a significant other or property of another public figure	5	(2)
Another individual third party or their property	3	(1)
A stereotyped group of people, a class of people, or "everyone"	8	(4)
Him or herself (e.g., self-mutilation; suicide)	11	(5)
His or her own property or significant other(s)	1	(<1)

---

---

Table 6-12-- By whom subjects indicated threats would be executed

---

Executor	N	(%)
The subject or an agent of the subject	34	(16)
An unspecified or vaguely identified party (including "persons around you")	12	(6)
God	7	(3)
A stereotypic or named group, or a class of people	0	(0)

---

---

**Table 6-13-- Assassination and death threats**

---

Target	N	(%)
The celebrity	9	(4)
Someone around the celebrity	2	(1)
Another public figure	3	(1)
Himself or herself	8	(4)
Other	2	(1)

---

Table 6-14-- Actions threatened

---

Action	N	(%)
Kill someone	11	(5)
Harm someone sexually	6	(3)
Injure someone physically in other ways	8	(4)
Stalk, haunt, or hunt someone	4	(2)
Harm someone's career	6	(3)
Harm a business	4	(2)
Commit arson	1	(<1)
Commit suicide	4	(2)
Otherwise damage or steal possessions	1	(<1)
Tamper with a consumer product	0	
Kidnap someone	2	(1)
Do something undesirable but unspecified	9	(4)

---

## CHAPTER 7

### APPROACHES TOWARD CELEBRITIES

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover . . .  
I am determined to prove a villain.

--Shakespeare, King Richard III

A fundamental concern of public figures and of those associated with them is the prospect that subjects who are inappropriately interested in them will go beyond letters, telegrams, gifts, and telephone calls to actions that are more unpleasant, harassing, disruptive, frightening, destructive, or violent. As described in Chapter 1, these actions take many forms, including those resulting in financial losses, terrifying incidents, personal injury, and death. From the standpoint of the public figure, of course, the most problematic are those with a potential for personal injury.

To cause personal injury from a distance greater than a mile or so requires the use of weapons that can be shipped (e.g., explosives, booby trap devices, poisons, or pathogenic microorganisms) or devices outside the grasp of solitary individuals (such as hijacked aircraft or ballistic missiles). Thus, setting aside these rare or unlikely means of attack, physical proximity is a precondition to the most serious attacks. A fundamental premise of this project is that attacks are too rare to predict statistically, leading us to focus on approach behavior as a precondition to attacks. To the extent that approaches by letter writers

can be predicted, it becomes possible to identify the high-risk group of letter writers, namely those predicted to approach. We therefore devoted particular attention to the subjects' patterns of travel, stalking, and physical approaches toward the celebrities.

#### APPEARANCE AND MOVEMENTS OF SUBJECTS

Those protecting public figures require intelligence concerning the subjects believed to pose a risk to their protectees, and among the most important facts for them to know are the subjects' identity, appearance, and location. As noted in Chapter 5, 95 percent of the subjects volunteered some identifying information in their first known mailing, most often both a full name and home address. But because location is so quickly changeable for most subjects, it is also important to know subjects' mobility and travels, particularly when they are stalking the public figure. We observed that many subjects wrote about their appearance, travels, and even stalking, but there was no way to know in advance whether their self-report was honest.

We therefore collected data on these variables in two ways: information in letters (e.g., self-reported, postmarks, return address, or information contained in enclosures) and information from all other sources (the fruits of investigation). In the following section, we

compare the distribution of variables according to these two sources of information. By collecting information from both sources, we were able to assess the degree to which subjects volunteered valid information.

### Appearance

Coders noted whether any of seven features of physical appearance were reported by the subjects or otherwise known. As shown in Table 7-1, about one-fifth of the subjects did report on each aspect of appearance studied. For each appearance variable studied, investigative sources added information for subjects who had not volunteered the information. In particular, investigative sources provided added information with respect to those aspects of appearance routinely recorded on driver licenses. Importantly, to the extent it could be verified, the information that subjects volunteered was valid.

### Mobility and Movements

By definition, encounters with public figures require that the subject and the public figure be in the same location at the same time. This may occur through preexisting physical proximity, travel by the public figure, or travel by the subject. It is therefore important to know about subjects' mobility and travels.

At the time of our data collection, nine percent of the subjects were incapacitated through confinement: five

percent in prisons, four percent in mental hospitals. None was known to be physically incapacitated. The non-incarcerated subjects included some who were highly mobile. Indeed, eleven percent of the subjects reported having moved their residence in order to be in closer proximity to the celebrity. Investigative sources brought the number of subjects who had so moved to 31 (14 percent). Most of these individuals moved to temporary lodging or a new permanent residence in the city where the celebrity was believed to live, and with a few exceptions, these beliefs were correct. (The exceptions were those who moved to a city mistakenly believed to be the celebrity's home, usually a former residence of the celebrity.) Table 7-2 shows all of the lodgings of those who moved their residence to be in closer proximity to the celebrity, including the smaller numbers who rented or bought property, camped out, or lived in their cars.

Likewise, investigative files offered more complete information than subjects' letters on their known methods of travel. For example, 28 mentioned that they drove a car, van, or truck, but 40 were known from investigative sources to do so. Where subjects volunteered that they drove, this information was valid to the extent that it could be verified. According to investigative sources, 11 traveled by plane, seven by walking long distances, six by

hitchhiking, five by local public transportation, four by motorcycle, four by long-distance bus, three by train, three by boat, one by bicycle, and one in a stolen vehicle. Table 7-3 gives the subjects' known methods of travel, as ascertained from their letters and from all sources combined.

Subjects wrote about a great deal of travel. One hundred thirty-six subjects (65 percent) mentioned no travel in their letters; investigative sources indicated that six of these subjects did travel. (Some subjects were able to approach the celebrity without traveling because they lived in the same city or made an approach when the celebrity had traveled to their home town.) Forty-one subjects (20 percent) mentioned one trip, seven (three percent) mentioned two, and 24 (12 percent) mentioned three or more. Investigative sources added information about only a few additional trips. Table 7-4 gives the number of trips known for subjects, as ascertained from their letters and from all sources combined.

Eight subjects reported having traveled without a clear destination, and a ninth was known to have done so from investigative sources. Table 7-5 shows the greatest distance the subjects were known to have traveled in pursuit of the celebrity. Note that at least 46 had traveled across more than one state in pursuit of the celebrity, including

seven who had traveled to foreign countries to pursue the celebrity. Seventeen volunteered that they had traveled to "stalk" the celebrity, and four others were known to have done so through the fruits of investigation.

We developed the concept of a "delusional search" to refer to any travel in search of the public figure that is motivated by the subject's delusional belief that the public figure may be there, when there is no rational basis for the belief. In such cases, the subject's travel destinations are consistent with the delusion, rather than with reality. Six subjects (three percent) were known to have engaged in a delusional search for the celebrity. Investigative sources did not identify additional cases of delusional searching.

#### Methodical Stalking and Ruses

We were able to identify 29 subjects (14 percent of all subjects and 27 percent of subjects who approached) who had gone beyond traveling to meet the celebrity to behaviors that we would regard as methodical stalking of the celebrity, including surveillance of the celebrity's movements from a vehicle, traveling from city to city tracking the celebrity, lying in wait at locations where the celebrity was expected, and determining the celebrity's daily routine or schedule for the purpose of stalking or approaching. The distribution of these types of methodical stalking is shown in Table 7-6, which also shows that seven

of the methodical stalkers (24 percent) were identified as such only from investigative sources. Thus, while there are subjects who volunteer information on their stalking in letters, there are others whose embarkation on this ominous path is identified only through investigation.

Four of the methodical stalkers (14 percent) were known to have stalked not only the celebrity, but also second targets (two reported in letters; two more learned through investigation) and third targets (one learned only through investigation). Where there was a second or third target, that person was either someone close to the celebrity or another public figure.

Just as methodical stalking implies a degree of skill and dedication to the task that is at least unsettling to victims and at most a necessary condition to assassination (as in the cases of John Hinckley, Mark Chapman, and Arthur Jackson), subjects who used sophisticated techniques to locate, obtain information about, or get near their targets set themselves apart from their many fellow subjects. Ten subjects (five percent) volunteered that they had used a pretext, ruse, disguise, or similar techniques for these purposes, and four additional cases were identified through investigation, bringing the total to seven percent of the entire sample or 13 percent of the approach-positives. Two examples from the de Becker archives are:

A man obtained access to the homes of a famous actor, a talk-show host, and other public figures using the pretext of delivering a singing telegram from another well-known actor with whom he was obsessed. Following his appearance at one home, he was arrested for causing a disturbance at the office of the actor with whom he was obsessed.

\* \* \*

A subject with "romantic interests" in a female celebrity posed as a pizza delivery man in order to gain access to the celebrity. He later sent a letter apologizing for his behavior.

#### INTERVENTIONS

An effort was made to collect data on interventions used to manage these cases. These data were incomplete but showed that six subjects had been arrested and two had been civilly committed. In six cases it was known that subjects' therapists had been contacted. Three subjects were given warnings under California Penal Code Section 602. In none of the cases in the statistical sample was injunctive relief obtained (such as a restraining order), but restraining orders had been obtained against other subjects in the sampling universe.

#### Others' Awareness of the Subject's Interest in the Celebrity

Given that notification of the intended victim is among the intervention options for those who become aware of subjects such as these, we sought evidence of whether others were aware of the subject's interest in the celebrity (not including security personnel). Sixty-three subjects volunteered information on whether anyone else was aware of

their interest in the celebrity. Of these, five (eight percent) stated that no one else was aware of their interest, and 58 (92 percent) indicated that someone else was aware. In descending order of frequency, those mentioned as being aware of this interest were: family members (28); friends (27); mental health personnel (seven); law enforcement personnel (seven); co-workers, employers, or boss (five); clergy (two); and others (eleven).

#### APPROACHES

The proportion of all letter-writing subjects in the Gavin de Becker archives who were known to have approached the celebrity was 12 percent. As explained in Chapter 3, however, the selection of the statistical sample was such that 50 percent of the subjects in that sample were subjects who had approached. The description provided here of approach-positive subjects is based on the 107 such subjects in the statistical sample, who are a representative sample of all letter writers who were known to have approached.

#### Definition

An "approach positive" case was defined as one in which a subject

is known to have (1) personally gone to a location believed to be the home of the celebrity, (2) personally gone to any agency believed to represent the celebrity (including business agents, personal agents, employers or employees of

the celebrity), (3) personally gone to a location believed to be the home or business address of any acquaintance, friend, relative or intimate of the celebrity, (4) personally approached within five miles of any of the above locations with the expressed intent of seeing, visiting or confronting any of the above parties, (5) traveled more than 300 miles to see the celebrity or any of the above parties, even in a public appearance, or (6) behaved in any manner out of the ordinary at any public appearance of the celebrity.

We included the fifth criterion despite knowing that some ordinary fans travel more than 300 miles to see their favorite performers. Our reasoning was that anyone writing a letter odd enough to have been referred for assessment had differentiated himself or herself from the ordinary fan by writing the odd letter.

Some examples of behaviors that met this definition of approach are provided to illustrate the diversity of behaviors involved:

A subject who had been obsessed with a particular celebrity approached her three days after the murder of John Lennon. He leaped toward her carrying a record album, just as Chapman was reported to have done before shooting Lennon. Confronted by protective personnel, the subject stated that he knew where she lived. The celebrity drove away, and the subject showed up at her residence not long thereafter. Investigation revealed that the subject had recently left his job and lived in an apartment decorated with numerous photographs of the celebrity.

\* \* \*

A subject visited the home of a celebrity wearing a large Bowie knife on his belt and a t-shirt proclaiming his love for the star. Questioned at the gate, he reported having walked over 1,000 miles to see her. He was confronted by a law enforcement official, but not detained.

\* \* \*

Toward the end of a concert, a family reported to police that they had seen a man in their row stand up and reveal that he had a carbine wrapped in a cloth he had been holding in his lap. Investigation did not locate the weapon, but did determine that the man was "weird" and had rented a room across the street from the location of the concert.

\* \* \*

An astute member of a protective detail observed a bulge under the arm of a member of the audience who was wearing too heavy a coat for the weather. He consented to be searched and was found to be wearing a shoulder holster for a .38 caliber revolver. In the holster, however, was a tape recorder with which he had planned to secretly tape the concert.

Additional illustrations of approach behavior from this population are given in Chapter 1.

#### Number of Approaches

All subjects had been under investigation for at least six months at the time of data collection (to allow sufficient opportunity for an approach to be made). Of the 107 approach-positive cases, 71 made exactly one known approach, 16 made two, nine made three, eight made four, and three made five or more. Thus, 36 of the subjects (33.6 percent) who made at least one known approach were known to have approached at least once again.

The following description of approaches is based on the first known approach for each subject to simplify presentation of our findings. In comparing first and subsequent approaches, we found no significant differences

in the distributions of any of the variables reported below. By presenting data on only the first known approach for each subject, we avoid the problem of interpreting grouped data in which some subjects are represented more than once.

#### Setting of Approach

The most common sites for the first known approach were the home of the celebrity (45, or 42 percent), an agency representing the celebrity (15, or 14 percent), a public appearance of the celebrity where the subject behaved inappropriately (12, or 11 percent), and a business owned or operated by the celebrity (11, or 10 percent). The remainder of the approaches were toward the celebrity in other public settings (9), toward significant others or agents of the celebrity (3), at a place where the celebrity was temporarily staying (1), at a home believed incorrectly to be that of the celebrity (1), at an agency believed incorrectly to represent the celebrity (1), at a location incorrectly believed to be the venue of a public performance (1), and various other settings.

Forty-one (49 percent) of the approaches were indoors, 36 (43 percent) outdoors, five (six percent indoors and outdoors), and two (two percent) in vehicles. Of 26 cases in which lighting condition was known, eight (31 percent) were in poorly lit or dark circumstances.

Of 63 approaches in which the number of others present was known, 16 (25 percent) occurred in the presence of a crowd, 18 (29 percent) occurred in the presence of 10 or more people or in the midst of pedestrians or shoppers, four (six percent) in the midst of two to five others, 20 (32 percent) in the presence of only one other person, and five (eight percent) when no one appeared to be present (these approaches were captured on remote television monitors or when the subject hand-delivered an item).

In 21 instances, the celebrity was present at the time the subject approached. In 14 of these, the subject was in a crowd or audience. One approach was in the midst of street traffic, and in one only one person was present other than the subject and the celebrity. In five cases, the number of others present was unknown. In no instance was the celebrity alone when first approached. Table 7-7 shows who was present at the time of the approach.

#### Timing of Approach

The date of approach was known in 68 instances. The only noticeable deviation from a chance distribution by day of the week was that only three (four percent) of the approaches occurred on Thursdays, while 13-19 percent of the approaches occurred on each other day of the week. The time of day was known for only 19 cases, among which one was between 6:00 a.m. and noon, 13 (68 percent) between noon and

6:00 p.m., five between 6:00 p.m. and midnight, and none between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

#### Distance Traveled to Approach

Of 94 persons for whom the distance traveled for the approach was known, 42 (45 percent) traveled within the city, 14 (15 percent) from outside the city but within the state, 27 (29 percent) between states but less than 2,000 miles, and 11 (12 percent) more than 2,000 miles. Table 7-8 shows the means by which the subjects traveled to their approaches, both for any long-distance segment of their trip and for the proximal stage of their approach.

#### Behavior During Approach

Of 78 persons for whom this information was available, 69 (88 percent) of the subjects arrived alone, eight (10 percent) with a compatriot, and one (one percent) with an organized group. Of 33 people whose appearance at the time of the approach was known, 23 (70 percent) were normally groomed and dressed, five (15 percent) were sloppy looking, two (six percent) were filthy and in rags, and three (nine percent) were meticulously dressed.

Of 46 persons for whom this information was known, 26 (57 percent) behaved in an odd or unusual manner, 16 (35 percent) behaved normally, and four (nine percent) were incoherent or disorganized. Investigative information recorded on 56 cases suggested that 16 (29 percent) were

definitely psychotic at the time of the approach, 12 (21 percent) were probably psychotic, and 28 (50 percent) were not apparently psychotic.

#### Crimes During Approach

The only crimes known to have been committed in the course of the 107 first approaches of subjects in the statistical sample were 15 trespassing incidents (eight at the celebrity's home and the remainder at other locations), one verbal assault against a significant other of the celebrity, one disorderly conduct in the presence of a significant other of the celebrity, and one theft of an item of no value. Two subjects were known to have possessed knives at the time of their approach, but none in the sample was confirmed as having a firearm, though other cases in the sampling universe carried firearms.

During their approaches, five subjects used cons or ruses in an attempt to gain access to the celebrity, two were known to have approached stealthily, and none entered a building by force. In three cases the subject had made an effort to determine the celebrity's time schedule to facilitate an approach.

#### Interaction with Others During Approach

Of 90 people for whom disposition was known, 50 (56 percent) left of their own accord, 20 (22 percent) were turned away by security personnel, 10 (11 percent) were

turned away by persons other than security personnel, six (seven percent) were invited in and befriended by unsuspecting third parties, and four (four percent) encountered some police involvement. Of 71 subjects whose response to these interventions was known, one made a verbal threat, one tried to negotiate his way in despite being told to leave, and none begged, refused to leave, or used physical force.

#### Age at Approach

The age at the time of a subjects' first known approach was studied as a measure of the age distribution of approachers. This age ranged from 12 to 49. Of course, subjects who make multiple approaches may do so at various ages, and some cases in the sampling universe had approached many times over the course of years. The age distribution is shown in Table 7-9. The fact that the mean age at time of first approach (29; S.D. = 7.7) is lower than that of the sample as a whole reflects the differences in the measurement of these two variables. Known approaches always preceded inclusion of those data in the study, and subject age was calculated as of the time of data collection.

The age groups most often represented among subjects at the time of their approach are ages 20-24, 25-29, and 30-34. From the available data, however, it is not possible to determine whether this reflects a higher rate of approach

behavior than found among other age groups of subjects writing to celebrities.

#### SUMMARY

With certain rare exceptions, physical proximity is a necessary condition to physical violence. A fundamental tenet of the present research is that the development of a behavioral science capacity to predict inappropriate approaches to public figures-- that is, to identify which subjects will pursue a face-to-face encounter-- would be an important step toward the prevention of assassinations and other attacks on public figures. The necessity for this step springs from the statistical impossibility of predicting events as rare as assassination per se. Whether the approaches can be predicted is examined in subsequent chapters. In this chapter we explored the availability of information on subjects that would help identify them and track their movements. We also presented descriptive data on the approaches made by subjects.

To a limited degree, we were able to examine whether the information volunteered by subjects was valid. Where independent sources of information were available regarding such objective facts as the subjects' appearance and travels, they generally corroborated the subjects' self reports. It was rare to find that a subject had provided

misleading information. Although a great deal of what the subjects report about their subjective perceptions has no basis in reality, we have no reason to believe that most subjects report anything other than the truth as they believe it to be.

Important empirical observations reported in this chapter are:

(1) About 20 percent of subjects volunteered information in their letters about each of the following elements of their physical descriptions: height, weight, hair color, hair style, facial hair, eye color, and personal hygiene and grooming.

(2) Investigative sources approximately doubled the number of cases on which information was obtained regarding height, weight, hair color, and eye color (information recorded on drivers licenses), but added information about hair style, facial hair, and personal hygiene and grooming for only about eight percent of the subjects.

(3) Nine percent of the subjects were incapacitated through confinement: five percent in prisons, four percent in mental hospitals. Ninety-one percent of the subjects were free and at large.

(4) Fourteen percent of the subjects had moved their residences in order to be closer to the celebrity to whom they had written. (In a few cases, the subjects moved to

the wrong city, usually one where the celebrity had resided previously.)

(5) Less than one third of the subjects volunteered information on the means of transportation they used. Among these, however, there were subjects who reported nearly every form of transportation, from hiking, hitchhiking, and bicycling to boats, trains, planes, and every kind of motor vehicle.

(6) Thirty-five percent of subjects wrote about particular trips they had taken. Forty-three percent of those who mentioned travelling mentioned two or more trips. Most of the trips about which they wrote were in pursuit of the celebrity.

(7) At least 43 percent of the approach-positive subjects had traveled across more than one state in pursuit of the celebrity, including seven who had traveled to foreign countries to pursue the celebrity.

(8) At least 20 percent of the approach-positive cases had specifically set out to "stalk" the celebrity.

(9) At least 3 percent of the subjects had conducted a delusional search for the celebrity, traveling to locations where-- according to their delusions-- the celebrity would be found, but which were not true locations of the celebrity.

(10) At least 27 percent of the subjects who approached the celebrity had engaged in such methodical stalking

behaviors as surveillance of the celebrity's movements from a vehicle, traveling from city to city tracking the celebrity, lying in wait at locations where the celebrity was expected, and determining the celebrity's daily routine or schedule for the purpose of stalking or approaching. Although 76 percent of the methodical stalkers volunteered this information in their letters, 24 percent were identified as methodical stalkers only through investigative efforts.

(11) Among the methodical stalkers, 14 percent had stalked at least one person other than the celebrity, either someone close to the celebrity or another public figure.

(12) At least 13 percent of subjects who approached had used a pretext, ruse, disguise, or similar techniques to locate, obtain information about, or get near their targets.

(13) The data available did not permit valid measurement of the frequency with which various interventions had been employed, but the sample included subjects who had been arrested, civilly committed, and issued warnings under California Penal Code Section 602 and subjects whose therapists had been contacted.

(14) Twenty-seven percent of the subjects volunteered the information that someone else was aware of their interest in the celebrity, most often the subject's family members and friends, but sometimes mental health or law

enforcement personnel, co-workers, employers, supervisors, clergy, and others.

(15) Twelve percent of letter-writing subjects in the Gavin de Becker archives approached the public figures to whom they wrote.

(16) One-third of the approach-positive cases approached two or more times.

(17) The most common sites at which subjects approached were the celebrities' homes (42 percent), agencies (14 percent), public appearances (11 percent), and businesses (10 percent). Smaller proportions of subjects approached a variety of other locations where the celebrity happened to be or was thought to frequent.

(18) Sixty percent of the approaches occurred when there were two or more other people present, and 32 percent occurred in the presence of only one other person.

(19) The celebrity was present at the time of 20 percent of the approaches, but was not alone with the subject in any of the cases studied.

(20) Among cases where this information was available, 88 percent of the subjects arrived alone at the time of the approach, but 10 percent arrived with a compatriot.

(21) Physical appearance at the time of the approach was known only 33 subjects, but among these 79 percent were normally or meticulously dressed; 21 percent were visibly sloppy or disheveled.

(22) Normality of outward behavior at the time of the approach was known for only 46 subjects, but among these 35 percent behaved normally and 65 percent behaved oddly or were recognizably disorganized or incoherent. Investigative information recorded on 56 cases suggested that half of the subjects were recognizably psychotic at the time of the approach.

(23) The chargeable crimes committed during the approaches studied were generally those treated by the criminal justice system as minor offenses, such as trespassing, disorderly conduct, verbal assault, or theft. Although a few subjects carried weapons, none of those in the statistical sample succeeded in harming the celebrity. (This cannot be taken as indicative of the subjects' dangerousness because the celebrities whose cases were studied have the best possible security services, which in a number of instances prevented tragic outcomes.)

(24) At the time of the first known approach, subjects ranged in age from 12 to 49, with a mean of 29 years. Two-thirds of the subjects were between 20 and 34 years old at the time of their first known approach.

In the next chapter, we compare subjects who approached the celebrity with those who did not.

Table 7-1-- Sources of information on subjects' appearance

Type of information	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Height	37	(17)	99	(46)
Weight	49	(23)	104	(49)
Hair color	53	(25)	112	(52)
Hair style	52	(24)	70	(33)
Facial hair	63	(29)	80	(37)
Eye color	37	(17)	93	(43)
Personal hygiene and grooming	48	(22)	65	(30)

---

Table 7-2-- Subjects' moving their residence to be in closer proximity to the celebrity

---

Type of information	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Moving his/her residence closer to the celebrity	24	(11)	31	(14)
Transient lodging	12	(6)	14	(7)
Moved to the same city	11	(5)	14	(7)
Rented or bought property	2	(1)	5	(2)
Camping out	1	(<1)	2	(1)
Lives in car	1	(<1)	1	(<1)

---

Table 7-3-- Subjects' known methods of travel

Method of travel	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Drives a car, van, or truck	28	(14)	40	(20)
Motorcycle	3	(1)	4	(2)
Bicycle	1	(<1)	1	(<1)
Long-distance bus	1	(<1)	4	(2)
Airplane	11	(5)	11	(5)
Train	3	(1)	3	(1)
Boat	3	(1)	3	(1)
Walking long distance	6	(3)	7	(3)
Hitchhiking	5	(2)	6	(3)
Stolen vehicle	0		1	(<1)
Local public transportation	3	(1)	5	(2)
Other	3	(1)	3	(1)

Table 7-4-- Frequency with which subjects traveled

Frequency	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
No known travel	136	(65)	130	(62)
Only one (1) known trip	41	(20)	44	(21)
Two known trips	7	(3)	8	(4)
More than two known trips	24	(12)	27	(13)

Table 7-5-- Greatest distance the subject is known to have traveled in pursuit of the celebrity

Distance	From letters <u>alone</u>		From all <u>sources</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
No known travel	142	(70)	136	(66)
Local community only	7	(3)	7	(3)
Within 100 miles of home	9	(4)	9	(4)
Across more than one state	16	(8)	18	(9)
Extensive distances across least several states or cross-country	23	(11)	30	(15)
Out of the country	7	(3)	7	(3)

Table 7-6-- Methodical stalking of celebrities

Form of methodical stalking	From letters <u>alone</u>		From all <u>sources</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Any stalking	22	(10)	29	(14)
Methodical stalking behaviors				
Following the celebrity by vehicle within visual range	1	(<1)	1	(<1)
Following the celebrity's movements from city to city	4	(2)	4	(2)
Lying in wait where the celebrity was expected	12	(6)	18	(8)
Determining the celebrity's daily routine or schedule for purpose of stalking or approaching	1	(<1)	2	(1)

---

Table 7-7-- Persons present during approach incidents

---

Person	N (%)
Household or support staff	39 (51)
Protective detail (security)	36 (47)
The celebrity	21 (28)
Bystanders	21 (27)
Audience	15 (17)
Police	8 (10)
Members of celebrity's family	5 (7)

---

---

Table 7-8-- Means of travel used during approach incidents

---

Means of Travel	N	(%)
<b>Long distance</b>		
Drove	10	(14)
Bus	4	(6)
Airplane	4	(5)
Hitchhiked	2	(3)
Train	2	(3)
<b>Final approach</b>		
Car <sup>1</sup>	17	(44)
On foot	10	(28)
Local bus, subway, or trolley	8	(20)
Taxi	3	(8)
Hitchhiked	1	(3)
Motorcycle, bicycle	0	

---

<sup>1</sup> At least six of these cars were borrowed; none was known to have been stolen.

---

Table 7-9-- Subject age at time of  
first known approach (N = 59)

---

Age	N	(%)
<15	1	(2)
15-19	6	(10)
20-24	10	(17)
25-29	14	(24)
30-34	16	(27)
35-39	6	(10)
40-44	3	(5)
45-49	3	(5)

---

## CHAPTER 8

### WHICH SUBJECTS APPROACH CELEBRITIES?

In this chapter we take up the question of whether subjects who approached celebrities differed from those who did not, and, if so, in what ways they were different. To address this question, we compared the 107 approach-negative subjects with the 107 approach-positive subjects, using the statistical sample defined in Chapter 3 and described in the preceding chapters. The features on which the two groups were compared are the characteristics of subjects described in Chapter 4, the characteristics of their communications described in Chapters 5 and 6, and, to the extent it was not circular to do so, characteristics of the subjects or their communications that were described in Chapter 7.

For each comparison, we used the Chi-square test for discrete variables (or those which were grouped into discrete values) and the t-test for continuous variables. Wherever appropriate, we report values of Chi-square and probability, or the group means and standard deviation, the value of t, and the probability. As neither of these tests measures more than association or differences between mean values of two groups, we report the differences found as significant associations or differences, using a probability of .05 as the threshold for reportability. Considering the sample size and the number of comparisons made, however, we

recommend caution in interpreting associations or differences with probabilities between .01 and .05.

#### MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY

A significant association was observed between approach status and subjects' reporting having received any mental health treatment (either outpatient or inpatient). As shown in Table 8-1, subjects who reported either form of treatment were significantly less likely to have approached. Other aspects of subjects' reported mental health history were not associated with approach status, including a variable measuring whether the subject made any mention of suicide threats, suicide attempts, thoughts of suicide, or a history of physically self-damaging acts.

#### Signs and Symptoms of Mental Disorder

The only psychotic features that were associated with approach status were perseveration (see Table 8-2), poverty of content (see Table 8-3), and a variable that includes both of these (see Table 8-4). In each instance, subjects with the symptom were significantly less likely to have approached.

Approach status was not associated with the presence or absence of any of the specific types of delusions (as listed in Table 4-1); "any delusion"; any of the specific types of hallucinations (as listed in Table 4-2); "any

hallucination"; "any thought disorder"; or "any psychotic symptom."

Two nonpsychotic features were significantly associated with approach behavior. Subjects evidencing an excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness were significantly more likely to have approached (see Table 8-5). Subjects evidencing inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger were significantly less likely to have approached (see Table 8-6).

#### Diagnosis

Diagnoses of schizophrenia, mania, major depression, bipolar disorder, or schizoaffective disorder were not associated with approach status. Delusional disorder was too infrequent to be statistically associated with approach status, but is the only disorder for which it is the case that nearly all subjects with the disorder approached the celebrity: Of five subjects with this disorder, four approached. None of the personality disorder diagnoses was significantly associated with approach status.

### BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES

#### Intelligence

Ratings of the subject's apparent intelligence were significantly associated with approach status. As shown in Table 8-7, subjects whose IQ was rated as low were least

likely to have approached, while subjects whose IQ was rated as high were most likely to have approached.

#### Emotions Expressed

Only one of the expressed emotions was associated with approach status. Subjects rated as expressing happiness, contentment, joy, or seeming piece of mind were significantly more likely to have approached (see Table 8-8). Other expressed emotions were not associated with approach status, whether taken one at a time or as additive indices of conceptually related emotions. (Various efforts at factor analysis of the emotional variables failed to produce conceptually meaningful factors that were significantly associated with approach behavior.)

#### Stressful Life Events

The total number of stressful life events reported by subjects was significantly associated with approach status. Among subjects who approached, the mean number of stressful life events reported was 1.9 (S.D. = 4.5); among subjects who did not approach, the mean number reported was 0.9 (S.D. = 1.7). Thus, subjects reporting a higher number of stressful life events were significantly more likely to have approached ( $t = -2.2$ ;  $df = 136.7$ ;  $p < .03$ , two-tailed).

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic Information

Subjects who approached (mean age = 31.7; S.D. = 9.0) did not differ significantly in age from subjects who did not approach (mean age = 34.1; S.D. = 11.0) (using the best data available on age, whether from letters or investigative sources). Note, however, that these data reflect the subject's age at the time of data collection. Although age at the time of approach was known for many subjects (see Chapter 7), there was no appropriate age of comparison for the approach-negative subjects. Neither sex nor race was associated with approach status, but for these variables the data were too often missing to provide a valid indication of their possible association with approach status.

Family, Social, and Employment History

Most of the variables in this category were missing too often to justify a comparison by approach status, and none that could be studied was associated with approach status.

Delinquency and Criminal History

Neither the individual items of past antisocial behavior nor a measure of whether any such behaviors were reported, nor an additive index of the number of such behaviors reported was associated with approach status.

## VOLUME OF COMMUNICATIONS

Quantity

The mean number of words in the first communication, the mean number of words per sentence, and the mean number of pages in the first communication did not differ significantly between positives and negatives.

Number of Letters and Likelihood of Approach

The total number of approach-positive cases in the de Becker archives at the time of sampling was 231. Of these, 61 had never written, and 170 (74 percent) had sent a written communication to the celebrity, but not necessarily prior to an approach. Of the 170 who had written, at least 67 (39 percent) wrote prior to any approach, and as many as 103 (61 percent) approached before or at the same time as their first written communication. Thus, at least 39 percent of the subjects who approached gave advanced "written notice" of their interest in the celebrity, but large numbers of non-approaching subjects gave superficially similar "notice." At that time the archives contained written communications from 1,328 subjects who were not known to have approached (approach-negative cases).

All of the cases selected for study had been on file for at least six months, thereby permitting each subject the opportunity to approach and to write more than once. There were 170 approach-positive cases who had ever written to the

celebrity. Among these subjects, the mean number of written communications was 9.9 (S.D. = 22.0). Among a random sample of 170 approach-negative subjects who had ever written to the celebrity, the mean number of communications was 4.3 (S.D. = 14.1). The difference between these means was statistically significant ( $t = 2.80$ ,  $df = 338$ ;  $p < .005$ ). Thus, subjects who approached sent a significantly greater number of communications to the celebrity. Note, however, that these communications did not necessarily precede the first approach.

Despite the association between number of communications and approach status, there was no association between the total number of pieces of paper in the communications and approach status, even when those sending the most extreme amounts of material were removed from the analysis.

To further examine the relationship between the total number of written communications (ever) and the likelihood of approach (at any time in the sequence of letter writing), we estimated the probability of any approach for classes of persons who had written particular numbers of letters. These estimates were calculated from extrapolations based on measurements in a random sample of 100 approach-positive cases and 100 approach-negative cases. These data are given in Table 8-9. As shown there, the lowest rate of approach

(7.5 percent) was for those who had written only once. The rate is somewhat higher among those who wrote twice (12.5 percent), three or four times (17.5 percent), or five to nine times (15.8 percent). The peak rate of approach, however, was among those who had written ten to 14 times: 65 percent of such subjects had approached.

Note, however, that this rate is based on a relatively small sample of 23 cases. These data reflect the association between number of communications and approach behavior that was first described in Chapter 3. These data cannot be interpreted as showing the risk of future approach, because they are based on the total numbers of communications received before, during, or after approach by subjects in the sampling universe.

In order to explore the potential value of number of communications as a predictor of future approach behavior, we estimated the probability of a future approach among subjects who had written a particular number of communications to date. This was done in two ways, both of which relied on the following method. The probabilities were calculated by dividing the number of approach-positive subjects who had sent X or more communications before any approach by the total number of approach-positive and approach-negative cases who had sent X or more communications before any approach. (Here, too, estimates

were calculated using extrapolations from measurements made in a random sample of 100 approach-positive and 100 approach-negative cases.)

First, Table 8-10 gives the probabilities-- given a certain number of communications to date-- that the next event from the subject will be an approach, as opposed to another communication or nothing at all. As shown there, subjects who have at a given point in time sent only one communication (or who have already sent 25 or more communications) have a likelihood of only about three percent of an approach as their next move. In contrast, subjects who at a given point in time have written between ten and 14 communications have a likelihood of 33 percent of their next move being an approach. Here, too, the sample size is regrettably low (12 cases) for the sub-sample with 10-14 letters.

Second, Table 8-11 gives the probabilities that subjects who have written a particular number of communications to date will eventually approach. Here, the probabilities vary from 3.5 percent to 12.2 percent, and once again, the highest probability attaches to subjects from whom ten communications have been received at a given time.

Duration

Subjects who corresponded for longer than one year were significantly more likely to have approached than those who corresponded for less than one year (see Table 8-12).

## FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS

Identifying Information

Subjects who gave no address in their first known communication were significantly more likely to have approached the public figure (see Table 8-13). We tested whether this finding resulted from an association between traveling, on the one hand, and the lack of an address, on the other, and found no association between these variables.

There was no significant difference between positive and negative cases in the proportion who gave their full name or the proportion who provided some identifying information. Thus, completely anonymous letter writers were neither more nor less likely to make an approach than non-anonymous letter writers.

Addressees

There was no significant difference between the first letters of positives and negatives in the party to whom the envelope was addressed.

Geography

Those whose mailings came from multiple states, provinces, or countries were significantly more likely to

have approached than those whose mailings came from a single location. Forty-four percent of those with postmarks from a single state, province, or foreign country approached, and 66 percent of those with postmarks from two or more different states, provinces, or countries approached (see Table 8-14).

#### Means of Communication

Subjects who telephoned in addition to writing were significantly more likely to have approached the public figure (see Table 8-15).

#### Paper, Ink, and Handwriting

The type of paper used by subjects for their first written communications was significantly associated with approach status. As shown in Table 8-16, subjects who wrote on tablet-like paper (either plain or lined) were significantly less likely to have approached than those who wrote on any other type of paper (which included quality stationery, postcards, preprinted greeting cards, inappropriate stationery or paper, a combination of various papers, a photocopy, or other kinds of paper).

The first letters of positives and negatives did not differ significantly in the use of handwriting vs. printing vs. typing vs. other forms of text; color of ink, pencil, or typewriting used; or changes in handwriting within the letter.

### Propriety

There were no significant differences between the first letters of positives and negatives in the use of inappropriate vs. appropriate greetings; the use of inappropriate vs. appropriate means of addressing the celebrity; the use of inappropriate vs. appropriate closings; or politeness.

### Appearance and Format

We compared positive and negative cases on a series of variables designed to measure the occurrence of particular types of idiosyncratic writing or disorganization in the appearance of their letters. We found no significant differences on any of these variables. There was a nonsignificant trend toward more idiosyncrasies among the negatives than among the positives on spelling, punctuation, and bizarre formation of individual characters, but positives tended to make excessive revisions somewhat more often. No differences were observed regarding evidence of efforts to disguise handwriting; the slope of lines of text; the position of text on the page; evidence of poor planning of space on the paper; the use of postscripts; ratings of overall disorganization; or changes in handwriting over time.

### Enclosures

Subjects who enclosed commercial pictures (including drawings, stickers, and seals) were significantly less

likely to have approached than those who did not enclose such materials (see Table 8-17). There was no significant difference between positives and negatives in the proportion who enclosed their own creative products, photographs of themselves, media clippings and photographs, valuables and commercial materials, other business-like enclosures, religious or mystical materials, bizarre materials, or any enclosures. Findings concerning enclosures within the first mailing were similar to those for enclosures at any time.

#### SUBJECTS' PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CELEBRITY

##### Roles

Neither any of the particular roles reported in Chapter 6 nor changes in roles over time was significantly associated with approach status.

##### Patronage

The measurement of the level of patronage was confounded with the measurement of approach status, since traveling to see the celebrity was among the criteria for assessing moderate or maximal patronage.

##### Idolatry

Whether the subject idolized the celebrity was not associated with approach status.

## THEMATIC CONTENT

Mention of Particular Themes

No significant difference was observed between negatives and positives in whether any political theme or party was mentioned.

Repetitive Themes, Preoccupations, Overvalued Ideas, and Obsessions

Only two of the repeatedly mentioned themes listed in Chapter 6 were associated with approach status. As shown in Table 8-18, subjects who repeatedly mentioned public figures other than the celebrity were significantly less likely to have approached the celebrity. In contrast, as shown in Table 8-19, subjects who repeatedly mentioned entertainment products were significantly more likely to have approached the celebrity. Even when repeatedly mentioned themes or obsessions were combined to examine preoccupation or obsession with anything related to celebrities or the entertainment industry, any celebrity or public figure, any preoccupation, or any obsession, no other significant difference was found. None of the preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions was significantly associated with approach status.

Degree of Insistence

None of the measures of insistence reported in Chapter 6 was significantly associated with an approach, either alone or when combined in an additive index.

### Wants and Desires

Among the desires expressed by subjects in their first letters, two were significantly associated with approach status. Table 8-20 shows that subjects who expressed a desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity were significantly less likely to have approached. (Note, however, that this category is made up more of subjects who were obscene letter writers, dealt with further below, than of subjects who were deluded about having an intimate relationship with the celebrity). Table 8-21 shows that subjects who expressed a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity were significantly more likely to have approached.

No significant differences were observed between negatives and positives in their requests for a response by mail or telephone or for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition. A nonsignificant trend was observed for those who asked to get information to someone to be less likely to have approached.

### Emotional Provocation

Of the seven types of emotional provocation studied, only one was associated with approach status. As shown in Table 8-22, subjects who attempted to instill shame in the celebrity were significantly less likely to have approached the celebrity.

### Cryptic Content

There was a nonsignificant trend for the negatives to more often use symbolism or esoteric references, e.g., references to particular products of the celebrity, religion, the occult, mythology, numerology, or astrology. The use of cryptic symbolism was statistically independent of approach status.

### Sexual Content

A significant association was observed between the subject indicating a sexual interest (as opposed to romantic interest) in the celebrity and approach status. As shown in Table 8-23, subjects who indicated a sexual interest in the celebrity were less likely to have approached. Likewise, as shown in Table 8-24, subjects who mentioned any sexual activity, including deviant forms, were significantly less likely to have approached.

### Threatening Content

Forty-nine of the subjects made at least one threat. Of 107 approach-negative cases, 24 (22 percent) made a threat; of 107 approach-positive cases, 25 (23 percent) made a threat. Thus, there was no association between making any threat and making an approach. Moreover, there was no significant difference in the mean number of threats between approach-negative threateners and approach-positive threateners. Among the aspects of threats examined in

relation to approach status were the means by which the threat was conveyed, whether the threat was anonymous or not, the person or property against which the threat was directed, the nature of the threatened harm, whether the subject made direct, veiled, or conditional threats, the logical structure of the threat, the nature of any demands made for conditional threats, the person or force that was to carry out the threat, whether the locus of control was internal or external, evidence of a plan, means, or opportunity to carry out the threat, or scores on the credibility scale. None of these variables had a significant zero-order (bivariate) association with making an approach when studied in the sample as a whole or when studied among those who made a threat.

#### Announcements of Events Concerning the Celebrity

Subjects who announced a specific location where something would happen with respect to the celebrity were significantly more likely to have approached (see Table 8-25). Likewise, subjects who announced a specific time when something would happen with respect to the celebrity were significantly more likely to have approached (see Table 8-26). These items were used to create a variable examining which subjects announced both a specific location and a specific time. As shown in Table 8-27, subjects who had announced both a location and a time were significantly more likely to have approached.

### Weapons

Only 13 subjects mentioned any weapon. This was too small a proportion of the sample to permit detection of statistical significance, however, nine of the 13 people who mentioned a weapon approached, and four did not.

## APPEARANCE AND MOVEMENTS OF SUBJECTS

### Appearance

Neither the variables related to the subjects' appearance nor the amount of information subjects volunteered about their appearance was significantly associated with approach status.

### Mobility and Movements

A significant association was observed between approach status and whether the subject mentioned having a vehicle (car, van, truck, or motorcycle) in any communication. Table 8-28 shows that subjects who mentioned having a vehicle were significantly more likely to have approached.

As expected, various measures of mobility and movement were highly associated with approach status. These measures are confounded with approaches, for many approaches require travel. To illustrate the degree of association, a few of these variables and their relationship to approach status are reported here. Table 8-29 shows that the frequency with which subjects were known to travel was significantly

associated with approach status, and Table 8-30 shows that the mention in the first known communication of traveling to see the celebrity was highly associated with approach status.

#### Others' Awareness of the Subject's Focus on the Celebrity

There was no association between others' awareness of the subject's focus on the celebrity and approach status.

#### ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Although we did not specifically attempt to classify letters as to whether they were "obscene letters" or "hate mail," we have noted that both public figures and some security personnel use these phrases to dismiss certain classes of communications that they seem to think are harmless. Because of the common use of these concepts, we tried to operationalize them from the data base that we collected and to determine whether they were associated with approach.

#### Hate Mail

Subjects who expressed angry, hateful emotions (hate, aggression, malice, condemnation, punitiveness, revenge-seeking, or inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger) and who either made a threat or attempted to frighten or shame the recipient were classified as hate-mail writers. This variable was significantly associated with approach

status. Hate-mail writers were significantly less likely to have approached the celebrity than subjects who were not hate-mail writers (see Table 8-31).

#### Obscene Letters

Subjects who were vulgar, obscene, or lewd in their first communication were classified as obscene-letter writers. This variable was significantly associated with approach status. Obscene-letter writers were significantly less likely to have approached the celebrity than subjects who were not obscene-letter writers (see Table 8-32).

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter, we compared 107 subjects who pursued a face-to-face encounter with the entertainment celebrity to whom they had written and 107 subjects who did not pursue an encounter. We found significant differences between the two groups in many areas of history, functioning, and behavior: mental health history, symptoms, intelligence, emotional expression, stressful life events, volume and duration of communications, whether the subject provides identifying information, geography of postmarks on letters, means of communication used, type of paper used, enclosures, repeatedly mentioned themes, expressed desires, emotional provocation, sexual content of letters, announcements, mobility, sending hate mail, and sending obscene mail.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 15, we consider the data in Tables 8-10 and 8-11 important in helping to refine estimates of the base rate of approach behavior in this population. A major failing of much of the predictive literature concerning violence has been the ignoring of base rate information, in part because such information is rarely available. Armed with information about the base rate-- and even a tool to help refine base rate estimates at various points in time-- efforts can be directed toward predicting deviations from the base rate, both higher expected rates and lower expected rates.

Note that none of the well-documented predictors of future violence (chiefly demographic characteristics and history of past antisocial behavior) was found to be significantly associated with approach behavior. It is possible that this is merely because these were the two areas with the most incomplete data and that if complete data were available, these factors would have been associated with approach status, but we have no way to evaluate this possibility. Thus, we cannot say whether approach behavior is associated with traditional predictors of violence.

Mental health professionals may be surprised to find that there were no associations between particular diagnoses and approach behavior. Despite the obvious centrality of

mental disorder to the behavior studied here, the fact emerges that it is not which disorders subjects have that determines their pursuit of celebrities. Rather, it is the interaction between mental disorder and other individual and situational factors that determines which subjects pursue an encounter. This is consistent with a growing body of clinical research that fails to show consistent associations between particular psychotic diagnoses, on the one hand, and particular antisocial acts, on the other.

Theories of the "suicidal" course of assassins are called into question by our observation that there was no association between suicidal behaviors and approach behavior. Note, however, that it remains possible that suicidality is an important discriminator between those approach-positive subjects who do and do not commit violent attacks at the time of the approach.

Some members of the Project Advisory Board with years of experience in the assessment of cases such as those we studied held strong convictions about the predictive value of certain features, such as particular diagnoses, the degree of insistence of letters, particular physical characteristics of subjects (overweight, blue-eyed blonds with receding hairlines), and threatening statements. These particular convictions all proved false, as none of these features was associated with whether subjects approached.

Here, too, however, it remains possible that one or more of these variables would be associated with violence within the subgroup of subjects who do approach.

The most important of the negative findings is the lack of association between verbal threats and approach behavior. This finding held true through many attempts to disprove it by testing every aspect of threatening statements for which we could create a measure. This finding contradicts a vast body of assumptions that each day is relied on in judging whether harassing communications warrant concern, notification of the police, security precautions, or investigation. With respect to inappropriate communications to entertainment celebrities, the presence or absence of a threat in the communications is no indication whatsoever of whether a subject is going to pursue an encounter. Those who rely on the presence or absence of threats in making judgments about what to do are making a serious mistake. Unfortunately, this error is codified in the criminal law, which recognizes various types of verbal threats as unlawful but does not accord equal recognition to harassment without threats, even though the latter often poses an equal or greater danger of harm to persons or property.

It is unnecessary to review here each of the specific differences found between approach-negative and approach-positive subjects because we will have occasion to do so in

great detail in Chapter 14, where we examine the risk factors for approach behavior and develop scales for predicting approaches. Before doing so, however, we turn to the results of the study of the Capitol Police archives.

---

Table 8-1-- Self-reported mental health treatment (either outpatient treatment or psychiatric hospitalization)

---

Reports any psychiatric treatment	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	29	(27)	12	(11)	7.72
No	78	(73)	95	(89)	p = .005

---



---

Table 8-2-- Perseveration

---

Perseveration	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	28	(26)	13	(12)	5.91
No	79	(74)	94	(89)	p < .015

---



---

Table 8-3-- Poverty of content

---

Poverty of content	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	28	(26)	14	(13)	4.86
No	79	(74)	92	(87)	p < .028

---

Table 8-4-- Schizophreniform thought disorder (poverty of content, perseveration, and/or neologisms)

Schizophreniform thought disorder	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	41 (38)	21 (20)	8.20
No	66 (62)	86 (80)	p = .004

Table 8-5-- Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness

Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	39 (36)	56 (52)	4.85
No	68 (64)	51 (48)	p < .03

Table 8-6--Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger

Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	17 (16)	6 (5)	4.87
No	90 (84)	101 (94)	p < .03

Table 8-7-- IQ

Estimated IQ	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Low IQ	21 (20)	7 (6)	8.38
Neither low nor high	74 (69)	83 (78)	p = .015
High IQ	12 (11)	17 (16)	

Table 8-8-- Expression of happiness, contentment, joy, or seeming piece of mind

Expressed happiness, contentment, etc.	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
No	79 (74)	66 (62)	9.21
Some evidence	24 (22)	24 (22)	p = .01
Clearly evident	4 (4)	17 (16)	

Table 8-9-- Probabilities of any approach based on number of communications ever received

Number communications	Number persons	Number who approached	Probability of approach	95% Confidence interval*
1	997	75	.075	.059 - .091
2	152	19	.125	.072 - .176
3 - 4	114	20	.175	.105 - .245
5 - 9	120	19	.158	.093 - .223
10 - 14	23	15	.652	.427 - .836
15 - 24	20	4	.200	.057 - .437
25 or more	73	18	.247	.153 - .361

\* Based on the normal approximation to the binomial distribution where  $N > 100$ ; based on scientific tables where  $N < 100$ .

Table 8-10-- Probabilities of a future approach by persons who have written exactly X number of communications received prior to any approach and who will not write again before that approach (i.e., the probability that the subject will approach before writing again vs. neither write again nor approach)

Number communications	Number persons	Number who approach	Probability of approach	95% confidence interval
1	954	32	.034	.022 - .046
2	140	7	.050	.014 - .086
3 - 4	107	5	.047	.007 - .087
5 - 9	114	12	.105	.049 - .161
10 - 14	12	4	.333	.099 - .661
15 - 24	21	5	.238	.082 - .472
25 or more	57	2	.035	.004 - .121

Table 8-11-- Probabilities of a future approach by persons who have thus far written X number of communications without having approached (i.e., the probability that the subject will eventually approach given a particular number of communications received to date)

Number communications	Number persons	Number who approach	Probability of approach	95% confidence interval
1 or more	1405	67	.048	.037 - .059
2 or more	451	35	.078	.053 - .103
3 or more	311	28	.090	.058 - .122
5 or more	204	23	.113	.070 - .156
10 or more	90	11	.122	.063 - .208
15 or more	78	7	.090	.037 - .176
25 or more	57	2	.035	.004 - .121

Table 8-12-- Duration of correspondence (N = 191)

Duration of correspondence	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
0 - 12 months	84 (82)	56 (63)	8.20
13 - 91 months	18 (18)	33 (37)	p = .004

Table 8-13-- Providing full address in the first item of correspondence

Provided full address	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	95 (89)	76 (71)	9.43
No	12 (11)	31 (29)	p < .002

Table 8-14-- Number of geographically dispersed postmarks (number of different states, provinces, or countries represented) (N = 197)

Number of postmarks	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
One	95 (90)	73 (79)	3.99
Two or more	10 (10)	19 (21)	p = .046

Table 8-15-- Telephoning in addition to writing

Telephoned	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	5 (5)	15 (14)	4.47
No	102 (95)	92 (86)	p < .04

Table 8-16-- Type of paper used in the first item of correspondence

Type of paper	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Plain or lined paper	68 (64)	41 (39)	12.21
All other paper	39 (36)	65 (61)	p = .0005

Table 8-17-- Enclosure of commercial pictures

Encloses commercial pictures	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	11 (10)	2 (2)	5.24
No	96 (90)	105 (98)	p = .022

Table 8-18-- Repeated mention of public figures other than the celebrity

Repeatedly mentions other public figures	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	38 (35)	24 (22)	3.84
No	69 (65)	83 (78)	p = .05

Table 8-19-- Repeated mention of entertainment products

Repeatedly mentions entertainment products	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	28 (26)	45 (42)	5.32
No	79 (74)	62 (58)	p = .02

Table 8-20-- Expressed desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity (in the first communication)

Expresses desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	21 (20)	7 (6)	6.9
No	86 (80)	100 (94)	p = .008

Table 8-21-- Expressed desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity (in the first communication)

Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	28 (26)	58 (54)	16.3
No	79 (74)	49 (46)	p = .0001

Table 8-22-- Attempts to instill shame

Attempts to instill shame in celebrity	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	16 (15)	6 (6)	4.10
No	91 (85)	101 (94)	p = .04

Table 8-23-- Whether the subject indicates sexual interest in the celebrity

Subject indicates sexual interest in the celebrity	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	35 (33)	21 (20)	4.09
No	72 (67)	86 (80)	p = .04

Table 8-24-- Whether the subject mentions any sexual activity, including deviant forms

	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	20 (19)	9 (8)	3.99
No	87 (81)	98 (92)	p < .05

Table 8-25-- Subject announces a specific location where something will happen with respect to the celebrity

Announces specific location	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	5 (5)	19 (18)	7.93
No	102 (95)	88 (82)	p < .005

Table 8-26-- Subject announces a specific time when something will happen with respect to the celebrity

Announces specific time	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	4 (4)	18 (17)	8.56
No	103 (96)	89 (83)	p = .003

Table 8-27-- Subject announces a specific location and time for something to happen with respect to the celebrity

Announces specific time and location	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	3 (3)	17 (16)	9.32
No	104 (97)	90 (84)	p = .002

Table 8-28-- Whether subject mentions having a vehicle

Mentions having vehicle	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	10 (9)	21 (20)	3.77
No	97 (91)	86 (80)	p = .05

Table 8-29-- Frequency of travel (N = 208)

Frequency of travel	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
No known travel	85 (81)	51 (50)	24.0
One known trip	9 (9)	32 (31)	p < .0001
Two or more known trips	11 (11)	20 (19)	

Table 8-30-- Approach status and mention in the first known communication of traveling to see the celebrity

Mention of traveling to see the celebrity	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	15 (14)	54 (50)	30.89
No	92 (86)	53 (50)	p < .0001

Table 8-31-- Hate-mail writers

Hate-mail writer	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	28 (26)	14 (13)	5.01
No	79 (74)	93 (87)	p = .025

Table 8-32-- Obscene-letter writers

Obscene-letter writer	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	9 (8)	1 (1)	5.14
No	98 (92)	106 (99)	p = .023

## CHAPTER 9

### SUBJECTS WHO WRITE TO POLITICAL FIGURES

The letters of the insane are worth study--  
as the most reliable evidence of the state of the  
patient's mind for the time being . . .  
--Bacon, On the Writing of the Insane, 1870, p. 9.

In this chapter we describe subjects who wrote inappropriate communications to Members of the United States Congress. For the sake of simplicity, the recipients of these communications are referred to as "politicians" throughout the text, even though some subjects addressed their communications to members of the staff of the Senator or Congressman or to Congress as a whole rather than to any specific Member of Congress.

Throughout this chapter, the sample is the stratified random sample from the Capitol Police archives of 86 subjects who wrote inappropriate communications to public figures in the political arena (the selection of which is described fully in Chapter 3). Where data were missing on fewer than three percent of the subjects, no particular mention is made of that fact. Where missing data influence the results, however, we give the number of subjects for whom information was available.

As was the case with inappropriate communications to celebrities, the most striking feature of the inappropriate communications to politicians was the obviously high

prevalence of mental disorder among the subjects. This chapter begins with some of the more conclusive evidence of mental disorder and of the types of mental disorder evidenced.

## MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY

### Outpatient Mental Health Treatment

As mental disorder is evident in many of the subjects' writings, it was of interest to determine the extent to which they revealed their history of mental health treatment. Seven subjects (eight percent) were known to have received outpatient psychotherapy. Five of these subjects had been treated on an outpatient basis by a psychiatrist, and at least six had been prescribed medication.

### Psychiatric Hospitalization

Thirty-three subjects (38 percent) were known to have undergone psychiatric hospitalization, and at least 25 of these had been hospitalized more than once. Only five subjects expressed their attitude toward treatment, and among four of these the attitude was unfavorable.

A total of 29 subjects (43 percent) were known to have received any mental health treatment (either outpatient or hospitalization).

### Suicide

Six subjects either threatened suicide in their letters or mentioned that they had threatened suicide in the past. Three subjects mentioned having attempted suicide. A total of 14 subjects made any mention of suicidal thoughts, intentions (including threats), or attempts.

### PSYCHOTIC PSYCHOPATHOLOGY

As in Chapter 4, this section uses diagnostic criteria based to the extent possible on the standardized diagnostic manual at the time of data collection, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 3rd ed. (American Psychiatric Association, 1980), also known as DSM-III. The specific criteria used for each diagnosis are given in detail in Chapter 4.

### Delusions

The aspect of psychopathology that most greatly shapes the content of subjects' communications to Members of Congress is the presence of delusions, i.e., false beliefs resulting from mental illness. As some of the examples in Chapter 1 illustrate, subjects had a variety of delusions that were involved in some manner with their communications with politicians. A few examples of delusions in this sample are:

- conviction that words are being switched around to deceive him and the public.
- conviction that an entertainment celebrity gave money to a terrorist group to fund a nuclear attack.
- conviction that the politician is a murderer.
- conviction that black's are "the devil's work."
- conviction that God will cause confusion in the Senate.
- conviction that something is wrong with her, and it relates to forces keeping the races apart.
- conviction of the subject's extensive involvement with the C.I.A., N.S.A., El Salvador, and Viet Nam.

A total of 71 subjects (83 percent) were rated as evidencing delusions. The distribution of delusions, classified into traditional categories, is given in Table 9-1. Note that persecutory delusions occurred at about the same rate as grandiose delusions in this population. This is as expected, for delusions of persecution are often associated with efforts to seek help from powerful people, while delusions of a special relationship with a famous person are by definition grandiose. Both grandiose and persecutory delusions are classified as paranoid delusions. There were 21 subjects who showed evidence of persecutory delusions without evidence of grandiose delusions, and 17 subjects who showed evidence of grandiose delusions without evidence of persecutory delusions.

Erotomantic delusions were identified for four subjects, all of whom believed that the politician loved them and one of whom believed that she was married to the politician. No

subject with the Capgras delusion appeared in the statistical sample, but such cases were observed in the sampling universe.

### Hallucinations

A total of seven subjects (eight percent) reported any hallucinations. The specific types of hallucinations reported are shown in Table 9-2.

### Thought Disorder

Fifty-six subjects (65 percent) had some evidence of thought disorder. The particular features of thought disorder identified in their communications are shown in Table 9-3.

As was done in Chapter 4 for subjects writing to celebrities, three features of schizophrenic thought disorder-- poverty of content, perseveration, and neologisms-- were treated together by calculating the proportion of subjects who evidenced one or more of these three symptoms. Forty-four subjects (51 percent) evidenced one or more of these.

### Psychotic Features

Seventy-seven subjects (90 percent) had at least one of the key psychotic features listed in Table 9-4. Thus, a minimum of 90 percent of the subjects suffered from a psychotic mental illness.

## PSYCHOTIC ILLNESS

The signs and symptoms for which we collected data in detail were the same as those reported in Chapter 4. Thus, we do not have detailed data on all the signs and symptoms of all possible psychiatric disorders. Nonetheless, there were few instances in which coders believed that significant signs or symptoms were in evidence but unrepresented on coding forms. In this section, we present the data on those signs and symptoms characteristic of particular psychotic illnesses and estimate the prevalence of these illnesses among the subjects according to standardized diagnostic criteria. (The criteria as applied here are detailed in Chapter 4.)

Schizophrenia

Table 9-5 gives the distribution of the individual features of schizophrenia among the subjects. After excluding subjects who had the full manic or depressive syndrome or a diagnosis of organic mental disorder or mental retardation, 59 subjects (69 percent) met the DSM-III criteria for a diagnosis of schizophrenia.

Mania

Features of mania were noted in a great many subjects, but no subject provided sufficient evidence to permit a formal diagnosis of mania. The features and their distribution in the total sample are shown in Table 9-6.

DSM-III requires the presence of a period of elevated, expansive, or irritable mood and also at least three of the other features given in Table 9-6 (four if the mood is only irritable). In addition, DSM-III requires the absence of schizophrenia, delusional disorder, and organic mental disorder.

#### Major Depressive Illness

Features of major depressive illness were noted in few cases, and no subject provided sufficient evidence to permit a formal diagnosis of this condition. The features and their distribution in the sample are shown in Table 9-7.

#### Bipolar Disorder

Subjects who have experienced both a manic episode and a major depressive episode are properly regarded as suffering bipolar disorder, but since no subject met the criteria for either mania or depression, none met criteria for bipolar disorder.

#### Delusional Disorder

Although there were 51 subjects (59 percent) who had persecutory and/or jealous delusions, most of these subjects also suffered other symptoms that led to exclusion from this diagnostic category. Nine subjects (ten percent) met DSM-III criteria for delusional disorder.

### Schizoaffective Disorder

DSM-III provided no criteria for the diagnosis of schizoaffective disorder, as the condition was only then being described and studied. To estimate the prevalence of this disorder among the subjects, we relied upon the criteria given in DSM-III-R. Two subjects (two percent) evidenced both one of the key features of schizophrenia (given in Table 9-5) and either the full manic syndrome or full depressive syndrome, after excluding subjects with a diagnosis of schizophrenia or organic mental disorder.

## PERSONALITY DISORDER

### Narcissistic Personality Disorder

The features of narcissistic personality that were coded are given in Table 9-8, along with their distribution among subjects. Three subjects (four percent) met the standard for a diagnosis of narcissistic personality disorder given in Chapter 4.

### Histrionic Personality Disorder

For a diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder, DSM-III requires the presence of behavior that is overly dramatic, intensely expressed, over-reactive, calls attention to writer, or reflects a craving for excitement and also at least two of five other features. Only three of these five features were included in the coding instrument,

and these are given in Table 9-9. Eight subjects (nine percent) met DSM-III criteria for a diagnosis of histrionic personality disorder.

#### Borderline Personality Disorder

Features of borderline personality disorder identified among the subjects are shown in Table 9-10. One subject (one percent) met the standard for borderline personality disorder set forth in Chapter 4.

#### Schizotypal Personality Disorder

The six features of this disorder studied are given in Table 9-11, with their distribution in the sample. Five subjects (six percent) met the standard given in Chapter 4 for a diagnosis of schizotypal personality disorder.

#### Antisocial Personality Disorder

It was not possible to reliably ascertain the prevalence of antisocial personality disorder in the sample. Later in this chapter, however, we do present the available information about antisocial behavior.

#### Other Symptoms

Defining substance abuse as either frequent drinking or drug use, recurrent intoxication, binge drinking, alcoholic blackouts, shakes, or DTs, or social or legal problems related to substance use, or use of illegal drugs, we found that two subjects (two percent) were substance abusers.

Among the thirteen subjects who had none of the diagnoses reported above, there were five who had at least

one psychotic symptom. These subjects, who had delusions, hallucinations, thought disorder, or a combination of these, but who did not meet the DSM-III criteria for any of the psychotic disorders, are diagnosed as having a psychosis not otherwise classified. One of these had preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions in addition to the psychotic feature. Among the eight subjects who had neither any of the above diagnoses nor any psychotic feature, three had preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions.

#### Other Psychopathology

Five subjects (six percent) had none of the above diagnoses, no psychotic features, and no preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions. For this group, the only diagnostic impressions available are those of the coders. The coder diagnoses could not be confirmed according to DSM-III criteria either because data on the necessary signs and symptoms were not collected or because the features necessary to meet the criteria were not evidenced in sufficient number. Nonetheless, the coders' impressions are the best available characterization of these otherwise undiagnosed subjects. According to the coders, these subjects included one with narcissistic personality features; one with paranoid personality disorder, and three with no diagnosis.

Summary of Diagnostic Findings

Table 9-12 summarizes the diagnostic information given above for all subjects. The single most common diagnosis was schizophrenia (69 percent of subjects). The other psychotic disorders identified in this population were delusional disorder (10 percent), psychosis not otherwise classified (six percent), and schizoaffective disorder (two percent). In order of decreasing frequency, the nonpsychotic disorders observed were: histrionic personality disorder (nine percent), schizotypal personality disorder (six percent), narcissistic personality disorder (four percent), substance abuse (two percent), and borderline personality disorder (one percent).

## BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES

Intelligence

None of these subjects was estimated to be of low IQ, and only one was estimated to have a high IQ.

Emotions Expressed

The subject's emotional states were rated on a three-point scale (no evidence, some evidence, or clearly evident), as described in Chapter 4. As shown in Table 9-13, the emotions most commonly expressed by subjects in their letters were hatred, aggression, or malice (66 percent), condemnation, desire for revenge, or punitiveness

(58 percent), and suspiciousness or distrust (53 percent). Desperation or recklessness was expressed by 42 percent; despair, depression, or hopelessness by 27 percent; love, adoration, or affection by eight percent; happiness, contentment, or joy by six percent; and jealousy or covetousness by two percent.

#### Stressful Life Events

Stressful life events were identified in only five cases. The total number of stressful life events reported by subjects in their letters ranged from none to four. No stressful life events were reported by 81 subjects (94 percent); one reported one; and four reported two or more.

### SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

#### Demographic Information

At the time of data collection, subjects ranged in age from 20 to 90 according to available information, but in this sample there were a few cases from as early as 1979. The mean age was 43.2 years and the modal age 32 years. Of 60 cases in which the subject's sex was known, 48 were males and 12 were females. For 47 subjects in which valid data on race were available, 40 were white, four black, and two Asian. Religion was only known for two subjects.

Educational attainment was known for only six subjects, and among these was higher than found among most patient

populations, with five of the six having attended at least some college. Marital status was known for only 15 subjects, seven of whom were divorced or separated, four of whom were married, and four of whom were single. Eleven subjects mentioned whether they had children. Of these, seven had one child and four had two. Of 11 subjects for whom current living arrangements were known, four lived with both parents, two in mental hospitals, two with their spouses or lovers, one in a prison, one with their children, one had no fixed address, and none alone. Three subjects wrote about feelings of loneliness.

#### Family, Social, and Employment History

Only 12 subjects (14 percent) were known to be veterans.

Seventeen subjects (20 percent) gave enough information for coders to rate their highest known occupational status. Of those who could be coded, none had never been employed; three (18 percent) were unskilled employees; one (six percent) was a manual worker; five (29 percent) were clerical workers, sales workers, or technicians; two (12 percent) were administrative personnel or owners of small independent businesses; and none was a higher executive or professional.

Small numbers of subjects gave detailed information about their families of origin. For example, three subjects

reported significantly impaired relationships with the family of origin. Small numbers also expressed their feelings toward their parents. For example, two expressed anger or other negative feelings toward their parents.

#### Delinquency and Criminal History

Coders were asked to identify up to three felonies known to have been committed by the subjects, distinguishing information learned from their letters, on the one hand, from information learned from investigative sources, on the other. Based solely on the subjects' letters, only two reported committing felonies, both of which were property crimes. Investigative sources, however, revealed a felony history for seven subjects (eight percent of the sample). Although not all of the felonies were identified, those that were included six potentially violent offenses, three violent offenses, three property crimes, and one minor crime or probation violation. Note that felons do not necessarily reveal this fact in their letters.

Other evidence of antisocial behavior was available in only smaller numbers of cases. Table 9-14 gives the available information regarding past antisocial behavior among these subjects.

#### SUMMARY

This chapter has focused on the subjects who wrote to Members of Congress, reviewing their signs and symptoms of

mental disorder, the types of mental disorders they evidenced, and their psychological and social characteristics.

To identify particular forms of psychopathology among the subjects and measure their prevalence, the same criteria were applied in this sample as were applied to the entertainment industry sample (see Chapter 4). Despite the rigor of these criteria and the likelihood that certain signs and symptoms were under-represented in letters (as compared to clinical examinations), high rates of mental disorder were measurable.

Important empirical findings reported in this chapter are:

(1) The high prevalence of mental disorder among these subjects is immediately apparent to anyone who examines their correspondence from such obvious features as bizarre handwriting, bizarre thoughts, and bizarre enclosures.

(2) Forty-three percent of the subjects were known to have received some form of mental health treatment. Four of the five subjects who mentioned their attitudes toward treatment expressed unfavorable opinions.

(3) Sixteen percent of the subjects mentioned that they had thought about, threatened, or attempted suicide.

(4) Eighty-three percent of the subjects evidenced delusions (most often persecutory and grandiose delusions),

65 percent evidenced thought disorder, and eight percent reported hallucinations. Overall, 80 percent of the subjects evidenced paranoid delusions.

(5) Overall, 90 percent of the subjects evidenced one or more psychotic symptoms.

(6) Five percent of the subjects had erotomaniac delusions, a higher proportion of such delusions than found in any sample other than that reported in Chapter 4.

(7) The most common diagnosis was schizophrenia, evidenced by 69 percent of the subjects. Other psychoses identified were delusional disorder (ten percent), schizoaffective disorder (two percent), and psychosis not otherwise classified (six percent).

(8) The most common personality disorder diagnosis among these subjects was histrionic personality disorder, found among nine percent. Other personality disorders identified were schizotypal personality disorder (six percent), narcissistic personality disorder (four percent), and borderline personality disorder (one percent). Two percent of subjects were recognized as substance abusers.

(9) Nine percent of the subjects could not be given a formal diagnosis or determined to have psychotic symptoms, but all except four percent of the subjects evidenced multiple signs and symptoms of mental disorder in their letters.

(10) Considering that signs and symptoms of mental disorder were being detected solely from letters written by the subjects and that in some cases the available sample of writing amounted to no more than a few words, it is extraordinary that 90 percent of the subjects could be determined to be psychotic and that 96 percent could be determined to suffer from some mental disorder. These data firmly establish that the written materials studied are the work of the mentally disordered.

(11) The emotions most commonly expressed by subjects in their letters were hatred, aggression, or malice (66 percent), condemnation, desire for revenge, or punitiveness (58 percent), and suspiciousness or distrust (53 percent). Desperation or recklessness was expressed by 42 percent; despair, depression, or hopelessness by 27 percent; love, adoration, or affection by eight percent; happiness, contentment, or joy by six percent; and jealousy or covetousness by two percent.

(12) The subjects ranged in age from 20 to 90, with a mean age of 43 and a modal age of 32.

(13) Eighty percent of the subjects were male and 20 percent female.

(14) Five percent of the subjects were known to have used an alias.

(15) The most incomplete data of the study were those for demographic and social characteristics other than age

and sex (race, religion, education, marital status, military service, occupation, others in the household) and for information about the subjects' families of origin, relationships with parents, and delinquent behavior during adolescence. Letters such as those we studied are not an appropriate source for studying the distribution of these variables in a population of letter writers, despite the fact that small numbers of subjects volunteered great quantities of information on these topics.

(16) Four percent of the subjects wrote about feelings of loneliness.

(17) Only two percent of the subjects mentioned that they had committed felonies in the past, but eight percent were known felons.

In the next chapter, we examine the communications these subjects sent to Members of Congress.

Table 9-1-- Delusions noted among the subjects, based on evidence in their communications to politicians

Type of delusion	N	(%)
Any grandiose delusion	47	(55)
Grandiose	41	(48)
Special importance to the politician	18	(21)
The politician loves the subject	4	(5)
The politician is married to the subject	1	(1)
Causing newsworthy events	8	(9)
Any persecutory delusion	51	(59)
Persecution by the politician	26	(30)
Persecution by anyone else	44	(51)
Capgras (someone replaced by imposter)	0	
Any paranoid delusion	69	(80)
Any grandiose delusion	47	(55)
Any persecutory delusion	51	(59)
Jealous (believes real or delusional sexual partner unfaithful)	2	(2)
Religious	15	(17)
Referential	21	(24)
Any bizarre delusion	12	(14)
Being controlled	11	(13)
Thought broadcasting	3	(4)
Thought insertion	4	(5)

Table 9-1-- (CONT.)

---

Type of delusion	N	(%)
Thought withdrawal	2	(2)
Any other delusion	18	(21)
Nihilistic	2	(2)
Somatic (bodily)	7	(8)
Other	11	(13)

---

---

Table 9-2-- Types of hallucinations  
identified in subjects' communications

---

Hallucination	N	(%)
Auditory	6	(7)
Visual	4	(5)
Olfactory, tactile, or gustatory	1	(1)

---

---

Table 9-3-- Evidence of thought disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Formal thought disorder <sup>1</sup>	47	(55)
Poverty of content	37	(43)
Perseveration	17	(20)
Clanging	3	(4)
Neologisms	9	(10)

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes markedly illogical thinking, flight of ideas, loose associations, or incoherence.

---

Table 9-4-- Evidence of key psychotic symptoms identified in subjects' communications

---

Psychotic symptoms	N	(%)
Any delusion	71	(83)
Any thought disorder	56	(65)
Any hallucination	7	(8)

---

---

Table 9-5-- Evidence of schizophrenia identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Bizarre delusions <sup>1</sup>	12	(14)
Somatic, grandiose, religious, nihilistic, or other delusions without persecutory or jealous content	16	(19)
Delusions with persecutory or jealous content accompanied by hallucinations of any type	6	(7)
Auditory hallucinations	6	(7)
Incoherence, marked loosening of associations, markedly illogical thinking, or marked poverty of content of speech associated with at least one of the following: (a) inappropriate affect or (b) delusions or hallucinations	46	(54)

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes delusions of being controlled, thought broadcasting, thought insertion, and thought withdrawal.

---

Table 9-6-- Evidence of mania identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Elevated, expansive, or irritable mood	40	(47)
Feels euphoric	5	(6)
Irritable mood	36	(42)
Inflated self-esteem (grandiosity, which may be delusional)	48	(56)
Any grandiose delusion	47	(55)
Inflated self-esteem not due to delusions	6	(7)
Overly talkative	9	(10)
Abnormally high level of activity in work, sex, or social relations	3	(4)
Short attention span, easily distracted	3	(4)
Decreased need for sleep	0	
Feels thoughts are racing	1	(1)
Excessive involvement in activities with a high potential for painful consequences which is not recognized	0	
Foolish investments or purchases	0	
Buying sprees	0	

---

---

 Table 9-7-- Evidence of depression identified in subjects' communications
 

---

Feature	N	(%)
Feels depressed, sad, blue, low, hopeless, or irritable for at least two weeks	4	(5)
Poor or increased appetite or significant change in weight	1	(1)
Poor appetite or significant weight loss	1	(1)
Increased appetite or significant weight gain	0	
Insomnia or hypersomnia	0	
Trouble sleeping	0	
Sleeps too much	0	
Psychomotor retardation (moves too slowly)	0	
Loss of interest or pleasure in former activities or decrease in sex drive	2	(2)
Loss of interest or pleasure in former activities	1	(1)
Decrease in sex drive	0	
Fatigue, loss of energy	0	
Feels worthless, excessively guilty	1	(1)
Feels unable to think or concentrate	2	(2)
Thoughts of death or suicide	14	(16)
Thoughts or wishes of death	14	(16)
Thoughts of suicide	1	(1)

---

---

Table 9-8-- Evidence of narcissistic personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
<b>First group of features:</b>		
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	37	(43)
Preoccupied with fantasies of unlimited success, power, brilliance, beauty, or ideal love	4	(5)
Desires constant attention and admiration	0	
Responds to criticism, defeat, or inattention with indifference or marked shame or rage	8	(9)
<b>Second group of features:</b>		
Sense of entitlement	29	(34)
Interpersonal exploitativeness	10	(12)
Relationships alternate between idealization and devaluation	2	(2)
Lack of empathy for others	10	(12)

---

---

Table 9-9 -- Evidence of histrionic personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Ideas are overly dramatic, intensely expressed, over reactive, call attention to writer, or reflect a craving for excitement	33	(38)
Egocentric, self-indulgent, and inconsiderate	15	(17)
Vain and demanding	18	(21)
Suicide threats or attempts	6	(7)

---

---

Table 9-10 -- Evidence of borderline personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger	31	(36)
Pattern of intense unstable personal relationships	2	(2)
Uncertainty about identity in several areas	3	(4)
Impulsiveness in at least two potentially self-damaging areas	2	(2)
Physically self-damaging acts or suicide attempts	6	(7)

---

---

Table 9-11 -- Evidence of schizotypal personality disorder identified in subjects' communications

---

Feature	N	(%)
Magical or superstitious thinking or peculiar beliefs <sup>1</sup>	34	(40)
Social isolation	15	(17)
Believes others are talking about him	16	(19)
Thought content is digressive, vague, overelaborate, circumstantial or metaphorical	38	(44)
Significant unwarranted suspiciousness or mistrust	51	(59)
Inappropriate affect	12	(14)

---

<sup>1</sup> This feature was often coded as present for subjects who were frankly deluded.

Table 9-12 -- Diagnoses by DSM-III Criteria

Diagnosis	N	(%)
Schizophrenia	59	(69)
Mania	0	
Major depressive illness	0	
Bipolar disorder	0	
Schizoaffective disorder	2	(2)
Delusional disorder	9	(10)
Psychosis not otherwise classified	5	(6)
Narcissistic personality disorder	3	(4)
Histrionic personality disorder	8	(9)
Borderline personality disorder	1	(1)
Schizotypal personality disorder	5	(6)
Substance abuse	2	(2)

---

Table 9-13-- Emotional states expressed in subjects' communications to politicians

---

Emotional cluster	<u>Some Evidence</u>		<u>Clearly Evident</u>		<u>Total</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Hatred, aggression, malice	38	(44)	19	(22)	57	(66)
Condemnation, revenge-seeking, punitiveness	31	(36)	19	(22)	50	(58)
Suspiciousness, distrust	20	(23)	26	(30)	46	(53)
Desperation, recklessness, nothing to lose	25	(29)	11	(13)	36	(42)
Despair, depression, hopelessness	18	(21)	5	(6)	23	(27)
Love, adoration, affection	3	(4)	4	(5)	7	(8)
Happiness, contentment, joy, seeming peace of mind	4	(5)	1	(1)	5	(6)
Jealousy, covetousness	1	(1)	1	(1)	2	(2)

---

---

Table 9-14-- Past antisocial behaviors reported by subjects in their communications to politicians

---

Feature	N	(%)
Juvenile behavior problems	0	
Poor work record <sup>1</sup>	2	(2)
Poor parenting skills	0	
Illegal occupation	0	
Multiple arrests	0	
History of jail or prison	1	(1)
History of fire-setting	0	
Repeated physical fights/assaults	1	(1)
Use of aliases <sup>1</sup>	4	(5)
Reckless driving	0	
Escape from custody or elopement	0	
History of committing a felony? (based on letters)	2	(2)
History of committing a felony? (based on investigative files)	7	(8)

---

<sup>1</sup> Both "poor work record" and "use of aliases" may result from psychotic illness, and are thus not necessarily signs of a pattern of antisocial behavior.

CHAPTER 10  
THE VOLUME AND FORM OF  
ODD COMMUNICATIONS TO POLITICAL FIGURES

This chapter examines the basic characteristics of the communications sent to Members of Congress by the subjects described in Chapter 9. The volume of communications, their form, and enclosures are each considered in turn.

VOLUME OF COMMUNICATIONS

Quantity

The number of communications sent or delivered by each subject to a particular politician was determined not only for the cases included in the statistical sample, but for a random sample of all of the cases in the Capitol Police files at the time the sample was selected. This number ranged from zero to a number well in excess of 500. The distribution by number of mailings for a random sample of cases in the sampling universe is shown in Table 10-1. Only a portion of this sample was studied in order to eliminate the potential confounding effects of the observation that approach-positive cases averaged a significantly larger number of letters than approach-negative cases (see the discussion of this problem in Chapter 3).

The total number of written communications from the subjects selected for the sample ranged from one to over 100, but files that had become too large to store had sometimes been "pruned," making it impossible to count the

total number of written communications. Eliminating three outliers with a very large but uncountable number of mailings, the mean number of communications was 2.5 per subject. The distribution of cases by number of communications is shown in Table 10-2.

In addition to the "pruning" of files that had resulted in some materials being discarded, we believe that those responsible for opening the mail of Members of Congress were inconsistent in their saving and referral of materials to the Capitol Police. This appeared to be a greater problem in this portion of the study than in the entertainment industry segment, in part because there were often notations in the file indicating that subjects had written many times previously, though earlier letters had not been saved and no case file had been opened on a subject until a letter writer struck someone as problematic.

Individual communications varied substantially in length, from a single postcard or preprinted greeting card to lengthy tomes, thereby affecting the total quantity of information available about particular subjects. One subject, for example, provided 18 volumes of documentation for unfathomable claims that were never stated clearly enough to be certain what it was she wanted. She did, however, provide a great deal of personal information about herself. Yet other subjects sent such sparse communications that little was known about them.

One measure of the amount of information provided by subjects is the number of pieces of paper they had sent containing their own writings. This ranged from one piece of paper to more than 1,000, with a mean of 17.8 (5.5 without the most extreme case) and a median of 4.0 pages. Fifty percent of the subjects had three or fewer pages; 10 percent had more than 15 pages.

As expected, for subjects with more than one communication there was a statistically significant association between the total number of communications and the time span in months over which the subjects attempted to communicate with the politician (Chi-square = 5.43, d.f. = 1;  $p = 0.02$ ). A high number of mailings was associated with a long duration of communication.

#### Duration

For subjects who sent more than one mailing, the time span between mailings ranged from less than one month to 76 months, with a mean of 12.5 months (S.D. = 17.7). The distribution of duration of correspondence in months was skewed by some extremely persistent letter writers, so the more appropriate measure of central tendency is the median, which was four months.

## FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS

Identifying Information

Subjects tended to give ample identifying information about themselves. Sixty-eight (81 percent) gave their full name, 61 (74 percent) gave an address, and 72 (86 percent) gave some identifying information in their written communications. Only 12 (14 percent) of the letter writers maintained complete anonymity.

Geography

The subjects in this sample were based in 16 states and the District of Columbia. No subject in the statistical sample was from a foreign country.

Thirty-six of the subjects (90 percent of 40 cases in which the number of postmarks was known) mailed their communications from a single state; four (10 percent) had postmarks from at least two different states. The presence of multiple postmarks is generally an indication of the subject's mobility.

Means of Communication

At least twelve percent of the subjects had used some means other than mailed letters in their efforts to contact the politician from a distance, including telephone calls (nine cases) and telegrams (one case). Because it is not always possible to determine that a caller is the same person as a letter writer, and because information on

telephone calls does not always make its way to case files, the true proportion of subjects who communicate through multiple media is certainly higher than the twelve percent measured.

Thirty subjects (35 percent) hand-delivered at least one communication, mostly to staff members at the Capitol. These hand-deliveries constitute an approach by definition. Among the 43 approach-positive cases in the statistical sample, there were only ten subjects whom we could be absolutely certain had mailed an inappropriate communication that was received at the Capitol and forwarded to the Capitol Police in advance of the subject making his or her first approach. In only five cases could it be verified that no mailing had been received prior to the first known approach. In the remainder, any pre-approach mailings that may have existed were never received, never forwarded, or undated.

#### Paper

For each subject, the predominant type of paper used for all mailings was recorded. Forty-seven subjects (56 percent) most often used plain paper; 21 (25 percent) used lined paper; four (five percent) used stationery; three subjects (four percent) sent a photocopy; one subject (one percent) used a preprinted greeting-type card; one subject (one percent) used unprinted, quality stationery; four (five

percent) sent some combination of the above types of paper; none used postcards; and three (four percent) used other forms of paper.

#### Handwriting

Thirty-one subjects (37 percent) wrote their communications in cursive script, 22 (26 percent) hand printed their letters, 28 (34 percent) sent typed letters, and one (one percent) used a combination of the above. Contrary to popular stereotypes, only one subject (one percent) sent a letter which had been cut and pasted from printed matter.

#### Propriety

Thirty-seven subjects (45 percent) predominantly used appropriate greetings in their communications, 14 (17 percent) used the politician's name by itself, 18 (22 percent) used no greeting, one (one percent) used an overly familiar term, 11 (13 percent) used a greeting which was inappropriate for other reasons, and one (one percent) used some attention-getting phrase (e.g., "Hi").

Twenty-eight subjects (35 percent) predominantly used an appropriate form of closing in their communications, 37 (46 percent) used inappropriate forms of closing, and 15 (19 percent) used no closing.

Subjects also demonstrated inappropriateness in writing letters that were impolite. As shown in Table 10-3, 18

subjects (24 percent) were inconsiderate or rude, and 12 (16 percent) were vulgar, obscene, or lewd.

#### Appearance and Format

Fourteen subjects (16 percent) used idiosyncratic punctuation in their writings. Ratings of poor planning of space on the paper were distributed as shown in Table 10-4.

#### ENCLOSURES

Twenty-seven subjects (31 percent) provided enclosures with their communications. The distribution of enclosures is shown in Table 10-5. Media clippings and photographs were the most common type of enclosure, but even these were sent by only eight percent of subjects. Examples of specific enclosures sent by these subjects include:

- a photocopy of a statute
- two greeting cards
- a photograph of the subject
- documents purportedly supporting the subject's position
- a photocopy of information purportedly from a "Voice of Americanism" [sic] broadcast
- the subject's resume
- photocopies of various receipts
- a report from a climatologist and the resume of a proposed business partner
- a cartoon drawing with a violent theme depicting the subject and the President

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter, we examined the volume, duration, and form of communications to Members of the U.S. Congress,

including enclosures sent by the subjects. Important empirical findings reported here are:

(1) Subjects in the sample averaged at least 2.5 letters apiece, with a range from one to over 100 letters, though other subjects were known to have sent more than 500 communications. (In this sample, older materials had sometimes been discarded, making it impossible to count the number of communications that had been referred for assessment). Fifty percent of subjects sent two or more communications.

(2) The quantity of material sent by subjects ranged from one to more than 1,000 pieces of paper (in one case 18 volumes of documents). The median quantity of material available was four pages.

(3) As expected, the greater the time interval over which subjects wrote, the larger the number of communications they had sent.

(4) Subjects in the sample who wrote multiple letters averaged a duration of twelve months of correspondence, and one subject wrote for more than six years.

(5) Eighty-six percent of subjects gave their name, address, or both in their first known communications; only 14 percent remained completely anonymous.

(6) Subjects in the sample were based in 16 states and the District of Columbia.

(7) Ten percent of the subjects sent letters postmarked from at least two different states, indicating their mobility.

(8) At least 12 percent of subjects telephoned, sent telegrams, or used some method other than mail to communicate with the politician from a distance.

(9) Thirty-five percent of the subjects hand-delivered at least one communication, mostly to staff members at the Capitol.

(10) Because of irregularities in the preservation of communications by those who initially receive them, letters delivered prior to any approach were documented as having been on file with the Capitol Police in advance of any visit for only 10 of the 43 approach-positive letter-writing subjects in the statistical sample (23 percent). In only 12 percent of approach-positive cases could it be verified that no mailing had been received prior to the first known approach. In the remainder, any pre-approach mailings that may have existed were never received, never forwarded, or undated.

(11) Eighty-one percent of the subjects wrote their first known communications on tablet-like paper, and the remainder used a variety of papers that included stationery, preprinted greeting cards, photocopies, postcards, or a combination of these.

(12) Thirty-seven percent of subjects wrote their communications in cursive script; 26 percent printed their letters, and 34 percent sent typed letters. Contrary to popular stereotypes, only one subject sent a letter which had been cut and pasted from printed matter.

(13) Fifty-five percent of the subjects used inappropriate greetings or none at all, 17 percent addressed the politician too informally, and 65 percent used inappropriate closings or none at all. Twenty-four percent of the subjects were rated as inconsiderate or rude and 16 percent as vulgar, lewd, or obscene.

(14) Oddities in the appearance of the letters included poor planning of space (19 percent) and idiosyncratic punctuation (16 percent).

(15) Thirty-one percent of the subjects sent enclosures with their communications, ranging from the innocuous (e.g., self-addressed reply envelopes) to the bizarre. The most common types of enclosures were media clippings and photographs, creative efforts by the subject, and photographs of the subject.

In the next chapter, we examine the verbal and thematic content of the communications sent to Members of Congress.

---

Table 10-1-- Number of communications  
per subject for a random sample of cases  
in the sampling universe (N = 97)

---

Number of communications	N	(%)
1	49	(50)
2	15	(16)
3-5	16	(17)
6-12	11	(11)
51-146	6	(6)

---

---

Table 10-2-- Number of communications per subject for the stratified random sample of cases selected for the statistical study (N = 83)

---

Number of communications	N	(%)
1	42	(51)
2	15	(18)
3-5	16	(19)
6-12	6	(7)
51-146	4	(5)

---

---

**Table 10-3-- Politeness of the communications (N = 75)**

---

<b>Politeness</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Very polite	3	(4)
Ordinary politeness, somewhat polite	42	(56)
Inconsiderate, rude	18	(24)
Vulgar, obscene, lewd	12	(16)

---

---

Table 10-4-- Evidence of poor planning  
of space on the paper in communications  
(N = 83)

---

Evidence of poor planning of space on the paper	N	(%)
None	67	(81)
Minimal	11	(13)
Moderate	2	(2)
Utter chaos	3	(4)

---

---

 Table 10-5-- Enclosures sent to politicians (N = 86)
 

---

Enclosure	N	(%)
Subject's creative efforts <sup>1</sup>	4	(5)
Photograph of subject	4	(5)
Media clippings and photographs <sup>2</sup>	7	(8)
Other photographs (apparently homemade) <sup>3</sup>	2	(2)
Commercial pictures <sup>4</sup>	1	(1)
Valuables and commercial materials <sup>5</sup>	0	
Business cards	0	
Other business-like enclosures <sup>6</sup>	1	(1)
Religious or mystical materials	3	(4)
Bizarre materials <sup>7</sup>	1	(1)
Other	9	(10)

---

<sup>1</sup> Includes drawings, poems, tape recordings, and literary works (including poetry or lyrics within a letter).

<sup>2</sup> Includes photographs of the politician from the media.

<sup>3</sup> Includes only those which could have been taken by the subject; excludes photographs of the subject or politician.

<sup>4</sup> Includes commercial drawings, stickers, and seals.

<sup>5</sup> Includes items of value and books.

<sup>6</sup> Includes literature explaining businesses and self-addressed replies.

<sup>7</sup> Includes biological materials, personal documents (social security card, driver's license, birth certificate), drugs, pebbles, dirt, seeds, and similar objects.

## CHAPTER 11

### THE CONTENT OF ODD COMMUNICATIONS TO POLITICAL FIGURES

In this chapter we examine the content of the communications subjects sent to politicians. First we look at the subjects' perceived relationships with the politicians, particularly the roles in which they cast themselves and the politicians. Next we examine the particular themes about which the subjects wrote. Finally we consider the subjects' messages, including threats.

#### SUBJECTS' PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLITICIANS

Perceived relationships were gauged by judging the roles in which the subjects cast themselves and the politicians to whom they wrote, by examining levels of patronage, and by seeking evidence that subjects idolized others.

#### Roles

Coders were trained to identify "roles" assumed by the subjects in their correspondence with politicians. For each subject, the coder rated up to three roles in which the subject cast himself or herself. Table 11-1 shows the distribution of roles identifiable in the subjects' writings. Note that the most frequently adopted role was that of an enemy (40 percent), and the second most frequently adopted was that of a special constituent or fan.

In addition to those who postured themselves as an enemy of the Member of Congress, there were smaller

proportions who cast themselves in equally inappropriate if less overtly ominous roles: religious advisers, prophets, and saviors (14 percent); those with special powers (nine percent); rescuers (seven percent); and lovers and would-be lovers (six percent).

The subjects often cast the politician to whom they were writing in a role other than that reflecting a correct perception of their true social relationship, namely, a political representative to whom the subject was a stranger. In many instances, these roles were reciprocal to those assumed by the subjects (e.g., subjects assuming the role of a business associate or collaborator often cast the politician in the role of a business associate or collaborator), but this was not necessarily the case.

As with the subjects' own roles, coders identified up to three roles in which the politician was cast by the subject. Table 11-2 shows the distribution of these roles. Although 88 percent of subjects showed a recognition in at least one of their writings that the politician was actually a stranger to them, 42 percent cast the Member of Congress in an enemy role. Other inappropriate perceptions of role occurred among subjects who considered the politicians as rescuers, benefactors, and potential benefactors (23 percent); business associates and collaborators (12 percent); friends and acquaintances (nine percent); lovers,

potential lovers, and would-be lovers (six percent); beneficiaries of the subject (five percent); and spouses, potential spouses, and suitors (two percent).

Coders rated whether the nature of the role in which the subject cast himself changed over time. Of 36 cases in which there were either multiple mailings or variously dated materials within a single mailing, coders rated three (eight percent) as showing a change in roles and 33 (92 percent) as showing no change in roles.

#### Patronage

Subjects were assigned to one of three levels of patronage as described in Chapter 6. Rated according to this scale, 46 of the subjects (62 percent) evidenced minimal patronage, 24 (32 percent) moderate patronage, and four (five percent) maximal patronage.

#### Idolatry

Coders judged only four subjects as having "ever idolized or worshipped someone." Two of these idolized the politician to whom they had written, one idolized another public figure, and two idolized someone else.

### THEMATIC CONTENT

Themes about which the subjects wrote were explored by tabulating mentioned themes and identifying those which were mentioned repetitively. We also examined the degree of

insistence demonstrated by subjects, which we consider conceptually related to their degree of obsession and emotional investment in particular ideas.

#### Mention of Particular Themes

As one might expect, commonly mentioned themes in these letters (given in Table 11-3) included political issues (40 percent), the President of the U.S. (35 percent), other government figures (40 percent), and political parties or groups (26 percent). Communists and democrats were mentioned with equal frequency, just ahead of republicans and much more often than mentions of Nazis or socialists. The particular political issues mentioned by subjects seemed to reflect the newsworthy issues of the day. Although it may be appropriate to write to Members of Congress with concerns about these issues, the writings by these subjects were anything but appropriate, even if on a relevant subject. These subjects also mentioned other persons and institutions that are the recipients of similar unwanted attention, including entertainment celebrities (13 percent), corporations, corporate executives, or products (six percent), and sports figures (one percent). Five percent made explicit reference to political assassins.

Forty-one subjects (48 percent) mentioned any political issue or political party. Of these, 26 expressed political sentiments, the intensity of which was rated as minimal (11 cases), moderate (14 cases), or extreme (eight cases).

Repetitive Themes, Preoccupations, Overvalued Ideas, and Obsessions

One of the more striking findings from this research is the high proportion of subjects who repeatedly mention particular themes in their letters. To code a theme as repeatedly mentioned, the coder needed only to note two or more mentions of the same theme within the total body of available communications from the subject. In contrast, a judgment that the subject had ever been preoccupied or obsessed with someone or something required evidence that the subject "can't stop thinking about someone or something." (See the discussion of preoccupations, overvalued ideas, and obsessions in Chapter 4.)

Of the 86 subjects, 76 (88 percent) repeatedly mentioned a particular theme. Table 11-4 shows the distribution of these themes. The theme repeatedly mentioned by the largest proportion of subjects (49 percent) was that of injustices they perceived themselves as having endured. Twenty-eight (33 percent) of the subjects repeatedly mentioned the politician or another public figure, and an equal number repeatedly mentioned political or governmental themes. Other themes repeatedly mentioned by sizable proportions of subjects were law enforcement, security, intelligence, or the military (27 percent), religious or mystical themes (23 percent), violence or

aggression (24 percent), and racial issues (15 percent). Nine subjects (10 percent) repeatedly mentioned love, marriage, or sexual activity. Only one or two subject repeatedly mentioned union with the politician, legislation, becoming a public figure, rescue of the politician, or occult, science fiction, or fantasy themes.

Sixty-nine (80 percent) of the subjects evidenced preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession regarding someone or something. (These concepts are treated in detail in Chapter 4. Here, the term "preoccupied" is used to indicate this entire class of ideation.) The distribution of the subjects' preoccupations is given in Table 11-4. The most prevalent theme for these preoccupations was subjects' perceptions of injustice they had endured (38 percent). Second in frequency were the 18 subjects (21 percent) who were preoccupied with the politician or another public figure. Other themes with which subjects were preoccupied included violence or aggression (17 percent), politics or government (16 percent), religious or mystical themes (14 percent), law enforcement, security, intelligence, or the military (13 percent), and racial issues (six percent). Seven subjects (eight percent) were preoccupied with love, marriage, or sexual activity, and two with union with the politician.

Degree of Insistence

Subjects varied in the degree of insistence communicated in their writings. We assessed several different aspects of insistence by coding whether each was present in a subject's communications. The distribution of these findings for the subjects' communications is shown in Table 11-5. The most prevalent type of insistence occurred among the 58 percent of subjects who communicated that their concerns were of extreme importance, great consequence, or grave. Other types of insistence included demanding or ordering the politicians to take particular actions (36 percent), communicating a sense of urgency or emergency (35 percent), demonstrating fanaticism or zealotry (29 percent), or begging or imploring (16 percent).

## MESSAGES AND THREATS

Wants and Desires

In their letters to politicians, most of the subjects sought something. The most common requests were for rescue or assistance (28 cases). Although it may in principle be appropriate to seek assistance from one's political representative, the assistance sought was always inappropriate. Among the expressed desires that were most obviously inappropriate were requests for valuable gifts (nine cases), face-to-face contact in the politician's home

or private office (four cases), sexual contact (two cases), and a visit from the politician at the subject's home (one case).

Table 11-6 shows the expressed desires of the subjects, grouped by broad categories. Note that up to three desires were coded for each subject, so the numbers total more than 86. Examples of the requests identified were subjects who wished compensation for harms they had delusions of undergoing, subjects who wanted their inventions to be used against enemies of the nation, and subjects who urgently wanted their thoughts communicated to the President or foreign leaders.

#### Emotional Provocation

Coders rated whether each subject had attempted to instill, evoke, or provoke any of seven types of emotional response. By far the most prevalent was the effort to instill feelings of worry or anxiety, observed in the writings of 43 subjects (50 percent). The second most common was an effort to evoke fear (35 subjects; 41 percent). In decreasing order of frequency, the other emotions subjects sought to evoke were upset (20 subjects), shame (19; 21 percent), anger (11; 13 percent), love (one), and sexual excitement (one).

#### Sexual Content

Only one subject wrote about sexual arousal or responsiveness, and this concerned the politician's wife.

No subject specifically wrote about sexual arousal or responsiveness involving the politician or specifically expressed their own sexual interest in the politician. Six subjects (seven percent) mentioned any sexual activity, including deviant forms.

### Threatening Content

Defining a "threat" as any offer to do harm, however implausible, coders identified threats in 50 (58 percent) of the cases and no threats in 36 cases. As shown in Table 11-7, 16 subjects (19 percent of the sample and 32 percent of the threateners) made only one threat, and 34 subjects (40 percent of the subjects and 68 percent of the threateners) made two or more threats. The largest number of threats made by any one subject in the sample was 31. The mean number of threats per threatener was 4.3 (S.D. = 5.5). Without the most extreme case, the mean was 3.7 threats per threatener (S.D. = 3.9).

Threats were classified according to their form, using the definitions given in Chapter 6. Among the 50 threateners, 24 subjects (48 percent) made direct threats; 30 made indirect or veiled threats (60 percent); and 25 made conditional threats (50 percent). Many threateners made more than one type of threat.

Taking threats as the unit of analysis (rather than subjects), we coded a total of 211 threats, of which 89 were

direct (42 percent), 76 veiled (36 percent), and 46 conditional (22 percent). The distributions of these are given in Table 11-8, which reports the numbers and percentages of threateners who made particular numbers of each type of threat.

To explore the nature of the conditions that subjects set forth for averting the threatened action, we looked at the conditions set forth to avert the 46 conditional threats made by these subjects in any of their writings. These data are given in Table 11-9. Subjects more commonly sought influence or power (40 percent) than financial gain (20 percent) or personal attention (eight percent).

Seventeen threateners (34 percent of all threateners) made 69 threats (included in the totals above) which were implausible because they were curses or hexes, evidenced a psychotic notion of causation, or were technically impossible. For example, one subject wrote:

Follow-up!

WARNINGS FROM GOD ALMIGHTY!

BE DAMNED!

\*

\*

\*

GOD ALMIGHTY WILL DESTROY YOUR Oil WELLS! BANKS!  
Cities! TOWNS! STATES! COUNTRIES! BuildINGS!  
 (GOD WILL DO IT FOR you-- OKAY?!)

Four subjects made threats that were statements of a desire or intent to exert influence through lawful means but that from their context were nonetheless threats. For example,

one subject, who often wrote hexes promising the destruction of the world also threatened to file a civil suit:

I am sueing you for damages for:  
. . . fraudulently lying pretending you are  
torturing someone else so you wont get caught and  
pay for your crime.

\* \* \*  
If I do not hear from you in two (2) weeks I will  
be reporting you to the U.N. & to the Civil  
Liberties Union . . .

Threats were rated for the presence of evidence of plans, means, or opportunity to carry out the threat. For five subjects, the threat was accompanied by evidence that the subject had a plan to carry it out. Two subjects made threats that were accompanied by some evidence that the threatener had the means to carry out the threat. Two subjects made threats that were accompanied by some evidence that the threatener had an opportunity to carry out the threat.

The Credibility scale (described in Chapter 6) assigns each subject a score based on whether any threat is accompanied by evidence of a plan (worth one point), evidence of means (one point), or evidence of opportunity (one point). In this sample, six subjects (12 percent of threateners) scored greater than zero on this scale: four scored one, one scored two, and one scored three.

For each threat, coders recorded the target of the threat, who would execute the threat, and the type of harm

threatened. The distribution of the targets of subjects' threats is given in Table 11-10. The most common target was the politician (33 percent), and the second most common class of targets consisted of other public figures or their significant others, protective details, or property (22 percent). Twelve percent of subjects threatened to harm a stereotyped group of people, a class of people, or "everyone"; five percent threatened to harm the politician's significant others or property; four percent threatened to harm themselves; two percent threatened to harm another individual third party or their property; and one percent threatened to harm their own significant others or property.

Thirty-eight percent of the subjects indicated that they or their agents would execute the threats, but others indicated that the threats would be executed by unspecified or vaguely identified third parties (14 percent), by God (nine percent), or by a group (seven percent).

Twenty-nine subjects (34 percent) threatened to kill someone, making homicide the most common threatened harm. The most prevalent type of death threat was a threat to assassinate the politician. Twenty-three percent of all subjects threatened to assassinate the politician, as did 69 percent of those who made any death threat. Others whom the subjects threatened to kill were other public figures (14 percent), people around the politician (four percent), themselves (two percent), and others (two percent).

Other threatened actions included harming someone's career (seven percent), doing something undesirable but unspecified (five percent), injuring someone physically (two percent), stalking, haunting, or hunting someone (two percent), committing arson (two percent) or suicide (two percent), and harming a business (one percent). The specific actions threatened are shown in Table 11-13. Five subjects (six percent) directed such threats toward the politician, seven (eight percent) toward other public figures, none toward themselves, and one toward others.

#### Announcements of Events Concerning the Politician

Seven subjects (eight percent) announced a specific location where something would happen with respect to the politician. Twelve subjects (14 percent) announced a specific time when something would happen with respect to the politician.

#### Weapons

A total of 26 subjects (30 percent) mentioned any weapon in their communications. Only one of these subjects specified that he possessed or had access to weapons.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter we examined the content of subjects' communications to politicians. In particular, we looked at the subjects' perceived relationships to the political

figures, the thematic content of their communications, and the messages and threats they communicated.

Important empirical findings reported in this chapter are:

(1) 40 percent of the subjects postured themselves as enemies of the Member of Congress to whom they wrote.

(2) Less overtly ominous roles in which subjects cast themselves included religious advisers, prophets, and saviors (14 percent); persons with special powers (nine percent); rescuers (seven percent); and lovers and would-be lovers (six percent).

(3) 42 percent of the subjects cast the Member of Congress in an enemy role.

(4) Others subjects considered the Members of Congress to be their rescuers and benefactors (23 percent); their business associates and collaborators (12 percent); their friends and acquaintances (nine percent); their lovers, potential lovers, and would-be lovers (six percent); their beneficiaries (five percent); and their spouses, potential spouses, and suitors (two percent).

(5) The roles in which subjects cast themselves were stable in 92 percent of the cases in which multiple samples over time were available.

(6) Subjects wrote to Members of Congress about political issues (40 percent), the President of the U.S. (35

percent), other government figures (40 percent), political parties or groups (26 percent), entertainment celebrities (13 percent), corporations, corporate executives, or products (six percent), political assassins (five percent), and sports figures (one percent).

(7) 88 percent of the subjects repeatedly mentioned particular themes, most often injustices they perceived themselves as having endured (49 percent). Other themes repeatedly mentioned by subjects included the Member of Congress or another public figure (33 percent), political or governmental themes (33 percent), law enforcement, security, intelligence, or the military (27 percent), religious or mystical themes (23 percent), violence or aggression (24 percent), racial issues (15 percent), and love, marriage, or sexual activity (10 percent).

(8) 80 percent of the subjects evidenced preoccupation, overvalued ideas, or obsession. The topics on which they were pathologically focused included their perceptions of injustices they had endured (38 percent), the Member of Congress or another public figure (21 percent), violence or aggression (17 percent), politics or government (16 percent), religious or mystical themes (14 percent), law enforcement, security, intelligence, or the military (13 percent), racial issues (six percent), and love, marriage, or sexual activity (eight percent).

(9) 58 percent of subjects communicated that their concerns were of extreme importance, great consequence, or grave; 36 percent demanded or ordered the Member of Congress to take particular actions; 35 percent communicated a sense of urgency or emergency, 29 percent demonstrated fanaticism or zealotry, and 16 percent begged or implored.

(10) Subjects' expressed desires included getting information to someone (41 percent), being rescued or assisted (28 cases), marrying or having sex or children with a Member of Congress (eight percent), having face-to-face contact with a Member of Congress (19 percent), or being given something of value (10 percent)

(11) Emotions that subjects seemed to want to evoke among Members of Congress included: worry or anxiety (50 percent), fear (41 percent), upset (21 percent), shame (21 percent), anger (13 percent), love (one percent), and sexual excitement (one percent).

(12) Although seven percent of subjects wrote about sexual activities, none expressed sexual interest in a Member of Congress; one expressed such interest in the wife of a Member.

(13) 58 percent of subjects made at least one threat, broadly defined, and 68 percent of the threateners made two or more threats. Excluding one subject who made 31 threats, the average number of threats per threatener was 3.7.

(14) Among the 50 threateners, 24 subjects (48 percent) made direct threats; 30 made indirect or veiled threats (60 percent); and 25 made conditional threats (50 percent).

(15) Of 211 threats, 89 were direct (42 percent), 76 veiled (36 percent), and 46 conditional (22 percent).

(16) Subjects making conditional threats sought to extort influence or power (40 percent), financial gain (20 percent), personal attention (eight percent), and other benefits (44 percent), not all of which were specified.

(17) Of 211 threats made by subjects, 69 (33 percent) were implausible because they were curses or hexes, evidenced a psychotic notion of causation, or were technically impossible.

(18) Five subjects gave evidence that they had a plan to carry out their threats, two that they had the means to carry out their threats, and two that they had the opportunity to carry out the threat.

(19) Threats were directed primarily toward Members of Congress (33 percent) or their significant others or property (five percent) and toward other public figures or their significant others, protective details, or property (22 percent).

(20) 38 percent of the subjects indicated that they or their agents would execute the threats, but others indicated that the threats would be executed by unspecified or vaguely

identified third parties (14 percent), by God (nine percent), or by a group (seven percent).

(21) 34 percent of the subjects threatened to kill someone. Twenty-three percent of all subjects threatened to assassinate the politician, as did 69 percent of those who made any death threat. Others whom the subjects threatened to kill were other public figures (14 percent), people around the politician (four percent), themselves (two percent), and others (two percent).

(22) Subjects also threatened to harm someone's career (seven percent), do something undesirable but unspecified (five percent), injure someone (two percent), stalk, haunt, or hunt someone (two percent), commit arson (two percent), commit suicide (two percent), or harm a business (one percent). These threats were directed primarily toward a Member of Congress (six percent) or other public figures (eight percent).

(23) Eight percent of the subjects announced a specific location where something would happen to the politician.

(24) 14 percent of the subjects announced a specific time when something would happen to the politician.

(25) 30 percent of the subjects mentioned a weapon, but only one specified that he had access to weapons.

The following chapter explores the approaches subjects made toward politicians.

---

Table 11-1-- Roles in which subjects cast themselves in relation to the politicians to whom they wrote

---

Role	N	(%)
Friend, adviser, or acquaintance	11	(13)
Spouse, would-be spouse, suitor	0	
Lover or would-be lover (sexual)	5	(6)
A special constituent or fan	27	(31)
Business associate, collaborator	8	(9)
Appropriate (one of many constituents or stranger)	15	(17)
Religious adviser, prophet, or savior	12	(14)
Enemy (includes assassin, persecutor, and condemning judge)	34	(40)
Someone with special powers	8	(9)
Family member (child, parent, or sibling)	0	
Rescuer	6	(7)

---

---

 Table 11-2-- Roles in which subjects cast the politicians
 

---

Role	N	(%)
Friend or acquaintance	8	(9)
Spouse, potential spouse, suitor (marriage)	2	(2)
Lover, potential lover, or would-be lover (sex)	5	(6)
Business associate, collaborator	10	(12)
Appropriate (stranger)	76	(88)
Enemy (includes persecutor and conspirator)	36	(42)
Rescuer, benefactor, or potential benefactor	20	(23)
Beneficiary	4	(5)
Family member (child, parent, or sibling)	0	

---

Table 11-3-- Themes mentioned in subjects' communications

Themes	N	(%)
President of the United States	30	(35)
Other government figures	34	(40)
Hinckley	2	(2)
Other assassins	4	(5)
Entertainment figures	11	(13)
Sports figures	1	(1)
Corporations or corporate executives or products	5	(6)
Any political issue	34	(40)
Nuclear war/power	4	(5)
Economy	6	(7)
Middle East	9	(10)
Central America	5	(6)
Iranian hostages	1	(1)
Racial issues	10	(12)
Other legislative issues	2	(2)
Other	25	(30)
Any political party or group	22	(26)
Republican	10	(12)
Democrat	11	(13)
Nazi	2	(2)

Table 11-3 (continued)

Themes	N	(%)
Socialist	1	(1)
Communist	11	(13)
Other	2	(2)

---

Table 11-4 Themes repeatedly mentioned by subjects in their writings.

---

	<u>Repeatedly mentioned</u>		<u>Preoccupied with</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
The politician	18	(21)	11	(13)
Other public figures	22	(26)	15	(17)
Injustice to self	42	(49)	33	(38)
Politics or government	28	(33)	14	(16)
Law enforcement, security, intelligence, or military	23	(27)	11	(13)
Religion or mysticism	20	(23)	12	(14)
Violence or aggression to self or others	21	(24)	15	(17)
Racial issues	13	(15)	5	(6)
Love, marriage, romance	6	(7)	3	(4)
Sexual activity	4	(5)	4	(5)
Union with the politician	2	(2)	2	(2)
Legislation / entertainment products	2	(2)	0	
Becoming a public figure	1	(1)	0	
Rescue of the politician	1	(1)	0	
Occultism, science fiction, or fantasy	1	(1)	0	
Other	32	(37)	27	(31)

---

---

Table 11-5-- Features of insistence in the subjects' first communications

---

Features	N	(%)
Extreme importance, of great consequence, or grave	50	(58)
Begging, imploring	14	(16)
Fanatical, zealous (ideological commitment)	25	(29)
Urgent, emergency	30	(35)
Demanding, ordering	31	(36)

---

---

Table 11-6-- Subjects' expressed desires in their communications to politicians

---

What is Sought	N	(%)
Rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	37	(43)
To get information to someone	35	(41)
Marriage, sex, or having children	7	(8)
Other face-to-face contact	16	(19)
A response by mail or telephone	6	(7)

---

---

**Table 11-7-- Frequency of threats per subject**

---

<b>Number of threats</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
0	36	(42)
1	16	(19)
2	14	(16)
3	4	(5)
4	4	(5)
5 - 9	4	(5)
10 - 14	5	(6)
15 or more	3	(4)

---

Table 11-8-- Distribution of various types of threats among the 211 threats contained in the communications of 50 threateners (percentages refer to total number of threateners)

Number of threats	(N = 89)		(N = 76)		(N = 46)	
	Direct N	(%)	Veiled N	(%)	Conditional N	(%)
1	9	(18)	14	(28)	15	(30)
2	5	(10)	7	(14)	6	(12)
3	2	(4)	2	(4)	1	(2)
4	1	(2)	3	(6)	1	(2)
5	1	(2)	1	(2)		
6	2	(4)				
7	2	(4)	1	(2)		
8			1	(2)		
9	1	(2)				
10			1	(2)		
11						
12					1	(2)
***						
20	1	(2)				

Table 11-9-- Conditions specified by 25 subjects for averting the threatened harm (N = 25 conditional threateners)

Condition	N	(%)
Personal attention <sup>1</sup>	2	(8)
Gaining influence or power <sup>2</sup>	10	(40)
Gaining something of financial value	5	(20)
Other demands (including those unstated)	11	(44)

<sup>1</sup> Includes: "write to me," "call me," "meet me," "marry me," and "acknowledge me."

<sup>2</sup> Includes: "change your product or ways," "deliver my message," and "stop doing what you're doing."

Table 11-10-- Targets of any of the subjects' threats

Target	N	(%)
The politician	28	(33)
A significant other or property of the politician	4	(5)
Another public figure, a protective detail, or a significant other or property of another public figure	19	(22)
Another individual third party or their property	2	(2)
A stereotyped group of people, a class of people, or "everyone"	10	(12)
Him or herself (e.g., self-mutilation; suicide)	3	(4)
His or her own property or significant other(s)	1	(1)

---

**Table 11-11-- By whom subjects indicated threats would be executed**

---

<b>Executor</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>(%)</b>
The subject or an agent of the subject	33	(38)
An unspecified or vaguely identified party (including "persons around you")	12	(14)
God	8	(9)
A stereotypic or named group, or a class of people	6	(7)

---

---

**Table 11-12-- Assassination and death threats**

---

Target	N	(%)
The politician	20	(23)
Someone around the politician	3	(4)
Another public figure	12	(14)
Himself or herself	2	(2)
Other	2	(2)

---

Table 11-13-- Actions threatened

Action	N	(%)
Kill someone	29	(34)
Harm someone sexually	0	
Injure someone physically in other ways	2	(2)
Stalk, haunt, or hunt someone	2	(2)
Harm someone's career	6	(7)
Harm a business	1	(1)
Commit arson	2	(2)
Commit suicide	2	(2)
Otherwise damage or steal possessions	0	
Tamper with a consumer product	0	
Kidnap someone	0	
Do something undesirable but unspecified	4	(5)

## CHAPTER 12

### APPROACHES TOWARD POLITICAL FIGURES

[M]any, not having had the opportunity of acquiring fame by any praiseworthy acts, have endeavored to acquire it by disgraceful ones.

--Niccolo Machiavelli (1882, p. 9.)

In this chapter we examine the information that subjects volunteered about their physical appearance and their movements in pursuit of Members of Congress, along with information developed through investigative sources. Both types of information are important to those protecting public figures who wish to identify those visitors who have given notice of a pathological interest or to predict which subjects will visit. Subjects' approaches to Members of Congress are also described here.

### APPEARANCE AND MOVEMENTS OF SUBJECTS

Data on subjects' appearance, travels, and stalking behavior were collected in two ways: information in letters and information from all other sources (the fruits of investigation). In the following section, we compare the distribution of variables according to these two sources of information. By collecting information from both sources, we hoped to assess the degree to which subjects volunteered valid information.

#### Appearance

Coders noted whether any of seven features of physical appearance were reported by the subjects or otherwise known.

As shown in Table 12-1, very few of these subjects volunteered information on their physical appearance. Investigative sources provided most of the physical descriptions, and in all but six cases, this additional information was obtained at the time the subjects approached the politician.

#### Mobility and Movements

At the time of our data collection, three of the subjects were incapacitated through confinement: one subject was in prison and two in mental hospitals. Seven percent of the subjects had moved their residences in order to remain in physical proximity to the Members of Congress on whom they were focused. This information was learned primarily from sources other than letters, though a few subjects mentioned such moves in their letters. Table 12-2 shows the living quarters of those who moved their residences for this purpose.

Investigative files added little to subjects' letters regarding their known methods of travel, and in this sample, few subjects mentioned how they traveled. The available information is given in Table 12-3. No subjects were known to travel by motorcycle, bicycle, boat, walking long distances, hitchhiking, or stolen vehicle.

These subjects wrote little about their travel. Eighty-four subjects (98 percent) wrote nothing about

travel. Of the two subjects who did, one mentioned a single trip and the other mentioned more than two trips.

Investigative sources did not provide much information about travel, even for subjects who had approached the Member of Congress (see Table 12-4).

One subject reported having traveled without a clear destination, and another was known to have done so from investigative sources. One mentioned traveling to other countries, and another was also known to have done so. No subject volunteered having traveled to stalk the politician, but three were known to have done so through the fruits of investigation.

No subject was known to have engaged in a "delusional search" for the politician (see Chapter 7).

#### Methodical Stalking and Ruses

We were able to identify four subjects (five percent of all subjects and nine percent of approach positives) who had gone beyond traveling for a meeting to behaviors that we would regard as evidence of methodical stalking. The distribution of various types of stalking is shown in Table 12-6, which also shows that two of the four stalkers were identified as such only from investigative sources. Thus, while there are subjects who volunteer information on their stalking in letters, there are others who do not and who are only recognized as methodical stalkers through

investigation. Of the four subjects who were known to stalk, two stalked the politician, one another public figure, and one both the politician and another public figure.

One subject who had threatened to kill a Member of Congress because it was his "destiny" to do so learned that the politician was making an unannounced visit to a particular city, located him there, and lay in wait outside the hotel. Another subject who held the delusion that she was engaged to a Member of Congress made her first approach by going to his home under the pretext of a business call.

Two subjects (two percent) volunteered that they had used a pretext, ruse, disguise, or similar technique to gain information about or get near their targets, and one additional case was identified through investigation, bringing the total to three percent of the sample or seven percent of the subjects who had approached.

#### INTERVENTIONS

An effort was made to collect data on interventions used to manage these cases. These data were incomplete and showed only that eight subjects had been arrested (by the Capitol Police, F.B.I., Secret Service, or other organizations). In no instance was injunctive relief obtained (such as a restraining order). Subjects in the

sampling universe are known to have been civilly committed, but none in the random sample had been. In only three cases was it known that subjects' therapists had been contacted.

#### Others' Awareness of the Subject's Focus on the Politician

Given that notification of the intended victim is among the intervention options for those who become aware of subjects such as these, we sought evidence of whether others were aware of the subject's interest in the politician (not including security personnel). In ten cases, there was evidence that someone other than the Member of Congress or the Capitol Police was aware of the subject's interest in the politician. In descending order of frequency, those known to be aware of this interest were: law enforcement personnel (seven); family members (five); mental health personnel (three); and others (two).

#### APPROACHES

##### Definition

An "approach positive" case in this sample was defined as one in which the subject:

is known to have (1) personally gone to a location believed to be the home of the politician, (2) personally gone to any agency believed to represent the politician (including employees of the politician), (3) personally gone to a location

believed to be the home or business address of any acquaintance, friend, relative, or intimate of the politician, (4) personally approached within five miles of any of the above locations with the expressed intent of seeing, visiting, or confronting any of the above parties, (5) traveled more than 300 miles to see the politician or any of the above parties, even in a public appearance, or (6) behaved in any manner out of the ordinary at any public appearance of the politician.

Although it is not uncommon for normal constituents to travel more than 300 miles to see their representatives, we reasoned that anyone writing a letter odd enough to have been referred for assessment had differentiated himself or herself from the ordinary constituent by writing the odd letter.

Some examples of behaviors that met this definition of approach are provided to illustrate the diversity of behaviors involved:

A man with twelve bizarre aliases, persistently visited at least five congressional offices. He had a history of numerous civil commitments for dangerousness to himself, numerous arrests for petty theft, simple assault, and unlawful entry, and was known to abuse PCP, cocaine, marijuana, and alcohol. He wanted money to finance his effort to travel to a nation whose king he believed himself to be.

\* \* \*

A man hand-delivered to a congressional committee an "assassination list" bearing the names and addresses of marked victims. He requested compensation for his "linguistic analyses," saying he needed the funds to escape Washington before he was caught by the "New York security jet," which flies over Washington conducting "rape and sex torture" on various groups.

\* \* \*

A man with a 15-year history of persecutory delusions had exhausted all the remedies he perceived for ridding himself of the "white collar federal criminals" whose conspiracy prevented his receiving disability benefits to which he believed he was entitled. He was well known to various government agencies whose officials he had harassed through letters, telephone calls, and visits, and to the police agencies which had investigated him over the years. He had been forcibly removed from one of the Senate office buildings six years earlier, but returned to the Capitol complex on at least five occasions in rapid succession to see a Member of Congress whom he thought was the only one who could help him. He was perceived as desperate and frightening. Although he was known to carry a gun when angry, the police were not notified on a timely basis about the recent visits. Thus, apart from entrance screening, no weapons search had been conducted during these most recent visits.

\* \* \*

A man who months earlier had sent a letter to a Member of Congress making reference to an "air machine" was found asleep in his truck near the Capitol. Awakened by police, he said he had been to the White House and would be going to Congress with his "air machine." He had with him a pistol and a Bowie knife and was arrested for transporting a loaded firearm.

Additional illustrations of approaches by these subjects are offered in Chapter 1.

#### Number of Approaches

All subjects had been under investigation for at least six months at the time of data collection (to allow

sufficient opportunity for an approach to be made). Of the 43 approach-positive cases studied, 15 made exactly one known approach, five made two, three made three, one made four, and one made five or more. Nine additional subjects were known to have approached two or more times, but the exact number of approaches was unknown. Thus, 19 of the subjects (56 percent) who made at least one known approach were known to have approached again.

#### Setting of Approach

The most common site for the first known approach was the politician's office in the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hart Senate Office Building, Russell Senate Office Building, Cannon House Office Building, Longworth House Office Building, or Rayburn House Office Building. These were the sites of the first approach for 28 subjects (65 percent of approach-positive cases). Other sites included public appearances (six), the politician's home (two), another public place (one), or elsewhere (one). Two subjects approached significant others or agents of the politician in public places. One subject went to an office believed incorrectly to be that of the politician.

Twenty-eight of the approaches were indoors, five outdoors, and ten were unknown. Of four cases in which lighting condition was known, one occurred in the dark.

Of 25 approaches in which the number of others present was known, four occurred in the presence of a crowd, one

occurred in the presence of 10 or more people or in the midst of street traffic, one among six to ten other persons, ten among three to five persons, eight in the presence of two other persons, none with one other person present, and one with no one present (an item was left and found later).

In five instances, the politician was present at the time of the approach: three times while in a crowd, once while on the street, and once while visiting his home state. In no instance in the statistical sample was the politician known to have been alone when approached. (Table 12-7 shows who was present at the time of the first approach of each subject.

#### Timing of Approach

The time of day was known for 22 cases, among which six were between 6:00 a.m. and noon, thirteen between noon and 6:00 p.m., two between 6:00 p.m. and midnight, and one between midnight and 6:00 a.m.

#### Distance Traveled to Approach

Of 17 persons for whom the distance traveled for the approach was known, none traveled within the city, three from outside the city but within the state, 11 between states but less than 2,000 miles, and three more than 2,000 miles. The means by which subjects traveled for the approach was known for only seven subjects. These subjects traveled long distances by car, bus, or airplane, and

arrived at the site of the approach by car, taxi, stolen vehicle, or on foot.

#### Behavior During Approach

Of 35 subjects for who this information was available, 33 (94 percent) arrived alone, two (six percent) with a compatriot, and none with an organized group. Of six people whose appearance at the time of the approach was known, two were normally groomed and dressed, three were sloppy looking, and one was filthy and in rags.

Of 21 subjects for whom this information was known, two (10 percent) behaved normally, 16 (76 percent) behaved in an odd or unusual manner, and three (14 percent) were incoherent or disorganized. Investigative information recorded on nine cases suggested that five were definitely psychotic at the time of the approach, three were probably psychotic, and one was not apparently psychotic.

#### Crimes During Approach

Crimes committed by subjects during their first known approach incidents are shown in Table 12-8. Four subjects were known to have been carrying firearms at the time of the approach, and one carried an edged weapon. The most frequent chargeable crime committed at the time of an approach was disorderly conduct. Subjects' other crimes included unlawful entry, trespassing, verbal assaults, making threatening gestures, brandishing a weapon, and property damage.

Three subjects were known to have used deceptive techniques (including a con or ruse, sneaking, stealth, or evasion) during their approaches in an attempt to gain access to the politician. Two others used force to gain entry.

#### Age at Approach

The age at the time of a subjects' first known approach ranged from 23 to 83. Of course, subjects who make multiple approaches may do so at various ages, and some cases in the sampling universe had approached many times over the course of years. The age distribution is shown in Table 12-9. The fact that the mean age at the first approach (40.7; S.D. = 13.5) is lower than that of the sample as a whole reflects the differences in the measurement of these two variables. Of necessity, known approaches had occurred prior to inclusion of that data in the study, and subject age was calculated as of the time of data collection.

#### SUMMARY

In this chapter we explored the availability of information on subjects that would help identify them and track their movements. We also presented descriptive data on the approaches made by subjects.

The effort to examine whether the information volunteered by subjects was valid was limited by the small

amount of objective information volunteered by these subjects. In the small number of instances in which both self-reported and independent investigative information were available, they generally corresponded. It was rare to find that a subject had provided misleading information.

Although much of what the subjects wrote about concerned delusional beliefs and psychotic perceptions, we found no evidence that most subjects report anything other than the truth as they believe it to be. (The occasional exception to this rule is rather dramatic, however, and consists of instances in which the information volunteered is completely misleading.)

Important empirical observations reported in this chapter are:

(1) Only about two percent of subjects volunteered information in their letters about various elements of their physical descriptions.

(2) Investigative sources provided information on one-third to one-half of the subjects regarding the various physical descriptors recorded on drivers licenses, but added information about hair style, facial hair, and personal hygiene and grooming for less than 20 percent of the subjects, and this information was usually collected at the time of an approach.

(3) Four percent of the subjects were incapacitated through confinement in prisons or mental hospitals. Ninety-six percent of the subjects were free and at large.

(4) Seven percent of the subjects had moved their residences in order to be closer to the Member of Congress.

(5) Less than ten percent of the subjects volunteered information on the means of transportation they used, and investigative sources added little additional information.

(6) Only two percent of these subjects wrote about particular trips they had taken.

(7) At least 40 percent of the approach-positive subjects had traveled across more than one state in pursuit of the Member of Congress.

(8) At least nine percent of the approach-positive subjects engaged in some form of methodical stalking of the Member of Congress, another public figure, or both, including surveillance of the target's movements from a vehicle, traveling from city to city tracking the target, lying in wait at locations where the target was expected, and determining the target's daily routine or schedule for the purpose of stalking or approaching. In this sample, none of the subjects volunteered in their letters that they were stalking.

(9) At least seven percent of the approach-positive subjects had used a pretext, ruse, disguise, or similar

techniques to locate, obtain information about, or get near their targets.

(10) The data available did not permit valid measurement of the frequency with which various interventions had been employed, but the sample included subjects who had been arrested and whose therapists had been contacted.

(11) For those 12 percent of subjects for whom it was known that someone other than the Member of Congress or the Capitol Police knew of their interest in the politician, the persons with such awareness were most often law enforcement personnel, family members, or mental health workers.

(12) Fifty-six percent of the approach-positive cases approached two or more times.

(13) The most common site for the first known approach was the Member's office in one of the Senate or House office buildings. Sixty-five percent of approach-positive subjects made their first approach there. Fourteen percent first approached at a public appearance, and the remainder approached at the Member's home, another public place, or elsewhere.

(14) Data on the number of other persons present at the time of an approach was often missing, but none of the approaches was known to have occurred when the Member of Congress was alone.

(15) The Member of Congress was present at the time of at least 12 percent of the approaches.

(16) Among cases where this information was available, 94 percent of the subjects arrived alone at the time of the approach, and six percent arrived with a compatriot.

(17) Physical appearance at the time of the approach was known for only six subjects, two of whom were normally dressed and four of whom were visibly sloppy or disheveled.

(18) Normality of outward behavior at the time of the approach was known for only 21 subjects, but among these 10 percent behaved normally and 90 percent behaved oddly or were recognizably disorganized or incoherent. Investigative information recorded on nine cases suggested that all but one of these subjects were recognizably psychotic at the time of the approach.

(19) Although the most frequent chargeable crime committed at the time of an approach was disorderly conduct, 12 percent of the approach-positive subjects were unlawfully carrying weapons (four firearms and one knife), two percent brandished a weapon, and five percent made threatening gestures. Their other crimes included unlawful entry, trespassing, verbal assaults, and property damage.

(20) At the time of the first known approach, subjects ranged in age from 23 to 83, with a mean of 41 years. The age distribution for this sample shows a peak in the late 30s.

In the next chapter, we compare subjects who approached the Member of Congress with those who did not.

Table 12-1-- Sources of information on subjects' appearance

Type of information	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Height	2	(2)	42	(49)
Weight	2	(2)	42	(49)
Hair color	2	(2)	40	(47)
Hair style	2	(2)	7	(8)
Facial hair	2	(2)	17	(20)
Eye color	1	(1)	32	(37)
Personal hygiene and grooming	1	(1)	10	(12)

---

Table 12-2-- Subjects' moving their residence to be in closer proximity to the politician

---

Type of information	From letters <u>alone</u>		From all <u>sources</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Moving his/her residence closer to the politician	2	(2)	6	(7)
Transient lodging	2	(2)	7	(8)
Moved to the same city	1	(1)	1	(1)
Rented or bought property	0		0	
Camping out	0		0	
Lives in car	0		1	(1)

---

Table 12-3-- Subjects' known methods of travel

Method of travel	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Drives a car, van, or truck	0		5	(6)
Long-distance bus	3	(4)	3	(4)
Airplane	1	(1)	3	(4)
Train	0		1	(1)
Local public transportation	1	(1)	1	(1)
Other	2	(2)	1	(1)

---

 Table 12-4-- Frequency with which the subject travels
 

---

Frequency	From letters <u>alone</u>		From all <u>sources</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
No known travel	84	(98)	73	(85)
Only one (1) known trip	1	(1)	5	(6)
Two known trips	0		2	(2)
More than two known trips	1	(1)	6	(7)

---

---

Table 12-5-- Greatest distance the subject is known to have traveled in pursuit of the politician

---

Distance	From letters <u>alone</u>		From all <u>sources</u>	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
No known travel	81	(94)	64	(74)
Local community only	1	(1)	2	(2)
Within 100 miles of home	2	(2)	3	(4)
Across more than one state	0		8	(9)
Extensive distances across at least several states or cross-country	2	(2)	9	(10)
Out of the country	0		0	

---

Table 12-6-- Methodical stalking of politicians

Form of methodical stalking	From letters alone		From all sources	
	N	(%)	N	(%)
Any stalking	2	(2)	4	(5)
Methodical stalking behaviors				
Following the politician by vehicle within visual range	1	(1)	1	(1)
Following politician's movements from city to city	1	(1)	1	(1)
Lying in wait where the politician was expected	2	(2)	3	(4)
Determining politician's daily routine or schedule for purpose of stalking or approaching	1	(1)	3	(4)

---

Table 12-7-- Persons present during approach incidents (N = 43 approach-positive cases)

---

Person	N	(%)
Support or household staff	25	(58)
Protective detail (security)	8	(19)
Member of Congress	5	(12)
Bystanders	4	(9)
Audience	3	(7)
Police	10	(23)
Members of politician's family	2	(5)

---

---

Table 12-8-- Crimes committed during the  
first known approach incidents  
(N = 43 approach-positive cases)

---

Person	N	(%)
Disorderly conduct	13	(30)
Trespassing	3	(7)
Unlawful entry	3	(7)
Carried weapon unlawfully	5	(12)
Face-to-face verbal assault	2	(5)
Threatening gesture without contact	2	(5)
Drew or brandished weapon at person	1	(2)
Damaged property	1	(2)

---

---

Table 12-9-- Subject age at time of first known approach (N = 30 approach-positive cases with valid data)

---

Age	N	(%)
20-24	2	(7)
25-29	3	(10)
30-34	5	(17)
35-39	7	(23)
40-44	4	(13)
45-49	3	(10)
50-54	1	(3)
55-59	2	(7)
60-64	2	(7)
65 and over	1	(3)

---

## CHAPTER 13

### WHICH SUBJECTS APPROACH POLITICAL FIGURES?

In this chapter we take up the question of whether subjects who approached Members of Congress differed from those who did not, and, if so, in what ways they were different. To address this question, we compared 43 approach-negative subjects with 43 approach-positive subjects, using the statistical sample defined in Chapter 3 and described in the preceding chapters. The features on which the two groups were compared are the characteristics of subjects described in Chapter 9, the characteristics of their communications described in Chapters 10 and 11, and selected characteristics of the subjects or their communications that were described in Chapter 12. The statistical conventions applied in Chapter 8 were also applied in this chapter.

#### MENTAL HEALTH HISTORY

A significant association was observed between approach status and subjects' reporting having received any mental health treatment (either outpatient or inpatient). As shown in Table 13-1, subjects who reported either form of treatment were significantly more likely to approach. (Note that this is opposite to the observation in the entertainment industry.) Other aspects of subjects'

reported mental health history were not associated with approach status, including a variable measuring whether the subject made any mention of suicide threats, suicide attempts, thoughts of suicide, or a history of physically self-damaging acts.

#### Signs and Symptoms of Mental Disorder

The only psychotic features that were associated with approach status were the presence of any paranoid delusion, a delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician, and any psychotic feature. Subjects with either of these symptoms were significantly more likely to approach the politician (see Tables 13-2 through 13-4).

Approach status was not associated with the presence or absence of any of the other specific types of delusions (see Table 9-1); "any delusion"; any of the specific types of hallucinations (see Table 9-2); "any hallucination"; or "any thought disorder." Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that both subjects who believed they were married to the Member and all five of those who believed they were lovers of the Member pursued face-to-face encounters.

The only nonpsychotic signs or symptoms of mental disorder that were significantly associated with approach status were social isolation and the subject's belief that others were talking about him or her. Subjects with either of these symptoms were significantly more likely to approach

the politician (see Tables 13-5 and 13-6). Note that while these symptoms may occur in schizotypal personality disorder, they also occur in schizophrenia, particularly among persons with persecutory delusions.

### Diagnosis

None of the diagnoses reported in Chapter 9 was significantly associated with approach status. (In the entertainment industry study, delusional disorder, though uncommon, appeared to be associated with pursuit of an encounter. In this sample, six of the nine subjects diagnosed as suffering delusional disorder approached.)

## BASIC PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES

### Intelligence

There was too little variance in intelligence to compare positives and negatives.

### Emotions Expressed

None of the expressed emotions was associated with approach status, whether taken one at a time or as additive indices of conceptually related emotions.

### Stressful Life Events

There was too little variance in the measurement of stressful life events to compare positives and negatives.

## SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic Information

Subjects who approached (mean age = 43.0; S.D. = 13.1) were not significantly different in age from subjects who did not approach (mean age = 43.8; S.D. = 12.6) (using the best data available on age, whether from letters or investigative sources). Neither sex nor race was associated with approach status.

Family, Social, and Employment History

Most of the variables in this category were missing too often to justify a comparison by approach status, and none of those that could be studied was associated with approach status.

Delinquency and Criminal History

Neither the individual items of past antisocial behavior nor a measure of whether any such behaviors were reported, nor an additive index of the number of such behaviors reported was associated with approach status.

## VOLUME OF COMMUNICATIONS

Quantity

The mean number of pieces of paper on file for subjects did not differ significantly between positives and negatives in the stratified statistical sample. (This is a

confirmation of the success of the effort to insure that the two groups did not differ on the amount of information available, which would have producing meaningless differences between groups.)

Number of Letters and Likelihood of Approach

All of the cases selected for study had been on file for at least six months, thereby permitting each subject the opportunity to approach and to write more than once. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the number of communications was significantly associated with approach status, causing us to stratify the sample by number of communications before randomly sampling approach-positive and approach-negative cases. The evidence of the significant relationship is given in Table 13-7, which is based on a random sample of 97 cases selected from the universe of subjects who had written to Members of Congress (prior to the stratified sampling procedure). Table 13-7 shows that subjects with a single communication were least likely to approach and that those with six or more communications were most likely to approach.

In a random sample of 50 approach-positive letter writers, the mean number of written communications was 7.1 (S.D. = 11.9). In a random sample of 50 approach-negative letter writers, the mean number of communications was 2.2 (S.D. = 2.2). The difference between these means was

statistically significant ( $t = -2.76$ ,  $df = 49$ ;  $p < .008$ ). Thus, subjects who approached sent a significantly greater number of communications to the politician. Note, however, that these communications do not necessarily precede the first approach.

For the same unstratified sample of 100 subjects, a similar association was observed between the total number of pieces of paper in the communications and approach status. After truncating the most extreme cases to a value of 30 pieces of paper (the next highest value being 26), the mean number of pieces of paper for approach-positive subjects was 8.36 (S.D. = 8.8); for approach-negative subjects the mean was 4.9 (S.D. = 5.1) ( $t = -2.24$ .,  $df = 65.1$ ;  $p = .028$ ).

#### Duration

No significant association was observed between duration of correspondence and approach status.

### FORM OF COMMUNICATIONS

#### Identifying Information

Subjects who identified themselves in any way in any of their communications were significantly more likely to approach the politician (see Table 13-8). Thus, completely anonymous letter writers were significantly less likely to make an approach than non-anonymous letter writers.

There was no significant difference between positive and negative cases in the proportion who gave their full name or the proportion who provided their full address.

#### Geography

There was no significant association between approach status and the number of different states from which communications had been mailed.

#### Means of Communication

Subjects who telephoned in addition to writing were significantly more likely to approach the public figure (see Table 13-9).

#### Paper and Handwriting

No significant association was observed between approach status and type of paper used. Subjects with cursive letters (i.e., written by hand, not including hand printing) were significantly less likely to approach (see Table 13-10).

#### Propriety

There were no significant differences between positives and negatives in the use of inappropriate vs. appropriate greetings. Subjects who used an appropriate closing were significantly more likely to approach than those who used an inappropriate closing or none at all (see Table 13-11). As shown in Table 13-12, subjects whose communications were polite were significantly more likely to approach than those

who were impolite (including those which were inconsiderate, rude, vulgar, obscene, or lewd).

#### Appearance and Format

There was no significant association between approach status and either the use of idiosyncratic punctuation or evidence of poor planning of space on the page.

#### Enclosures

There was no significant association between approach status and either any specific enclosure or providing any enclosure.

### SUBJECTS' PERCEIVED RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POLITICIAN

#### Roles

A significant association was observed between subjects taking the roles of "enemy" and of "special constituent" and approach status. Those taking the role of enemy were significantly less likely to approach (see Table 13-13), while those taking the role of a special constituent were significantly more likely to approach (see Table 13-14). Neither the other particular roles listed in Table 11-1 nor change in roles over time was significantly associated with approach status.

Two of the roles in which subjects cast the politician were significantly associated with approach status. As shown in Table 13-15, subjects who cast the politician in an

enemy role were significantly less likely to approach. In contrast, subjects who cast the politician in the role of a benefactor were significantly more likely to approach (see Table 13-16).

Because two of the statistically significant roles were potentially reciprocal to one another, we also examined a variable that combined both: whether the subject cast either himself or the politician in the enemy role. This variable, like those it encompasses, was significantly associated with approach status. As shown in Table 13-17, subjects who cast either themselves or the politician in an enemy role were significantly less likely to approach.

#### Patronage

The measurement of the level of patronage was confounded with the measurement of approach status, since traveling to see the politician was among the criteria for assessing moderate or maximal patronage.

#### Idolatry

The frequency of idolatry in this sample was too low to permit comparisons between positives and negatives.

### THEMATIC CONTENT

#### Mention of Particular Themes

No significant difference was observed between negatives and positives in whether any political theme or party was mentioned.

### Repetitive Themes, Preoccupations, Overvalued Ideas, and Obsessions

Only one of the repeatedly mentioned themes listed in Chapter 11 was associated with approach status. As shown in Table 13-18, subjects who repeatedly mentioned love, marriage, or romance were significantly more likely to approach the politician. None of the preoccupations, overvalued ideas, or obsessions was significantly associated with approach status.

### Degree of Insistence

None of the measures of insistence reported in Chapter 8 was significantly associated with an approach, either alone or when combined in an additive index.

### Wants and Desires

Two of the desires expressed by subjects in their writings were significantly associated with approach status. As shown in Tables 13-19 and 13-20, subjects who expressed a desire for face-to-face contact or for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition were significantly more likely to approach the politician. No significant difference was observed between negatives and positives in their requests for a response by mail or telephone, for getting information to someone, or for marriage, sex, or having children.

### Emotional Provocation

Of the seven types of emotional provocation studied, three were associated with approach status. As shown in

Tables 13-21 to 13-23, subjects who attempted to cause fear, provoke upset, or instill worry in the politician were significantly less likely to approach. These three items were combined as a single variable indicating whether in their writings the subjects ever attempted to frighten the politician. As shown in Table 13-24, this variable was significantly associated with approach status: subjects who attempted to frighten the politician were significantly less likely to approach.

#### Sexual Content

No significant association was observed between approach status and any indication of sexual arousal, any indication of sexual interest (as opposed to romantic interest) in the politician, any mention of sexual activity (including deviant forms), or the expression of sexual desire or mention of sexual fantasies or experiences. In general, these features were identified in very few cases, if at all, in this sample.

#### Threatening Content

Of the 43 approach-negative cases, 36 (84 percent) made one or more threats, broadly defined. Of the 43 approach-positive cases, 14 (33 percent) made one or more threats. The mean number of threats was significantly larger among the approach-negative cases (mean = 3.2; S.D. = 4.2) than among the approach-positive cases (mean = 1.4; S.D. = 3.2) ( $t = 2.30$ ;  $df = 84$  ;  $p = .024$ ).

The presence or absence of a threat was strikingly associated with whether subjects approached or not. As shown in Table 13-25, subjects who threatened were significantly less likely to approach the politician. Among the threateners, however, there was no significant difference in mean number of threats between approach positives and approach negatives.

Few subjects gave evidence of having a plan, the means, or the opportunity to carry out their threats. While those who did primarily approach, the numbers were too small to achieve statistical significance. None of the conditions specified in conditional threats was itself associated with approach; for each condition, those making conditional threats were less likely to approach.

#### Announcements of Events Concerning the Politician

Few subjects announced a specific location where or time when something would happen to the politician, and there was no significant difference between approach-negative and approach-positive cases with respect to either variable or a variable combining both features.

#### Weapons

Twenty-six subjects mentioned any weapon, but this bore no significant relationship to approach status.

## APPEARANCE AND MOVEMENTS OF SUBJECTS

Appearance

Neither the variables related to subjects' physical appearances nor the amount of information subjects volunteered about their appearance was significantly associated with approach status.

Mobility and Movements

Subjects in this sample mentioned having vehicles or travel too infrequently to permit statistical analysis. As expected, however, analyzable measures of mobility and movement were highly associated with approach status. These measures are confounded with approaches, for many approaches require travel. To illustrate the degree of association, Table 13-34 shows that subjects who mentioned traveling to see the politician were significantly more likely to be approach-positive. Note, however, that in some instances, the subject was describing having traveled to see the politician in the past.

Others' Awareness of the Subject's Focus on the Politician

There was no association between others' awareness of the subject's interest in the politician and approach status.

## ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

Although we did not specifically attempt to classify letters as to whether they were "obscene letters," "hate

mail," or "anonymous death threats," we have noted that both public figures and some security personnel use these phrases to dismiss certain classes of communications that they seem to think are harmless. Because of the common use of these concepts, we tried to operationalize them from the data base that we collected and to determine whether they were associated with approach.

#### Hate Mail

Subjects who expressed angry, hateful emotions (hate, aggression, malice, condemnation, punitiveness, revenge-seeking, or inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger) and who either made a threat or attempted to frighten or shame the recipient were classified as hate-mail writers. This variable was significantly associated with approach status. Hate-mail writers were significantly less likely to approach the politician than subjects who were not hate-mail writers (see Table 13-35).

#### Obscene Letters

Subjects who were vulgar, obscene, or lewd in any communication were classified as obscene-letter writers. This variable was significantly associated with approach status. Obscene-letter writers were significantly less likely to approach the politician than subjects who were not obscene-letter writers (see Table 13-36).

Anonymous Death Threats

Subjects who never identified themselves in any way in any known communication (neither name nor address) who also threatened to kill either the politician, another public figure, someone around a public figure, or anyone else besides themselves were classified as anonymous-death-threat writers. As shown in Table 13-37, anonymous-death-threat writers were significantly less likely to approach than other subjects. Of course it is possible that approaches made by these subjects were never connected to their letters.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter, we compared 43 subjects who both wrote to and pursued a face-to-face encounter with a Member of Congress and 43 subjects who wrote but did not pursue an encounter. We found a positive association between the number of mailings and the likelihood of approach, confirming an analogous finding reported in Chapter 8 for subjects writing to Hollywood celebrities. We found significant differences between those who approached and those who did not in many of the same areas of behavior in which significant differences were found in the celebrity study, too, including mental health history, symptoms, volume of communications, whether the subject provided identifying information, means of communication used,

repeatedly mentioned themes, expressed desires, emotional provocation, mobility, sending hate mail, and sending obscene mail.

Significant differences were also found for features that were not significant in the other study, including handwriting, propriety, role perceptions, and threatening statements. In contrast to the entertainment industry study, we did not observe any association between approaches to politicians and emotional expression, duration of communications, geography of postmarks on letters, type of paper used, or enclosures to the communications. Nor did we find significant differences in intelligence, stressful life events, sexual content of letters, or announcements concerning the politician, perhaps because there was too little variation in these variables to adequately study their relationship to approach behavior.

In Chapter 8 we reported some significant negative findings, namely that diagnosis, suicidality, insistence, and physical appearance were not associated with whether subjects approached. Each of these findings was confirmed in this sample, too.

The most striking and robust difference between the findings reported here and those from the other study, however, is the discovery of a strong association between making threats and not approaching. Subjects who sent

threats to a Member of Congress were significantly less likely to pursue a face-to-face encounter with the Member. Subjects who sent inappropriate letters that contained no threats were significantly more likely to pursue a face-to-face encounter. Likewise, a new measure of anonymous death threats (unavailable in the earlier study) showed a significant association with approach: subjects who made an anonymous death threat toward anyone were significantly less likely to pursue an encounter with the Member of Congress.

It is unnecessary to review here each of the specific differences between approach-negative and approach-positive subjects because we do so in the next chapter, where we examine the risk factors for approach behavior and develop scales for predicting approaches.

Table 13-1-- Self-reported mental health treatment (either outpatient treatment or psychiatric hospitalization)

Reports any psychiatric treatment	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	9 (21)	19 (44)	4.29
No	34 (79)	24 (56)	p < .04

Table 13-2-- Any paranoid delusion (N = 86)

Any paranoid delusion	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	30 (70)	39 (91)	4.69
No	13 (30)	4 (9)	p = .03

Table 13-3-- Delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician (N = 86)

Delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	14 (33)	30 (70)	4.86
No	29 (67)	13 (30)	p = .001

Table 13-4-- Any psychotic feature (delusions, hallucinations, or thought disorder) (N = 86)

Any psychotic feature	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	35 (81)	42 (98)	4.47
No	8 (19)	1 (2)	p < .04

Table 13-5-- Social isolation (N = 86)

Social isolation	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	3 (7)	12 (28)	5.17
No	40 (93)	31 (72)	p < .03

Table 13-6-- Subject believes others are talking about him or her (N = 86)

Believes others are talking about him	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	3 (7)	13 (30)	6.22
No	40 (93)	30 (70)	p = .013

Table 13-7-- Number of communications (N = 97 cases prior to stratified sampling)

Number of communications	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
1	30 (60)	19 (40)	7.18
2-5	16 (32)	15 (32)	p = .028
6 or more	4 (8)	13 (28)	

Table 13-8-- Providing any identifying information in correspondence (N = 84)

Provided identifying information	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	32 (76)	40 (95)	4.76
No	10 (24)	2 (5)	p < .03

Table 13-9-- Telephoning in addition to writing

Telephoned	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	1 (2)	10 (23)	6.67
No	42 (98)	33 (77)	p < .01

Table 13-10-- Handwriting (N = 86)

Type of writing	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Handwriting	22 (51)	9 (21)	7.26
Other writing	21 (49)	34 (79)	p = .007

Table 13-11-- Appropriate closings (N = 80)

Closing	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Appropriate closing	7 (17)	21 (54)	10.32
Any other closing	34 (83)	18 (46)	p < .002

Table 13-12 -- Politeness (N = 75)

Polite	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	16 (41)	29 (81)	10.60
No	23 (59)	7 (19)	p = .001

Table 13-13-- Enemy role<sup>1</sup>

Enemy role	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	25 (58)	9 (21)	10.94
No	18 (42)	34 (79)	p = .0009

<sup>1</sup> Includes the roles of assassin, persecutor, and condemning judge.

Table 13-14-- Special constituent role

Special constituent role	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	7 (16)	20 (46)	7.77
No	36 (84)	23 (54)	p = .0053

Table 13-15-- Politician cast in enemy role<sup>1</sup>

Politician cast in enemy role	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	26 (60)	10 (23)	10.75
No	17 (40)	33 (77)	p = .001

<sup>1</sup> Includes the roles of persecutor and conspirator.

Table 13-16-- Politician cast in benefactor role<sup>1</sup>

Politician cast in benefactor role	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	4	(9)	16	(37)	7.88
No	39	(91)	27	(63)	p = .005

<sup>1</sup> Includes the roles of rescuer, benefactor, or potential benefactor.

Table 13-17-- Subject casts either himself or the politician in enemy role

Either party cast in enemy role	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	32	(74)	13	(30)	15.10
No	11	(26)	30	(70)	p = .0001

Table 13-18-- Repeated mention of love, marriage, or romance

Repeatedly mentions love, marriage, or romance	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	0		6	(14)	4.48
No	43	(100)	37	(86)	p = .034

Table 13-19-- Expressed desire for face-to-face contact with the politician (N = 86)

Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	3 (7)	13 (30)	6.23
No	40 (93)	30 (70)	p < .02

Table 13-20-- Expressed desire for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition (N = 86)

Expresses desire for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	13 (30)	24 (56)	4.75
No	30 (70)	19 (44)	p < .03

Table 13-21-- Attempts to instill fear

Attempts to instill fear in politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	26 (60)	9 (21)	12.33
No	17 (40)	34 (79)	p = .0004

Table 13-22-- Attempts to provoke upset (N = 86)

Attempts to provoke upset in politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	15 (35)	5 (12)	5.28
No	28 (65)	38 (88)	p = .022

Table 13-23-- Attempts to provoke worry (N = 86)

Attempts to instill worry in politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	28 (65)	15 (35)	6.70
No	15 (35)	28 (65)	p < .01

Table 13-24-- Attempts to frighten<sup>1</sup> the politician (N = 86)

Attempts to frighten the politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	33 (77)	18 (42)	9.44
No	10 (23)	25 (58)	p = .002

<sup>1</sup> Includes attempts to cause fear, provoke upset, or instill worry.

Table 13-25-- Any threat

Any threat	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	36	(84)	14	(33)	21.07
No	7	(16)	29	(67)	p < .00001

Table 13-26-- Subject threatened to harm the person, associates, or property of any public figure

Threatened any kind of harm toward any public figure	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	28	(65)	13	(30)	9.14
No	15	(35)	37	(70)	p < .003

Table 13-27-- Subject threatened to kill the politician, those around the politician, or any other public figure

Threatened to kill any public figure or those around a public figure	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	20	(46)	8	(19)	6.41
No	23	(54)	35	(81)	p = .011

Table 13-28-- Subject claimed that the threat would be executed by the subject or an agent of the subject

Threat to be executed by subject or his agent	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	23 (54)	10 (23)	7.08
No	20 (46)	33 (77)	p < .008

Table 13-29-- Subject claimed that the threat would be executed by an unspecified or vaguely identified party, by a group or class of people, or by God

Threat to be executed by someone other than the subject or his agent	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	17 (40)	7 (16)	4.68
No	26 (61)	36 (84)	p = .03

Table 13-30-- Any direct threat

Any direct threat	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	17 (40)	7 (16)	4.68
No	26 (60)	36 (84)	p = .03

Table 13-31-- Any veiled threat

Any veiled threat	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	21 (49)	9 (21)	6.19
No	22 (51)	34 (79)	p = .013

Table 13-32-- Any conditional threat

Any conditional threat	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	17 (40)	8 (19)	3.65
No	26 (60)	35 (81)	p = .05

Table 13-33-- Any implausible threats,<sup>1</sup> by approach

Any implausible threat	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	14 (33)	3 (7)	7.33
No	29 (67)	40 (93)	p < .007

<sup>1</sup> Includes those implausible because of a psychotic notion of causation, because of technical impossibility, or because the threat is a mere curse or hex.

Table 13-34-- Mentions traveling to see the politician  
(N = 86)

Mention of traveling to see the politician	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	1 (2)	11 (26)	7.84
No	42 (98)	32 (74)	p = .005

Table 13-35-- Hate-mail writer

Hate-mail writer	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	34 (79)	16 (37)	13.81
No	9 (21)	27 (63)	p = .0002

Table 13-36-- Obscene-letter writers (N = 86)

Obscene-letter writer	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Chi-square probability
Yes	11 (26)	1 (2)	7.84
No	32 (74)	42 (98)	p = .005

Table 13-37-- Anonymous death threat writers (N = 86)

Anonymous death threat writers	Approach Negative		Approach Positive		Chi-square probability
	N	(%)	N	(%)	
Yes	8	(19)	1	(2)	4.47
No	35	(81)	42	(98)	p = .035

## CHAPTER 14

### PREDICTION OF APPROACHES TO PUBLIC FIGURES

In this chapter, we examine risk factors for approaches to entertainment celebrities, political figures, and public figures in general. The specific risk factors found in the studies reported in earlier chapters are used to develop scales for the prediction of approaches from letters, and these scales are then subjected to various tests of validity and their power to distinguish subjects who pursue a face-to-face encounter with a public figure from those who do not. We also explore here other efforts to predict approaches.

In Chapters 8 and 13 we compared the approach-positive and approach-negative subjects in the entertainment industry and political arena, respectively. In each sample, we found significant differences between approach-positive and approach-negative groups on a wide range of variables. Not surprisingly, no single variable that was represented often enough to subject to statistical analysis discriminated perfectly between these groups. Nonetheless, each discriminating variable may be viewed as a "risk factor" for approach behavior.

Risk factors may be divided into two groups: risk-enhancing factors, which are associated with an increased probability of an approach, and risk-reducing factors, which

are associated with a decreased probability of an approach. Note, however, that the statistical associations that identify a variable as a risk factor are not necessarily evidence that the factor is causal or even predictive of future approaches. Several features of the research attenuate the predictive power of the associations observed.

First, as noted in Chapter 3 and elsewhere, subjects were included in the sample who hand-delivered their first known written communication. The approach in which the communication was delivered could not have been predicted from writings that were only received during the approach.

Second, some variables may be confounded with whether a subject approaches. For example, information sometimes became available during an approach that was not known in advance from any source. This was particularly true for information on frequency of travel and physical appearance. Such information could produce statistically significant differences between subjects who approach and those who do not even if there were no true difference between groups or if such information could not become known prior to an approach and could therefore not be used for predictive purposes.

In this chapter, we explore risk factors for approach with a recognition of these limitations, and we build some simple risk-factor scales from those risk factors that we have no reason to believe are confounded with approach.

## RISK FACTORS IN THE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY

Table 14-1 summarizes the factors identified in letters to celebrities as significantly associated with making an approach (see Chapter 8) by listing each of these risk-enhancing factors. For each variable, Table 14-1 gives the percentage of approach-negatives who had the feature, the percentage of approach-positives who had the feature, and the level of statistical significance when the variable is bifurcated and tested by Chi-square. (For a few variables, the tests of significance were run with the variable dichotomized as indicated here, even though earlier descriptive chapters report statistics on the variable in a continuous distribution or when classified into more than two categories).

Table 14-2 lists all of the risk-reducing factors identified in written communications to celebrities, giving the variable, the percentage of approach-negatives who had each feature, the percentage of approach-positives who had each feature, and the level of statistical significance when the variable is bifurcated and tested by Chi-square.

Note that from the percentage data given in Tables 14-1 and 14-2, it is possible to inspect how the distribution of each variable differs between negative and positive subjects. Such inspection can provide some indication of

the utility of individual variables as a basis for distinguishing the two groups, but is quite vulnerable to misunderstanding. For example, the first variable in Table 14-1, the subject having expressed a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity, occurred among 54 percent of the approach-positive subjects and 26 percent of the approach-negative subjects. Although tempting to do so, it would be incorrect to infer that a subject with this feature was slightly more than twice as likely to approach as not to approach (i.e., a risk of approach greater than .67 percent). It would be incorrect because the table does not reflect the base rate of approaches in the universe of letter writers. To calculate the correct odds of approach is a somewhat more complicated task.

As noted in Chapter 3, 12 percent of the letter writers approached. Among the 88 percent who did not approach (who numbered 1272), 26 percent or 331 had expressed a desire for face-to-face contact. Among the 170 who approached, 54 percent or 92 had expressed a desire for face-to-face contact. Adding 331 and 92, we find that there were about 423 subjects who expressed a desire for face-to-face contact, of whom 92 or 22 percent approached. Thus, if one knew nothing but this fact, an expression of a desire for face-to-face contact would indicate a risk of approach of 22 percent. This is an improvement on the base-rate prediction

of 12 percent, but is a long way from the better than 67 percent prediction that the unwary reader might erroneously calculate from Table 14-1. In any event, predictions should not be made on the basis of single variables where more information is available.

Of the 30 variables listed in Tables 14-1 and 14-2, two may be confounded with the dependent variable (approach status). The variable "one or more known trips" may be confounded because the only trip known was sometimes that necessary for the approach. The variable "mentions traveling to see the celebrity" may be confounded because of instances in which a subject noted in a hand-delivered communication that he had traveled to see the celebrity and because of instances in which subjects referred to such travel in post-approach letters.

#### Scale A1

In order to determine how well the variables in Tables 14-1 and 14-2 discriminated between approach-negative and approach-positive cases in the sample of subjects writing to celebrities, a scale was constructed that provided one positive point for each risk-enhancing variable (i.e., those listed in Table 14-1) and one negative point for each risk-reducing variable (i.e., those listed in Table 14-2).

Based on an examination of the distribution of the raw data from this scale, a constant of +1 was added to the raw

scores in order to have the median value for the scale centered at zero. The two potentially confounded variables were not included in the scale. Thus, potential scores on this scale range from -15 to +13. This scale is named A1. (Note that each of the scales developed on the basis of subjects who wrote to celebrities is designated "A," that each of those developed on the basis of subjects who wrote to Members of Congress is designated "B," and that each of those using information from both samples is designated "C.")

This scale was applied to both data sets, i.e., subjects who had written to celebrities and subjects who had written to politicians. The subjects who had written to politicians had a different median score on this scale, for the distribution of positive and negative values was different among these subjects. To adjust for this difference in median value, an additional variable was added to the scale: Recipient is a politician. This variable was assigned a value of +2. Thus, scores for those who had written to celebrities did not change as a result of adding this variable, but scores for those who wrote to politicians were changed so as to result in a median of zero on the scale. (Similar adjustments were made where necessary for each of the other scales described below.)

The variables in the finalized scale are shown in Table 14-3, along with the values assigned for each variable.

Table 14-4 shows the distribution of scores for approach-negative and approach-positive subjects who wrote to celebrities. Actual scores ranged from -10 to +8. Inspection of the data in Table 14-4 indicates that extreme negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while extreme positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. In a subsequent portion of this chapter, the success of this and other scales in distinguishing approach-negative and approach-positive cases is considered more formally. Here, however, it is notable that the mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-4.

#### Scale A2

A number of the variables in Scale A1 co-vary to some degree because they encompass elements of other variables in the scale. This results in an arbitrary weighting of variables inasmuch as the same attribute may account for more than one point being added to the scale. Thus, a restricted scale was devised that eliminated these potential redundancies. This scale, named Scale A2, also needed calibration by adding a constant of +1 so that the median would be centered at zero. (For subjects who wrote to politicians, an additional calibration of +1 was necessary

to achieve a median of zero.) Table 14-5 gives this scale in its entirety.

Table 14-6 shows the distribution of scores for approach-negative and approach-positive subjects who wrote to celebrities. Actual scores ranged from -7 to +7. Inspection of the data in Table 14-6 indicates that extreme negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while extreme positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. The mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-6.

#### RISK FACTORS IN THE POLITICAL ARENA

Table 14-7 summarizes the factors identified in letters to Members of Congress as significantly associated with making an approach (see Chapter 13) by listing each of these risk-enhancing factors. For each variable, Table 14-7 gives the percentage of approach-negatives who had each feature, the percentage of approach-positives who had each feature, and the level of statistical significance when the variable is bifurcated and tested by Chi-square.

Table 14-8 lists all of the risk-reducing factors identified in written communications to Members of Congress, giving the variable, the percentage of approach-negatives

who had each feature, the percentage of approach-positives who had each feature, and the level of statistical significance when the variable is bifurcated and tested by Chi-square.

Of the 36 variables listed in Tables 14-7 and 14-8, one may be confounded with the dependent variable (approach status). That is the variable "mentions traveling to see the politician," which may be confounded because of instances in which a subject noted in a hand-delivered communication that he had traveled to see the politician and because of instances in which subjects referred to such travel in post-approach letters.

#### Scale B1

In order to determine how well the variables in Tables 14-7 and 14-8 discriminated between approach-negative and approach-positive cases in the political sample, a scale was constructed that provided one positive point for each risk-enhancing variable (i.e., those listed in Table 14-7) and one negative point for each risk-reducing variable (i.e., those listed in Table 14-8). The one confounded variable was not included in the scale. Thus, potential scores on this scale range from -20 to +15. (For subjects who wrote to celebrities, an adjustment of -4 was necessary to achieve a median of zero.) This scale, named Scale B1, is shown in Table 14-9.

The distributions of scores on Scale B1 for approach-negative and approach-positive cases are shown in Table 14-10, along with summary statistics. Actual scores ranged from -16 to +12. Inspection of the data in Table 14-10 indicates that extreme negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while extreme positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. The mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-10.

#### Scale B2

A number of the variables in Scale B1, particularly those characterizing various aspects of threats, co-vary to some degree because they encompass elements of other variables in the scale. This provides an unintended weighting of variables inasmuch as the same attribute may lead to more than one point being added to the scale. Thus, a restricted scale was devised that eliminated these potential redundancies. This scale, named Scale B2, needed calibration by subtracting a constant of -3 so that the median would be centered at zero. (For subjects who wrote to celebrities, an adjustment of -1 was necessary to achieve a median of zero.)

The distributions of scores on Scale B2 for approach-negative and approach-positive cases are shown in Table 14-

12, along with summary statistics. Actual scores ranged from -6 to +7. Inspection of the data in Table 14-12 indicates that extreme negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while extreme positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. The mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-12.

#### GENERALIZED RISK FACTORS

Ideally, a single scale would discriminate approach-negative from approach-positive cases in both samples. Efforts were therefore directed toward developing a scale that would have utility in analyzing cases from both kinds of samples.

A comparison of Tables 14-1 and 14-2 with Tables 14-7 and 14-8 will show that there were four variables that were significant in both samples and with an association in the same direction. Other variables, however, were significant in both samples with associations in opposite directions. Most of the variables were significant in only one of the two samples.

#### Scale C1

The four variables that were significant in the same direction in each sample were: hate mail, obscene mail,

telephoning, and an expressed desire for face-to-face contact. A scale was constructed by assigning one negative point to each of the two risk-reducing factors (hate mail and obscene mail) and one positive point to each of the risk-enhancing variables (telephoning and expressing a desire for face-to-face contact). Each subject was assigned a score on this scale, which ranges from -2 to +2. The scale was named Scale C1 and is shown in Table 14-13.

The distributions of scores on Scale C1 for approach-negative and approach-positive cases from both samples are shown in Table 14-14, along with summary statistics. Actual scores ranged from -2 to +2. Inspection of the data in Table 14-14 indicates that negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. In each sample, the mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-14.

#### Scale C2

For each of the non-redundant and non-confounded variables that was a statistically significant risk factor in one sample but not the other, we examined the ratio of approach-positive to approach-negative cases in the sample in which statistical significance was not achieved. Of 28

variables screened in this way, ten had ratios that were in the opposite direction from that expected on the basis of the statistically significant association in the other sample. Seven had ratios of 1.00, and eleven had ratios in the expected direction. The two highest ratios among these latter were for the variables "reports one or more stressful life events" and "duration of correspondence one year or more." These two variables were added to the variables in Scale C1 to form Scale C2. The scale was calibrated by adding -1 to each value in order to center the median at zero. For subjects who wrote to politicians, an adjustment of +1 was necessary to achieve a median of zero. This scale has possible values from -3 to +5 and is shown in its entirety in Table 14-15.

The distributions of scores on Scale C2 for approach-negative and approach-positive cases from both samples are shown in Table 14-16, along with summary statistics. Actual scores ranged from -3 to +3. Inspection of the data in Table 14-16 indicates that negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. In each sample, the mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-16.

Scale C3

As noted above, there were four variables that were statistically significant in both samples in the same direction, 11 that were statistically significant in one sample and showed a trend in the same direction in the other sample, and seven that were statistically significant in one sample and distributed identically among the approach-negative and approach-positive cases in the other sample. These 22 variables were used to create a scale named Scale C3. For subjects who wrote to celebrities, an adjustment of -1 was necessary to achieve a median of zero. For subjects who wrote to politicians, an adjustment of +2 was necessary to achieve a median of zero. This scale has possible values from -10 to +15 and is shown in Table 14-17.

The distributions of scores on Scale C3 for approach-negative and approach-positive cases from both samples are shown in Table 14-18, along with summary statistics. Actual scores ranged from -8 to +7. Inspection of the data in Table 14-18 indicates that extreme negative scores occurred primarily for approach-negative subjects, while extreme positive scores occurred primarily for approach-positive subjects. In each sample, the mean score for approach-negative subjects was significantly lower than that for approach-positive subjects ( $p < .001$ ), as indicated by the statistics given at the bottom of Table 14-18.

## VALIDITY OF THE RISK FACTOR SCALES

In this section we test the validity of the scales by applying each scale to samples other than those from which it was derived.

Cross-Validation of Risk Factor Scales

The question naturally arises as to whether risk factors identified in the entertainment industry study are also applicable in the political arena, and vice versa. The first effort to explore this question was to apply Scales A1 and A2, which were developed exclusively from data on celebrity cases, to the data from subjects who wrote to Members of Congress. The results of these applications are shown in Tables 14-19 and 14-20. Table 14-19 shows that for political cases, the mean scores on Scale A1 were significantly higher ( $p = .011$ ) for subjects who approached than for those who did not approach. Table 14-20 shows that for political cases, the mean scores on Scale A2 were significantly higher ( $p = .004$ ) for subjects who approached than for those who did not approach. Thus, these two scales succeeded in this test of cross-validation.

The second effort at cross-validation applies Scales B1 and B2, which were derived exclusively from data on political cases, to the data derived from subjects who wrote to entertainment figures. The results of these applications

are shown in Tables 14-21 and 14-22. Table 14-21 shows that for celebrity cases, the mean scores on Scale B1 were not significantly different between subjects who approached and those who did not. Table 14-22 shows that for celebrity cases, the mean scores on Scale B2 were significantly higher ( $p = .023$ ) for subjects who approached than for those who did not approach. Thus, only Scale B2 succeeded in this test of cross-validation.

#### Application of Risk Factor Scales to Test Cases

A small sample of cases was coded that was not used in developing the various scales. These cases were "saved" for use in testing the various scales. The sample consists of 14 cases from the files of the United States Capitol Police. This sample is referred to in various tables as the "political test cases."

The 14 cases are not truly representative of all cases in the Capitol Police files for two reasons. First, they were part of the originally selected sample of 100 cases (50 negative and 50 positive) selected for the purpose of counting the number of communications. Thus, the ratio of approach to non-approach cases is artificially set at 1:1 and is not reflective of the true base rate of approach. Second, these are the cases that were not included in the statistical sample after the matching procedure. As noted in Chapter 13, subjects who approached averaged a larger

number of communications than those who did not approach. The 14 cases in this test sample were those randomly discarded when the matching procedure was undertaken. The seven approach-negative cases in this sample were all single communication cases, while the seven approach-positive cases in this sample were all multiple communication cases.

Ideally, one would test the various scales on a large sample of randomly selected cases representative of the entire universe of persons who write to public figures. Such a test is beyond the scope of this report, and the only data at hand for a test of "unknown" cases is the application of the seven scales to the 14 political test cases.

Tables 14-23 to 14-29 show the results when each of the seven scales was applied to the 14 political test cases. From both the distribution of scores and the statistics presented at the bottom of each table it is possible to make a preliminary assessment of the success of each scale in discriminating subjects who approach from those who do not.

Both scales derived entirely from celebrity cases failed to distinguish approach-negative from approach-positive political test cases. An inspection of the distribution of scores in Tables 14-23 and 14-24 shows no clear trend. The mean scores of approach-negative and approach-positive political test cases did not differ significantly on Scale A1 or Scale A2.

In contrast, both scales derived entirely from political cases functioned successfully at the same task. An inspection of the distribution of scores in Tables 14-25 and 14-26 shows that approach-negative cases had predominantly negative scores on each scale, while approach-positive cases had predominantly positive scores on each scale. The mean scores of approach-negative and approach-positive political test cases were significantly different on both Scale B1 ( $p = .016$ ) and Scale B2 ( $p = .001$ ).

The jointly derived scales performed nearly as well with the political test cases. An inspection of the distribution of scores on Scale C1 (Table 14-27) shows a trend in the expected direction, but insufficient variation in scores to discriminate the groups, reflected in a difference between the means that was not statistically significant. Inspection of Tables 14-28 and 14-29, however, shows that approach-negative cases had predominantly negative or zero scores on both Scale C2 and Scale C3, while approach-positive cases had predominantly positive scores on each scale. The mean scores of approach-negative and approach-positive political test cases were significantly different on both Scale C2 ( $p = .005$ ) and Scale C3 ( $p = .003$ ).

Thus, Scales B1, B2, C2, and C3-- derived from either political cases or both political and celebrity cases--

showed promise as practical tools for distinguishing which subjects who write inappropriate communications to political figures will pursue a face-to-face encounter. To explore exactly how well the scales performed, we tested their discriminating power, as described in the following section.

#### DISCRIMINATING POWER OF THE RISK FACTOR SCALES

Inspection of the distributions of cases according to the various scales reported above gives some indication of the power of each scale to discriminate approach-negative from approach-positive cases in these samples, and the Chi-square values and significance indicate whether the scales are statistically associated with approach behavior. In order to compare one scale with another, however, it is useful to have a standardized procedure for evaluating their discriminating power. For this purpose, we use the statistics routinely used to assess the value of diagnostic or predictive tests.

It is important to note at the outset that when we apply these tests to these data, we are not truly testing the predictive power of the scales because the base rate of the criterion behavior-- approach status-- was artificially constrained in all three samples to 50 percent, when the true base rate is closer to 12 percent. Also, the reader should remember that any "predictive" instrument is expected

on a statistical basis to perform better on the sample from which it was derived than on other samples. Only tests on fresh samples can truly validate the scales, and we have only the 14 political test cases at hand with which to do this.

The five statistics reported here for each application of the scales are "sensitivity," a measure of how well the scale does at detecting those who truly approach; "specificity," a measure of how well the scale does at selecting only those who truly approach; the "power of positive prediction," a measure of the proportion of those "predicted" to approach who truly did; the "power of negative prediction," a measure of the proportion of those "predicted" to be non-approachers who were truly non-approachers; and "global hit rate," the proportion of "predictions" that were correct.

As with all scales, the selection of the dividing line between high scores and low scores determines to some extent the "balance" between sensitivity and specificity. By lowering the dividing line or threshold score for a positive prediction, the sensitivity can be increased, but always at the expense of specificity. Likewise, by raising the dividing line or threshold score for a positive prediction, the specificity can be increased, but always at the expense of sensitivity. For applied purposes, the decision of where

to set the dividing line is thus always a question of whether one wants to reduce the number of false positives despite an increase in the number of false negatives, or whether one would prefer to reduce the number of false negatives despite an increase in the number of false positives. We do not discuss all of the possibilities for each scale because of the large number of permutations that would result. We do, however, show each scale with two different "dividing lines" to illustrate the implications of this choice.

Tables 14-30 through 14-43 show the distribution of cases according to low and high scores on each scale, by approach status, and give Chi-square statistics and the five "predictive test" statistics described above for each application of each scale. Each scale is applied to the three samples described earlier: the subjects who wrote to Hollywood celebrities ( $N = 214$ ), the subjects who wrote to Members of Congress ( $N = 86$ ), and the "fresh" political test cases ( $N = 14$ ).

Two tables are presented for each scale. The first of the two tables illustrates the discriminating power of the scale when scores of 0 or lower are interpreted as a negative prediction of an approach and scores of +1 or higher are interpreted as a positive prediction of an approach. The second table for each scale illustrates the

discriminating power of the scale when scores of -1 or lower are interpreted as a negative prediction of an approach and scores of 0 or higher are interpreted as a positive prediction of an approach. To illustrate the interpretation of Tables 14-30 through 14-43, the first two are described in detail in evaluating Scale A1.

#### Scale A1

Applying Scale A1 to all three samples, it succeeded in "predicting" approaches better than chance for the celebrity cases for which it was intended, but not for the political cases or the political test cases. Applied to the celebrity cases with a threshold of +1 or higher for a positive prediction, the sensitivity was 61 percent and the specificity was 86 percent (Table 14-30). Applied to the celebrity cases with the alternative threshold of 0 or higher for a positive prediction, the sensitivity was improved to 75 percent, but at the expense of decreasing the specificity to 67 percent (Table 14-31). The global hit rates were similar, at 73 percent and 71 percent, respectively.

Note that the data in Table 14-30 show that when Scale A1 was applied to the celebrity cases with the first threshold, it correctly predicted 65 of the 107 approaches (true positives), but it predicted that 15 other subjects would approach who did not (false positives). It correctly

predicted that 92 subjects would not approach (true negatives), but incorrectly predicted non-approach for 42 other subjects who did approach (false negatives). Whether this or any other ratio of false positives to false negatives is acceptable depends entirely on the consequences of each type of error.

If the cost of false positive errors is small compared to the cost of false negative errors, one would be better served by the alternative threshold. When Scale A1 was applied to the celebrity cases with the second threshold, it correctly predicted 80 of the 107 approaches (true positives), but it predicted that 27 other subjects would approach who did not (false positives). It correctly predicted that 72 subjects would not approach (true negatives), but incorrectly predicted non-approach for 27 other subjects who did approach (false negatives).

If even this ratio of false negatives to false positives were unacceptable, one would want to lower the threshold still further. As illustrated by the distribution of raw scores on each scale in other tables in this chapter, it is possible for most scales to choose a decision point that correctly identifies all or nearly all of the subjects who approach. When this is done, however, one loses so much in specificity that a large proportion of those predicted to approach are actually false positives. All predictive

scales and even diagnostic tests are subject to these problems, whether or not this is made explicit to those who rely on the test findings, and the results reported here are remarkably good for the behavioral sciences.

#### Scale A2

Applied to the celebrity cases for which it was intended, the results were statistically significant ( $p < .0001$ ), and the global hit rate was 73 percent with either threshold. But applied to political cases the results were statistically significant only with the second threshold ( $p = .0093$ ), with a global hit rate of 65 percent. Applied to political test cases, Scale A2 failed completely.

#### Scale B1

Applied to the political cases for which it was intended, Scale B1 achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and global hit rates of 78 and 79 percent among the larger sample, but the sample was too small to demonstrate statistical significance among the political test cases despite global hit rates of 71 percent at both thresholds.

#### Scale B2

Scale B2 succeeded in each of the political samples for which it was intended. With subjects from the larger sample, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) at each threshold and global hit rates of 83 and 80 percent,

respectively. With subjects from the smaller political test case sample, it achieved statistical significance at each thresholds ( $p < .01$  and  $p < .05$ , respectively) and global hit rates of 86 and 79 percent, respectively. For celebrity cases, however, Scale B2 failed.

#### Scale C1

Scale C1, intended for application to any case involving a public figure, succeeded in predicting approaches toward both celebrities and politicians in the two larger samples. Applied to celebrity cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 68 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p = .0097$ ) and a global hit rate of 57 percent at the second threshold. Applied to political cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0013$ ) and a global hit rate of 64 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p = .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 78 percent at the second threshold. Applied to the political test cases, Scale C1 achieved statistical significance with neither threshold, despite global hit rates of 64 percent and 71 percent respectively.

#### Scale C2

Scale C2, intended for application to any case involving a public figure, succeeded in predicting approaches toward both celebrities and politicians in all

three samples. Applied to celebrity cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 66 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p = .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 64 percent at the second threshold. Applied to political cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 69 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p = .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 78 percent at the second threshold. Applied to the political test cases, Scale C1 achieved statistical significance only at the second threshold, where the global hit rate was 86 percent. For each sample, Scale C2 performed better than the more abbreviated Scale C1.

#### Scale C3

Finally, Scale C3, the last of those intended for application to any case involving a public figure, succeeded in predicting approaches toward both celebrities and politicians in each of the larger samples. Applied to celebrity cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 67 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p = .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 68 percent at the second threshold. Applied to political cases, it achieved statistical significance ( $p < .0001$ ) and a global hit rate of 77 percent at the first threshold and statistical significance ( $p =$

.0001) and a global hit rate of 77 percent at the second threshold. Applied to the political test cases, Scale C1 did not achieve statistical significance at either threshold, despite global hit rates of 86 and 71 percent, respectively. Thus, Scale C3 performed somewhat better than Scale C2 for celebrity cases, but slightly less well for political cases.

#### Adjustments for the Base Rate

As noted earlier in this chapter, the actual base rate of approach is 12 percent, not 50 percent as it was in the sample studied. This difference requires that an adjustment be made for the base rate in making any predictive or other use of the scales given here. The effect of such an adjustment was illustrated above for predictions made on the basis of a single variable, and the same principles apply in making predictions with a scale. To illustrate this, we use the example of the application of Scale A2-- the best of the scales for predicting approaches to celebrities-- using the decision rule that scores of 0 or higher predict an approach.

In the sample studied, 38.3 percent of approach-negative subjects had such scores on this scale. Extrapolated to all cases in the de Becker archives at the time of sampling, approximately 487 approach-negative subjects would be expected to have a score of 0 or higher.

In the sample studied, 84.1 of approach-positive subjects had a score of 0 or higher. Extrapolating to the sampling universe, approximately 143 would be expected to have such scores. Of some 630 subjects with scores this high, about 143 or 29.4 percent would be approach positive. If one relied on Scale A2 as a screening tool, one would expect to accord priority to 630 of the 1442 subjects. In doing so, one would unnecessarily pay attention to 487 subjects with high scores who will not approach (false positives) and one would ignore 27 subjects who in fact will approach (false negatives). Of course, by changing the score required for a positive prediction, one could decrease the number of false negatives even further-- at a cost of generating more false positives, or one could reduce the number of false positives at a cost of increasing the number of false negatives.

#### OTHER EFFORTS TO PREDICT APPROACHES

In addition to the development of the scales described above, several other efforts were devoted to the task of predicting approach behavior. These are summarized here.

##### Predictions Based on the Number of Communications

In Chapter 5 we presented tables from which it is possible to estimate the probability of approach on the basis of the number of communications received at a particular point in time. The general principle illustrated

there was that the probability of approach increased with each successive communication until the tenth, and decreased thereafter. Those tables allow one to improve upon the base rate in making predictions, and can be used in conjunction with the scales, as will be described in Chapter 15.

#### Predictions Based on Prior Approaches

Although the research effort reported here was directed primarily toward predicting the first approach, data reported in Chapters 7 and 12 allow calculation of the probability of future approaches by those who have already approached. For example, of 107 subjects who approached a celebrity once, at least 36 (34 percent) approached a second time, and of 36 subjects who approached twice, at least 20 (56 percent) approached a third time. Likewise, 19 of the 43 subjects (56 percent) who made one approach toward a Member of Congress were known to have approached again. Thus, a subject who has approached once is at much higher risk of another approach.

#### Predictions Based on the First Inappropriate Letter

For predictive purposes, it would be ideal if it were possible to predict approach behavior from the first communication received from a subject. Martell (1989) developed his doctoral dissertation from the data collected for the present study from the de Becker archives. Martell's research focused on a multivariate analysis of

data from the first known communication, exploring which variables were predictive of a subsequent approach. That research is presented in its entirety in Appendix 5.

Martell limited this part of his study to the first known letters from 102 of the approach-negative cases and 81 approach-positive subjects from the de Becker archives who had written to a celebrity before the first known approach. Note, however, that even among these 81 approach-positive subjects, in many cases it could not be established that the first letter was received in advance of the first approach. The cases for which this could not be determined were those in which it was known that the first letter was hand-delivered at the time of an approach and those for which this may have been the case but could not be established.

Martell constructed restricted hierarchical logistic regression models using a subset of the variables collected from single letters and applied exploratory and confirmatory logistic regression modeling to develop and compare models that optimized predictive accuracy. A model developed from the first letters, weighted to reflect the underlying base rate of approach in the population, provided both the best fit with the data and the highest level of cross-validation classification accuracy. Hazard rates associated with specific features in the letters permitted direct assessment of the probability of approach. Under this model,

predictions that a given writer would approach were correct two out of three times. Overall, three out of four subjects were correctly classified as either approach positive or approach negative.

The practical applicability of these results is limited by the fact that the subjects did not always send their first letters in advance of the approach. Those whose letters were hand-delivered at the time of the first approach obviously could not be predicted to approach on the basis of those letters.

Unfortunately, the predictive utility of the model is also compromised by the inclusion of mentioning travel to see the celebrity as one of the predictor variables, when this was confounded with approaches, as for example when subjects hand delivered a letter stating that they had traveled a great distance to visit to the celebrity or when an approach was known only because a subject wrote about it. As shown in Table 14-1, 50 percent of the approach-positive subjects mentioned traveling to see the celebrity, but only 14 percent of the approach-negative subjects did so. The presence of this variable alone leads to a prediction of a 32 percent probability of approach after doing the appropriate base rate calculations. Had it been included in the scales evaluated in this chapter, they would have had a considerably higher global hit rate, but we would not be

able to rely upon them because of the unknown extent to which the variable is confounded with approach data.

Nonetheless, using multivariate methods Martell (1989) confirmed the findings reported above regarding stressful life events, desire for face-to-face contact, and other particular risk factors. In addition, the multivariate analysis showed that depressive emotional content in letters significantly reduced the odds of approach. Although several indications of a trend in this direction were observed in the bivariate comparisons undertaken in preparing Chapter 8 above, none of the individual variables achieved statistical significance.

#### Prediction from Changes in Letters Before an Approach

The second focus of Martell's (1989) research was on changes discernible from subjects' communications immediately before an approach. If approaches were preceded by some detectable change in communications, it would be possible to monitor repetitive communicators for indications of an impending approach. For this purpose, the letter each approach-positive subject had written most proximally to the approach (the "immediate pre-approach letter") was taken as the second point in the time sequence (along with the first known communication). For the approach-negative group, the second point in the time sequence was that letter which most closely corresponded to the time interval between first

letter and immediate pre-approach letter for the matched approach-positive case. Thus, this study was limited to those subjects in the sample who had written two or more letters. Repeated measures analyses were employed to examine changes in the letters over time between the two groups.

This study showed that evidence of psychotic thought processes in the most recent letter increased the odds of approach, with psychotic profiles being about twice as likely to approach. Desperate emotional content (insistence, desperation, recklessness, or nothing to lose) increased the odds of approach by two times for the first letters, and by as much as four times for the pre-approach letters. In contrast, angry emotional content (hatred, aggression, malice, suspiciousness, distrust, jealousy, or condemnation) was not a significant factor in the first letter models and functioned to decrease the odds of approach in the models estimated for immediate pre-approach letters.

The expression of angry feelings in writing may serve to diffuse the subject's need for aggression. Megargee (1982) has described this phenomenon as response substitution:

Another way to cope with the situation of having an aggressive response toward a particular target blocked by inhibition is to change the response

rather than the target. Sometimes verbal aggression can be used in place of physical aggression, or a hostile letter in place of direct verbal aggression. (Pp. 142-43.)

The expression of desperation may increase the odds of an approach because it is an indication of increasing frustration. The well-known frustration-aggression hypothesis (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, and Sears, 1939; Miller, 1941) postulates that aggression is often a response to frustration. Expressions of desperation may reflect subjects' frustration in attempting to generate connections with celebrities. Subjects who feel a greater degree of frustration in their quest for the attention of celebrities may be at greater risk for exhibiting aggressive behavior in the form of an approach.

Psychotic thought processes in the first letter were not predictive of an approach, but by the immediate pre-approach letter this variable became predictive, with subjects who became discernibly psychotic during the interval being more likely to approach. The proportion of approach-positives casting the celebrity in the role of a potential spouse more than doubled from first letters to immediate pre-approach letters; in contrast, the proportion among approach-negatives decreased over time.

## SUMMARY

In this chapter we reported the development and testing of seven scales for the prediction of approaches to public figures. We also reviewed the other evidence amassed from this research that bears on the prospects for predicting approaches to public figures.

The scales comprised risk factors identified from the studies of subjects writing inappropriate communications to Hollywood celebrities and Members of the Congress of the United States. These risk factors consisted of 30 significant differences between those subjects who did and did not approach the celebrities and 36 significant differences between subjects who did and did not approach the Member of Congress.

The scales developed included those based solely on the findings from the celebrity cases, those based solely on the findings from the political cases, and those based on both the findings from both studies. Each of the scales was tested on the 214 celebrity cases, the 86 political cases, and 14 political test cases that were not used in the earlier study. These tests included comparisons of the mean scores of positive and negative subjects on each scale, tests of the association between approach status, and calculations of the sensitivity, specificity, global hit rate, and other predictive attributes of each scale.

In general, the scales performed best when applied to the samples for which they were intended. The best scale for use with subjects writing to celebrities (Scale A2) consisted of 24 variables and a constant and correctly classified 73 percent of the subjects ( $p < .0001$ ). The best scale for use with subjects writing to political figures (Scale B2) consisted of 18 variables and a constant and correctly classified 83 percent of the subjects in the larger political sample ( $p < .0001$ ) and 86 percent of the subjects in the political test sample ( $p < .01$ ). The best scale for use with subjects writing to public figures who cannot be readily classified as entertainment celebrities or politicians (Scale C2) consisted of seven variables and a constant. When applied to celebrity cases, it correctly classified 64 percent of the subjects ( $p = .0001$ ). When applied to the larger political sample, it correctly classified 78 percent of the subjects ( $p < .0001$ ). When applied to the political test sample, it correctly classified 86 percent of the subjects ( $p = .01$ ).

Despite the success of these scales in correctly classifying cases, there are several reasons for urging restraint in their application. In brief, these are: (1) the need to validate the scales on cases other than those from which they were derived (the 14 test cases used here being far too small a sample for this purpose); (2) the need

to integrate base rate information into predictions in a manner that the scales alone cannot do; (3) the need for training in the measurement of the variables comprising the scales-- some of which are technical psychopathological constructs-- if they are to be reliably coded; and (4) the need to avoid substituting these scales-- which are at best a screening tool-- for prudent professional judgment and individualized assessment of all of the relevant information.

Ideally, professional judgments should not be made solely on the basis of these or any other scales. In the conclusions we address the ways in which we think these scales might be further developed and their possible applications given the current state of knowledge.

Table 14-1-- Factors enhancing the risk that subjects will approach celebrities to whom they have written inappropriate communications (N = 214)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity	26	54	.0001
Mentions traveling to see the celebrity	14	50	.0001
One or more known trips	20	50	.0001
Announces specific time and location	3	16	.002
Announces specific time	4	17	.003
Duration of correspondence one year or more	18	37	.004
Announces specific location	5	18	.005
Clearly expresses happiness, joy contentment, or peace of mind	4	16	.01
Repeatedly mentions entertainment products	26	42	.02
Mentions any stressful life event	38	54	.03
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	36	52	.03
Telephoned in addition to writing	5	14	.04
Two or more postmarks	10	21	.046
Mentions having vehicle	9	20	.05

Table 14-2-- Factors reducing the risk that subjects will approach celebrities to whom they have written inappropriate communications (N = 214)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Tablet-like paper (plain or lined)	64	39	.0005
Provides full address	89	71	.002
Schizophreniform thought disorder	38	20	.004
Reports any psychiatric treatment	27	11	.005
Expresses desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity	20	6	.008
Low IQ	20	6	.008
Perseveration	26	12	.015
Encloses commercial pictures	10	2	.022
Obscene-letter writer	8	1	.023
Hate-mail writer	26	13	.025
Poverty of content	26	13	.028
Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger	16	5	.03
Attempts to instill shame in celebrity	15	6	.04
Subject indicates sexual interest in the celebrity	33	20	.04
Repeatedly mentions other public figures	35	22	.05
Mentions any sexual activity	19	8	.05

Table 14-3-- Scale A1

Risk factor	Point value
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity	+1
Announces specific time and location	+1
Announces specific time	+1
Duration of correspondence one year or more	+1
Announces specific location	+1
Clearly expresses happiness, joy contentment, or peace of mind	+1
Repeatedly mentions entertainment products	+1
Mentions any stressful life event	+1
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Two or more postmarks	+1
Mentions having vehicle	+1
Recipient is a politician	+2
Tablet-like paper (plain or lined)	-1
Provides full address	-1
Schizophreniform thought disorder	-1
Reports any psychiatric treatment	-1
Expresses desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity	-1
Low IQ	-1
Perseveration	-1

Table 14-3 (CONT.)

---

Risk factor	Point value
Encloses commercial pictures	-1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1
Poverty of content	-1
Inappropriate, intense, or uncontrolled anger	-1
Attempts to instill shame in celebrity	-1
Subject indicates sexual interest in the celebrity	-1
Repeatedly mentions other public figures	-1
Mentions any sexual activity	-1
Constant	+1

---

---

Table 14-4-- Celebrity case scores on  
Scale A1 (N = 214)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-10	1	
-9	1	
-8	3	
-7	3	
-6	5	
-5	9	2
-4	11	3
-3	8	1
-2	13	11
-1	18	10
0	20	15
+1	9	18
+2	2	11
+3	3	15
+4	1	3
+5		4
+6		6
+7		6
+8		2
Mean	-2.10	+1.44
S.D.	2.80	2.95

$t = -9.01; df = 212 ; p < .001$

---

Table 14-5-- Scale A2

---

Risk factor	Point value
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the celebrity	+1
Announces specific time	+1
Duration of correspondence one year or more	+1
Announces specific location	+1
Clearly expresses happiness, joy contentment, or peace of mind	+1
Repeatedly mentions entertainment products	+1
Mentions any stressful life event	+1
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Two or more postmarks	+1
Mentions having vehicle	+1
Recipient is a politician	+1
Tablet-like paper (plain or lined)	-1
Provides full address	-1
Schizophreniform thought disorder	-1
Reports any psychiatric treatment	-1
Expresses desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity	-1
Low IQ	-1
Encloses commercial pictures	-1
Obscene-letter writer	-1

---

Table 14-5 (CONT.)

---

Risk factor	Point value
Hate-mail writer	-1
Subject indicates sexual interest in the celebrity	-1
Repeatedly mentions other public figures	-1
Mentions any sexual activity	-1
Constant	+1

---

---

 Table 14-6-- Celebrity case scores on Scale A2 (N = 214)
 

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-7	1	
-6	2	
-5	7	
-4	7	1
-3	12	3
-2	16	7
-1	21	6
0	21	20
+1	12	19
+2	5	16
+3	2	12
+4	1	6
+5		7
+6		7
+7		3
Mean	-1.30	+1.64
S.D.	2.14	2.47

$t = -9.31; df = 212 ; p < .001$

---

Table 14-7-- Factors enhancing the risk that subjects will approach politicians to whom they have written inappropriate communications (N = 86)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician	33	70	.001
Polite	41	81	.001
Uses an appropriate closing to letter	17	54	.002
Politician cast in benefactor role <sup>1</sup>	9	37	.005
Mention of traveling to see the politician	2	26	.005
Subject takes special constituent role	16	46	.0053
Telephoned in addition to writing	2	23	.01
Believes others are talking about him	7	30	.013
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the politician	7	30	.02
Expresses desire for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	30	56	.03
Any paranoid delusion	70	91	.03
Social isolation	7	28	.03
Provides any identifying information	76	95	.03

Table 14-7 (CONT.)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Repeatedly mentions love, marriage, or romance	0	14	.034
Reports any psychiatric treatment	21	44	.04
Any psychotic feature	81	98	.04

<sup>1</sup> Includes the roles of rescuer, benefactor, or potential benefactor.

Table 14-8-- Factors reducing the risk that subjects will approach politicians to whom they have written inappropriate communications (N = 86)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Any threat	84	33	.00001
Subject takes enemy role or casts politician in enemy role	32	13	.0001
Hate-mail writer	79	37	.0002
Attempts to instill fear in politician	60	21	.0004
Subject takes enemy role <sup>1</sup>	58	21	.0009
Politician cast in enemy role <sup>2</sup>	60	23	.001
Attempts to frighten <sup>3</sup> the politician	77	42	.002
Threatened any kind of harm toward any public figure <sup>4</sup>	65	30	.003
Obscene-letter	26	2	.005
Handwritten (not hand printed)	51	21	.007
Any implausible threat <sup>5</sup>	33	7	.007
Threat to be executed by subject or his agent	54	23	.008
Attempts to instill worry in politician	65	35	.01
Threatened to kill any public figure or those around a public figure <sup>6</sup>	46	19	.011
Any veiled threat	49	21	.013

Table 14-8 (CONT.)

Risk factor	Percent with feature		Sig.
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	
Attempts to provoke upset in politician	35	12	.022
Any direct threat	40	16	.03
Threat to be executed by someone other than the subject or his agent <sup>7</sup>	40	16	.03
Anonymous death threat	19	2	.035
Any conditional threat	40	19	.05

- 1 Includes the roles of assassin, persecutor, and condemning judge.
- 2 Includes the roles of persecutor and conspirator.
- 3 Includes attempts to cause fear, provoke upset, or instill worry.
- 4 Includes any threat to harm the person, associates, or property of any public figure.
- 5 Includes those implausible because of a psychotic notion of causation, because of technical impossibility, or because the threat is a mere curse or hex.
- 6 Includes any threat to kill the politician, those around the politician, or any other public figure.
- 7 Includes threats to be executed by an unspecified or vaguely identified party, by a group or class of people, or by God.

Table 14-9-- Scale B1

Risk factor	Point value
Reports any psychiatric treatment	+1
Any paranoid delusion	+1
Delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician	+1
Any psychotic feature	+1
Social isolation	+1
Believes others are talking about him	+1
Provides any identifying information	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Uses an appropriate closing to letter	+1
Polite	+1
Subject takes special constituent role	+1
Politician cast in benefactor role	+1
Repeatedly mentions love, marriage, or romance	+1
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the politician	+1
Expresses desire for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	+1
Recipient is a celebrity	-4
Any threat	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1
Attempts to instill fear in politician	-1

Table 14-9-- (CONT.)

---

Risk factor	Point value
Subject takes enemy role	-1
Politician cast in enemy role	-1
Subject takes enemy role or casts politician in enemy role	-1
Attempts to frighten the politician	-1
Threatened any kind of harm toward any public figure	-1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Handwritten (not handprinted)	-1
Any implausible threat	-1
Threat to be executed by subject or his agent	-1
Attempts to instill worry in politician	-1
Threatened to kill any public figure or those around a public figure	-1
Any veiled threat	-1
Attempts to provoke upset in politician	-1
Threat to be executed by someone other than the subject or his agent	-1
Anonymous death threat	-1
Any direct threat	-1
Any conditional threat	-1

---

---

Table 14-10-- Political case scores on  
Scale B1 (N = 86)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-16	2	
-15	2	
-14	1	
-13	2	1
-12	2	
-11	3	
-10	3	
-9	3	
-8	2	
-7	3	1
-6	3	2
-5		2
-4	3	
-3	3	1
-2	1	
-1	1	2
0	1	2
+1		2
+2	1	
+3	1	4
+4	5	2
+5		5
+6		7
+7		2
+8	1	
+9		5
+10		2
+11		2
+12		1
Mean	-6.09	+3.60
S.D.	6.39	5.62

$t = -7.47; df = 84; p < .001$

---

Table 14-11-- Scale B2

---

Risk factor	Point value
Reports any psychiatric treatment	+1
Delusion of persecution by someone other than the politician	+1
Social isolation	+1
Believes others are talking about him	+1
Provides any identifying information	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Uses an appropriate closing to letter	+1
Polite	+1
Subject takes special constituent role	+1
Politician cast in benefactor role	+1
Repeatedly mentions love, marriage, or romance	+1
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the politician	+1
Expresses desire for rescue, assistance, valuables, or recognition	+1
Recipient is a celebrity	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1
Subject takes enemy role or casts politician in enemy role	-1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Handwritten (not handprinted)	-1
Constant	-3

---

---

Table 14-12-- Political cases scores on Scale B2 (N = 86)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-6	4	
-5	9	1
-4	3	1
-3	5	
-2	9	2
-1	1	1
0	7	5
+1	3	9
+2		5
+3	1	2
+4	1	8
+5		4
+6		4
+7		1
Mean	-2.44	+2.19
S.D.	2.54	2.73

$t = -8.14; df = 84; p < .001$

---

---

**Table 14-13-- Scale C1**

---

<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Point value</b>
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the public figure	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1

---

Table 14-14-- Celebrity case (N = 214) and politician case (N = 86) scores on Scale C1

Score	<u>Celebrity Cases</u>		<u>Politician Cases</u>	
	Approach Negative	Approach Positive	Approach Negative	Approach Positive
-2	2 (2)	1 (1)	9 (21)	1 (2)
-1	23 (22)	9 (8)	25 (58)	9 (21)
0	59 (55)	36 (34)	8 (19)	20 (47)
+1	23 (22)	53 (50)	1 (2)	10 (23)
+2	0	8 (8)	0	3 (7)
Mean	-0.04	+0.54	-0.98	+0.12
S.D.	0.71	0.79	0.71	0.91
	t = -5.62; df = 212		t = -6.24; df = 84	
	p < .001		p < .001	

Table 14-15-- Scale C2

---

Risk factor	Point value
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the public figure	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Duration of correspondence one year or more	+1
Mentions any stressful life event	+1
Recipient is a politician	+1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1
Constant	-1

---

Table 14-16-- Celebrity case (N = 214) and political case (N = 86) scores on Scale C2

Score	<u>Celebrity Cases</u>		<u>Politician Cases</u>	
	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)
-3	2 (2)	0		
-2	12 (11)	3 (3)	9 (21)	1 (2)
-1	37 (35)	19 (18)	23 (53)	7 (16)
0	43 (40)	37 (35)	9 (21)	17 (39)
+1	11 (10)	28 (26)	2 (5)	14 (33)
+2	2 (2)	17 (16)	0	2 (5)
+3	0	3 (3)	0	2 (5)
Mean	-0.49	+0.43	-0.91	+0.35
S.D.	0.96	1.13	0.78	1.04
	t = -6.42; df = 212		t = -6.32; df = 84	
	p < .001		p < .001	

Table 14-17-- Scale C3

Risk factor	Point value
Expresses a desire for face-to-face contact with the public figure	+1
Telephoned in addition to writing	+1
Duration of correspondence one year or more	+1
Mentions any stressful life event	+1
Believes others are talking about him	+1
Polite	+1
Subject takes special fan or constituent role	+1
Repeatedly mentions love, marriage, or romance	+1
Announces specific location	+1
Repeatedly mentions entertainment products	+1
Excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness	+1
Two or more postmarks	+1
Mentions having vehicle	+1
Recipient is a politician	+2
Recipient is a celebrity	-1
Obscene-letter writer	-1
Hate-mail writer	-1
Subject takes enemy role or casts politician in enemy role	-1
Tablet-like paper (plain or lined)	-1

---

**Table 14-17 (CONT.)**

---

<b>Risk factor</b>	<b>Point value</b>
Schizophreniform thought disorder	-1
Expresses desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the public figure	-1
Low IQ	-1
Encloses commercial pictures	-1
Subject indicates sexual interest in the public figure	-1

---

Table 14-18-- Celebrity case (N = 214) and political case (N = 86) scores on Scale C3

Score	<u>Celebrity Cases</u>		<u>Politician Cases</u>	
	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)	Approach Negative N (%)	Approach Positive N (%)
-8	1 (1)			
-7	1 (1)			
-6	2 (2)			
-5	7 (6)			
-4	6 (6)		1 (2)	
-3	14 (13)	5 (5)	9 (21)	1 (2)
-2	16 (15)	12 (11)	13 (30)	
-1	22 (21)	13 (12)	6 (14)	5 (12)
0	19 (18)	21 (20)	6 (14)	6 (14)
+1	13 (12)	14 (13)	3 (7)	8 (19)
+2	4 (4)	14 (13)	5 (12)	7 (16)
+3		11 (10)		6 (14)
+4	2 (2)	6 (6)		6 (14)
+5		7 (6)		4 (9)
+6		3 (3)		
+7		1 (1)		
Mean	-1.43	+1.00	-1.16	+1.77
S.D.	2.19	2.37	1.69	1.99
	t = -7.78; df = 212		t = -7.37; df = 84	
	p < .001		p < .001	

---

Table 14-19-- Political case scores on  
Scale A1 (N = 86)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
- 6	1	
-5	1	1
-4	5	2
-3	5	3
-2	6	3
-1	7	8
0	9	8
+1	3	4
+2	4	6
+3	1	4
+4	1	3
+5		1
Mean	-1.09	+0.21
S.D.	2.23	2.39

$t = -2.61; df = 84; p = .011$

---

---

Table 14-20-- Political case scores on  
Scale A2 (N = 86)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-5	1	
-4		
-3	6	2
-2	4	6
-1	15	5
0	9	13
+1	5	6
+2	3	8
+3		2
+4		1
Mean	-0.81	+0.21
S.D.	1.53	1.67

$t = -2.96; df = 84; p = .004$

---

---

Table 14-21-- Celebrity case scores on Scale B1 (N = 214)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-14	3	
-13		1
-12	1	
-11	1	
-10	3	3
-9	1	2
-8	1	2
-7		1
-6	2	
-5	2	5
-4	5	4
-3	6	3
-2	11	8
-1	15	14
0	18	26
+1	20	16
+2	9	7
+3	2	9
+4	4	3
+5	2	1
+6	1	2

---

Mean                    -1.24                    -0.73

S.D.                    3.97                    3.48

$t = -1.01; df = 212; p = .315$

---

---

Table 14-22-- Celebrity case scores on Scale B2 (N = 214)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-6	2	
-5	1	2
-4	5	
-3	7	5
-2	13	12
-1	27	26
0	28	27
+1	12	16
+2	9	14
+3	2	2
+4	1	2
+5		
+6	0	1
Mean	-0.66	-0.10
S.D.	1.83	1.75

$t = -2.29; df = 212; p = .023$

---

---

Table 14-23-- Political test case scores  
on Scale A1 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-5	1	0
-4		1
-3		1
-2	1	
-1		
0	3	3
+1		1
+2	1	
+3		1
+4	1	
Mean	-0.14	-0.43
S.D.	2.85	2.37

$t = 0.20; df = 12; p = .84$

---

---

Table 14-24-- Political test case scores  
on Scale A2 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-3	1	1
-2	1	
-1		1
0	2	2
+1	2	1
+2		1
+3	1	
+4		1
Mean	0.00	+0.43
S.D.	2.00	2.23
$t = -0.38; df = 12; p = .71$		

---

---

Table 14-25-- Political test case scores  
on Scale B1 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-13	1	
-12		
-11		
-10	1	
-9		
-8	1	
-7	1	
-6		
-5	1	1
-4	1	
-3		
-2		
-1		2
0		
+1		1
+2		1
+3		1
+4	1	
+5		
+6		
+7		1
Mean	-6.14	+0.86
S.D.	5.40	3.76
$t = -2.81; df = 12; p = .016$		

---

---

Table 14-26-- Political test case scores  
on Scale B2 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-6	1	
-5	1	
-4	2	
-3		
-2	1	
-1		1
0	1	
+1	1	1
+2		2
+3		2
+4		1
Mean	-2.86	+2.00
S.D.	2.61	1.63

$t = -4.17; df = 12; p = .001$

---

---

Table 14-27-- Political test case scores  
on Scale C1 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-2	2	1
-1	5	3
0		1
+1		2
Mean	-1.29	-0.43
S.D.	0.49	1.13

$t = -1.84; df = 12; p < .091$

---

---

Table 14-28-- Political test case scores  
on Scale C2 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-2	2	
-1	5	2
0		2
+1		2
+2		1
Mean	-1.29	+0.29
S.D.	0.49	1.11

---

$t = -3.42; df = 12; p < .005$

---

---

Table 14-29-- Political test case scores  
on Scale C3 (N = 14)

---

Score	Approach Negative N	Approach Positive N
-2	3	
-1		
0	2	
+1	2	3
+2		1
+3		1
+4		1
+5		1
Mean	-0.57	+2.43
S.D.	1.40	1.62
$t = -3.71; df = 12; p < .003$		

---

Table 14-30 -- Application of Scale A1 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	92	42	34	25	5	5
$\geq +1$	15	65	9	18	2	2
Chi-square	47.93		3.46		Fisher's exact one-tailed	
Probability	<.0001		= .063		.72	
Sensitivity	.61		.42		.29	
Specificity	.86		.79		.71	
Power of positive prediction	.81		.66		.50	
Power of negative prediction	.69		.57		.50	
Global hit rate	73%		60%		50%	

Table 14-31 -- Application of Scale A1 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	72	27	25	17	2	2
≥ 0	35	80	18	26	5	5
Chi-square	36.39		2.28		Fisher's exact	
Probability	<0001		.131		= .72	
Sensitivity	.75		.60		.71	
Specificity	.67		.58		.29	
Power of positive prediction	.70		.59		.50	
Power of negative prediction	.73		.60		.50	
Global hit rate	71%		59%		50%	

Table 14-32-- Application of Scale A2 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	87	37	35	26	4	4
$\geq +1$	20	70	8	17	3	3
Chi-square	46.04		3.61		Fisher's exact	
Probability	< .0001		= .058		.70	
Sensitivity	.65		.40		.43	
Specificity	.81		.81		.57	
Power of positive prediction	.78		.68		.50	
Power of negative prediction	.70		.57		.50	
Global hit rate	73%		60%		50%	

Table 14-33-- Application of Scale A2 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq -1$	66	17	26	13	2	2
$\geq 0$	41	90	17	30	5	5
Chi-square	45.35		6.76		Fisher's exact	
Probability	< .0001		.0093		.72	
Sensitivity	.84		.70		.71	
Specificity	.62		.60		.29	
Power of positive prediction	.69		.64		.50	
Power of negative prediction	.80		.67		.50	
Global hit rate	73%		65%		50%	

Table 14-34-- Application of Scale B1 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	69	69	35	11	6	3
$\geq +1$	38	38	8	32	1	4
Chi-square	0.00		24.73		Fisher's exact	
Probability	= 1.00		<.0001		.13	
Sensitivity	.36		.74		.57	
Specificity	.64		.81		.86	
Power of positive prediction	.50		.80		.80	
Power of negative prediction	.50		.76		.67	
Global hit rate	50%		78%		71%	

Table 14-35-- Application of Scale B1 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	<u>Celebrity</u>		<u>Politician</u>		<u>Test Politician</u>	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	51	43	34	9	6	3
≥ 0	56	64	9	34	1	4
Chi-square	0.93		26.79		Fisher's exact	
Probability	= .34		<.0001		.13	
Sensitivity	.60		.79		.57	
Specificity	.48		.79		.86	
Power of positive prediction	.53		.79		.80	
Power of negative prediction	.54		.79		.67	
Global hit rate	54%		79%		71%	

Table 14-36-- Application of Scale B2 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	83	72	38	10	6	1
$\geq +1$	24	35	5	33	1	6
Chi-square		2.34		34.37	Fisher's exact	
Probability		.13		< .0001		.01
Sensitivity		.33		.77		.86
Specificity		.78		.88		.86
Power of positive prediction		.59		.87		.86
Power of negative prediction		.54		.79		.86
Global hit rate		55%		83%		86%

Table 14-37-- Application of Scale B2 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	55	45	31	5	5	1
≥ 0	52	62	12	38	2	6
Chi-square		1.52		29.86		Fisher's exact
Probability		.218		< .0001		.05
Sensitivity		.58		.88		.86
Specificity		.51		.72		.71
Power of positive prediction		.54		.76		.75
Power of negative prediction		.55		.86		.83
Global hit rate		55%		80%		79%

Table 14-38-- Application of Scale C1 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	<u>Celebrity</u>		<u>Politician</u>		<u>Test Politician</u>	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	84	46	42	30	7	5
$\geq +1$	23	61	1	13		2
Chi-square	26.83		10.32		Fisher's exact	
Probability	< .0001		.0013		.23	
Sensitivity	.57		.30		.29	
Specificity	.78		.98		1.00	
Power of positive prediction	.73		.93		1.00	
Power of negative prediction	.65		.58		.58	
Global hit rate	68%		64%		64%	

Table 14-39-- Application of Scale C1 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	25	10	34	10	7	4
≥ 0	82	97	9	33		3
Chi-square	6.69		24.62		Fisher's exact	
Probability	.0097		< .0001		.096	
Sensitivity	.91		.77		.43	
Specificity	.23		.79		1.00	
Power of positive prediction	.54		.79		1.00	
Power of negative prediction	.71		.77		.64	
Global hit rate	57%		78%		71%	

Table 14-40-- Application of Scale C2 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
$\leq 0$	94	59	41	25	7	4
$\geq +1$	13	48	2	18		3
Chi-square	26.51		14.66		Fisher's exact	
Probability	< .0001		.0001		.096	
Sensitivity	.45		.42		.43	
Specificity	.88		.95		1.00	
Power of positive prediction	.79		.90		1.00	
Power of negative prediction	.61		.62		.64	
Global hit rate	66%		69%		71%	

Table 14-41-- Application of Scale C2 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	Celebrity		Politician		Test Politician	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	51	22	32	8	7	2
≥ 0	56	85	11	35		5
Chi-square	16.30		24.73		Fisher's exact	
Probability	.0001		< .0001		.01	
Sensitivity	.79		.81		.71	
Specificity	.48		.74		1.00	
Power of positive prediction	.60		.76		1.00	
Power of negative prediction	.70		.80		.78	
Global hit rate	64%		78%		86%	

Table 14-42-- Application of Scale C3 to each sample  
(requiring +1 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	<u>Celebrity</u>		<u>Politician</u>		<u>Test Politician</u>	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ 0	88	51	35	12	5	
≥ +1	19	56	8	31	2	7
Chi-square		26.6		22.71		Fisher's exact
Probability		< .0001		<.0001		.096
Sensitivity		.52		.72		1.00
Specificity		.82		.81		.71
Power of positive prediction		.75		.79		.78
Power of negative prediction		.63		.74		1.00
Global hit rate		67%		77%		86%

Table 14-43-- Application of Scale C3 to each sample  
(requiring 0 or higher for a positive prediction)

Score	<u>Celebrity</u>		<u>Politician</u>		<u>Test Politician</u>	
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
≤ -1	69	30	29	6	3	
≥ 0	38	77	14	37	4	7
Chi-square		27.14		23.32		Fisher's exact
Probability		< .0001		<.0001		.076
Sensitivity		.72		.86		1.00
Specificity		.64		.67		.43
Power of positive prediction		.67		.73		.64
Power of negative prediction		.70		.83		1.00
Global hit rate		68%		77%		71%

## CHAPTER 15

### OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Our research objectives were (1) to provide a representative, quantitative description of the pursuit of contact with public figures through letters and travels and (2) to devise methods for predicting which among the thousands of mentally disordered persons who write will physically approach the object of their attention, thereby making violence possible. In this chapter we review our major findings.

### THE PURSUIT OF PUBLIC FIGURES

The pursuit of Hollywood celebrities and of Members of Congress-- two populations of public figures who have little in common aside from prominence-- shows a remarkable commonality. Both populations are relentlessly pursued by large numbers of mentally disordered individuals. They receive a high volume of inappropriate communications recognizable as the work of the mentally disordered from such obvious features as bizarre appearances, enclosures, and content. In addition, however, they no doubt receive less obviously disturbed communications that are never referred for assessment to those responsible for their security.

Subjects

Those writing inappropriate letters to public figures ranged in age from 14 to over 90. Among the 214 subjects we studied in the de Becker archives, 80 percent were male and 20 percent female, and they wrote primarily to celebrities of the opposite sex. Among the 86 subjects we studied in the Capitol Police archives 85 percent were male. At least eight percent were convicted felons, though only two percent volunteered this information. More than 90 percent of the subjects were free and at large; less than 10 percent were confined to prisons or mental hospitals at a particular point in time. Subjects wrote from all corners of the nation, and those writing to celebrities had a global distribution.

Despite the use of rigorous diagnostic criteria and reliance for diagnostic purposes on the subjects' letters (which undoubtedly under-represent certain signs and symptoms), high rates of mental disorder were measurable. Paranoid delusions were probably more common among these subjects than among any population that has ever been studied outside of a mental hospital, occurring among 64 percent of those in the de Becker archives and 80 percent of those in the Capitol Police archives. More than half of the subjects had thought disorders, and about 10 percent reported hallucinations. Erotomania-- the delusion that

someone else loves the subject-- was more common in these populations than has ever been reported elsewhere, occurring in 16 percent of those focused on entertainment celebrities and five percent of those focused on Members of Congress.

The most common diagnosis was schizophrenia, evidenced by one-half to two-thirds of the subjects in each population. Narcissistic, histrionic, schizotypal, and borderline personality disorders were identified among subjects in each sample, as was substance abuse. About 95 percent of the subjects either could be given a formal psychiatric diagnosis or demonstrated multiple psychiatric symptoms in their communications.

Ten to 20 percent of subjects mentioned having thought about, threatened, or attempted suicide. More than one-third of the subjects expressed desperation in their letters.

To a limited degree, we were able to examine whether the information volunteered by subjects was valid. Where independent sources of information were available regarding objective facts, they generally corroborated the subjects' self reports. Few subjects intentionally gave misleading information. Although much of what the subjects reported about their subjective perceptions had no basis in reality, we believe most subjects honestly report their perceptions, beliefs, and intentions.

Communications

In most respects, the volume and form of the communications was remarkably similar in the two samples. Half or more of the subjects wrote multiple letters, and a small number of subjects in each sample wrote many hundreds of letters. (The record-setting subject to date sent over 10,000 letters in six years, and is still at it. Her runners-up are at the 6,200 and 5,400 letter marks, respectively.) Serial letter writers averaged about one year of correspondence.

The great majority of subjects volunteered their name, address, or both (95 percent in the de Becker archives and 86 percent in the Capitol Police archives). Only five percent of the subjects writing to celebrities and 14 percent of those writing to politicians remained completely anonymous. Less than one percent of letters were the "cut-and-paste" variety common in fiction.

About ten percent of subjects mailed letters from multiple states or countries, indicating their mobility. At least 12 percent of subjects telephoned, sent telegrams, or used some other method to communicate with the public figure from a distance, in addition to mailing letters. Among the more creative efforts observed were classified advertisements, sending delegates to visit the celebrity, publishing a book through a vanity press, and hiring a billboard.

Both populations mentioned public figures other than those to whom they had written. Thirty-six percent of the subjects focused on celebrities mentioned some public figure other than the celebrity to whom they had written, including political leaders. For example, two percent mentioned President Kennedy, five percent President Carter, and six percent President Reagan. Subjects writing to Members of Congress often mentioned other governmental figures (the President of the U.S. among 35 percent and other government figures among 40 percent), but also mentioned other famous people or entities, including entertainment celebrities (13 percent), corporations, corporate executives, or products (six percent), political assassins (five percent), and sports figures (one percent). Subjects from each sample had engaged in methodical stalking of a public figure other than the one whose harassment led to inclusion in the study. The significant overlap in the focus of these two populations of letter writers is one of our most important findings and is discussed further below.

Most death threats and threats to commit other kinds of harm specified that the victim would be the public figure to whom the subject wrote or those around the public figure, but threats were also directed toward other public figures, private citizens, or the subjects themselves. Subjects threatened a variety of harms, including homicide, other

personal injury, and property destruction. Approximately 10 percent of the subjects in each sample mentioned a specific time or place when or where something would happen to the public figure. Most subjects indicated that they would carry out the threats themselves, but others indicated that the threats would be executed by unspecified parties or by God. In each sample, approximately one third of the written threats were implausible because they were predicated on a psychotic notion of causation or were technically impossible, curses, or hexes.

In each sample, 88 percent or more of subjects repeatedly mentioned particular themes in their writings. Fifty-five percent or more of the subjects were pathologically focused on some topic or idea.

#### Approaches

Twelve percent of those writing to celebrities attempted to physically approach the celebrity; a comparable figure is not available for the Congressional cases. Irregularities in the preservation of communications by those who open the mail (staff members, not security personnel or police) made it impossible to adequately gauge how many subjects wrote before their first visit. For celebrity cases, the proportion could be anything from 35 to 100 percent; for Congressional cases, the proportion could be anywhere from 23 to 88 percent.

Forty percent or more of the subjects who approached the public figure had traveled across more than one state in pursuit of the encounter. About 10 percent of subjects moved their residences-- including immigrating to the United States-- in order to remain in physical proximity to the public figures on whom they were focused. At least 10 percent of the approach-positive subjects had used a pretext, ruse, disguise, or similar techniques to locate, obtain information about, or get near their targets.

The subject's focus on the public figure was sometimes known to the subject's family members, people known from work, and mental health or law enforcement personnel, but few of these people reported the subject's focus to the potential victim. Records on interventions that had been made were too rare to allow valid measurement of intervention frequency. Among the interventions that had occurred, however, were admonitions to leave, warnings that the subject would be arrested if he returned, calls to therapists, civil commitment, and arrest.

About 90 percent of subjects arrived alone at the time of the approach, and five to ten percent arrived with a single compatriot. It was rare for a subject to arrive in an organized tour group, though this has been known to occur. Each sample included subjects whose appeared sloppy or disheveled and who were recognizably psychotic when they

approached, but others who were normally groomed and dressed and whose behavior appeared normal. On no occasion did a subject in either sample succeed in approaching the public figure without anyone else present, though subjects in each of the archives sampled had done so.

#### Which Subjects Approach?

The greater the number of mailings, the higher the chances that a subject would approach. In both studies, subjects who approached differed significantly from those who did not in many areas of behavior, including mental health history, symptoms, mobility, means of communication used, thematic content, expressed desires, and attempts to provoke emotional responses. Although there were many statistically significant differences between those who did and did not approach, most of these differences were observed in only one of the samples. Only four specific differences were statistically significant in both samples:

- Subjects who expressed a desire for face-to-face contact were more likely to approach.
- Subjects who telephoned in addition to writing were more likely to approach.
- Subjects who sent "hate mail" were less likely to approach.
- Subjects who sent obscene letters were less likely to approach.

None of the well-documented predictors of future violence (age, sex, race, substance abuse, and history of past antisocial behavior) was significantly associated with approach behavior. The data on these variables were among those most often missing from the records, so it is possible that if more complete data were available, these factors would have been associated with approach status. With no way to evaluate this possibility, we cannot say whether approach behavior is associated with traditional predictors of violence.

Mental health professionals may be surprised to find that there were no statistically significant associations between particular diagnoses and approach behavior. Despite the obvious centrality of mental disorder to the behavior studied here, the fact emerges that it is not which disorders subjects have that determines their approaches to public figures. Rather, it is the interaction between mental disorder and other individual and situational factors that determines which subjects pursue a face-to-face encounter.

Theories of the "suicidal" trajectory of assassins are called into question by our observation that there was no association between suicidal behaviors and approach behavior. Note, however, that it remains possible that suicidality is an important discriminator between those

approach-positive subjects who do and do not commit violent attacks at the time of the approach.

These commonalities are the best information currently available on mentally disordered persons who pursue contact with public figures. The fact that there are so many commonalities among those pursuing such different groups of public figures as Hollywood celebrities and Members of the Congress of the United States suggests that those who pursue other public figures may well share many of these features.

#### SPECIAL PATTERNS IN THE PURSUIT OF PUBLIC FIGURES

Despite all of the commonalities between those who pursue celebrities and those who pursue political figures, there were also substantial differences between the two groups.

##### Patterns of Behavior

Certain patterns were recognizable among the subjects, and these patterns are described with the caveat that individual subjects demonstrated varying numbers of the features of each pattern. The pattern observed among subjects who wrote to celebrities was that those who physically approached the celebrity were more often those with an excessive sense of self-importance or uniqueness (grandiosity or narcissism) who were excessively interested in entertainment products. They tended to write often and

for a long period, to telephone, to mention having a vehicle and traveling to see the celebrity, to express a desire for a meeting, and to announce a specific time and place for something to happen. They tended to travel often and to mail letters from various locations. Some expressed happiness and contentment, but others wrote about many stresses in their lives.

Subjects who did not pursue an encounter, in contrast, more often were those who were thought disordered, mentally retarded, or reported receiving psychiatric treatment and who wrote on tablet paper, giving a complete return address. Subgroups included (1) those who sent hate mail and expressed intense anger, (2) those who wrote obscene letters, described explicit sexual activities, and attempted to shame the celebrity, (3) those who wrote more naive letters describing their sexual interest in the celebrity, and a desire to marry, have sex with, or have children with the celebrity, and (4) those who wrote to describe their concern with another public figure.

The pattern observed among subjects who wrote to Members of Congress was that those who physically approached the Member were more often those who were socially isolated, psychotic individuals who reported a history of psychiatric treatment, suffered paranoid delusions, and believed others were talking about them. They tended to identify themselves

in their letters, which were polite, to telephone in addition to writing, to mention traveling to see the Member, and to express a desire for a meeting. There were two subgroups: (1) those who viewed themselves as constituents with special problems, often a delusion of persecution by someone other than the Member, and who saw the Member of a Congress as a benefactor from whom they hoped for rescue and assistance, and (2) a smaller subgroup of those who were primarily concerned with love, marriage, and romance and harbored delusions of being lovers or spouses of the Member.

Subjects who did not pursue an encounter, in contrast, more often were those who perceived the Member of Congress as an enemy. These subjects made every imaginable type of threat, sent hate mail, wrote obscene letters, and attempted to frighten the recipients of their letters.

### Subjects

Those writing inappropriate letters to Members of Congress were more often known to have received some form of mental health treatment (43 versus 19 percent). Psychotic illnesses were somewhat more prevalent among subjects in the Capitol Police archives (90 percent) than among subjects in the de Becker archives (72 percent). Subjects writing to celebrities had grandiose delusions three times as often as persecutory delusions (60 and 21 percent, respectively), while grandiose and persecutory delusions occurred in

approximately equal proportions of subjects writing to Members of Congress (55 and 59 percent, respectively).

In keeping with their higher prevalence of erotomanic delusions, subjects writing to celebrities much more often expressed love, adoration, or affection (81 versus eight percent) and happiness, contentment, or joy (32 versus six percent). Likewise, in keeping with their much higher prevalence of persecutory delusions, subjects writing to Members of Congress much more often expressed hatred, aggression, or malice (66 versus 25 percent); condemnation, desire for revenge, or punitiveness (58 versus 22 percent); and suspiciousness or distrust (53 versus 25 percent).

Subjects writing to Members of Congress were somewhat older than those writing to entertainment figures (a modal age of 32 versus 25 years). Subjects writing to celebrities more often wrote of feelings of loneliness (22 versus four percent).

#### Communications

Subjects writing to celebrities were on the average more intimate and personal, while those writing to Members of Congress were on the average more distant and formal. For example, subjects writing to celebrities were about 10 times more likely than those writing to Members of Congress to provide physical descriptions of themselves of a kind that would allow them to be recognized (20 versus two

percent). Subjects writing to celebrities more often addressed the public figure too informally (72 versus 17 percent). Subjects writing to Members of Congress more often typed their letters (34 versus 17 percent), while those writing to entertainment celebrities more often wrote in a cursive script (49 versus 37 percent). Subjects writing to celebrities more often sent enclosures (55 versus 31 percent), and they were on the average more personal in nature than those sent to politicians. Indeed some enclosures were as personal as birth certificates, passports, photographs of the subject masturbating, and containers of blood or semen.

The most common roles adopted by those pursuing celebrities were seemingly benevolent, such as friends, spouses, suitors, or lovers; only five percent cast themselves as enemies. Subjects pursuing celebrities more often idolized the object of their attention than did those pursuing politicians. For example, while 58 percent of the former idolized or worshipped someone, almost always the celebrity, only five percent of the latter did so. Ten percent of those focused on celebrities were maximally invested in this focus, as indicated by such behaviors as devoting a room or shrine to the celebrity, taking multiple trips of extraordinary distances to see public appearances, and devoting significant time on a daily basis to their interest in the celebrity.

Ninety-two percent of the subjects writing to celebrities repeatedly mentioned the world of Hollywood, 91 percent repeatedly mentioned public figures, and 53 percent repeatedly mentioned love, marriage, and sex; only 13 percent repeatedly mentioned perceived injustices. In contrast, among those writing to Members of Congress, the most common theme repeatedly mentioned by subjects was that of injustices they perceived themselves as having endured (49 percent). Comparatively few repeatedly mentioned public figures (33 percent), the world of Capitol Hill (33 percent), or love, marriage, or sex (10 percent).

Fifty-five percent of those writing to celebrities were pathologically focused on some topic or idea, most often the world of Hollywood (52 percent), a public figure (51 percent), or love, marriage, or sex (15 percent). Only two percent were focused on injustices. Among those writing to Members of Congress, however, 80 percent demonstrated such a pathological focus, most often their perceptions of injustices they had endured (38 percent) or a public figure (21 percent); eight percent were focused on love, marriage, or sex. A smaller proportion of the de Becker subjects than the Capitol Police subjects was pathologically focused on violent or aggressive themes (two and 17 percent, respectively).

Thirty-two percent of subjects writing to celebrities mentioned sexual activities, as contrasted with seven

percent of those writing to politicians. Twenty-four percent of the former and none of the latter specifically expressed their own sexual interest in the public figure.

Subjects writing to Members of Congress more often communicated a sense that their concerns were of extreme importance (58 versus 18 percent) or urgent (35 versus eight percent). They more often demanded or ordered particular actions (36 versus eight percent).

Subjects writing to celebrities more often expressed a desire for face-to-face contact than those writing to politicians (40 versus 19 percent). Those writing to Members of Congress more often sought to get information to someone (41 versus 22 percent) or to be rescued or assisted (33 versus five percent). Approximately equal proportions of subjects in both samples sought to upset or shame the recipients of their letters, but those writing to celebrities more often sought to evoke love and sexual excitement, while those writing to politicians more often sought to evoke worry, fear, and anger.

Subjects writing to Members of Congress more often made threats, broadly defined, than those writing to celebrities (58 versus 23 percent). Those sending threats to politicians averaged 3.7 threats apiece, while those sending threats to celebrities averaged 2.8 threats. Threats to commit all types of harm-- including death threats-- were

more prevalent among the communications to politicians. Those sending threats to politicians more often made direct threats (48 versus 26 percent) and veiled threats (60 versus 39 percent) and less often made conditional threats (50 versus 71 percent). Subjects making conditional threats often sought influence or power (51 percent among de Becker subjects; 40 percent among Capitol Police subjects). Those threatening celebrities, however, much more often sought personal attention (69 versus eight percent). Those threatening celebrities more often gave evidence of having a plan to carry out the threat (39 versus 10 percent), the means to carry out the threat (20 versus four percent), and the opportunity to carry out the threat (24 versus four percent). Subjects writing to politicians more often mentioned a weapon (30 versus six percent).

Subjects writing to celebrities were much more likely to mention particular trips they had taken (35 percent versus two percent)-- chiefly in pursuit of the public figure-- and were also more likely to volunteer information on the means of transportation they used.

#### Approaches

With certain rare exceptions, physical proximity is a necessary condition to physical violence. A fundamental tenet of the present research is that the development of a behavioral science capacity to predict inappropriate

approaches to public figures-- that is, to identify which subjects will pursue a face-to-face encounter-- would be an important step toward the prevention of assassinations and other attacks on public figures. The necessity for this step springs from the statistical impossibility of predicting events as rare as assassination per se.

Twelve percent of letter-writing subjects in the Gavin de Becker archives approached the public figures to whom they wrote. A comparable figure is not available for subjects in the Capitol Police archives because the information was not stored in a manner allowing this calculation to be made. Subjects who approached Members of Congress were more often known to have made multiple approaches (56 versus 34 percent), but this may merely reflect the completeness of record keeping regarding repetitive approaches in the two data sources.

Subjects approaching celebrities were most likely to do so at the celebrity's home (42 percent), while this was an uncommon location among those approaching Members of Congress (five percent). Subjects approaching Members of Congress were most likely to do so at an office within the Capitol complex (65 percent), as compared with the 24 percent of subjects who approached celebrities at agencies or businesses. These differences probably reflect several influences: (1) it is general information that Members of

Congress have offices in the Capitol complex, but not all celebrities keep offices outside the home; (2) a thriving industry sells the home addresses of Hollywood celebrities, but there is less of a market for the home addresses of Members of Congress; and (3) as noted above, subjects approaching celebrities more often had a personal and intimate agenda than those approaching Members of Congress, making it more appropriate-- in the deluded view of the subject-- that the encounter occur in the home. Similar proportions of subjects in each sample (about 12 percent) first approached the public figure at a public appearance. Subjects approaching Members of Congress appeared to commit more serious chargeable offenses than those approaching celebrities, but this may be an artifact of recording procedures and unusual features of the law regarding persons on the grounds of the Capitol complex. Although in both samples most of the chargeable offenses consisted of disorderly conduct or trespassing, 12 percent of the subjects approaching Members of Congress were unlawfully carrying weapons. The comparable number of subjects carrying weapons at the time of an approach to a celebrity is not known, in part because security personnel do not in all circumstances have the authority to search subjects for weapons and because certain weapons that can be lawfully carried in California are illegal on the grounds of the

Capitol complex. In neither sample can the crimes committed by subjects be taken as indicative of the subjects' dangerousness because the presence of elaborate security precautions prevented a number of tragic outcomes.

Subjects who had approached celebrities were three times as likely (27 versus nine percent) to be known to have engaged in such methodical stalking behaviors as surveillance of a public figure's movements from a vehicle, traveling from city to city tracking a public figure, lying in wait at locations where a public figure was expected, and determining a public figure's daily routine or schedule for the purpose of stalking or approaching. This difference, however, may reflect a greater propensity of those writing to celebrities to volunteer such information.

#### Which Subjects Approach?

We identified 30 risk factors for approaches to entertainment celebrities and 36 risk factors for approaches to Members of Congress, each risk factor being a statistically significant difference between subjects who did and did not approach. Nearly all of the risk factors were specific to one population or the other. In the case of those pursuing celebrities (but not in the case of those pursuing politicians), the risk factors included intelligence, emotional expression, stressful life events, sexual content of letters, announcements concerning the

public figure, duration of communications, geographical distribution of postmarks on letters, type of paper used, and enclosures to the communications. In contrast, risk factors for approaches toward political figures (but not toward celebrities) included handwriting, propriety, and role perceptions.

The most striking and robust difference between the two studies, however, is the discovery that making threats is a risk factor only among the political cases, where subjects who sent threats to a Member of Congress were significantly less likely to pursue a face-to-face encounter with the Member. The discovery that threats reduce the risk could hardly be more counterintuitive. Subjects who sent inappropriate letters that contained no threats were significantly more likely to pursue a face-to-face encounter. Likewise, a new measure of anonymous death threats (unavailable in the earlier study) showed a significant association with approach: subjects who made an anonymous death threat toward anyone were significantly less likely to pursue an encounter with the Member of Congress.

In contrast, among the celebrity cases, there was no association whatsoever between verbal threats and approach behavior. This finding held true through many attempts to disprove it by testing every aspect of threatening statements for which we could create a measure. This

finding contradicts a vast body of assumptions that each day is relied on in judging whether harassing communications warrant concern, notification of the police, security precautions, or investigation. Among inappropriate communications to entertainment celebrities, the presence or absence of a threat in the communications is no indication whatsoever of whether a subject is going to pursue an encounter. Those who rely on the presence or absence of threats in making judgments about what to do are making a serious mistake. Unfortunately, this error is codified in the criminal law, which recognizes various types of verbal threats as unlawful but does not accord equal recognition to harassment without threats, even though the latter often poses an equal or greater danger of harm to persons or property.

#### PREDICTING APPROACHES AND PREDICTING VIOLENCE

In the de Becker archives, at least 12 percent of the subjects approached the public figure. Thus, with no other information to guide one, the best estimate of the likelihood that the author of an odd or threatening letter will attempt a physical encounter is 12 percent. We calculated the probability of an approach based on the number of communications a subject had sent in order to refine this base rate prediction. A major failing of much

of the predictive literature concerning violence has been the ignoring of base rate information, in part because such information is rarely available. Armed with information about the base rate-- and even a tool to help refine base rate estimates at various points in time-- efforts can be directed toward predicting deviations from the base rate, both higher expected rates and lower expected rates.

### Risk Factor Scales

Our effort to develop instruments to predict deviations from the base rate took the form of a series of scales comprising risk-enhancing and risk-reducing factors (variables that had a statistically significant association with approaches). We devised scales for use in predicting approaches to celebrities, for predicting approaches to political leaders, and for predicting approaches to public figures in general (for use when it would be difficult to say whether the public figure is more like an entertainment celebrity or more like a political figure).

Each of the scales consists of a list of risk factors which are coded as present or absent for the subject to which the scale is applied, plus statistical corrections. The higher the score a subject achieves, the higher his risk of approach. For example, the best scale for use with subjects writing to celebrities consisted of 23 risk factors. The 214 subjects studied had scores on this scale

ranging from -7 to +7. Of 17 subjects with scores of +5 or higher, 100 percent approached; of 73 subjects with scores from +1 to +4, 73 percent approached; of 41 subjects with scores of 0, 49 percent approached; of 73 subjects with scores between -1 and -4, 23 percent approached; and of 10 subjects with scores of -5 or lower, none approached. A subject's score is an indication of his odds of approach.

To apply the scales, it is necessary to select one or more dividing lines between high and low scores, a selection that has important implications for the functioning of any predictive scale. In the example given above, a maximally specific decision rule that scores of +5 or above would be predicted to approach would have been correct every time such a prediction was made, but it would have failed to predict 90 of 107 approaches. At the other extreme, a maximally sensitive decision rule that an approach would be predicted for every subject with a score of -4 or higher would have correctly predicted every approach, but would cause one needless concern about 97 subjects who did not approach. All predictive scales demonstrate this trade off between sensitivity and specificity that affects the types of errors one is more likely to make. To evaluate the scales we developed, we selected dividing lines near the average score, but this is not necessarily the best dividing line, the selection of which depends very much on the

practical and policy implications of the decisions to be made with the scales.

The best scale for use with subjects writing to celebrities correctly classified 73 percent of the subjects ( $p < .0001$ ). With one of the particular cut-points tested, predictions that subjects would approach were correct 78 percent of the time; predictions that subjects would not approach were correct 70 percent of the time.

The best scale for use with subjects writing to political figures consisted of 17 risk factors and correctly classified 83 percent of the subjects in the larger political sample ( $p < .0001$ ) and 86 percent of the subjects in the political test sample ( $p < .01$ ). With one of the particular cut-points tested, predictions that subjects would approach were correct 87 percent of the time in one sample and 86 percent of the time in the other sample; predictions that subjects would not approach were correct 79 percent of the time in one sample and 86 percent of the time in the other.

The best scale for use with subjects writing to public figures who cannot be readily classified as entertainment celebrities or politicians consisted of six risk factors. When applied to celebrity cases, it correctly classified 64 percent of the subjects ( $p = .0001$ ). When applied to the larger political sample, it correctly classified 78 percent

of the subjects ( $p < .0001$ ). When applied to the political test sample, it correctly classified 86 percent of the subjects ( $p = .01$ ).

#### Other Predictive Information

The research design was such that three important predictors of a future approach could not be integrated into the scales: the number of letters received, mention in letters of traveling to see the public figure, and prior approaches. For statistical reasons, we cannot test how great an improvement in prediction would result from integrating the information from these predictors with predictions based on the scale.

This research was directed toward the prediction of approach behavior because incidents of violence occur more rarely than the approaches, and because an approach is generally a precondition to an attack. Because violent incidents are uncommon, factors specifically predictive of violence (but not necessarily of approach behavior) could fail to show statistical significance because they were too rare to be subjected to statistical analysis or too rare to have even occurred at all in the samples studied. We have no reason to doubt that the traditional demographic and criminal history predictors of violence are applicable in these cases.

We suspect that there may be a few rare and highly predictive features of public figure attacks. Only case

histories can provide information on such uncommon "predictors." A few examples of such features, which our observations lead us to believe are important predictors of attacks on public figures, but which cannot be scientifically proved as predictive with the methods used in this research are:

- Efforts to study or emulate famous assassins, killers of celebrities, and other offenders whom the subject regards as predecessors and role models.
- The construction of a "hit list" of intended victims, particularly if coupled with delusions of persecution.
- Creation of a diary documenting the stalking of a famous target.
- A pattern of seemingly random and purposeless travel while focused on a particular famous person.
- Efforts to acquire a weapon for the specific purpose of attacking a public figure.

Although these are actuarial rarities, our best judgment on the basis of current information is that these features are of such clinical significance that they should override any negative predictions made with actuarial methods such as our scales.

In any event, one should not rely on statistical models in the absence of informed clinical decision making. No matter how good a statistical tool may be at predicting future behavior, there is always a possibility that some intervening factor will alter the outcome from that predicted.

#### LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research reported here has several limitations that must be understood to adequately assess the state of current knowledge of those who pursue public figures. These limitations stem from the nature of the available data and the focus on some phenomena to the exclusion of others.

There is no way to measure the frequency or content of inappropriate letters that were never referred to Gavin de Becker or the Capitol Police. The research design was not prospective, i.e., we used existing archival records to study events that had already occurred, instead of studying events as they unfolded. This was the only economical approach for an exploratory study of this scale, but it precluded the possibility of gathering more complete data than were routinely recorded on such features as telephone calls made by subjects or the behavior of subjects during approaches. To the extent one relies on our findings for descriptive information, this limitation is easy to take

into account by noting the extent to which reported data were complete. For predictive purposes, however, the results are limited, as we have noted periodically, by the fact that an unknown proportion of subjects delivered the first letters we had available for study at the time of an approach; we have no way to know how many wrote earlier letters that were not referred or what the content of such letters may have been.

We studied only two data bases with the methods reported here. Obviously the results reported here have no applicability to threats by political terrorists or organized criminal enterprises. While we are optimistic that the findings can be generalized to mentally disordered subjects who pursue other public figures, such as sports figures, radio announcers, television newscasters, executives, judges, or the President, this remains to be demonstrated. While we found many commonalities between the two groups studied that may prove true for other populations, we also found important differences, suggesting that there are probably various overlapping populations of public figure pursuers. Subjects may differ in important ways according to the types of public figures they pursue, and to the extent they do, target-specific predictive models may be superior to global models.

There could be important variables that we did not measure, that could not be measured from letters, or that

were too rare to show up in the 300 cases studied. In retrospect, we believe one important variable was measured improperly. This was whether subjects mentioned traveling to see the public figure. This appeared to be one of the more powerful predictors of approach, but we did not rely on it in constructing scales because the way in which it was measured allowed for mention of a previous approach to be counted, and this would of course be associated with approach behavior.

Despite the success of our scales in correctly classifying cases, there are several reasons for urging restraint in their application. In brief, these are the need to validate the scales on cases other than those from which they were derived or the small sample of "test" cases we had available; the need to integrate base rate information into predictions in a manner that the scales alone cannot do; the need for training in the measurement of the variables comprising the scales-- some of which are technical psychopathological constructs-- if they are to be correctly coded; and the need to avoid substituting these scales-- which are at best a screening tool-- for prudent clinical judgment and individualized assessment of all of the relevant information. Ideally, clinical judgments should not be made solely on the basis of these or any other scales.

## CHAPTER 16

### IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It's not easy being a star.

--Arthur Bremer

Bremer offered these words (cited by Clarke, 1982, p. 187) to explain why he seemed depressed when facing trial for shooting Governor George Wallace, after unsuccessfully stalking President Nixon. His reference was to himself as a notorious criminal; ironically, he spoke truly for all who are renowned.

Being famous has its costs, and among them is its appeal to those in search of identity, ideal love, limitless power, a connection with greatness, or other quixotic goals. The pursuit of the famous by the mentally disordered is a constant source of privacy invasions, harassment, and danger, sometimes ending in tragedy.

Pursuit of the famous by the mentally disordered appears to be a growing problem. The rate of attacks on public figures increased even during the six years of this project, and every indication we have suggests that encounters and communications are escalating as well. The magnitude of the problem is difficult to estimate because few public figures have systems in place to monitor the inappropriate communications they receive, let alone assess the risk posed by particular subjects.

As one indication of the volume of subjects and communications, we note that the Gavin de Becker archives grew from files on some 1,500 subjects in January 1985, to files on some 6,000 subjects in October 1989. This represents an average increase of nearly 900 cases per year. Some 5,000 of these subjects had letters on file, and more than 800 had tried to visit the celebrity. The total volume of communications in the de Becker archives is estimated at 143,000 items of correspondence as of this writing, and is increasing by some 50,000 communications per year.

Another suggestion of increasing rates of recognition and referral, if not of the underlying phenomenon, is the increasing rate with which new case files are opened by the Capitol Police Intelligence Division. Rates per fiscal year from 1986 through 1989 were 330, 385, 415, and 459.

These increases probably do reflect changes in recognition and reporting of incidents, among other factors, but the most compelling reason to believe that the pursuit of the famous by the mentally disordered is truly escalating is that fame, as we know it today, is a new phenomenon (Mills, 1956; Braudy, 1986). When the Bible was the principal medium of communication with greatness and the only medium in most homes, the mentally ill most often had religious delusions. In a secular age in which television, radio, and the movies have replaced the role of the Bible in

most lives, it should not surprise us that the mentally ill have delusions about the new secular "gods," particularly the gods of love and power.

#### THE NEED TO SHARE INTELLIGENCE

The day we walked into the offices of the Capitol Police, we found familiar names: subjects whose pursuit of entertainment celebrities we had already studied who were also pursuing Members of Congress. Our statistical results confirmed the discovery that subjects who pursue one public figure are at risk of pursuing another public figure. Twenty-seven percent of the subjects who wrote to celebrities also wrote to another public figure. They wrote to other entertainment celebrities, politicians, journalists, sports figures, and corporate executives, among others.

Likewise, subjects wrote to Members of Congress about the President of the U.S. (35 percent), other government figures (40 percent), entertainment celebrities (13 percent), corporations, corporate executives, or products (six percent), and sports figures (one percent). Twenty-two percent had explicitly threatened a public figure other than the Member of Congress to whom they wrote.

As of this writing, there are 87 subjects in the de Becker archives whose communications contained sinister,

delusional, or otherwise significant references to a President of the United States, a First Lady, or a Vice President. This figure does not include additional subjects who made significant references to the Secret Service, the White House, Air Force One, Dallas, presidential assailants, or related themes.

Those responsible for the protection of public figures regularly learn of subjects who are focused on public figures other than their own protectees. Yet only morality and a patchwork of duty to warn law requires one agency to share such information with another, and the Secret Service is generally bound by law and policy not to share such information. We recommend that lawmakers consider legislation to enable or require the sharing of intelligence on at least the identity and address of subjects expressing excessive interest in public figures among government agencies and others designated by public figures for this purpose.

#### THE NEED FOR EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

The most obvious implication of our research is the striking need for an early warning system that will bring subjects who are focused on public figures to the attention of their potential victims. (Of course, because of the stature of many of these potential victims, it is often

those who protect them who will receive the information and decide on any response that may be indicated.) To be maximally effective, such an early warning system should be exceedingly sensitive to the detection of "signals" of a possible problem, however ambiguous or scant the evidence of danger. We are concerned that for the great majority of public figures, who do not have intelligence services such as those we studied, there is both substantial under-detection of these signals and misinterpretation of those that are detected.

#### Barriers to Signal Detection

Among the widespread barriers to effective detection of these signals are:

- The pervasive myth that threats are of concern, but not other "nut mail," "kook calls," odd visitors, or nonthreatening statements by mentally disordered persons focused on public figures.
- The myth that the mentally disorder subject would not know how to find the public figure.
- Psychological defense mechanisms, particularly denial, operating among public figures, those around them, and others, causing important information to be ignored.
- The difficulty that untrained observers have in

- recognizing subtle manifestations of mental illness, including some of the signs and symptoms most predictive of approach behavior.
- Lack of awareness of the importance of making such reports.
  - Lack of awareness in the general public (and, too often, among mental health and law enforcement professionals) of the means of making such reports, except in the case of subjects making threats toward Secret Service protectees.
  - Lack of an easy and inexpensive means of making such reports (again, with the exception of Secret Service cases).

All but the last of these barriers could theoretically be overcome by educational efforts of one kind or another, though education does not affect defense mechanisms nearly as much as highly publicized slayings of public figures. After each such incident, sensitivity to the detection of signals rises dramatically for a time, eventually declining to the earlier levels.

#### The Myth That Only Threats "Count"

We have disproved the myth that threats and threateners are the only communications or people of concern. The most common assumption in all quarters-- laymen, mental health

professionals, law enforcement professionals, and lawmakers-- is that threats foretell more dangerous behavior, but that other odd communications do not. This is a groundless assumption and the source of more misguided policy and decision making than any other error in this field.

It is true that explicit threats of particular kinds or delivered in particular ways are unlawful under federal or state law, thereby permitting law enforcement intervention for certain threatening subjects. It is even true that particular kinds of threats do predict particular kinds of future behavior, confirming the wisdom of treating threats seriously. Thus, there are practical as well as policy reasons for the law having evolved in this way, but there is no scientific basis for considering threats-- as traditionally defined-- more harmful to victims or predictive of future harm than other forms of harassing communication.

We have shown that for subjects pursuing entertainment figures, explicitly threatening statements on the average have no relationship to the risk, and for subjects pursuing political figures, threats on the average lessen the risk. One of the worst mistakes that can be made is to assume that because a subject did not threaten, he poses no danger. It is a mistake made many times each day.

Note, however, that inappropriate communications are associated with those behaviors that threats have been mistakenly assumed to predict. For the specific purposes of deciding which cases to report or refer for assessment, all inappropriate communications and visits should be treated as threats. Neither threats nor other types of inappropriate communications or visits necessarily indicate dangerousness; but dangerousness cannot be ascertained from the presence of absence of a threat. Threats should continue to be reported and assessed, and so should all other inappropriate communications and visits.

#### The Myth That the Mentally Ill Cannot Locate the Famous

We have also disproved the myth that the mentally ill person whose attention is fixed on a prominent stranger will be unable to locate him or her. Nearly anyone with the time to do so can find the home and haunts of anyone else, particularly a famous person, and we have shown that 12 percent of those who write do attempt to visit. For many of these subjects, pursuit of the public figure is the sole commitment and mission in life. Books such as How to Get Anything on Anybody (Lapin, 1983)-- marketed mostly in weapons magazines and at weapons shows-- offer techniques for locating people who are trying to keep their whereabouts unknown, and these techniques are used by subjects to locate those they pursue. Moreover, as noted below, public record

keeping and media content both facilitate subjects' access to their victims.

### Psychological Defense Mechanisms

The majority of odd and threatening communications sent to public figures lead to neither an approach nor violence. The high volume of these false alarms contributes to a variety of psychological responses, including: (1) denial, whereby the matter is brushed aside with the thought, "it can't happen to me"; (2) superstitious learning, whereby a few memorable experiences lead to erroneous beliefs (e.g., "The ones who write never do anything. It's the ones who don't write you have to worry about."); and (3) desensitization, whereby the recipient who has "seen it all" no longer experiences any emotional arousal in response to communications or visits and hence takes no protective action. These maladaptive responses occur in part because it is in the nature of sensitive warning systems that a high ratio of false alarms to valid warnings attenuates responses (Breznitz, 1984). A chief goal of our research was to devise a means of distinguishing the smaller number of valid warnings from the larger number of false alarms. To the extent we have succeeded, recipients of odd and threatening communications have a new resource for setting rational priorities.

Training in the Recognition and Preservation of Evidence

Those who open the public figure's mail need training in the recognition of communications requiring assessment and the preservation of documents. The practice in some quarters of allowing fan mail or its equivalent to go unopened for months, to discard it unopened, or to return it unopened is to be deplored. Letters should be preserved with minimal disruption. In the case of anonymous communications, particularly extortion and ransom notes, envelopes and all packaging materials and enclosures should be preserved and exposed to minimal handling, preferably with cotton gloves touching only the extreme edges. To allow photocopying without smudging any latent fingerprints that may be present, a letter may be enclosed in a transparent plastic sheath.

Those who receive telephone calls for public figures need training on the recognition of calls requiring assessment and on the preservation of information from such calls. Information from telephone calls is much more often lost because it is not recorded or otherwise documented. Where lawful, incoming calls to telephones that regularly receive inappropriate and threatening telephone calls should be tape-recorded. Where not lawful, a standardized form for recording observations made in the course of such telephone calls should be provided to all those who answer the phone.

Those who greet visitors have an even greater challenge because they must serve both screening and reporting functions and because they are at risk of violence themselves, as illustrated by the shooting deaths of two guards at Universal Studios in 1989 when Nathan Trupp, who had toured the studio earlier that day, arrived to kill actor Michael Landon.

Records on subjects must be maintained in a manner that allows them to be searched under multiple identifiers because subjects write under aliases (17 percent of the celebrity cases and five percent of the political cases) and do not always continue giving full identifiers when they are confident that they have established a close relationship with the public figure.

#### Strategies for Increasing Signal Detection

Some strategies we recommend to increase signal detection, i.e., the proportion of relevant events that are reported are:

--Training all gatekeepers to visitors, deliveries, mail, and telephone calls how to identify persons and communications deserving of assessment and procedures for documenting observations, handling evidence, and reporting events.

- Providing standardized reporting forms to those who are regularly the first to detect relevant events. In the entertainment industry these include secretaries, managers, agents, fan mail service workers, and studio and venue security guards. In politics and business, these include telephone operators, secretaries, and staff members in various offices.
- Increasing awareness of the problems of public figure protection among the law enforcement, security, and mental health communities through publications and educational programs that provide information on the documentation and reporting of cases.
- Developing a centralized clearing house for initial reports on obsessions, harassment, threats, and stalking so that anyone can report relevant information at no cost to someone who will refer the information to the appropriate parties ("Dial 1-800-STALKER").
- Increasing awareness of the problems of public figure protection among members of the general public through informative stories in the mass media that provide a toll-free number for making the desired notifications.

A centralized clearing house is necessary to direct information to those whose personal safety requires such information. A subject's excessive focus on a public figure may first be detected through the observations of family members, acquaintances, or therapists, comments overheard by strangers, letters sent to other public figures, or any of a variety of other means. Only an inexpensive and widely known means of reporting such detections can channel the necessary information to those who need it.

Public figures are not these subjects' only victims. Those around public figures not only must cope with communications and visits from subjects, but may themselves become the focus of the subject's attention:

A woman who years previously had worked as a governor's receptionist received a series of telephone calls at home from a man who used to try to visit the Governor. He slipped a letter under her door, writing that he had changed his name, was homeless, and wanted help, and imploring, "Please don't be another door slammer." Her building was supposedly locked at the time he must have delivered the letter. The woman moved to a suburb of the state capital, using a listed telephone number. Three years later, the same man left another letter under the door of her new home, reading: "I am harassed constantly in all directions. Frankly, I am without a place to stay, and when I do fall asleep I find myself being gassed by the creatures of the night. I trust you." The victim became fearful enough to impair her sleep, and she had begun to wonder whether her home was a safe place to stay.

Many people who become aware of a subject's excessive interest in a public figure may be reluctant to report this to anyone, thinking that the matter does not concern them and that they do not want to become involved. It may help to combat these attitudes if those educating the public highlight this observation from our study: the persons most likely to be killed when these subjects turn to murder are the subjects' own family members and intimates. None of the cases in our sampling universe succeeded in killing celebrities or politicians, but they killed at least six family members and three others.

Moreover, subjects sometimes attack people they mistake for the public figure, putting ordinary citizens at risk:

A man attacked a young woman with a knife and attempted to rape her because she resembled a particular celebrity. During the attack he said, "I have been looking for one year. You don't deserve to live." He was convicted and sentenced to seven years in prison.

Even if the early signals detected and reported to the public figure are not subjected to clinical assessments of dangerousness, it is important that there be notification to the public figure of a subject's pathological interest in him or her. Even where there is no legal duty to make such warnings, there is surely a moral imperative to do so.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT AND PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION

Awareness of a subject's focus on a public figure offers the opportunity to assess the danger that the subject poses toward the public figure and to devise strategies for preventing violence or other undesirable outcomes. When we began our research, the overwhelming majority of persons attempting to make such assessments were unqualified to do so. Although many of them readily admit their lack of qualifications, others seem unaware of their limitations. Regrettably, this situation remains true today.

There are exceptions in both the public and private sectors. Several government agencies have personnel with years of experience in handling large numbers of mentally disordered persons who pursue public figures, but their expertise, which is based primarily on this experience and their investigative backgrounds, resides in the hands of a finite number of agents or officers who are subject to transfer, retirement, and other moves that take their expertise with them. In the private sector, there are but a handful of security consulting firms and mental health professionals with relevant expertise, again based primarily on years of experience in handling large numbers of mentally disordered persons who pursue public figures and on their investigative or clinical backgrounds.

Threat Assessment

To this state of affairs we have tried to bring empirical research that answers many basic questions and offers new assessment tools. The objective tools available to the behavioral scientist who attempts to assess the threat posed by a mentally disordered subject with undue interest in a public figure include the base rate tables presented in Chapter 8, the risk factor scales presented in Chapter 14, and the well-established predictors of violence (Monahan, 1981).

Our study represents what Monahan (1984) has termed the "second generation" of research in the prediction of violent behavior. Previous studies had reached a predictive "sound barrier" of one correct dangerousness prediction out of three. This study stretches the limits of that predictive barrier, increasing the power of positive predictions to correct predictions 78 percent of the time for celebrity cases and 87 percent of the time for political cases. Even with these high levels of positive predictions, the proportion of all cases correctly classified remained high at 73 percent and 83 percent respectively.

This result may reflect the fact that our scales do not attempt to predict violence, but rather behavior that is a prerequisite to violence. The fact that the base rate of approach behavior is much higher than the rate of violence

helps explain why the results of this study are so superior to the results of previous efforts to predict violence.

As attractive as it may be for the layman to attempt to apply these objective tools, it is essential to recognize that these tools, like diagnostic tests in medicine or psychology, are nothing without informed clinical judgment to interpret the results and evaluate their contribution to what must remain a fundamentally clinical assessment based on all available information. The tools are intended to supplement clinical judgment and decision making, not substitute for it. Neither these nor any other objective measures can substitute for a thorough and individualized assessment guided by experience and sound clinical judgment.

Our scales in particular are meant to enhance clinical decision making, not replace it. All but one of the scales we developed requires a clinical assessment to even compute a subject's score, and the one exception is not the scale with the best performance.

#### Preventive Intervention

Assuming that a subject has been determined to pose a substantial risk to the public figure, the question remains of how best to manage that risk and prevent violence, dangerous encounters, or other untoward outcomes. Two strategies are important for all public figures: maintaining the confidentiality of one's home address and

hardening the target. Two others are applicable to most high risk cases: developing additional information on the subject and monitoring the subject's status and movements. Other strategies that should be considered in each case but applied only in selected cases after careful weighing of the potential risks and benefits are: assisting the subject to obtain voluntary treatment, warning the subject of consequences that will ensue if particular behaviors occur, injunctive relief, arrest, and involuntary psychiatric commitment. The selection and execution of these countermeasures is beyond the scope of this report, but we have several relevant observations that we offer for the purpose of stimulating further work in this important area.

Maintaining Confidentiality of Home Address: Among the most critical countermeasures is to prevent subjects from locating the public figure's home, particularly for those who do not have adequate home security resources (Dietz, 1989). In the entertainment industry, the home is the most common location for inappropriate approaches by the mentally disordered. A would-be assailant who can locate the public figure's home can wait for the victim at predictable times of day, can purposely enter the home while it is unoccupied, when everyone is asleep, or at other times of the subject's choosing. Knowing his or her victim's home address provides a potential assailant with all of the advantages of surprise.

A home address is generally treated as public information, and special measures are needed to guard against its release. Not only must the public figure's telephone number and address be unpublished; special arrangements are necessary to insure that neither the address nor the telephone number be obtainable from unsuspecting employees of the telephone company, credit card companies, banks, florists, doctors, acquaintances, secretaries, or the host of other organizations and persons that would ordinarily know where someone lives. Only a move to a new home can eliminate the possibility of being located from outdated telephone books and reverse directories.

Subjects sometimes use very elaborate pretexts and ruses to locate and gain access to their intended victims:

Arthur Jackson, who traveled from Scotland to murder actress Theresa Saldana, hired a private detective to locate her parents' unlisted telephone number. Calling her mother under the pretense of being Martin Scorsese calling to offer the actress a part in a movie, Jackson obtained Ms. Saldana's home address. Jackson then traveled to Los Angeles, stalked Saldana around her home, and nearly killed her in a brutal knife attack (Based on Saldana, 1986).

It is very difficult to maintain the confidentiality of a home address. In California, for example, a court order is necessary in order to register to vote without disclosing a home address, and to buy a home without making the address public requires that it be purchased by a third party or a

trust. The most readily accessible and widely abused source for the home address, however, is the state department of motor vehicles, used to locate actress Rebecca Schaeffer who was murdered at her home in July 1989 and numerous other public figures (de Becker, 1989). At the time of this writing, the California Assembly is considering legislation that would limit access to this information to those with a legitimate interest.

Target Hardening: The strategies for making public figures more difficult to locate, approach, and attack are beyond the scope of this report. Substantial expertise exists concerning such strategies, and is in the hands of selected government agencies, private security firms, and corporate security services. The potential victim or protector who turns to published sources for this information is in for a shock, however. The typical manual sold for "bodyguards" (Elhanan, 1985; Rapp, 1988; Thompson, 1984) is not the source of guidance one might hope. Elhanan (1985), for example, in Keep 'Em Alive: The Bodyguard's Trade speaks of the protection of political figures, rock stars, corporate executives, and the rich and famous. He has this to say about mentally disordered subjects in the crowd at a public appearance:

[T]here's a subtle, or sometimes not so subtle, sense of something being not right with them, which is noticeable if you're looking for it.

Experience in this kind of passive alertness helps develop a sixth sense for that slight taint of disorder in an individual-- it's like noticing the smell of something faintly rotten.

When this happens, I usually try not to do anything, not even look in the direction my attention is drawn. I just wait for the opportunity to glance over as if by routine, and check out the scent. (P. 53.)

Rapp (1988) is equally misleading when he writes of assassins:

Individual assassins usually have little in resources. Bremer and Hinckley are two recent American examples. Their plans cannot be complex, and therefore often fail for lack of "backup." Because they work alone, the bodyguard usually has no warning of the attempt until it's actually under way. These individuals don't confide their plans to others, which eliminates the risk of informers.

It is chilling to consider that there are those who hire bodyguards "educated" by reading such manuals (which do not even give particularly good advice on their strong points, such as selecting weapons and clothing). The manuals, incidentally, are marketed by the very publishers which produce manuals on how to commit crimes (Dietz, 1988).

Developing Intelligence: In general, the more information one has about the subject, the more refined an assessment will be possible, but the critical decision to be made is whether or not to allow the subject to learn that information is being gathered. Two schools of thought are

at odds on this issue, and we express here no opinion on their relative merits.

The one school holds that a direct approach to the subject by police or security personnel often satisfies his need for attention, deters him from further action, and enhances data collection by permitting a direct interview, observation in a natural setting (often his home), and the establishment of rapport to facilitate future monitoring. (An extreme variant of this school, the "go out and meet the threat" school, holds that intimidating confrontation of the subject is the best means of "getting rid of the problem.")

The other school holds that any direct approach to the subject that he might connect with his pursuit of the public figure will strengthen his conviction that he and the public figure have a relationship, thereby worsening the problems of the subject, the public figure, and the protective personnel. According to this school, information should be developed unobtrusively from archival records; by pretext calls in which a deceptive telephone call is made to the last known location of the subject in order to verify his or her presence there, determine any new location, and gather additional information; and by analogous pretext interviews. Pretext calls and interviews are routinely used by law enforcement and security personnel (Rush and Siljander, 1984), but clever offenders also use the technique to gather

intelligence on their victims (Dietz, 1989), as in the case of Arthur Jackson. The notion of gathering information on an unsuspecting subject is disquieting to many mental health professionals, who are ethically enjoined against any deceptive practices toward their patients and who generally eschew doing anything without the patient's knowledge and consent. Here, however, we are speaking of the assessment of a subject who is not the patient of the evaluator.

Risk Surveillance: Many of the most important facilitators of an approach and of violence can change quickly, requiring periodic assessment or even continuous monitoring. Among these are the subject's location, acquisition of weapons, mental status, and intentions. Only through ongoing intelligence collection (including disclosures made by the subject in his communications) can one hope to know when a subject gains new mobility, changes his physical appearance, buys a gun, or acquires a job in the public figure's home, office, or security force.

Voluntary Treatment: These subjects are extremely difficult to engage in treatment because they often have fixed delusional systems. Those who are grandiose have no interest in losing their deluded perception of a personal connection to fame, glamour, or power, and those who suffer persecutory delusions are notoriously difficult to engage in a trusting therapeutic relationship.

Warning the Subject: Subjects who are turned away by police or security personnel may be warned of legal actions that will be taken should they return or engage in other harassing or unlawful conduct. In some jurisdictions, a documented warning about trespassing permits arrest in the event the subject returns to prohibited property. Where no such statutory provision exists, we recommend that lawmakers consider enacting one.

Injunctive Relief: As far as we can judge, injunctive relief in the form of peace bonds or restraining orders rarely if ever succeeds in causing a subject to abandon his pursuit of the public figure. It could hardly be otherwise, for many of the most persistent subjects are pursuing public figures because of delusions, and delusional beliefs are not subject to any kind of disproof, not even the pronouncements of the sternest judge. Nonetheless, injunctions do serve the function of facilitating arrest and commitment when the subject inevitably violates the court order.

Jeff Turner, a 35 year-old unemployed resident of a halfway house, was arrested in June 1988 when he carried a 24-inch samurai-styled sword into the courthouse where a petition was being heard on behalf of singer Tiffany, saying the sword was a gift for the singer. After Turner obtained the singer's home address from the Department of Motor Vehicles, she petitioned for a restraining order. The court ordered Turner to stay at least 300 yards away from Tiffany for the following three years and barred him from calling or sending letters to the star. After the hearing, Turner told journalists that he and the

singer, though distant cousins, had been engaged to each other by their families before birth: "We have a Middle Eastern courtship, so we are never alone and we exchange love letters through intermediaries." (Based on Seager, 1989.)

Note that in ordering the subject to stop writing letters, the court unknowingly attempted to prevent Turner from warning the singer of an impending attack. We recommend that restraining orders not bar letters, but rather bar telephone calls, visits, following, and other harassing behaviors.

Involuntary Psychiatric Commitment: Civil commitment, like arrest, involves a substantial deprivation of liberty for the subject. To safeguard the rights of the mentally ill, legislative bodies and courts have adopted what some regard as excessively high thresholds for sustaining a commitment beyond the few days provided for by temporary restraining order or emergency commitment. Current standards for commitment and lack of knowledge of this specialized population result in many subjects being held for only a few days before release, serving neither to initiate effective treatment nor to prevent future crimes through the quarantine function of commitment.

Both the legal standards and the lack of knowledge can be remedied. The chief difficulties with current standards of commitment, as applied to these cases, concern the common

requirements that the individual have engaged in a "recent overt act" and the danger be "imminent."

The requirement of a "recent overt act" (expressed variously among the states and sometimes including "threats") is often interpreted by clinicians as requiring recent violence, even if the statute is silent on the meaning of this term. Note that writing inappropriate letters, making inappropriate telephone calls, traveling to pursue an inappropriate encounter with a public figure, and making an inappropriate visit in search of the public figure are all overt acts. Where the type of overt act required is not specified, only an adequate assessment of the individual subject's dangerousness can establish whether that subject's letter writing, telephone calling, travel, or visits fulfill the overt act criterion for commitment.

The ordinary meaning of the word "imminent" is "hanging threateningly overhead." Unfortunately, there has been a substantial effort to redefine "imminent" to mean "immediate." Those favoring this new meaning draw support from recent research indicating that short-term predictions of future violence are more accurate than long-term predictions (Monahan, 1984). Short-term predictions are better in part because so much of the violence traditionally studied stems from intoxication, acute agitation, anger, and other temporary states.

Many of the more dangerous subjects who pursue public figures, however, are dangerous in part because of fixed delusions or a cluster of symptoms commonly known as obsessions. These were the most common symptoms in both study populations, with delusions identified among 65 percent of subjects pursuing entertainment figures and 83 percent of subjects pursuing political figures. Obsession-like symptoms were identified among 55 percent of those pursuing entertainment figures and 80 percent of those pursuing political figures.

Delusions and obsession-like symptoms are not temporary states that fade within hours, days, or weeks regardless of treatment. Rather, they are often chronic symptoms that persist for years without proper treatment. In both study populations, the serial letter writers had averaged about one year of correspondence when we studied them, and there were subjects who had been writing, calling, and visiting for many years. The acutely violent patient is like a bullet in mid-flight; the deluded or obsessed stalker is like a cocked .45. Both pose an imminent risk of striking a target, but in the case of the former the suspense will soon be over.

We recommend that lawmakers consider enacting additional commitment criteria that are specific to the class of persons who, as a result of obsession or delusion,

pose a substantial risk of bodily harm to a particular person or group or to those mistakenly identified as the object of the obsession or delusion, and that such criteria specify that the danger need not be immediate. Note that such legislation should not be specific to public figures, because identical behavior is observed among mentally disordered persons who are obsessed or deluded regarding private citizens (most often former lovers or the new partners of former lovers, employers or other superiors, passing acquaintances, or complete strangers), the discussion of which is beyond the scope of this report.

Unless and until such criteria are enacted and understood, it is essential that those who examine the defendant be apprised of: (1) the seriousness of the defendant's quest, (2) the ways in which the assessment of dangerousness of subjects pursuing public figures differ from ordinary assessments of dangerousness, (3) the fact that not only the identified public figure (who may or may not have elaborate security) but also other public figures, the defendant's family and intimates, and even complete strangers are at risk from such subjects, and (4) other pertinent findings from research on this special population. Victims and prosecutors cannot assume that the doctors at the state hospital have such knowledge and should either educate those doctors or retain their own experts.

Arrest: One of the difficulties in public figure protection is that the crimes committed by mentally disordered offenders who pursue public figures tend to be at one extreme or the other of the customary notions (and legal codifications) of seriousness of crime. Large numbers of subjects commit those offenses accorded little weight by police, prosecutors, and judges, such as harassment, trespassing, disorderly conduct, or making threats; small numbers of subjects commit those offenses accorded great weight, such as attempted murder and murder. By the time the latter have occurred, intervention has failed.

The challenge in public figure protection is to use the seemingly minor offenses to prevent the most serious. Under existing law, this usually requires that arrest for harassment, trespassing, disorderly conduct, or making threats be used as a basis for commitment to a mental hospital, under applicable provisions for pre-trial or pre-sentence evaluations of dangerousness. As noted above, special knowledge is needed to assess this population, and victims and prosecutors have the means of interjecting that knowledge into the evaluative process by insuring that court-appointed evaluators are well informed or retaining their own experts.

A great many changes could be made in the existing statutes regarding threats and harassment (Robinson, 1984,

included as Appendix 6) that would bring a greater proportion of relevant cases within the reach of the criminal law. A discussion of these changes is beyond the scope of this report, but we note that the most fundamental changes needed concern the conceptions of what constitutes a "threat" or "harassment."

#### CULTURAL FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE PROBLEM

The pursuit of the famous by the mentally disordered reflects the interplay of culture and psychopathology in ways that go beyond the scope of our empirical research. To attribute the problem to psychopathology without recognizing the contributions of the culture would be as mistaken as failing to recognize the contributions of psychopathology. The mentally ill in America are attempting to function in a culture that excludes them from meaningful participation while seemingly according every advantage and glory to performers, athletes, evangelists, newscasters, business leaders, and elected officials. It should come as no surprise that so many of those whose illnesses predispose to grandiose or persecutory delusions come to believe-- largely through what they see on television-- that the famous are their intimates, their persecutors, or their last hope.

Several authors have addressed the contributions of the media to generating inappropriate attention to the famous:

. . . In the days before intensive celebrity media coverage, celebrities were generally known to the public through their paid performances. But not anymore. Because they are constantly revealing themselves through dramatized reality over talk shows, in magazines, and "infotainment," audiences come to know their celebrities intimately without ever having been in their presence. The result is a growing belief by fans that their celebrities are actually very approachable. . . . (Rein et al., 1987, p. 329.)

The illusion of intimacy theme has been most thoughtfully developed by Schickel (1985), whose Intimate Strangers is required reading for anyone who wishes to understand the contribution of our culture to the behavior we studied. Caughey (1984) has written that "imaginary relationships . . . are an important, powerful, and pervasive aspect of contemporary American life" (p. 7), and he indicted those cultural influences that spawn "imaginary relationships" for the crimes of Steinhagen, Chapman, and Hinckley. To Caughey, the "imaginary relationships" experienced by these offenders were products of enculturation similar to the more "benign" fantasies of other Americans.

As of this writing, TV Guide, the weekly index to American preoccupations, offers the following network and cable experiences: "Runaway with the Rich and Famous," "Hollywood Chronicles," "Celebrity Outdoors," "Hollywood Insider," "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous," "Entertainment This Week," "Entertainment Tonight," "Showbiz

Week," "Grand Old Opry Live Backstage," "Week in Rock," and "Inside Video, This Week." Only a substantial market for tidbits and gossip about celebrities-- as opposed to information about genuine achievements-- could have spawned this secondary industry of celebrity "news" programs.

There can be no doubt that the illusion of intimacy provided by many of these shows and by talk shows, tabloids, tabloid television, People magazine, and now Celebrity and Fame magazines fosters the very problem we studied. These media increase the proportions of the mentally ill who focus on the famous instead of on the traditional foci of grandiose and persecutory delusions (such as Jesus, Solomon, the C.I.A., and the K.G.B.), but there is little that could be done to remedy this. In addition, however, these media often do something that is both more dangerous and less essential to either their entertainment role or their profit-making function: our research suggests that it is dangerous and irresponsible to give information that makes it easier for those dangerous to the famous to successfully locate and attack the object of their attention. In this, they join such enterprises as Hollywood: Map & Guide to the Fabulous Homes of the Stars (Anonymous, 1986) and The New Address Book: How to Reach Anyone Who's Anyone (Levine, 1986).

We know better than to give unsolicited advice to those segments of the media that do not always behave responsibly.

What we can point out, however, is the dilemma faced by those ascending toward fame: how to gain name and product recognition without becoming a target. Publicists encourage performers, office seekers, and others whose careers require such recognition to participate in interviews, talk shows, and other events where personal disclosures are valued. Appearances in these are today nearly a prerequisite to fame. Yet it is these appearances-- largely uncompensated, by the way-- that most encourage the illusion of intimacy and most often reveal that which should not be revealed, from favorite restaurants and hotels to travel plans and the names of family members.

Public figures and would-be public figures can attempt to exert some control over the information disclosed in these appearances, but the only ultimate solution to their dilemma is an improbable one: if enough sought-after interviewees and guests declined appearances in undignified publications and programs, publishers and broadcasters would be forced to make a business decision to behave responsibly.

#### FUTURE RESEARCH NEEDS

To develop additional information about those who pursue contact with the famous, the priorities for future research are:

- development of multivariate predictive models that take into account prior approaches
- prospective application of predictive models to additional cases and additional samples
- studies of those who pursue other types of public figures
- studies devoted to the task of predicting which of the subjects who approach public figures will be violent
- studies of communications in forms other than writing, including telephone calls and face-to-face statements
- studies integrating information from documents with information from structured interviews and from direct observations of behavior

The methods developed for this study-- namely clinically informed content analysis of naturally occurring communications-- are applicable to research on a variety of communications other than those to public figures. The most direct applicability lies in the study of other distressing communications from the mentally disordered, such as suicide notes, suicidal statements, and the "nut mail" received by the press, manufacturers, government bodies, and any other institution known to the general public. In addition to

these applications, however, the methods can be applied to manipulative and hostile communications, such as those from jilted lovers and disgruntled employees, and to communications associated with other forms of criminal behavior, such as extortion communications and those alleging or threatening product tampering, sabotage, bombing, ransom kidnapping, and other crimes.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aaronson D, Rieber RW: Psycholinguistic research: Implications and applications. New York, Wiley, 1979
- Aldrich JH, Nelson FD: Linear probability, logit, and probit models. Beverly Hills, Sage, 1984
- Allport GW: The use of personal documents in psychological science. New York, Social Science Research Council, 1942
- Allport GW: Letters from Jenny. New York, Harcourt, Brace, & World, 1965
- Allport GW, Faden JM: The psychology of newspapers: Five tentative laws. Public Opinion Quarterly 4:687-705, 1940
- American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Third Edition. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 1980
- American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual, Third Edition, Revised. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Association, 1987
- Anderson JA: Separate sample logistic discrimination. Biometrika 59(1):19-35, 1972
- Anonymous: Handbook of Bomb Threat & Search Procedure. Cornville, AZ, Desert Publications, 1976
- Anonymous: Hollywood: Map & Guide to the Fabulous Homes of the Stars. Panorama City, CA, J.B.M. Publications, 1986
- Armistead T: Issues in the identification of handprinting: A case study in anonymous death threats. J Pol Sci Admin 12:81-98, 1984
- Atkinson JW (ed): Motives in fantasy, action and society: A method of assessment and study. Princeton, NJ, Van Nostrand, 1958
- Bacon GM: On the Writing of the Insane. London: John Churchill & Sons, 1870
- Baldwin AL: Personality structure analysis: A statistical method for investigating the single personality. J Abn Soc Psychol 37:163-183, 1942
- Bales RF: Interaction process analysis. Reading, MA, Addison-Wesley, 1950
- Beck A, Resnick H, Lettieri D: The prediction of suicide. Bowie, MD, Charles, 1974

Beers CW: A mind that found itself: An autobiography, 5th ed. New York, Doubleday, 1928

Behrendt JE: Class defects in printwheel typescript. J Forensic Sci 33:328-335, 1988

Berelson B: Content analysis in communications research. New York, Free Press, 1952

Berelson B, Lazarsfield PF: The analysis of communication content. Chicago and New York, University of Chicago and Columbia University, 1948

Beres LR: Terrorism and Global Security: The Nuclear Threat. Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1979

Billowitz A, Pendleton L: Successful resolution of threats to a therapist. Hosp Comm Psychiatry, 39(7):782-783, 1988

Blackstone Associates: Documents on Terrorism. Terrorism: An International J 2(3-4):283-296, 1979

Blumer H: An appraisal of Thomas and Znaniecki's The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. In: Critiques of research in social sciences: I. New York, Social Science Research Council, 1939

Bradford JMW: Forensic psychiatric aspects of schizophrenia. The Psychiatric J the University of Ottawa 8:96-103, 1983

Braudy L: The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History. New York, Oxford University Press, 1986

Breznitz S: Cry Wolf: The Psychology of False Alarms. Hillsdale, NJ, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1984

Brown GW, Birley JL: Crisis and life changes and the onset of schizophrenia. J Health Soc Behav 9: 203-214, 1968

Brown GW, Sklair F, Harris TO, Birley JLT: Life events and psychiatric disorders. Part 1: Some methodological issues. Psychological Medicine 3:74-87, 1973

Brown GW, Harris T: Social origins of depression: A study of psychiatric disorder in women. New York, Free Press, 1978

Buss AH: The psychology of aggression. New York, John Wiley, 1967

- Buss AH: Aggression pays. In: J.L. Singer (Ed), The control of aggression and violence: Cognitive and physiological factors. New York, Academic Press, 1971
- Cadwell JJ: Nuclear Facility Threat Analysis and Tactical Response Procedures. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1983
- Campus N: Transituational consistency as a dimension of personality. J Personality and Social Psychology 29:593-600, 1974
- Campus N: A measure of needs to assess the stimulus characteristics of TAT cards. J Personality Assessment 40:248-258, 1976
- Cartwright D, French JRP Jr: The reliability of life history studies. Character and Personality 8:110-119, 1939
- Caughey JL: Imaginary social worlds: A cultural approach. Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1984
- Cavan RS, Hauser PM, Stouffer SA: Note on the statistical treatment of life history material. Social Forces 9:200-203, 1930
- Chais P: Final Cut. New York, Simon and Schuster, 1981
- Chaplin JR: Dictionary of psychology. New York, Dell Publishing, 1975
- Chapman L, Chapman J: Illusory correlations as an obstacle to the use of valid psychodiagnostic signs. J Abnormal Psychology 74:271-280, 1969
- Chedru F, Geschwind N: Writing disturbances in acute confusional states. Neuropsychologia 10:343-353, 1972
- Chomsky N: Aspects of the theory of syntax. Cambridge, MA, The M.I.T. Press, 1965
- Cicchone JR, Kaskey GB: Life events and antisocial behavior. Bull Am Acad Psychiatry Law 7:63-68, 1979
- Clarke JW: American Assassins: The Darker Side of Politics. Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1982
- Cocozza JJ, Steadman HJ: Prediction in psychiatry: An example of misplaced confidence in experts. Social Problems 25:265-276, 1978

Cocozza JJ, Steadman HJ: Some refinements in the measurement and prediction of violent behavior. Am J Psychiatry 1012-1020, 1974

Convit A, Brizer D, Lin SP, Jaeger J, Volavka J: Characteristics of violent inpatients: A predictive model. Department of Psychiatry, New York University at Manhattan Psychiatric Center, and the Nathan S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research. Paper presented at the NATO Conference on Violence, Naples, Italy, September 1986

de Becker G: Testimony before the Assembly Transportation Committee Hearing on Department of Motor Vehicles' Data: Privacy vs. Access Rights, Los Angeles, CA, October 4, 1989

Deese J: Text structure, strategies, and comprehension in learning from scientific textbooks. In: Research in science education: New questions, new directions. Edited by J Robinson. Boulder, CO, Center for Educational Research and Evaluation, 1981

Derogatis LR: SCL-90 administration, scoring, and procedures manual (Vol. 1). Baltimore, MD, Clinical Psychometric Research, 1977

Derogatis LR: Self-report measures of stress. In: Handbook of Stress: Theoretical and Clinical Perspectives. Edited by L Goldberger, S Breznitz. New York, The Free Press, 1982

Dietz PE: Dangerous information: Product tampering and poisoning advice in revenge and murder manuals. J Forensic Sciences 33:1206-1217, 1988

Dietz PE: Defenses against dangerous people when arrest and commitment fail. In: Simon RI (Ed.): American Psychiatric Press Review of Clinical Psychiatry and Law. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Press, 1989

Dietz PE: Hypothetical criteria for the prediction of individual criminality. In: CD Webster, Ben-Aron MH, Hucker SJ (Eds), Dangerousness: Probability and prediction, psychiatry, and public policy. Cambridge, England, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp 87-102

Dietz PE: Mass, serial, and sensational homicides. Bull NY Acad Med 62:477-491, 1986

Dietz PE: Threats or blows? Observations on the distinction between assault and battery. Int J Law and Psychiatry 4:401-416, 1981

Dietz PE, Rada RT: Interpersonal violence in forensic facilities. In: Lion JR, Reid WH (eds): Assaults Within Psychiatric Facilities. New York, Grune & Stratton, 1983a, pp 47-59

Dietz PE, Rada RT: Seclusion rates and patient census in a maximum security hospital. Behav Sci Law 1:89-93, 1983b

Dietz PE, Rowe KL: The psychological analysis of suicide notes. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, February 1985

Dohrenwend BS, Dohrenwend BP: Exemplification of a method for scaling life events: The PERI life events scale. J Health Soc Behav 19:205-229, 1978

Dohrenwend BS, Krasnoff L, Askenasy AR, Dohrenwend BP: The psychiatric epidemiology research interview life events scale. In: L. Goldberger and S. Breznitz (Eds.), Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical perspectives. New York, The Free Press, 1982

Dollard J, Doob LW, Miller NE, Mowrer OH, Sears RR: Frustration and aggression. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1939

Dollard J, Mowrer OH: A method of measuring tension in written documents. J Abn Soc Psychol 42:3-32, 1947

Driscoll JM: Aggressiveness and frequency-of-aggressive-use ratings for pejorative epithets by Americans. J Social Psychology 114:111-126, 1981

Elhanan P: Keep 'Em Alive: The Bodyguard's Trade. Boulder, CO, Paladin Press, 1985

Elliot FR: Presidential inaugural addresses: A study in verbal symbols. Public Opinion Quarterly 1:79-82, July 1937

Epstein JJ: The grammar of a lie: Its legal implications. In Robert J DiPietro (Ed) Linguistics and the professions: Proceedings of the second annual delaware symposium on language studies. Norwood, NJ, Ablex Publishing, 1982

Erickson B, Lind EA, Johnson BC, O'Barr WM: Speech style and impression formation in a court setting: The effects of "powerful" and "powerless" speech. J Exper Soc Psychol 14:266-279, 1978

Farnsworth DL: Dangerousness. Psychiatric Annals 7:304-309, 1977

Fein RA: Interaction with the United States Secret Service: Views of a mental health professional. Behav Sci Law 2:168-178, 1984

Fenton F: The influence of newspaper presentations on the growth of crime and other anti-social activity. Am J Sociol 16:342-371, 538-564, 1910

Fillenbaum S: Inducements: On the phrasing and logic of conditional promises, threats, and warnings. Psychol Res 38:231-250, 1976

Fillmore C: The case for case. In E Bock and R Harms (Eds.), Universals of linguistic theory. New York, Holt, Reinhart, & Winston, 1968, pp 1-90

Fischer GW: Conceptual models, judgment, and the treatment of uncertainty in nuclear threat assessment. J Soc Iss 39(1):87-116, 1983

Fleiss JL, Williams JB, Dubro AF: The logistic regression analysis of psychiatric data. J Psychiatric Res 20:145-209, 1986

Freeman L: "Before I Kill More . . ." New York, Crown Publishers, 1955

French JE: Verbal access to feeling states in juvenile delinquents. Dissertation Abstracts International, 41(2):670-B, 1980

Freud S: Leonardo da Vinci. In: J. Strachey (Ed), The standard edition of the complete psychological works of Sigmund Freud. Volume 11: Five lectures on psycho-analysis, Leonardo da Vinci, and other works. London, The Hogarth Press, 1910, 1957

Freud S: Eine Kindheitserinnerung aus Dichtung und Wahrheit. Ges. Schrift, Vol. 10. Vienna, International Psychoanalytic Society, 1924

Freud S: Psychoanalytische Bemerkungen über einen autobiographischen beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia. Ges. Schrift, Vol. 8. Vienna, International Psychoanalytic Society, 1926

Fugua P, Wilson JV: Terrorism: The Executive's Guide to Survival. Houston, Gulf Publishing Co., 1978

George AL: Propaganda analysis: A study of inferences made from Nazi propaganda in World War II. Evanston, IL, Row, Peterson, 1959

Gerbner GL, Holsti OR, Krippendorff K, Paisley WJ, Stone JP (Eds.): The analysis of communication content: Developments in scientific theories and computer techniques. New York, John Wiley, 1969

Gersten JC, Langner TS, Eisenberg JG, Simcha-Fagan O: An evaluation of the etiologic role of stressful life-change events in psychological disorders. J Health Soc Behav 18:228-244, 1974

Gervasio AH, Pepinsky HB, Schwebel AI: Stylistic complexity and verb usage in assertive and pasive speech. J Counseling Psychology 30:546-556, 1983

Giles H, Powesland PF: Speech style and social evaluation. London, Academic Press, 1975

Goldberger L, Breznitz S: Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical aspects. New York, The Free Press, 1982

Good MI: Primary affective disorder, aggression, and criminality: A review and clinical study. Arch Gen Psychiatry 35:954-960, 1978

Gordon T: Hazards with the use of the logistic regression function with special reference to data from prospective cardiovascular studies. J Chr Dis 27:97-102, 1974

Gottschalk LA: Research using the Gottschalk-Gleser Content Analysis Scales in English since 1969. In: Gottschalk LA, Lolas F, Viney LL (Eds.): Content Analysis of Verbal Behavior: Significance in Clinical Medicine and Psychiatry. Berlin, Springer-Verlag, 1986, pp 28-46

Gottschalk LA, Lolas F, Viney LL (Eds.): Content Analysis of Verbal Behavior: Significance in Clinical Medicine and Psychiatry. Berlin, Springer-Verlag, 1986

Greenland C: Evaluation of violence and dangerous behavior associated with mental illness. Seminars in Psychiatry 3:345-356, 1971

Gunderson JG Management of manic states: The problem of fire setting. Psychiatry 37:137-146, 1974

Guze SB, Goodwin DW, Crane JB: Criminality and psychiatric disorders. Arch Gen Psychiatry 20:583-591, 1969

Hagstrum JH: "Esteem enlivened by desire": The ideal of friendship between men and women in western culture. Key Reporter 49(3):2-4, Spring 1984

- Hall GS: Adolescence. New York, Appleton, 1904
- Halperin M, Blackwelder WC, Verter JI: Estimation of the multivariate logistic risk function: A comparison of the discriminant function and maximum likelihood approaches. J Chr Disease 24:125-158, 1971
- Hartogs R: Who will act violently? The predictive criteria. In: R. Hartogs and E Artzt (Eds.), Violence: The causes and solution. New York, Dell, 1970
- Haymon ST: Death of a God. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1987
- Hedlund JL, Sletten IW, Altman H, Evenson RC: Prediction of patients who are dangerous to others. J Clin Psychol 29:443-447, 1973
- Heilman ME: Threats and promises: Reputational consequences and transfer of credibility. J Exp Soc Psychol 10:310-324, 1974
- Hilton O: The evolution of questioned document examination in the last 50 years. J Forensic Sci 33:1310-1318, 1988
- Hilton O: Scientific Examination of Questioned Documents, rev. ed. New York, Elsevier Science, 1982
- Hoffman JL: Psychotic visitors to government offices in the national capital. Am J Psychiatry 99:571-575, 1943
- Holmes TH, Mesuda M: Life change and illness susceptibility. In: D.R. Heise (Ed), Personality and socialization. Chicago, Rand McNally, 1972
- Holmes TH, Rahe RH: The Social Readjustment Rating Scale. J Psychosomatic Research 11:213-218, 1967
- Homzie MJ, Kotsonis ME, Toris CCM: Letter writing differences: Relative status effects. Language and Speech, 24:377-385, 1981
- Hyams J: Murder at the Academy Awards. New York, St. Martin's Press, 1983
- Institute for Propaganda Analysis: How to detect propaganda. Propaganda Analysis 1:5-8, 1937
- Institute of Medicine: Research and Training for the Secret Service: Behavioral and Mental Health Perspectives. Washington, DC, National Academy Press, 1981

Ionno JA: A prospective study of assaultive behavior in female psychiatric patients. In: RJ Lion, WH Reid (Eds.), Assaults within psychiatric facilities. New York, Grune & Stratton, 1983

James EL: The classification of office copy machines from physical characteristics. J Forensic Sci 32:1293-1304, 1987

James W: The varieties of religious experience: A study in human nature. New York, Modern Library Edition, 1902

Janis IL, Fadner RH: The coefficient of imbalance. In HD Lasswell, et al. (Eds), Language of politics: Studies in quantitative semantics. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1965

Jaspers K: General Psychopathology. Trans. by J. Hoenig and M.W. Hamilton. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1923, trans. 1963

Joreskog KG, Sorbom D: Advances in factor analysis and structural equation models. New York, University Press of America, 1979

Kahle M: Beziehungen weiblicher Fursorgezoglinge zur Familie. Beihefte z. Zsch. f. angew. Psychol, No. 60, 188, 1931

Kaplan A, Goldsen JM: The reliability of content analysis categories. In HD Lasswell et al. (Ed) Language and politics. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1965, pp 83-112

Kenny DT: A theoretical and research reappraisal of stimulus factors in the TAT. In: J Kagan, G Leser (Eds.), Contemporary issues in thematic apperceptive methods. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1961

Klassen D, O'Connor WA: A prospective study of predictors of violence in adult male mental health admissions. Unpublished manuscript, Greater Kansas City Mental Health Foundation, 1984

Klassen D, O'Connor WA: Predicting violence among ex-mental patients: Preliminary research results. Paper presented during a symposium on Violent Crime and Mental Disorder at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, San Diego, California, November 1985

Kleinbaum DG, Kupper LL: Applied regression analysis and other multivariable methods. Belmont, LA, Duxbury Press, 1978

Kleinbaum DG, Kupper LL, Morgenstein H: Epidemiologic research principals and quantitative methods. Belmont, CA, Lifetime Learning Publications, 1982

Kleinfield S: Staying at the Top: The Life of a CEO. New York, Signet, 1987

Kozol HL, Boucher RJ, Garafalo RF: The diagnosis and treatment of violence. Crime and Delinquency 18:371-392, 1972

Krafft-Ebing, R. von: Psychopathia sexualis. Stuttgart, Enke, 1881

Krafft-Ebing R: Psychopathia Sexualis. (Klaf FS, trans.) New York, Stein and Day, 1965

Krieger D: What happens if . . . ? Terrorists, revolutionaries, and nuclear weapons. Ann Am Acad Polit Soc Sci 430:44-57, March 1977

Krippendorff K: Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology. Beverly Hills, Sage, 1980

Kupperman RH: Facing tomorrow's terrorist incident today. In: A. H Norton and M H Greenberg (eds): Studies in Nuclear Terrorism. Boston, GK Hall, 1982, pp 379-424

Kupperman R, Trent D: Terrorism: Threat, Reality, Response. Stanford, CA, Hoover Institutions Press, 1979

Labov W: Sociolinguistic patterns. Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972

Lapin L: How to Get Anything on Anybody. San Francisco, Auburn Wolfe Publishing, 1983

Lauderdale P, Smith-Cunnien P, Parker J, Inverarity J: External threat and the definition of deviance. J Pers Soc Psychol 46(5):1058-1068, 1984

Leary T: Interpersonal diagnosis of personality. New York, Ronald Press, 1957

Lefkowitz M, Eron L, Walder L, Huesman L: Growing up to be violent. New York, Pergamon, 1977

Levine M: The New Address Book: How to Reach Anyone Who's Anyone. New York, Perigee Books, 1986

Levinson RM, Ramsay G: Dangerousness, stress, and mental health evaluations. J Health Soc Behav 20:178-187, 1979

- Lindsay RK: Inferential memory as the basis of machines which understand natural language. In EA Feigenbaum and J Feldman (Eds) Computers and Thought. New York, McGraw Hill, pp 217-233, 1963
- Lippman W: Public opinion. New York, McGraw Hill, 1922
- Lloyd C: Life events and depressive disorder reviewed. Arch Gen Psychiatry 37:520-548, 1980
- Lombroso C: The man of genius. London, Scott, 1891
- Lorimar RJ, Justice B, McBee GW, Weinman M: Weighting events in life-stress research. J Health Soc Behav 20:306-308, 1979
- Macdonald JM: Bombers and Firesetters. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1977
- Macdonald JM: The threat to kill. Am J Psychia 120:125-130, 1963
- Macdonald JM: Homicidal Threats. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1968
- Macdonald JM Shaughnessy RB: Bomb threats, In: Macdonald JM: Bombers and Firesetters. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1977, pp 167-178
- Machiavelli N (1882) (translation by CE Detmold) The historical, political and diplomatic writings of Niccolo Machiavelli, Vol 1. Boston, James R. Osgood
- Maher BA, McKean KO, McLaughlin B: Studies in psychotic language. In: Philip J Stone, et al. (Eds) The General Inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis studies in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1966
- Mahl GF: Exploring emotional states by content analysis. In: I. de Sola Pool (Ed) Trends in content analysis. Urbana, IL, University of Illinois Press, pp 89-130, 1959
- Martell DA: Predicting potentially dangerous approaches toward public figures from the writings of mentally disordered individuals. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, 1989
- Martell DA, Dietz PE: Mental disorder and threats against public figures: Preliminary research results. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Society of Criminology, San Diego CA, November 1985

Mason JJ, Grose WP: The individuality of toolmarks produced by a label maker used to write extortion notes. J Forensic Sci 32:137-147, 1987

Mathews BC: A study of a New York daily. Independent 68:82-86, 1910

McClelland DC: The achieving society. Princeton, NJ, Van Nostrand, 1961

McClelland DS, Atkinson JW: The projective expression of needs. J Psychol 25:205-222, 1948

McClelland DS, Atkinson JW, Clark RA, Lowell EL: The achievement motive. New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953

McCord J: Some child rearing antecedents to criminal behavior in adult men. J Pers Soc Psychol 37:1477-1486, 1979

McDiarmond J: Presidential inaugural addresses: A study of verbal symbols. Public Opin Q 1:79-82, 1937

Meehl P: Clinical versus statistical prediction: A theoretical analysis and a review of the evidence. Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, 1954

Megargee E: Recent research on overcontrolled and undercontrolled personality patterns among violent offenders. Sociol Symp 9:37-50, 1973

Megargee E: Psychological determinants and correlates of criminal violence. In: ME Wolfgang and NA Weiner (Eds), Criminal violence. Beverly Hills, CA, Sage, 1982

Melges FT, Harris RF: Anger and attack: a cybernetic model of violence. In: DN Daniels, MF Gilula, FM Ochberg (Eds), Violence and the struggle for existence. Boston, Little, Brown & Co, 1970, pp 97-127

Mesuda M, Cutler DL, Hein L, Holmes TH: Life events and prisoners. Arch Gen Psychiatry 35:197-203, 1978

Milburn TW, Watman KH: On the Nature of Threat: A Social Psychological Analysis. New York, Praeger, 1983

Miller AH: Terrorism and Hostage Negotiations. Boulder, Colorado, Westview Press, 1980

Miller GA: Some psychological studies of grammar. Am Psychol 17:748-762, 1962

- Miller J: Inquirer II programmer's guide. St. Louis, MI, Washington University Press, 1969
- Miller NE: The frustration-aggression hypothesis. Psychological Review 48:337-342, 1941
- Miller TW: Advances in understanding the impact of stressful life events on health. Hosp Comm Psychiatry 39:615-622, 1988
- Mills CW: The Power Elite. London, Oxford University Press, 1956
- Miron MS, Douglas JE: Threat analysis: The psycholinguistic approach. FBI Law Enforcement Bull 48(9):5-9, September 1979
- Miron MS, Goldstein AP: Hostage. New York, Pergamon Press, 1979
- Miron MS, Pasquale A: Psycholinguistic analyses of coercive communications. J Psycholinguistic Research 7(2):95-120, 1978
- Miron MS, Reber J: Handling telephone bomb threats. Shiller Park, IL, Motorola Teleprograms, Inc, 1978
- Monahan J: Prediction research and the emergency commitment of dangerously mentally ill persons: A reconsideration. Am J Psychia 135:198-201, 1978
- Monahan J: Predicting violent behavior: An assessment of clinical techniques. Beverly Hills, CA, Sage, 1981
- Monahan J: The prediction of violent behavior: Toward a second generation of theory and policy. Am J Psychia 141:10-15, 1984
- Monahan J, Klassen D: Situational approaches to understanding and predicting violence. In: ME Wolfgang and NA Wiener (Eds), Criminal violence. Beverly Hills, CA, Sage, 1982
- Monahan J, Steadman HJ: Crime and mental disorder: An epidemiological approach. In: M Tonry and N Morris (Eds), Crime and Justice: An annual review of research, Vol 4. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983
- Monahan J, Wexler D: A definite maybe: Proofs and probability in civil committment. Law Hum Behav 2:37-42, 1978

- Morrison DG: On the interpretation of discriminant analysis. *J Marketing Res* 6:156-163, 1969
- Morse S: Crazy behavior, morals, and science: An analysis of the mental health legal system. *Southern Calif Law Rev* 51:527-654, 1978
- Murray HA: Uses of the Thematic Apperception Test. *Am J Psychia* 107:577-581, 1951
- Murray HA: Thematic apperception test manual. Cambridge MA, President and Fellows of Harvard College, 1971
- Murstein BI: Theory and research in projective techniques (emphasizing the TAT). New York, Wiley, 1963
- Nacci P, Tedeschi JT: Trust and reactions to threats. *Bull Psychonomic Soc* 1(6A):421-422, June 1973
- Novaco RW: The function and regulation of the arousal of anger. *Am J Psychia* 133:1124-1128, 1976
- Novaco RW: Anger and coping with stress. In: J Foreyt and D Rathjen (Eds), *Cognitive Behavior Therapy: Theory, Research, and Practice*. New York, Plenum, 1978
- Okun MA, Sandler IN, Baumann DJ: Buffer and booster effects as event-support transactions. *Am J Comm Psychol* 16:435-449, 1988
- Ogilvie DM, Stone PJ, Schneidman ES: Some characteristics of genuine versus simulated suicide notes. In Philip J Stone, et al., (Eds), *The General Inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis studies in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1966
- Paige JM: Letters from Jenny: An approach to the clinical analysis of personality structure by computer. In Philip J Stone et al. (Eds), *The General Inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis studies in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science*. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1966
- Pandurangi A, Kapur R: Reactive psychosis: A prospective study. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavia* 61:89-95, 1980
- Paykel ES: Life stress and psychiatric disorder: Applications of the clinical approach. In: BS Dohrenwend and BP Dohrenwend (Eds), *Stressful life events: Their nature and effects*. New York, Wiley, 1974

- Pepitone A, Kleiner R: The effects of threat and frustration on group cohesiveness. *J Abn Soc Pschol* 54(2):192-199, 1957
- Perkins DV The assessment of stress using life events scales. In: L Goldberger and S Breznitz (Eds), *Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical perspectives*. New York, The Free Press, 1982
- Peterson C, McCabe A: *Developmental psycholinguistics: Three ways of looking at a child's narrative*. New York, Plenum, 1983
- Press SJ, Wilson S: Choosing between logistic regression and discriminant analysis. *J Am Statis Ass* 73:699-705, 1978
- Quinsey VL, Warneford A, Pruesse M, Link N: Released Oak Ridge patients: A follow-up study of review board discharges. *Brit J Criminology* 15:264-270, 1975
- Rahe RH: The pathway between subjects' recent life changes and their near future illness reports: Representative results and methodological issues. In: BS Dohrenwend and BP Dohrenwend (Eds) *Stressful life events: Their nature and effects*. New York, Wiley, 1974
- Rapp B: *Bodyguarding: A Complete Manual*. Port Townsend, WA, Loompanics Unlimited, 1988
- Ratskin J, Struening E: Life events, stress, and illness. *Science* 194:1013-1020, 1976
- Reed GF: *Obsessional Experience and Compulsive Behaviour: A Cognitive-Structural Approach*. New York, Academic Press, 1985
- Rein I, Kotler P, Stoller M: *High Visibility*. New York, Dodd, Mead & Co., 1987
- Remsberg C: *The Tactical Edge: Surviving High-Risk Patrol*. Northbrook, IL, Calibre Press, 1986
- Reynolds B: Introduction. In: M Morino, *The Hollywood Walk of Fame*. Berkeley, Ten Speed Press, 1987
- Rice B: Between the lines of threatening messages. *Psychology Today* 15(9), 52-64 passim, 1981
- Richardson SA, Dohrenwend BS, Klein D: *Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions*. New York, Basic Books, 1965

- Rickheit G, Bock M: Psycholinguistic studies in language processing. New York and Berlin, Walter de Gruyter, 1983
- Rieber RW, Vetter H: Theoretical and historical roots of psycholinguistic research. In Doris Aaronson and Robert W. Rieber (Eds), Psycholinguistic research: Implications and applications. New York, Wiley & Sons, 1979
- Rieger CJ: Computational linguistics. In William O Dingwall (Ed), A survey of linguistics science. Stamford, CT, Greylock Publishing, 1978
- Robinson AJ: A remedial approach to harassment. Virginia Law Rev 70:507-544, 1984
- Rofman ES, Askinazi C, Fant E: The prediction of dangerous behavior in emergency civil commitment. Am J Psychia 137:1061-1064, 1980
- Roth LH: Dangerousness: In the eye of the beholder? Am J Psychia 138:995, 1981
- Rovin J: TV Babylon. New York, New American Library, 1984
- Rubin JC, Lewicki RJ: A three-factor experimental analysis of promises and threats. J Appl Soc Psychol 3:240-257, 1973
- Rule BG, Nesdale AR: Emotional arousal and aggressive behavior. Psychol Bull 83:851-863, 1979
- Rush DA, Siljander RP: Fundamentals of Civil and Private Investigation. Springfield, IL, Charles C Thomas, 1984
- Saldana T: Beyond Survival. New York, Bantam Books, 1986
- Sanches M, Blount BG: Sociocultural dimensions of language use. New York, Academic Press, 1975
- Schlenker BR, Bonoma T, Tedeschi JT, Pivnick WP: Compliance to threats as a function of the wording of the threat and the exploitativeness of the threatener. Sociometry 33:394-408, 1970
- Schickel R: Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity. Garden City, NY, Doubleday, 1985
- Seager S: Obsessed fan ordered to keep his distance from teen singer Tiffany. Los Angeles Herald Examiner, September 28, 1989, pp. A1, A10
- Sebastiani JA, Foy JL: Psychotic visitors to the White House. Am J Psychiatry 122:679-686, 1965

Sebeok TA, Zeps VJ: An analysis of structured content, with application of electronic computer research in psycholinguistics. *Language and Speech* 1:181-193, 1958

Sedelow SY: *Stylistic Analysis*. Santa Monica, CA, SDC, 1967

Selye H: *The stress of life* (revised edition). New York, McGraw-Hill, 1976

Shah SA: Dangerousness: Conceptual, prediction, and public policy issues. In: RJ Hays, TK Roberts, KS Solway (Eds), *Violence and the violent individual*. New York, SP Medical & Scientific Books, pp 151-177, 1981

Shore D, Filson CR, Davis TS, Olivos G, DeLisi L, Wyatt RJ: White House cases: Psychiatric patients and the Secret Service. *Am J Psychiatry* 142:308-312, 1985

Shore D, Filson CR, Johnson WE, Rae DS, Muehrer P, Kelley DJ, Davis TS, Waldman IN, Wyatt RJ: Murder and assault arrests of White House cases: Clinical and demographic correlates of violence subsequent to civil commitment. *Am J Psychiatry* 146:645-651, 1989

Siegmán AW: Nonverbal correlates of anxiety and stress. In: L Goldberger and S Breznitz (Eds), *Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical perspectives*. New York, The Free Press, 1982

Siljander RP: *Terrorist Attacks: A Protective Service Guide for Executives, Bodyguards and Policemen*. Springfield, Ill, Charles C Thomas, 1980

Simpson GE: *The negro in the Philadelphia press*. Doctoral dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1934

Slater E, Roth M: *Mayer-Gross Clinical Psychiatry*. London, Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1968

Slovenko R: Criminal justice procedures in civil commitment. *Hosp Comm Psychiatry* 28:817-826, 1977

Spence DP: Verbal indicators of stress. In: L Goldberger and S Breznitz (Eds), *Handbook of stress: Theoretical and clinical perspectives*. New York, The Free Press, 1982

Speed JG: Do newspapers now give the news? *Forum* 15:705-711, 1893

Spitzer RL, Williams JBW: *Instruction manual for the Structured Clinical Interview for DSM-III (SCID)* 2/1/85

Revision. New York, Biometrics Research Department, New York State Psychiatric Institute, 1985

Starbuck ED: The psychology of religion: An empirical study of the growth of religious consciousness. New York, Scribners, 1899

State of Michigan: Summary of parolee risk study. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Corrections, 1978

Steadman HJ: A new look at recidivism among Patuxent inmates. Bull Am Acad Psychiatry Law 5:200-209, 1977

Steadman HJ: The right not to be a false positive: Problems in the application of the dangerousness standard. Psychiatric Quarterly 52:84-99, 1980

Steadman HJ, Cocozza J: Careers of the criminally insane. Lexington, MA, Lexington Books, 1974

Stein MI: Explorations in typology. In: Proceedings of the conference on personality measurement in medical education. Sponsored by the Association of American Colleges, Des Plaines, IL, 1963

Stein N, Glenn C: An analysis of story comprehension in elementary school children. In R Freedle (Ed) New directions in discourse processing. Hillsdale, NJ, Ablex, 1979

Stone PJ, Bales R, Namenworth VZ, and Ogilvie D: The General Inquirer: A computer system for content analysis and retrieval based on the sentence as the unit of information. Behav Sci 7:484-498, 1962

Stone PJ, Dunphy DC, Smith MS, and Ogilvie DM: The General Inquirer: A computer approach to content analysis studies in psychology, sociology, anthropology, and political science. Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1966

Stouffer SA: An experimental comparison of statistical and case history methods of attitude research. Unpublished manuscript, University of Chicago Library, 1930

Strauss MA, Gelles RJ, Steinmetz SK: Behind closed doors. Garden City, NJ, Anchor Press, 1980

Street AT: The truth about newspapers. The Chicago Tribune, July 25, 1909

Takeuchi J, Solomon F, Menninger WW (Eds): Behavioral science and the Secret Service: Toward the prevention of

assassination. Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 1981

Tasman P: Literary data processing. IBM J Res Devel 1:249-250, 1957

Taylor MA, Sierles FS, Abrams R: The neuropsychiatric evaluation. In: Hales RE, Yudofsky SC (Eds): The American Psychiatric Press Textbook of Neuropsychiatry. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Press, 1987, pp 3-16

Taylor SP, Gammon CB, Capasso DR: Aggression as a function of the interaction of alcohol and threat. J Pers Soc Psychol 34(5):938-941, 1976

Tedeschi JT: Threats and promises. In: P Swingle (Ed) the Structure of Conflict. New York, Academic Press, 1970, pp 155-191

Tedeschi JT, Malkis FS, Gaes GG, Quigley-Fernandez B: Human Relations. 33(9):647-657, 1980

Thomas WI, Znaniecki F: The polish peasant in Europe and America,) Two volume edition. New York, Knopf, 1927

Thompson L: Dead Client's Don't Pay: The Bodyguard's Manual. Boulder, CO, Paladin Press, 1984

Thornberry T, Jacoby J: The use of discretion in a maximum-security mental hospital: The Dixon case. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Society of Criminology, Chicago, 1979

Topp DO: Fire as a symbol and as a weapon of death. Med Sci Law 13(2):79-86, 1973

Vinokur A, Selzer ML: Desirable versus undesirable life events: Their relationship to stress and mental distress. J Personality and Social Psychology 32:329-337, 1975

Webster CD, Sepejak DS, Menzies RJ, Slomen DJ, Jensen FAS, and Butler BT: The reliability and validity of dangerous behavior predictions. Bull Am Acad Psychiatry Law 12:41-50, 1984

Weinstein EA, Lyerly OG: Symbolic aspects of presidential assassination. Psychiatry 32(1):1-11, 1969

Weisz AE, Taylor RL: American presidential assassinations. Dis Nerv Sys 30:659-667, 1969

Wenk E, Robison JD, Smith GW: Can violence be predicted? Crime and Delinquency 18:393-402, 1972

Werner O, Levis-Matechek G, Evans M, Litowitz B: An ethnoscience view of schizophrenic speech. In: M Sanchez and BG Blount (Eds), Sociocultural aspects of language use. New York, Academic Press, 1975

White RK: Black Boy: A value analysis. J Abn Soc Psychol 42:440-461, 1947

Wilcox DF: The American newspaper: A study in social psychology. Ann Am Acad Polit Soc Sci 16:56-92, 1900

Willey MM: The country newspaper: A study of socialization and newspaper content. Chapel Hill, NC, University of North Carolina Press, 1926

Winchester JM: Computer-printed documents as part of a computer crime investigation. J Forensic Sci 26:730-738, 1981

Wise MG: Delirium. In: Hales RE, Yudofsky SC (Eds): The American Psychiatric Press Textbook of Neuropsychiatry. Washington, DC, American Psychiatric Press, 1987, pp 89-105

Witucki J: A language pattern co-occurring with violence-permissiveness. Behav Sci 16:531-537, 1971

Wolfgang M, Figlio RM, Sellin T: Delinquency in a birth cohort. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1972

Woodward JL: Quantitative newspaper analysis as a technique of opinion research. Social Forces 12:526-537, 1934

Yoon SH, Kan GSH, Lee JN: Homicide in schizophrenics. Neuropsychiat. (Seoul, Korea) 12:189-201, 1973