

## Social-Media Intimate Partner Tracking and Violence and Jealousy

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The tracking of an intimate partners account could be perceived as a form of stalking, Psychologists are using the more politically correct terms of “partner surveillance”, “partner monitoring” and “anxiety reduction strategies”. It would be an interesting dialectical to consider where the political correct surveillance stops and stalking begins. These euphemisms beg the question of does it depend on the mores of an individual, or the intent of the cyber stalker. There is a psychological theory of cognitive dissonance that states that individuals change their vocabulary to ameliorate undesirable actions, in this case, stalking has become the more permissible “surveillance” (Fox and Warber, 2014), “monitoring” (Darcell., *et al.* 2011) or “Uncertainty reduction strategy” (Fox and Anderegg, 2014).

However though “normative” behaviour, surveillance or monitoring is an act that many are uncomfortable admitting to. It could be argued that the following studies on cyber stalking of sites such as Facebook and jealousy and personal relationships should clearly define their terminology, for example, did the researcher adopt the above terms for neutrality or because the owner of the information placed the information online in the public domain, making it accessible and thus more acceptable to tract. For the purpose of this study, I will use the term “cyber stalking”, and “general stalking” behaviours to account for stalking behaviours that occur not online.

Macfarlane’s (1999) statistical evidence regarding homicide and the “stalking” of intimate partners connects with the idea that at some point in the case study relationships, information that is uncovered potentially triggers an attack of jealousy, and subsequent loss of control? A research study by Miuse., *et al.* (2009) demonstrated that with a normal population, the more time spent tracking a Facebook account, the more jealous an individual was likely to become. Thus, for men and women with cluster B, “borderline”, “APD” and “narcissistic personality traits”, reading about their ex/partner’s subsequent relationships, or a partner advertising their availability could lead to an even stronger reaction (Nitzburg and Farber, 2013). Miuse., *et al.*’s (2009) results showed a correlation between women spending more time on social media and increased jealousy. It is possible to argue, however, that the male participants in the study may not have been honest about their Facebook usage, and the amount of jealousy and distress they felt during the activity. In addition to this, individuals with borderline, narcissistic and APD traits are likely to spend more time tracking and ruminating than the general population. This may cause an increase in the rage and jealousy triggering a “seek”, “control”, “and murder pattern”.

During the study, reasons for the in relationship stalking and explosive responses towards intimate partners were considered. There are many partners for each individual, so why would one particular partner cause such a dramatic unconscionable response? Rusbult., *et al.* in their investment model of love stated that the most important factor that maintains commitment to a relationship is investment I will attempt to demonstrate this through the metaphor of the book “The little Prince”.

It was during a screening of Saint-Exupery’s “little prince” that the psychology of the stalker was depicted clearly (Saint-Exupery, 1943). Metaphorically speaking, the “little prince” loves a rose; owns the rose, he cares for the rose, and takes a long time grooming it. The rose is eventually exactly the way that the little prince wants it. The rose cannot move, it must stay and wait for the affection of the “little

prince” ultimately the “little prince” rejects the rose as it perceived as “too demanding”. The little Prince misses his rose. A man points out to the little prince that there are lots of similar roses, and suggests that he take one of them. The little prince rejects his offer saying that it must be his rose, the one he chose and cultivated. At the end of the story the rose dies at the hands of the little prince due to his neglect, and the “little prince” mourns his perfect rose (Saint-Exupery, 1943). This childrens’ story appears similar to patterns seen in the intimate partner stalker murders. The killer controls the passive, dependent spouse, grooming her and keeping her restricted to the home. When she changes from his perfect rose, she is rejected and then ultimately she dies at the hands of her cultivator, often after making social media posts. Thus, the amount of effort, possible victim targeting, manipulation, and the large amount of emotions invested, combined with a sense of entitlement could explain the “in relationship” stalkers mind set. This was described as “banking” by a colleague. Over a long period of time so much has been invested into the relationship. Then one day the bank has closed and that can result in violence and panic. This could also be described in an evolutionary sense as survival behaviour; the man is fighting to keep his wife, his property. He feels that the only way he can keep his wife now is to kill her. There was an interesting case of revenge domestic homicide that highlights the symbolic nature of the man’s desire to stop the wife from leaving. Amanda Hornsby-Smith was strangled to death by her husband. He reported that he tied her up to stop her from getting away. This post murder behaviour of tying up his wife showed the continued prevalence of the fear of losing his wife even after she had died. Such actions also show a significant degree of cognitive dysfunction. Cbc.ca/news/worldreporter (20/09/2010).

There is a plethora of literature that presents the negative effects of social media on relationships, Facebook. Nitsburg and Farber (2013) maintained that Facebook can have negative effects on psychologically vulnerable individuals. Although persuasive, the study was weakened by their arguments and findings being based on a single case study.

Certainly, it could be concluded that social media offers new and effective platforms for partner surveillance and stalking, Where the man perceives the spouse or partner as an investment or asset any third party threat or perceived humiliating posting would stimulate stalking behaviours, anger and rage and ultimately murder. It is crucial that awareness of the effects of partner stalking on social media is made of those vulnerable in potential violent relationships.

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