BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Stalking: Psychiatric Perspectives and Practical Approaches*

REFERENCE: Pinals DA, editor. Stalking: psychiatric perspective and practical approaches. New York, NY: Oxford University Press Inc., 2007; 384 pp.

When one hears or thinks about the word "stalking," perhaps an image appears from the film Fatal Attraction, where Glenn Close obsessively pursues the main character, played by Michael Douglas. The book by Dr. Pinals provides a much more realistic and alarming portrayal of this behavior, which has come to the forefront of our celebrity obsessed culture. With the murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer in 1990, new clinical insights and legal conceptualizations began to emerge to try to understand this complex behavior. In the book Stalking: Psychiatric Perspectives and Practical Approaches, *Dr.* Pinals has assembled a comprehensive and thorough evaluation of this phenomena, which is at once a pathological construct and a criminal activity. The book presents an inclusive model for the assessment and management of this often problematic and dangerous activity.

The book begins by examining the many different forms of stalking behavior and providing an evaluation of the various classification schemes. The author relies on empirical data collected from the evaluation of stalkers and provides a systematic analysis of the different topologies. The authors note that before a systematic method of classifying stalking behavior had been made, the popular conception of stalking had relied on the obsessive love and emotional instability as the prelude to stalking behavior. The inclusion of fairly sophisticated methods for classifying stalkers include detailed descriptions of interpersonal dynamics and psychiatric diagnosis. The book then goes on to provide different risk assessment methods and not only examines the static risks for violence such as a previous history of crimes and substance abuse, but also examines the dynamic risk factors in stalking violence. The authors provide various risk management strategies for dealing with a potential stalker including potential treatment options. The welcome recommendation of using a risk management team to deal with the various sources of risk inherent in stalking behavior provides a multidisciplinary and multi-agency approach to minimizing the danger. The book contains strategies for evaluating and treating the potential victims of stalkers including pharmacological treatments. The chapter also incorporates current treatments of posttraumatic stress disorder, as well as evidence-based treatments related to anxiety.

A welcome addition to the book is a chapter on the forensic aspects of stalking as well as emerging legal trends, as different jurisdictions struggle with the need to protect traditional freedoms and public safety. The authors include a chapter on the psychopathology of stalking in its relation to competency to stand trial and criminal responsibility. The recognition that many stalkers may suffer from mental or emotional problems which are likely to be relevant in a legal proceeding provides recognition that such conditions are very likely to severely impair the stalker's judgment. The evaluation of the degree to which such impairment meets legal standards for competency or insanity provides a model for forensic evaluations for forensic practitioners as they are called upon to provide a forensic evaluation of defendants who face stalking charges. Finally, the authors detail specialized cases of stalking, which include juvenile stalking, celebrity stalking, and presidential stalking. The authors also include novel areas of stalking behaviors, such as child victims of stalking and immigrant victims of stalking. The addition of this book to the stalking literature will provide both the novice and the experienced forensic practitioner with a broad understanding of this complicated and fascinating behavior.

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