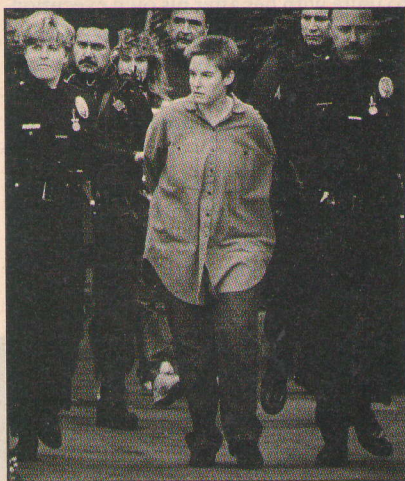


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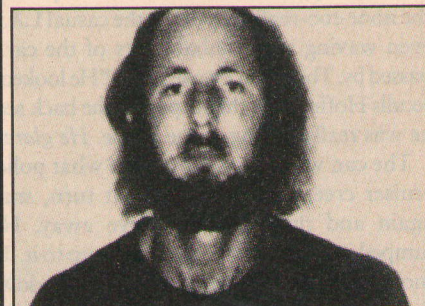
BEING STALKED BY AN OBSESSED FAN IS EVERY STAR'S WORST NIGHTMARE. DESPITE THE BEST SECURITY THEIR MONEY CAN

BUY, THE RESULTS CAN TURN VIOLENT — AND EVEN DEADLY **BY TOM O'NEILL**

DANGEROUS MINDS



BLIND OBSESSION (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT): SHARON GLESS' STALKER JONI LEIGH PENN; REBECCA SCHAEFFER'S MURDERER, ROBERT JOHN BARDO; DAVID LETTERMAN FAN MARGARET RAY; WHITNEY HOUSTON'S STALKER STEVEN J. MARRIOTT; AND THERESA SALDANA'S STALKER ARTHUR JACKSON



EIGHTEEN-YEAR-OLD DANIELLE HARRIS THOUGHT SHE HAD IT made. Last summer, after 13 years as a bit player in Hollywood, including a season as the pesky neighbor Molly on *Roseanne* and a part as Bruce Willis' daughter in *The Last Boy Scout*, she learned she was about to land a leading role in a major motion picture — *Daylight*, starring Sylvester Stallone, no less — which would be shot on location in Rome. One week earlier she'd thrown herself a big birthday bash at the Studio City home she shared with her manager-mother, Frances, and little sister Ashley. All her friends were there, including fellow sitcom alums Jenna Von Oy (*Six on Blossom*) and Mario Lopez (*A.C. on Saved by the Bell*). Harris was ecstatic: She had finally arrived. And

then came the call from the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) proving with all too much certainty that she truly had.

Based on a tip it had received from the Houston Police Department, the LAPD's threat-management unit (TMU, an elite force formed in 1990 after the stalking murder of actress Rebecca Schaeffer) had every reason to believe that an obsessed fan was at that very moment on his way to see Harris. The 19-year-old suspect (police asked that he not be identified in this story), who'd been sending Harris threatening letters for three years, was driving from Texas with his father and his father's girlfriend. He was known to have in his car two guns, a buck knife and, like Robert John Bardo, the man who shot Schaeffer once in the chest at point-blank range in

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: AP/WIDEWORLD; UP/BELT MAN; AP/WIDEWORLD; ANDRKEA KENAGULL/COBDEFIT/USA; AP/WIDEWORLD

front of her apartment building, a teddy bear.

Frances Harris immediately hung up the phone and called Scott Hoffman, a family friend and ex-marine who is the production-safety manager for MGM Studios. Hoffman left his office and, within half an hour, had the family out of its home and safely ensconced in his beach house. With two friends, one of whom was trained in security, Hoffman organized a round-the-clock vigil inside Harris' home and, with the aid of the Houston and L.A. police departments, tracked the approaching Texans. While not exactly condoning Hoffman's vigilantlike siege, the TMU nevertheless shared what intelligence it had been able to gather. And what it had learned was alarming.

Beaker Boy, as Hoffman would later christen the suspect (for his physical resemblance to the nerdy Beaker character from *The Muppet Show*), fit Bardo's profile to a T: He was a loner whose love letters turned threatening after Harris, like Schaeffer, responded with a signed picture. Both Bardo and Beaker Boy hoarded almost every performance of their victims' on videotape and every article ever written about them. And both, it turns out, also hired private detectives to track down their obsessions. But even more disturbing was the report the police uncovered about the time Beaker Boy tried to copy a mass murder he had seen on TV. Inspired by the 1991 massacre of 22 diners at a Luby's restaurant in nearby Killeen, Texas, the then 15-year-old walked out of his apartment with an assault rifle and started firing into a neighborhood playground. Luckily, no one was shot as the one round he was able to get off from the powerful weapon sent him reeling backward so hard onto the ground that he dropped the gun, ran home and locked himself in his bedroom. When the police arrived, they found a personal stash of S/M, pedophilia, necrophilia and serial-killer literature to rival John Wayne Gacy's.

Meanwhile, Hoffman, one day into his encampment and antsy, went out for a walk. Looking up from lighting a smoke, he saw a small, battered sports car, with Texas plates, approaching. "I just about s--- myself," recalls the hulking 31-year-old, adding that Houston had warned that the suspect would kill anyone who came between himself and Harris — *especially* a man. Hoffman quickly struck the none-too-realistic pose of the casual L.A. stroller, even waving at the inhabitants of the car as they passed by. They didn't wave back. "He looked at me," recalls Hoffman of the suspect in the back seat, "but he was really staring at the house. He glared at it."

The car, which was moving at what police call a cruiser creep, did a three-point turn, snailed by again and then quickly drove away. Hoffman jumped in his car but never caught up to it. The next morning, as he continued to sit in a shadowed corner of the Harris living room, Hoffman heard sirens screaming from the direction of Ventura Boulevard. Turning to his cronies, he said, "They got 'em."

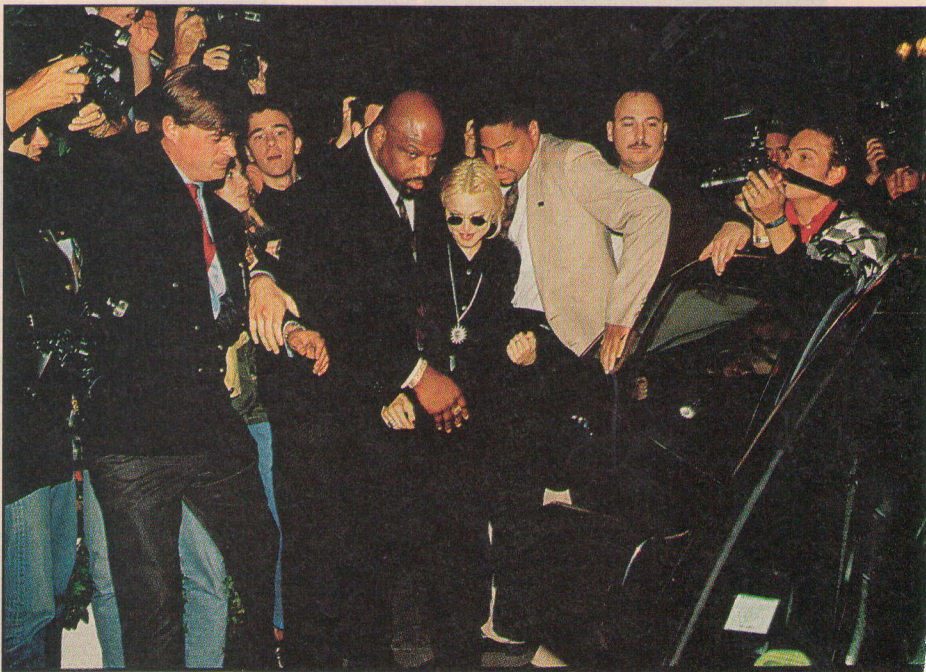
THE FIRST-EVER RECORDED CASE OF A CELEBRITY'S BEING stalked and attacked by an obsessed fan occurred in 1949. A baseball player named Eddie Waitkus was gunned down in his hotel room by a woman who used to set a place for him at her dinner table every night, though she'd never even met him. After the Waitkus shooting (which was loosely immortalized in the early '80s film *The Natural*), celebrity-stalking attacks were uncommon in America — save for those involving politicians — until the 1980 murder of John Lennon by Mark David Chapman.

And then all hell broke loose. Three months later, in a deluded bid for actress Jodie Foster's attention, John Hinckley Jr. shot and nearly killed President Reagan outside a Washington, D.C., hotel. The same year, a stalker broke into Linda Ronstadt's home and shredded her bedsheets, leaving a note that read, "You next time." Ralph Nau, a serial stalker of, among others, Olivia Newton-John, Cher and Sheena Easton, ax-murdered his autistic brother after Nau claimed the brother had interrupted signals from Newton-John during a TV show. In 1982, actress Theresa Saldana (now of *The Commish* but then as little known as Harris) was viciously stabbed 10 times outside her apartment by a Scotsman named Arthur Jackson, who said he was on a "divine mission" to deliver her to heaven, where he planned to unite with her after his own execution. (Saldana survived and two weeks later, in a highly publicized preliminary hearing, was wheeled into a courtroom, bandaged and attached to an IV, to testify against him.)

But it was the coldblooded murder of Schaeffer, seven years later, that really woke Hollywood up.

"That was the turning point," recalls Philip Little, the president of West Coast Detectives, one of the oldest agencies in L.A. "What we've heard since then is people saying, 'It could happen to me.'"

In the most recent case torn from the headlines, Robert Dewey Hoskins, a 37-year-old drifter, was shot two times by one of Madonna's



SAFETY MEASURES: MADONNA SURROUNDED BY SECURITY; HER STALKER ROBERT DEWEY HOSKINS IN COURT (RIGHT)

bodyguards last May, after he scaled the walls of her Hollywood estate, screaming that he would either "marry the bitch or slit her throat." Madonna, who receives scores of death threats every year, had to be subpoenaed late last month to testify after she repeatedly failed to cooperate with prosecutors. Whether the pop superstar was too busy or simply unconcerned is unclear. Says detective Andrew Purdy of Hollywood homicide, who was dispatched to New York shortly after the crime to meet with her: "I got indications from her attorneys that she was not going to cooperate, and I said: 'Well, fine. No victim, no crime. We'll just kick the guy out of jail, and I'll give you three guesses where he's headed, and the first two don't count.'"

Purdy adds that Hoskins' brother Mike, whom he interviewed shortly after the shooting, told him that Hoskins was obsessed with Madonna, and that the last thing Hoskins said to him was "You're

not going to see me anymore. The next time you see me I'll be on TV." Mike was convinced, says Purdy, that his brother wanted to gain "some fame posthumously."

In fact, Hoskins is so consumed by his passion for the Material Girl that he was willing to trade six years of his life for what may only amount to five minutes in the same room with her. Had he accepted the plea bargain offered by the DA, he would have had to serve only three years in prison instead of the nine he could receive if found guilty. (The mountain of evidence against him includes surveillance tapes of him roaming the property and a letter he left in her mailbox.) "He's doing it just to see her in court," says Purdy, "to get close to her."

TIMES HAVE CHANGED IN HOLLYWOOD. GONE ARE THE DAYS when Joan Crawford would hold press conferences on her front stoop and Bing Crosby would invite the world into his living room for televised specials. Today's celebrities retreat behind higher walls, bigger bodyguards and more elaborate security systems — if they don't move out of Hollywood altogether. While many don't like to admit it, a new climate of fear and, some say, paranoia — which has nothing to do with earthquakes, race riots or the decline of CBS — has taken over Los Angeles as well as Manhattan (*The New York Times* reported that stalking has become such a problem on Broadway that theaters

have had to take unprecedented security measures to protect their stars). In fact, the Risk Management Society, which publishes a newsletter for the security industry, estimates that as many as 150,000 people in the United States today are pursuing some kind of unwarranted and inappropriate contact with a famous person.

Lest anyone doubt the frequency of the crime, all you have to do is pick up a newspaper. In just the weeks surrounding Harris' drama, scads of other stars had to deal with fixated fans: Roberta Flack publicly expressed frustration with the lack of protection from the man who'd been stalking her for 12 years; Whitney Houston, plagued by stalkers long before playing the victim of one in *The Bodyguard*, took out an injunction against a man claiming to be her brother who was arrested with what was described as a rolling arsenal; Mary Hart begged

Massachusetts authorities not to release a convict who'd sent her more than 200 "sex-crazed" letters from his cell; the pop group TLC reported being stalked by a 17-year-old boy who broke into one of their homes and stole a pair of pants; and designer Todd Oldham continued to be followed by a paroled murderer. (Jay Leno, perhaps paying too-careful attention to all the coverage, called the police

HE WAS SCREAMING THAT HE'D "EITHER MARRY THE BITCH OR SLIT HER THROAT."

from his car phone because he thought he was being tailed by a stalker. It turned out to be a fan who wanted a picture — a *potential* stalker in the eyes of security experts, nonetheless.) Even intimidating male athletes aren't immune. Just days before Beaker Boy was apprehended, a woman who'd been stalking Toronto Blue Jay Roberto Alomar was arrested at his hotel with a gun.

And there are dozens more incidents, some reported, many of which remain under wraps.

"The first thing we tell our clients when there's a threat," says a source at PMK, one of the largest publicity firms in Hollywood, "is not to breathe a word of it to the press." The reasoning? Security experts believe attention encourages copycats; publicists think it's bad PR; and stars are so petrified that they'll do whatever they're told. But as the crime escalates out of control and nothing seems to impede it, the veil of secrecy is slowly lifting.

"I would venture," says Philip Little, "that someone with a knife or a gun shows up at a studio or a set looking for a star pretty close to every day. Maybe not always brandishing a gun, but they're showing up with a story like they're a friend, a sister or a brother, and 'They told me to come down here and meet them.'"

All of the studios approached for this story, including Paramount, Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Bros. and Universal — which lost two guards to a mad gunman pursuing Michael Landon in 1988 — refused to cooperate, citing safety precautions.

Patrick Swayze hedges before admitting that he left the set of *To Wong Foo* in the middle of production to fly back to L.A. to protect his wife from a woman (not the first) who'd been sending them death threats. "This one was serious," says Swayze, who rarely ventures out in public alone anymore, "but she's in jail now. She made a big mistake: She threatened a judge as well as me."

Do a little digging in the files of the Los Angeles County Courthouse and you'll come up with reams of temporary restraining orders detailing years of stalking abuse by fans, like the woman who camped outside actor Peter Strauss' home in her car and masturbated on his front lawn with his garden hose. Even macho action stars like Arnold Schwarzenegger aren't invulnerable. According to a bodyguard who has worked for the actor, the bodybuilders the star usually surrounds himself with and tries to pass off as pals are actually paid protectors.

WHAT'S BECOMING OF THE WORLD OF GLITZ AND GLAMOUR? Is it being ruined by the predatory presence of those with lust, envy and, yes, murder in their hearts? As more and more rising stars like Harris — not to mention the already entrenched like Madonna — are learning, there's a new price to be paid for fame these days, and for some it's worth reconsidering.

"It's funny," says Lt. John Lane, the officer in charge of the TMU, which is handling the Harris case. "Celebrities like this young lady do their damndest to make their faces visible so they can get recognized and be a bigger draw, [but] all the time they're working to get known, it's working against them." He shakes his head. "It's a double-edged sword, and it's a shame."

On the beachfront set of 'Baywatch,' Pamela Anderson Lee, wrapped in a terry-cloth robe, enters the location accompanied by her bodyguard. From behind a tangle of peroxided tresses, she glances warily at the unusually well-behaved crowd of paparazzi and tourists who are held back by a blue-uniformed security crew. When two preadolescent girls clutching autograph books break free and approach the actress as she exits, they are quickly pushed back by the guards. Lee, who never looks their way, continues walking.



WHILE HARRIS' STALKER WAS RELEASED ON A TECHNICALITY (the actress had unwittingly thrown away the evidence — a box of some 300 letters — when she cleaned house for her birthday party) and remanded to Texas in the custody of his father (who, police determined, was naively unaware of his son's lethal intentions), the fact that she's even alive today is a testament to the new vigilance Hollywood is displaying when it comes to protecting its young. Six years ago, when Bardo posed the same threat to Schaeffer, the warning signs weren't heeded, the creepy letters weren't even shown to her (they were thrown away by her agent and studio so as not to upset her), and when he arrived at the Warner Bros. lot — where her TV series, *My Sister Sam*, was taped — with a knife in his pocket, Bardo was driven back to his motel by the director of security and told to be a good boy now and to go home to Arizona. The next day he killed her.

What has helped most is the antistalking law, which went into effect in California in 1990 and was later adopted by all but two states. It defines a stalker as "any person who willfully, maliciously and repeatedly follows or harasses another person and who makes a credible threat with the intent to place that person in reasonable fear for his or her safety, or the safety of his or her immediate family."

"The last right of the public figure in America is the right to decide who they will meet with," says Gavin de Becker, Hollywood's best-known security consultant (his clients, though he won't name them, have ranged from Ronald Reagan to Cher). "All their other rights" — from keeping court records secret to holding funeral services in private — "have pretty much evaporated. The right to decide whom they'll meet with is the difference between being safe and not safe."

But this relatively new law protecting celebrities from those who want to harm them is still in the formative stages and, as such, not always effective. Just ask Danielle Harris. Despite the fact that her stalker had the addresses of her home, her agent and the studio where *Roseanne* is shot (even though she hadn't appeared on the show in three years), and witnesses saw him pass by the house, there was nothing on which to hold him because the only evidence expressing intent — the letters — had been thrown away.

"That's where we have problems with the stalking law — proving intent," says Lt. Lane, who also says that even with letters as evidence, it can be difficult to prosecute a case. "Sometimes the writer is just trying to develop a relationship, no matter how inappropriate or bizarre it is."

Indeed. In one of his letters to Harris, Beaker Boy described how he wanted to cut open her body and spread her blood all over himself.

"...FECES, DEAD RATS, FINGERNAILS RIPPED OUT OF JOINTS, POPPED EYEBALLS from some kind of animal with their cords attached..." Detective Michael Eubanks of West Coast Detectives is reciting a laundry list of some of the more unusual things stars have received in the mail and forwarded to his office for analysis. "We try to do the best we can to assess them," he adds, "but why does somebody literally send s--- in the mail?"

"Connection," says de Becker, 41, who became obsessed with assassins when he was 9 after the murder of President Kennedy. "It's all about connection and attachment: 'Your possession of this causes

some kind of relationship [between us].'" What seems otherwise inexplicable to the untrained eye is easily interpreted by de Becker, whose office handles more than 50,000 pieces of threatening mail a year. Adopting the twisted thinking of the stalker, as he often does in case-work, he elaborates: "A dead coyote is a form of a threat, as in 'This is beautiful, like you, so I killed it.'" Something as seemingly innocuous as a passport is a test to see if it will be sent back. "He's saying, 'If you send it back to me, that proves that even though I've written you hundreds of letters that you've never returned, you are getting them.'"

In 1982, when he was a 27-year-old presidential appointee to the Justice Department, de Becker initiated a study of the more than 125,000 threatening letters to public figures he'd collected up to that point. He chose a forensic psychiatrist named Park Dietz (who'd made a name for himself as the Hinckley prosecution psychiatrist) to conduct the massive undertaking. The report, which took Dietz six years to complete and is the handbook by which security people assess threats, produced a criteria of risk factors to use in predicting which letter writers were most likely to approach and/or harm their object of obsession. Among the many variables Dietz came up with were sexual content, letters postmarked from different places and what kind of paper was used (for example, people who wrote on tabletlike paper were found to be less likely to approach than those who wrote on any other kind of paper).

"We punch in things and come up with a risk factor," says a spokeswoman for Dietz, who rarely gives interviews anymore. Dietz's Threat Assessment Group (located in Newport Beach, Calif.) and de Becker's 46-member firm, Gavin de Becker Inc., are the two most highly regarded agencies in the field. One of Dietz's most surprising and important findings was that people who send hate mail are not more likely to seek inappropriate encounters than those who send love letters. It's the ones who, quietly but persistently, request face-to-face meetings, phone calls or letters back that are the stalkers in the making.

By 1990, with barely a glance at the text of a postcard — like the one actress Stephanie Zimbalist received from a man who'd been threatening her for years — Dietz could correctly predict whether or not a letter writer would approach a star and also whether he'd be armed. "He called the FBI and told them, 'He'll be here within 24 hours, and he's going to have a gun,'" says Dietz's spokeswoman, who added that the stalker was picked up less than 24 hours later in Zimbalist's neighborhood — carrying a gun.



REBECCA SCHAEFFER, MURDERED BY AN OBSESSED FAN

West Coast Detectives vice president Michael Eubanks has just met with a 19-year-old actor because his agent and his mother have become worried about the kind of mail he is starting to receive.

"He's just been in a couple of movies," says Eubanks of the rising star, who must remain anonymous for obvious reasons, "but already the mail has been unbelievable. It's mostly love letters, but that's how it starts."

Eubanks sat down with the young man, his mother and their attorney, at the actor's house, which Eubanks describes as "pretty wide open," and explained how they would build a cocoon of protection around him and his home. "We're going to mask his identity, remove his name from his real-estate holdings, the DMV and his voter records," explains Eubanks. Then they'll "secure the house," which often involves lacing it with cameras, lasers, walls and gates. The timing is perfect, notes Eubanks, who thinks these procedures

are best done in secrecy. "He'll be out of the country a few months, making a movie," he explains, "and the neighbors will think we're just remodeling." When the task's completed, the only place you'll be able to find the actor is onscreen.

THE TYPICAL STALKER, ACCORDING TO experts, is usually (but not always) a white male, in his late teens to early 40s, who may never have had a relationship or even sex. Most are withdrawn, lonely and addicted to their TV sets. Many suffer from erotomania — a psychiatric disorder that causes them to think that the person they're pursuing is in love with them and wants to be pursued. Others suffer from schizophrenia, manic depression or various forms of delusional or obsessional thinking. One thing they all have in common, experts agree, is their mental illness. At least 90 percent of the people who pursue public figures are thought to suffer from mental disorders and are often untreatable.

De Becker has broken down public-figure pursuers into four types based on their motivation. The first are "attachment seekers," who simply want a relationship with the person they are pursuing; the second are "identity seekers," who pursue public figures for fame and glory; the third are "rejection based," who've often evolved from attachment seekers and will pursue the celebrity who rejected them to avenge or reverse the rejection; and the fourth, and most difficult to track and treat, are the "delusion based," who stalk celebrities because they believe they are on a mission from God or some other inanimate force. Rejection-based pursuers are the most likely to kill.

Stalking flourishes today, experts agree, due to the ease and affordability of air travel, the invention of the TV and the VCR and the break-

"SOMEONE WITH A KNIFE OR GUN SHOWS UP AT A STUDIO OR A SET LOOKING FOR A STAR PRETTY CLOSE TO EVERY DAY."

down of the institutional system for the homeless and mentally ill.

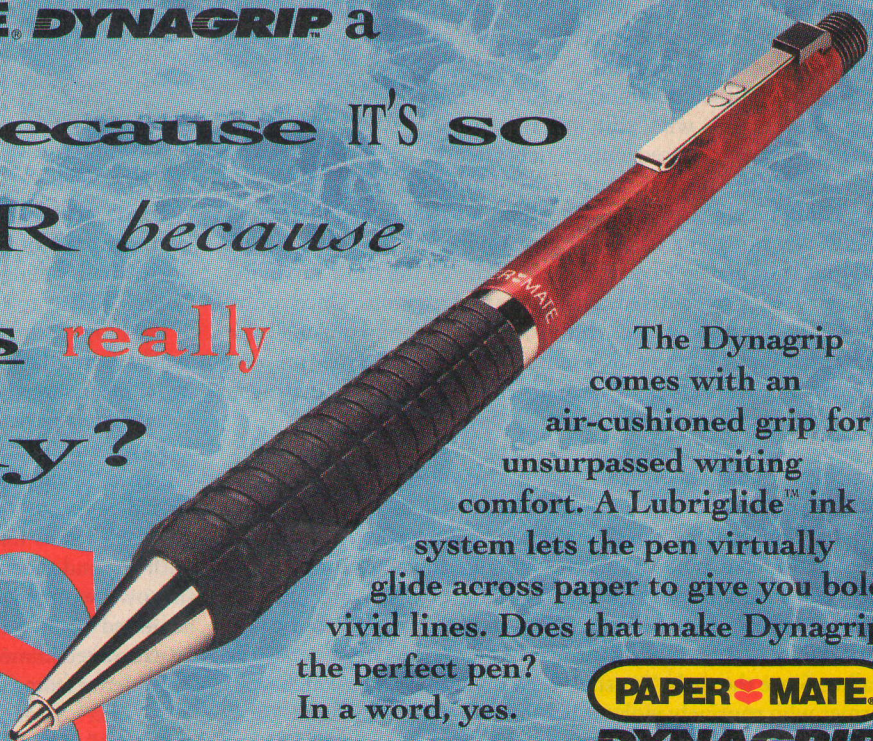
"The largest mental hospital in America is the Los Angeles County Jail," proclaims Dr. Louis Jolyon West, professor of psychiatry at UCLA's School of Medicine. "If there's an increase in stalking, it may very well be related to the fact that there's an increase in the number of mentally ill people wandering the streets." Dr. West, who has a large number of celebrities in his practice, many of whom have been traumatized by stalkers, adds, "All this came about when most of the major [state] hospitals were closed or greatly reduced in size."

Yet many stalkers, it seems, live at home with their families — and their VCRs and TVs.

The world was a safer place before, as Norma Desmond put it, "the pictures got smaller." Up until the advent of television, fans viewed their stars from a distance, on 40-foot-high screens or elevated stages. When television became a staple of American life, stars were brought into homes on a more frequent and intimate basis. With the addition of the VCR in the '80s, images of actors could be further accessed with the push of a button. And cyberspace has proved fertile ground for hackers who attach nude bodies — sometimes violently mutilated

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ones — to stars' heads and share or even sell them over the Internet. Alicia Silverstone is just one of Hollywood's young actresses who have been digitally transposed to appear nude on the Internet. A Jodie Foster chat room was recently closed on the Internet because of threats that were being made against the actress there.

FROM HIS EXPERIENCE HANDLING MORE THAN 18,000 STALKING cases, de Becker has found that the best way to deal with most stalkers, until they actually trespass on a star's property or make an inappropriate approach, is, as he puts it, "to watch and wait" rather than "to engage and enrage."

Both de Becker and Lane prescribe monitoring the suspect from a distance — while at the same time making his target as unavailable or even invisible to him as possible. Confronting a stalker too early can aggravate the situation and possibly accelerate his violent tendencies — if he has any. "My basic philosophy is, you do not talk straight to crooked people," says de Becker from his hideaway office in Los Angeles (which this reporter has promised not to describe). "A guy who has just left his wife, stolen a car and driven 3,000 miles because he got a message from Jesus that he should have a relationship with a famous singer doesn't have a whole helluva lot to lose. Do you think he'll end his trip [because] someone told him, 'You really have to leave her alone?'"

Donna Mills is one of the more fortunate stalking victims. When her pursuer escaped from jail in 1988, the police called her in Palm Springs, Calif., where she was enjoying a weekend vacation from *Knots Landing*, and told her it might be a good idea to extend it a little.

Mills recalls the LAPD's chilling warning: "They said: 'Usually when someone escapes, we figure they're going to get out of town as soon as possible, but this guy's obsessed with you. We think he may come after you.'" The terrified actress (who ironically portrayed the victim of a stalker in *Play Misty for Me*) was in the process of hiring round-the-clock guards and detectives when the police called back to say they'd shot and killed him.

"I felt so conflicted about his death," confides the actress, who still has the police attack dog she purchased immediately after the incident. "I felt bad that somebody got killed, and I didn't feel I should be happy about it, yet I was. I felt relief that he was not going to be out there anymore."

Other stars haven't been so lucky. One of the most terrifying aspects of being stalked is the long-range repercussions. Once you've got a stalker, it seems, there is little to do but wait him out and hope he'll either die or transfer his attentions elsewhere. "These are very long-term cases," explains Lt. Lane. "People can stay focused on an individual for 10 or more years."

IN ONE OF THE MANY TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDERS TAKEN OUT by Sylvester Stallone against a woman named Elfie Wade who has been stalking him since the mid-'80s, the pumped-up action star stated that he was in fear for his life and noted that nothing seemed to impede the woman, including jail time and restraining orders. Anne Murray, the Canadian pop star, has the perhaps dubious distinction of attracting the world's most persistent stalker. Since the early '70s she's been pursued by a Saskatchewan farmer who routinely violates her injunctions against him.

In other words, Danielle Harris, who had to move out of her

house and begin the slow, expensive process of sealing herself from the world, will have to worry about Beaker Boy the rest of her life. "He's being a good boy for now, but at some point he's going to get the itch," says Scott Hoffman, who, like so many others in L.A., has become a fast student of the stalking phenomenon. "It might be six months from now, or it might be six years, but he'll be back." (In fact, Hoffman's so worried about Beaker Boy's inevitable return that he recently went to court to increase the distance of the restraining order by 500 yards — that way, Harris will be out of range of an assault weapon.)

A security consultant who requests anonymity says that the only mistake made by the bodyguard who shot Madonna's stalker was that "he didn't kill the guy. The only way they stay down is if they're put down permanently."

"WE SAY AROUND HERE, 'NO GOOD DEED GOES UNPUNISHED!'" SAYS Park Dietz's spokeswoman with a sardonic laugh, of the typical stalker's predilection for wholesome, girl-next-door types.

"It's ironic that the nice ones are pursued," says another expert requesting anonymity. "How many letters do you think 'nasty' Joan Collins gets? Then talk to Kathie Lee Gifford." Gifford, in fact, has had serious problems. One of her small army of stalkers, Richard

Jones, is in a North Carolina prison charged with raping and robbing his own aunt after his repeated attempts to get near Gifford were thwarted. Other similarly sunny TV personalities who have had life-changing encounters with stalkers include Mary Hart, who, in addition to being on the receiving end of a deranged prisoner's sexually explicit letters, has been traumatized by a woman who claims she's receiving telepathic transmissions from Hart over the TV airwaves; Joan Lunden, who's received letters with references to her daughters from the jailed stalker of Olivia Newton-John; and Vanna White, who was screamed at by an obsessed fan in army fatigues during the warm-up for *Wheel of Fortune* one day.

But while experts agree that the majority of victims are the approachable ones like Schaeffer, Harris and Hart, they concede that no rules apply, because they're dealing with the irrational, unpredictable behavior of the mentally ill.

"Look at Rebecca Schaeffer," says Theresa Saldana, who still bears the scars of her 10 knife wounds, "then look at Madonna. It doesn't fit. Nothing fits. It's like asking when the earthquake will be. There's no way to know."

The only reason Saldana has agreed to be interviewed about her stalker Arthur Jackson — her first on the subject in years — is because he will be released this coming June. In 1991, while still in prison, Jackson was retried and convicted of sending Saldana threatening letters from jail, and an additional four years was tacked onto his sentence. Since then, the letters have ceased, but Saldana is convinced — through secondhand reports from prison officials and Jackson's fellow inmates — that the mad Scotsman is still obsessed with her and thoroughly committed to "completing his mission" (his own words) as soon as he is able. (First, though, he must be acquitted of a 24-year-old murder charge in Britain for which he will be extradited immediately upon his release.)

In a letter from California's Vacaville prison, Jackson claims that he is "over" Saldana and would, in fact, "cross to the other side of the street" if he saw her. But the middle- [Continued on page 98]



ACTRESS DANIELLE HARRIS HAD TO FLEE HER HOME WHEN A GUN-WIELDING FAN SHOWED UP.



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DANGEROUS MINDS

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aged inmate admits, between tiny hand-printed ramblings about witchcraft and possession, that "by some extraordinary coincidence, I became enamored by a quasi-transsexual Puerto Rican inmate named Melanie...who bore a vague resemblance to Ms. Saldana."

ANDREA EVANS NEARLY DISAPPEARS behind the table at Jerry's Famous Deli in West Hollywood. Later, in the parking lot, the former soap-opera actress (*One Life to Live*) giggles as she tries to find her parking receipt in her overstuffed bag. "I made a New Year's resolution to get smaller bags," says the petite blonde, "and smaller cars, too, because I look ridiculous in these great big cars. You can't even see me!"

That the 37-year-old actress would try to disappear behind giant dashboards or over-

understood — especially people in the soap industry — but they didn't. I mean, goodness, Rebecca Schaeffer once worked on *One Life to Live*. That scared me to death."

Evans says that since signing on as a client of de Becker's, she's found the courage to return to the business. "Gavin's advised me how to make myself untraceable," she explains. "He's really been a lifesaver because his advice has helped me to live a pretty normal life under the circumstances."

De Becker, who was one of the first to insist that stars remove themselves from all public records, is not willing to discuss how much his firm charges for its services, except to say that regular safety evaluation alone (which consists of screening mail and doing background investigation) costs approximately \$25,000 a year. Actual on-site protection and advance work can run, by all accounts, into the tens or even hundreds of thousands of dollars. (Saldana, who is a pro bono client of de Becker's, says: "I never could have afforded this. No one could put a dollar-

CELEBRITY STALKING WAS UNCOMMON UNTIL THE 1980 MURDER OF JOHN LENNON. AFTER THAT, ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE.

size fashion accessories is understandable. For three years she was stalked by a Russian immigrant in New York who followed her on the streets, sent her death threats written in his own blood and slit his wrists at the entrance of ABC studios (where the soap was taped) — then he listed her as his next of kin at the hospital.

Evans, who requested that her stalker not be identified here, tried to have the man put away. But each time he was arrested, he would be found mentally incompetent by the courts and ordered to spend 60 to 90 days in a psychiatric ward before being released to a halfway house — often just blocks away from Evans' Upper West Side apartment.

In 1990, when Evans finally couldn't bear the constant fear anymore, she quit the business and went into hiding.

"I couldn't concentrate on my work," says Evans, who, after five years of seclusion, is slowly re-emerging into her profession. "My life in New York was falling apart, and at the time, people didn't grasp the danger of it. You'd think they would've

and-cents value on what he does anyway.") When it is pointed out to Lt. Lane that a security source revealed that Roseanne pays around \$35,000 a month for protection, the head of the TMU scoffed at the figure, saying, "It's probably just for bodyguards, not behind-the-scenes evaluation."

During a recent rehearsal for an HBO special at the Fillmore Auditorium in San Francisco, comedian-actress Janeane Garofalo noticed a man lingering around the theater in a T-shirt bearing her likeness. This unnerved her because Garofalo had never sanctioned T-shirts with her face on them. When the man returned later that night for the taping, still wearing the T-shirt, she freaked out (as she put it) and pulled him onstage. "Listen," she said, furiously pumping his hand, "if you're a potential stalker, I think it's good that we make friends." Then she turned to the audience and said, "If something happens to me, you've all seen him!"

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TOLL OF BEING stalked stays with a victim forever. Lane calls it “mental terrorism.” “The hardest thing to live with,” says Evans, “is that I will never feel safe again. Even if he were to die, there’s a feeling of safety that I don’t have anymore, and I don’t think anything can bring that back.”

Says Philip Little: “It affects the best of them. They become very, very cautious around anybody they don’t know. It affects how they act [in public], how they respond to people.”

Andrea Evans says her friends tell her she’s “icy” in public. Theresa Saldana says she’s developed “radar about who’s safe and who’s not. And I don’t make myself tremendously available.” Donna Mills will no longer pose for pictures with male fans. The man who stalked her apparently became obsessed with her after she let him take a picture of the two of them together at a publicity event. She doesn’t even remember where or when — but he sent copies of the photo to all the tabloids from his jail cell, claiming that he was her boyfriend.

If celebrities seem reluctant to shake hands, sign autographs or even return a smile these days, it’s because they’ve been advised not to by their security consultants.

“Maybe you don’t have a stalker today,” warns Little, “but if you open yourself up and casually talk to some person in a restaurant, that could be the one who decides: ‘Hey, he talked to me! He must be in love with me!’”

Lane agrees. “No personal contact at all,” he says flatly. “After all, that could be the person from Texas who’s been focused on you for so long. It’s just like the president when he’s out doing the handshake, walking down the aisle — you don’t know which one of those is the Hinckley.”

“You don’t know,” continues Lane, “if, by shaking their hand, smiling or providing them a signature, you’re reinforcing a relationship that they think they have with you. And it’s only going to bring you much more anguish down the road.”

Saldana hasn’t ventured out of her house alone since the 1982 attack. In fact, she won’t even push a grocery cart down a supermarket aisle unescorted. But she’s accepted her fate and no longer considers herself a victim. “With [Jackson] behind bars now, I don’t consider myself to be living a petrified, panicked life.”

Evans is of the same mind-set, and her decision to return to the profession that nearly destroyed her is evidence enough. “From what I understand, he lives to kill me,” says the actress matter-of-factly. But he hasn’t

made any attempt to contact her in a year and a half, she adds, so she’s willing to take her chances. “Going public shows that I want my life back,” continues Evans. “Taking away my work was part taking away my life. Nobody should have to fear for their life because of what they do for a living.”

THREE DAYS BEFORE HE IS TO MARRY actress Amy Brenneman (*NYPD Blue*), Brad Silberling, a director (*Casper*), who in 1989 was discussing marriage with Rebecca Schaeffer, contemplates his loss.

From a pay phone in a mall in Brenneman’s hometown of Westport, Conn., the 32-year-old Silberling sounds harried and nervous (Brenneman’s in a shop buying gifts for her bridesmaids) but determined to put the end of one life and the beginning of another in perspective.

“She was 19 when I met her. I was 23,” recalls Silberling, “I was her first boyfriend. We were talking about the realities of what it would be like to build a future together, in terms of marriage and having a family.” He pauses. “She went out to get groceries and never came back.”

Schaeffer’s parents will be at Silberling’s wedding on Saturday. She was an only child, and he has re- [Continued on page 101]

Rolling Stone



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IN A LETTER, HARRIS' STALKER SAID HE WANTED TO CUT OPEN HER BODY AND SPREAD HER BLOOD ALL OVER HIMSELF.

mained like a son to them all these years, even insisting that Brenneman meet them early in their relationship. "It was something I wanted," he explains. "You can imagine how difficult it was for Rebecca's folks to meet this woman who in many ways embodies a lot of things they hoped Rebecca would be and have when she grew up."

In fact, Brenneman, a two-time Emmy nominee for her work in *NYPD Blue*, is, as Schaeffer was at the time of her death, just becoming a recognizable star in Hollywood and, much to Silberling's understandable consternation, beginning to receive some of the same worrisome attention. "She's just started on that whole roll with the mail and stuff," says Silberling, "[but] it's being monitored. There's been nothing specific — yet. As best I can, I make

it a point not to lay my fears on her, but..." His voice trails off, then picks up again. "The sudden loss of somebody like that colors everything. In the end, nothing ever fills the void."

The one thing Silberling hangs onto for solace is the legacy that his late girlfriend left behind: the formation of the TMU, the antistalking laws that were passed a year after her death and the new awareness of threatening behavior that has inarguably saved many lives, including Danielle Harris'. In fact, it was only after Silberling learned how this tragedy was avoided because of the TMU and the heightened efforts of those who learned from Schaeffer's death that he agreed to speak about his loss at such a sensitive time.

And now he learns something else.

When asked where he and Brenneman will honeymoon, Silberling responds that they are returning to Rome, where she is making a movie with Sylvester Stallone. As it turns out, this is the same film starring Danielle Harris.

"Oh, you're kidding!" exclaims Silberling. "I met her, then! Little Danielle?"

When informed that, yes, he's acquainted with the girl whose good fortune is due in no small part to the death of his former girlfriend, he is momentarily speechless. Before rejoining his fiancée to resume their wedding errands, he quietly says: "I literally met her last week. I'll have to say hello. She's in Italy right now."

And for the time being, perhaps, Danielle Harris is safe. ■

Contributing editor Tom O'Neill interviewed Richard Gere for the July 1995 cover of 'US.'

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