

This long-standing interest in stalking issues was matched by a Request for Proposals (RFP) issued by the COPS Office of the U.S. Department of Justice that specifically mentioned stalking in the general announcement asking for proposals related to domestic violence. The proposal prepared by the department in response to the RFP asked for \$229,000 in operational funds to staff the Unit with two detectives, one victim advocate, and one support staff. Additional funds were requested for a victim relocation fund, equipment, development of a computer program to identify stalking cases using police reports, mental health services for victims, use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) offender tracking system, and to hold a regional conference on stalking. In total, the funding request was for approximately \$370,000.

Unit Goals

The proposal submitted by the department included a number of ambitious goals. The most significant of these included the following.

- Increased arrests for stalking will result from better identification of cases not previously identified as stalking cases
- Build better cases through enhanced investigations, especially in long-term stalking cases
- Improved supervision of stalkers in the community, both pre- and post-trial, including enhanced bail for stalking through improved pre-trial check of defendants' histories of prior violence and arrests
- Improve services to victims, including victim relocation, development of stalking support groups, and provision of counseling services
- Expand knowledge base about justice system responses to stalking through development of agency protocol for handling these cases, seeking county-wide adoption of the protocol, and sponsorship of regional conference on stalking.

Unit Responsibilities

The department's Anti-Stalking Unit is responsible for follow-up investigations of

- Stalking reports
- Service of orders of protection and their enforcement
- Threat cases involving city employees, public officials, and schools.

These three major areas of responsibility are a logical fit. Regardless of the context, threat cases all require threat assessment expertise similar to that used in stalking cases. Enforcement of protection orders through arrest of order violators is essentially a form of stalking prevention since continued violations will ultimately result in the "pattern of behavior" that is at the heart of the criminal law definition of stalking.³ Service of process orders is important because it provides an opportunity for the Unit detectives to get to know which cases are potentially likely to turn into stalking and to provide informal warnings about the consequences of order violations.

Unit Staff/Operations/Case Procedures

Staff

The Anti-Stalking Unit is supervised by a Lieutenant who also supervises the drug team, legal staff, and the Investigations Unit. While the other units have their own supervisor who reports to the Lieutenant, the Anti-Stalking Unit reports directly to him.

The two Unit detectives are experienced officers, one of whom also serves as the polygraph operator for the department. The victim advocate works part-time and has a private counseling practice.

The Unit works a Monday-Friday shift from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The detectives are on call, however, for emergency calls (estimated 30 such calls yearly). One detective must always be available for emergency calls, so vacations must be synchronized. As needed, the shift schedule may be adjusted (e.g., night surveillance). Overtime pay is also available.

Training for the Unit detectives includes periodic domestic violence training and attendance at the annual conference for the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.

Operations/Case Procedures

³ New Hampshire Statutes § 633:3-a(1)(d)(5) provides that violation of a protective order may constitute stalking without more (i.e., no need to prove either threat or victim fear).

Better Identification. Stalking cases are identified either through referral from a patrol officer⁴ or detective or through daily review of police reports by the Unit detectives.⁵ The Unit also maintains a database of protective order services; this information is maintained in the department's "Wanted" file. When an officer comes to the scene of a call, the officer can quickly determine whether there is a protective order in effect so that the state stalking law can be invoked. Although the Unit staff does engage in some limited outreach efforts, community education has not yet resulted in many "walk-in" cases; the greatest number of victim self-referrals comes from the department's web site stalking page. The department is also working with a software company to develop a program that will aid in the identification of stalking cases involving repeat low-visibility crime reports to the CAD. The intent is to match calls involving nearby addresses, geographic area, names of victims, or a specific location.

Better Investigations. Cases are vertically assigned to the detectives, who are the point for future Unit contact by victims. Depending upon the perceived seriousness of the case when it reaches the Unit, initial steps may consist of a simple telephone contact or warning letter to a full-scale investigation. As needed, the detectives and the victim advocate may help victims obtain an order of protection.

Once a case is activated, it will be discussed at weekly meetings of the Unit staff, the prosecutor, probation, and mental health. These meetings are held each Tuesday in the office of the police prosecutor.⁶ The meetings discuss both new cases and selected old cases where there are still difficult issues remaining. All old cases are reviewed every 90 days. This is the only departmental unit that regularly meets to discuss cases.

⁴ The Department provides computer-aided training (CAT) to officers weekly; the training lasts about 10-15 minutes. Officers are graded based upon how well they do in their testing of this training. Changes in the stalking laws are disseminated by a bulletin and then tested using the computer-based testing of the training (CAT). At the initiation of the project, a memo was sent to all sworn personnel about the Anti-Stalking Unit and its policies.

⁵ For example, in one case the Unit detective saw in the police report of a criminal trespass charge that the victim reported prior domestic violence had occurred. This was confirmed through a check of departmental records which showed prior domestic violence calls. The check also found that there was an outstanding out-of-state order of protection in force. It is unclear to what extent the Department's emphasis on domestic violence reporting has improved reporting of domestic violence incidents in other crime type cases.

⁶ Although the incumbent police prosecutor is a sworn officer, this is not a requirement of the position.

After the case is assigned to a detective, the first responsibility of the detective is to develop a victim-offender history. Typically the Unit's victim advocate will help the victim go to court with a petition for the protection order. The detective may also send out a warning letter to the suspect, stating that continuation of the complained about behavior may result in criminal charges being filed..

All active cases are entered into the Department's "Wanted" file that is used by patrol officers to determine the status of any person they stop. If contact with the suspect is made by a police officer is made, the Unit detectives are notified. The detective may then make a follow-up call to the victim to determine if there had been any new incidents.

One common problem with domestic violence-related stalking cases is the loss of victim cooperation. While this does not occur as frequently as with domestic violence assault cases, it does occur in a significant number of cases. Victim cooperation in stalking cases is, of course, critical. The Unit protocol for stalking cases includes evidence collection based on victim cooperation. This includes letters or notes from defendant, gifts from defendant, answering machine tapes recording messages from defendant, photos of damage to victim's property, the use of phone traps, and a log that documents dates/time/location of victim's encounter with defendant.

Implicit in the improved investigation objectives are the policy of strict enforcement of court orders of protection and improved prosecutions. The policy of strict enforcement of protection orders is a carryover from the Department's policies regarding mandatory arrest in domestic violence cases. However, this policy has been strengthened by requiring arresting officers to notify the Unit detectives for their follow-up.

Because the police prosecutor is a sworn police officer in the department (although his duties are limited to legal tasks), ties between the two functions are close. For example, when a victim is to testify at bail or trial, Unit staff will take the victim to the prosecutor's office to await a call from the court. This limits the ability of the defendant to intimidate the witness prior to testifying. It also allows the prosecutor and victim to meet and prepare for testifying. Thus, the victim's memory will be refreshed by examining a copy of the police report section that recounts what the victim said at the time of arrest. Possible cross-examination questions will be reviewed,

especially where financial entanglements have necessitated contacts between the two parties, notwithstanding any order of protection.

Also implicit in the improved investigation objective is improved case management. Case management begins with appropriate case documentation. Unit protocol requires that at a minimum the following documents be included in each case file:

- Case profile sheet containing victim and suspect information and narrative of case
- Police arrest/incident reports
- Motor vehicle records
- Criminal records
- Local police contact records.

Based upon case evaluation whether follow-up actions are required, cases are either active or inactive, or closed. All cases are periodically reviewed every 90 days for appropriate case status.

Improved Supervision in the Community. The first opportunity for supervision of a suspect is the bail hearing at which bond may be required and conditions for release can be set by the court. Before the Unit existed, the only information available to the prosecutor arguing for bail conditions was a criminal record check. Based upon a few very serious incidents, this was deemed inadequate. Now the Unit provides the prosecutor with a threat assessment form that looks at dangerousness issues. This includes common factors such as making explicit threats against the victim or of suicide, history of violence or of order violations, mental health or substance abuse problems, and recent stress as from loss of job. A common condition of bail release is that the suspects periodically check in with the Unit detectives. Unit detectives may also make spot checks on releasees to ensure that they are in compliance with other bail release conditions, such as no use of alcohol, that are deemed necessary after Unit review of defendant's history.

In supervising suspects, the Unit takes advantage of new technologies. These include surveillance cameras as needed; digital cameras to take photographs of both the victim and the suspect; these photos are sent to all patrol officers via e-mail (officers are required to check their

e-mail daily). The Anti-Stalking Unit has also experimented with the use of a Global Positioning System to track offenders.⁷

Two related efforts are the Unit's pre-arrest stalking prevention practice of issuing warning letters to suspects and its encouragement of victims to obtain orders of protection; the department's reputation for arresting and prosecuting violators increases the credibility of these orders as a deterrent. Personal service of these orders by Unit detectives also provides an opportunity to stress the seriousness with which order violations are pursued.

Although state law limits warrantless arrests based solely upon probable cause in stalking cases to within six hours of stalking occurrence, the department has arranged for a bail commissioner or judge to be available "on-call" to issue warrants at any time.

Improved Services to Victims. Once a case is assigned to a detective, two important objectives are to reduce victim anxiety and to undertake a threat assessment. It is at this point that the detective will help with obtaining a restraining order. The victim advocate is also involved in all cases; she calls victims as soon as practicable and follows up once a week with phone calls. The advocate also attends arraignments to see if any victims are present and available to meet with her. To date there has been no use of the grant funds to relocate victims; should relocation be necessary, the Unit has developed a cooperative agreement with the DVERT Team in Colorado Springs, Colorado. The Unit protocol for relocation provides for financial assistance and help with name and Social Security number changes.

Victim safety planning is a primary Unit responsibility. The Unit protocol requires victim participation in safety planning; Unit personnel must provide victims with information about the risks they face so that safety planning can proceed. Planning includes an assessment of the risks posed by the victim's home, work, or school environment. Victims are kept informed of case status at all times, including bail status and custody release. A 25-item checklist is used for safety planning.

⁷ The use of a GPS requires that the defendant have a dedicated phone line, without call waiting; residence and work in building structures that do not interfere with signal; cooperation of all local jurisdictions where defendant and victim reside and work; and travel routes that separate victim from defendant.

Development of a stalking support group has proven to be difficult due to lack of interest among some victims and staffing changes at the mental health agency that sponsors such support groups. The Unit is also trying to have batterer treatment programs available for stalkers in a domestic violence context.

Expand Scope of Department Protocol Use. The department seeks to gain wider use of its protocol, both locally and otherwise, in several ways. First of all, the Department has been open to visits from other justice agencies who are interested in seeing first hand what they do. Second it has sponsored a regional conference that was attended by personnel from Departments in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and other states. Third, it has sponsored a rigorous evaluation by an independent evaluator to report on its successes and problems.

Other Activities. The Dover Police Department expends considerable effort on community relations. The Anti-Stalking Unit has developed a video on stalking and pamphlets explaining how the Unit can help victims. Unit staff have also led seminars on workplace violence for city employees and several local corporations. Another seminar that focused on workplace violence, stalking, and safety issues was held at a local college. They have also give talks to widow support groups on dating violence. The department has a web site that includes a stalking page. The department also participates on the county-wide Domestic Violence Council.

Statistical Measures of Performance

Data was not available at this time to measure the work of the Anti-Stalking Unit, due in part to the on-going evaluation of the project. A preliminary report by Dr. Kantor indicates that for 73 cases reviewed, about two-thirds involved intimates or former intimates and that 40 percent involved threats against the victim.

The police-prosecutor reports that he handles about 150-200 order violations and stalking cases yearly. Each detective carries a caseload of about 20-25 cases at any one time.

Summary

The Dover Police Department prides itself on being a progressive agency, one that is on the cutting edge of change. The Anti-Stalking Unit is but one manifestation of that attitude.

While most of its work might best be described as stalking prevention, nonetheless, it does handle both domestic violence-related and stranger stalking cases much more often than one might expect, considering Dover's population of 27,000.

The Dover Anti-Stalking Unit experience provides many lessons for law enforcement agencies of all sizes. First and foremost, stalking exists in significant numbers even in small jurisdictions. Second, stalking cases require changes in procedures and adoption of new techniques and technologies.

The LAPD Threat Management Unit (TMU)

California Stalking Law

California Penal Code § 646.9 was adopted in 1990 and was the first law in the United States to provide criminal penalties for stalking. The key elements of the law are:

- A course of conduct involving harassing or threatening behavior
- A credible threat, implicit or explicit, against the victim or the victim's family with apparent ability to carry out the threat
- Intent to place victim in fear for his or her own safety or that of immediate family
- Actual substantial emotional distress by the victim from the reasonable fear created by the course of conduct and threat.

Simple stalking as defined above constitutes what in state practice is called a "wobbler" offense. That is, stalking may be treated at the discretion of the district attorney as either a felony or a one-year misdemeanor. Stalking in violation of a court restraining order is always a felony, with a maximum sentence of up to four years.

Because stalking laws are so new in California and elsewhere, only a small number of police departments have established special units to respond to stalking complaints. The first such unit is that established by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

LAPD's Threat Management Unit (TMU)

The Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) Threat Management Unit (TMU) was the first (and until recently, the only) police unit to specialize in handling stalking cases. The TMU was set up in 1990 as a result of meetings between the LAPD and entertainment industry representatives to discuss what to do after the famous Rebecca Schaeffer murder case involving a stalker.⁸ These meetings resulted in a commitment by the LAPD to establish a dedicated unit for responding to threats involving strangers. This was a new approach to an old problem of how to

⁸ Rebecca Schaefer was a television actress who was most famous for appearing in a television comedy series. She was called by a stalker who obtained her home address from the state motor vehicle records and who came to her house and shot her.

handle cases involving obsessive behavior that may contain elements of harassment or threatening behavior, often without, however, any *present* injury. As the LAPD notes:

“Unless a specific crime had been committed, police agencies have historically remained uninvolved in such cases, leaving the victim to deal with his/her problem. However, by the time such cases escalate, some victims have experienced tragic consequences before police intervention could be initiated.” *Threat Management Unit Guidelines* (February 1999)

This brief quote includes two key elements of stalking cases: their continuing nature, which will typically continue into the future, and the role of the special stalking unit for homicide prevention.

Overview of TMU Responsibilities

To fill the void in police services that stalking complaints historically found, the TMU today is responsible for investigating serious threat cases in the city. This includes cases involving

- Stalking
- Terroristic threats
- Public officials
- Workplace violence involving city workers

Other duties include training divisional detectives and other law enforcement personnel. The TMU supervisor spends approximately 10 hours each month providing training. This includes training for LAPD detectives, POST training, and training for other organizations, including the California District Attorneys Association. The TMU has trained the Mayor's and other elected officials' staff about how to assess threats in letters, and it works with the city's Threat Assessment Team on employee violence cases not accepted by TMU. The TMU has also contributed to the city's a workplace violence policy and to the workplace violence protocol for police department employees.

TMU case investigations all involve similar tasks and problems. The most significant of these is threat assessment. It was this factor that led the unit to take over the elected official threat cases from the Criminal Conspiracy Section. The reason for this change in unit responsibility is that assassins rarely make explicit threats; specialized expertise is needed to

assess the level of danger or seriousness of any implied threats. Other commonalities among TMU cases are the need to conduct surveillance (for some cases) and the need to take a proactive approach to prevent crime, in addition to reacting to crimes already committed. A final commonality is the use of community resources in investigations, to both prevent and investigate threats and other crimes.

TMU Staffing and Caseload

The TMU is composed of eight detectives and one supervisor, a significant expansion from the original three detectives and one supervisor. The TMU detectives range in rank from Detective II (equal to sergeant) to detective trainee. Most have a minimum of 10 years of law enforcement experience; and the TMU supervisor (rank of Detective III) has 24 years of law enforcement experience and has been with the TMU since 1992.

Most cases accepted by the TMU involve stalking. While workplace violence cases are increasing, they are still relatively rare (16 cases in 5 years). About 30 percent of the TMU's stalking cases come from the entertainment industry.

Each Unit detective typically has 10 to 15 active cases. In the course of one year, the Unit investigates about 200 cases. Of these, approximately 70 percent involve citizen complaints, the majority of which are related to domestic violence.

Case Referral and Acceptance

Cases are referred to the TMU from the Major Assault Crimes (MAC) units, patrol officers, the District Attorney, the City Attorney, the public (including victim service agencies), and the movie studios or other entertainment industry organizations. The TMU's Officer-in-Charge also reviews all police crime complaints involving stalking or terroristic threats to identify other cases for possible TMU involvement. Occasionally, the TMU also handles cases referred by the Commanding Officer of the Detective Services Group; this can occur where high profile cases are brought to the attention of the Commander (whether or not they fit the TMU's criteria for case acceptance).

Cases accepted by the TMU are those requiring the extra investigative and specialized resources available to the Unit. For example, the stalking cases handled by the TMU are "long-term abnormal threat and harassment cases." The Unit also accepts cases that have not yet

reached the threshold of criminal behavior (e.g., "credible threat" or victim fear may be lacking). Although the harassing behavior in these cases may threaten to escalate into criminal stalking, a proactive response by the TMU detectives at this point may forestall more serious behavior and result in case termination without further formal action such as arrest.

Case Management Process

When a case is received by the TMU, a case intake form is filled out. This is used to record such information as

- Victim information (name, age, DOB, telephone numbers)
- Case information (crime location(s), detective name, date referred to TMU)
- Suspect information (name, address, description, etc.)
- Restraining order information (order number, termination date)
- Vehicle information
- Type of police report (crime, arrest, property)

The intake form is entered into an ACCESS database, permitting cross checks (e.g., prior stalking cases), case monitoring, and statistical summaries. Once the intake form is completed, the detective assigned to the case interviews the victim by telephone. A decision is then tentatively made by the detective to accept the case pending an in-person interview with the victim to assess victim credibility and willingness to cooperate. The final decision whether to accept the case or not is made by the Unit supervisor.

Regardless of whether or not the case is accepted, TMU detectives provide victims with safety information. This may include suggestions about varying their schedules, changing phone numbers, monitoring in-coming phone calls, and informing others so they can also take precautions. Victims whose cases are accepted are also told to keep daily logs of all stalking-related incidents to build a paper trail to prove stalking occurred.

From case referral to case termination, stalking cases are handled by the TMU detectives on a vertical basis. The only exception to this rule is when a detective is out sick or on vacation; then another detective will temporarily step in to handle the case.

Once a case is accepted, the detective assigned to the case will investigate and call the complainant every 7 days. If a case is designated inactive, detective calls will be made every 30 days. Similarly, if a case involves pre-stalking behavior (designated PEST cases, does not reach the level of serious threatening behavior), the assigned detective monitors the case by contacting the victim every 30 days. Another group of cases is considered "information only." These are cases that are outside the LAPD's jurisdiction or do not fit Unit criteria for handling.

When a case is closed, the detective sends a letter telling the victim to contact the detective at once if the stalking reoccurs. Cases are closed through arrest, mental health intervention, self-resolved (suspect stops the stalking activity), or where the victim is uncooperative, making it impossible to prosecute or to increase victim safety.

In all cases where the stalker's identity is known, the TMU detective checks the suspect's criminal record, looks for warrants and warrants, and reviews the Automated Firearms System for information about gun ownership. The detective will also review the Mental Evaluation Unit files and ask for a hand search of the files in appropriate cases. A copy of the suspect's driver's license, booking, or other ID photo will also be ordered. If at all possible, the detectives will also contact the stalking suspect in person. In misdemeanor stalking cases, they may send the stalker a letter asking him to contact the detective, or may directly contact the stalker through phone or personal interview.

The TMU detectives may also encourage the victim to obtain a court protective order against the stalker or inform the victim's employer that they may also seek a protection order against work-site stalking incidents. Where an order is obtained, the detective will personally serve the court order on the suspect.

If an emergency arises, victims are told to call 911 and inform the operator that this is a TMU case. Police "first responders" have been instructed to contact the TMU detective via beeper, if necessary. The detective then informs the Unit supervisor; however, very few emergencies actually require off-duty detectives to report in. In appropriate cases, detectives may act to divert suspects to a mental health agency for competency and dangerousness assessments.

Each stalking case is placed in a separate "stalking book." The stalking book is kept by the detective assigned to that case until the case is completed, whereupon the stalking book is

placed in the Unit files. The stalking book contains a chronological record of all case activities and all paperwork associated with the case, including crime reports, evidence/property reports, follow-up and progress reports, detective notes, crime scene photos, newspaper clippings, and prosecution materials (See Appendix).

Management and Training

One purpose of a specialized such as the TMU is to develop expertise among unit members in dealing with the crime of stalking and other threat crimes. This requires that the unit officers stay with the unit for a relatively extended period of time sufficient to both develop and use their expertise. Fortunately, staff turnover is not a major managerial concern with the TMU, since several of the detectives have been assigned to the Unit for an extended period. However, the department does have a policy of rotating younger officers, several of whom may have to move to another unit to receive promotions.

A more serious problem is managing overtime. Managers are rated on how well they control overtime use. As a result, whenever special demands such as surveillance, can be scheduled, officers will change their shift hours to minimize overtime. There is no LAPD policy against the use of flex time where the activity is scheduled (e.g., victim interview can only be done in evening). Overtime is permitted, however, for emergency field work, such as looking for a dangerous suspect or completing the paperwork associated with an arrest. Long interviews that run over the scheduled work day may also be an authorized overtime activity. As a result, detectives may telecommute in order to complete the necessary paperwork.

To ensure timely handling of case referrals, the first detective arrives at the TMU offices at 7 a.m. The day ends at 5 p.m.

Detectives are partnered to ensure officer safety. Thus, whenever a detective is sent on a field assignment (e.g., serve protective order, surveillance), he or she will be accompanied by a partner. This partnering is especially important when interviewing suspects because of their potential for unstable behavior. Partnering detectives also allows for consistency in case handling when a detective is not on duty because of sick leave, vacation, etc.

Special managerial approaches are needed in Los Angeles to deal with celebrity stalking. Each detective in the TMU is responsible for liaison with 3 or 4 different movie-television

studios. Liaison with shelter advocates is also needed to ensure that victims receive needed services.

Training new detectives assigned to the TMU is done through on-the-job training by assigning the new detective to team with an experienced detective. This is done for a period of six months to one year. At least twice a year, the TMU has "training days" when outsiders come in to talk to Unit members. Typically this would include one academic and one tactical training day. The Unit members are all receiving training on the use of the Internet in stalking crimes; this is being provided by SEARCH and a state DOJ course on Internet crime. Staff also attend meetings of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals.

Other Units Handling Stalking Cases

Major Assault Crimes. Major Assault Crimes (MAC) units are located in each of the LAPD's 18 geographical divisions. Among the duties of detectives assigned to MAC are investigation of less serious or aggravated stalking cases and domestic violence assaults. But even simple stalking cases that cross division lines are assigned to TMU.

Detectives newly assigned to MAC units receive training from the TMU; training is scheduled every quarter. Upon request, the TMU may also provide technical assistance to a MAC detective handling a stalking case.

A grant application has been submitted to the state to have two members of MAC in each division responsible for identifying stalking cases before they escalate. These detectives would try to use shelters for this purpose. The TMU will train shelter staff for this.

SMART. The LAPD's System-Wide Mental Assessment Response Team (SMART). SMART pairs a mental health professional and a law enforcement officer to conduct field assessments of suspects who display symptoms of psychiatric disorders. When officers respond to a call where the suspect may be mentally disordered, the officer can call the Mental Evaluation Unit to assist. The Unit will dispatch a SMART team, relieving the officers and allowing them to respond to new calls for assistance. The SMART team will then determine whether the individual should be released, arrested, or be involuntarily sent to a 72-hour holding facility for assessment and treatment. The TMU detectives consider SMART to be a very important resource.

School Threat Assessment Teams. A recent LAPD/TMU initiative is the establishment of a partnership between the Department and LA Unified Schools create threat assessment teams in the schools that use the assessment techniques pioneered by the TMU. The plan is for each school to establish an assessment team comprised of a school official, a law enforcement officer, a mental health professional, and legal counsel. The purpose of the teams will be to identify and resolve bona fide threats of violence in the schools. The TMU will be responsible for providing technical expertise and training. As of this writing, the school threat assessment teams are being formulated. TMU and other training will be implemented in the near future.

TMU Cases

To illustrate the investigative and legal issues facing TMU detectives, this section provides summaries of five cases handled by the TMU within the past few years.

Case 1. The Threat Management Unit took over the investigation of a residential burglary/stalking case originally handled by the LAPD's North Hollywood Division. The first incident in the case was a burglary of the victim's residence. The burglar bypassed several items of value in favor of taking undergarments from the victim's clothes hamper. Immediately following the burglary, the victim began receiving obscene telephone calls late at night. The caller graphically described his intent to return and rape the victim. Using phone trap records, the TMU detectives and officers from the North Hollywood Special Problem Unit staked out a pay phone identified by the phone trap. This surveillance led to the identification and arrest of a parolee with prior convictions for rape and residential burglary. The suspect was literally caught in the act of placing a call to the victim from the nearby pay phone. A subsequent search of the suspect's apartment resulted in the recovery of several items belonging to the victim. The District Attorney's office filed charges of felony burglary, stalking and receiving stolen property. At trial, the suspect was convicted on all counts. He was sentenced to a term of 60 years to life.

Case 2. In January 1995, TMU detectives were directly contacted by the father of a female victim, requesting their help in handling an aggravated stalking situation. The victim and the female suspect had maintained a love relationship off and on for four years. During that time, the suspect became increasingly violent, leading to their subsequent breakup. After the separation, the victim began to receive numerous hang-up and threatening phone calls. These

calls then began to include threats to the victim's immediate family. The victim's father was also the recipient of unordered magazines and advertising material from companies such as the Franklin Mint. The suspect also got herself arrested to be with the victim while the victim was in jail facing a forgery charge. After accepting the case, the TMU detectives instructed the victim on what she should do to help gather evidence of stalking (e.g., keep a log). With the evidence obtained from the victim, the TMU detectives obtained an arrest warrant for stalking against the suspect. The suspect subsequently pled guilty to stalking and was placed on probation. Upon release from jail, the suspect again began to harass and terrorize the victim and her family. The suspect was immediately re-arrested by the TMU detectives for violating probation. Probation was revoked by the court and a one-year prison sentence was imposed.

Case 3. In November 1994, the TMU was assigned a case involving the stalking of the director of a then popular television series. The victim was mailed death threats using cut out letters (e.g., "you will die."), mutilated dolls (cocktail swords stuck into the crotch of a Ken doll with its pants pulled down and red paint splashed on the doll), and envelopes full of feces. A possible suspect who had lived at the victim's home for awhile was identified by the victim, but there was no physical evidence linking him to the crime. The detectives began to work off-duty hours conducting stakeouts of the suspect in an effort to link him with the crimes. In May 1995, the detectives conducted surveillance of the suspect's car, because he had no known address. This ultimately led to seeing the suspect approach the car carrying a package similar in appearance to those previously received by the victim. The suspect was then arrested while attempting to mail another package of feces to the victim. The suspect was charged by the District Attorney's Office with felony stalking and was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison.

Case 4. The suspect, a terminated employee of a national television network, was stalking and terrorizing a former co-worker. His behavior became so obsessive that the victim eventually obtained a court order against his behavior. Sometime thereafter, the victim's vehicle was burglarized and her identification badge taken. A few days later, the suspect's psychiatrist notified the TMU and the police mental health unit (see above) that the suspect had reported thoughts of kidnapping and killing the victim, then killing himself. A check of the automated firearms system showed that the suspect had eight firearms registered to him. Based on this

information, the TMU obtained a search warrant for his residence to look for firearms. The suspect was then civilly detained as a mental health risk under § 5150 of the state Welfare and Institutions Code and the search warrant was executed. During the search, the TMU recovered 16 weapons and numerous rounds of ammunition. The victim's identification badge, taken in the burglary of her car, was also found. Additional evidence was found that linked the defendant to child pornography. The District Attorney's office filed charges of stalking, burglary, and receiving stolen property. The suspect pled to the burglary charge and was sentenced to two years in prison.

Case 5. The TMU was contacted by a male model who reported that he was a victim of stalking by a former companion, a physician specializing in infectious diseases. The victim and the suspect had known each other for 18 months. When the suspect told the victim that his intentions were of a romantic nature, the victim did not want to become so involved. A friendship relationship continued for another year before the victim decided to end their relationship completely because of the suspect's attempts at possessiveness. The suspect began to harass the victim, placing numerous phone calls to the victim and threatening him with great bodily injury. The suspect then began to walk around the victim's neighborhood in disguise, enabling him to monitor the victim's activities and visitors. At one point the suspect, dressed as a woman, assaulted the victim outside his home. A restraining order was obtained to prohibit this harassment, but the suspect continued to show up at locations that the victim frequented, sometimes traveling three times in one evening to different locations. The suspect also left cards and mementos at the victim's residence. After entering the case, the TMU detectives arrested the suspect in front of the victim's residence for stalking. At the time of the arrest, the suspect possessed binocular and a flashlight, which he explained he needed to help him find a wallet he lost earlier that evening. The District Attorney's Office charged the suspect with stalking and making terroristic threats against the victim. After release from jail on bail, the suspect continued to violate the restraining orders of the court. The victim filed three additional crime reports alleging order violations, and the suspect was again arrested in front of the victim's residence. The original complaint was amended to include an additional count of stalking, and a bail revocation hearing was held at which a new bail was set at \$500,000. Unable to make bail, the suspect remained in custody until trial. He was found guilty of stalking, but acquitted of terroristic threats. The court sentenced him to a term of three years in prison.

Summary and Conclusions

In many ways, the TMU is still a work in progress. The unit was established when stalking offenses were still not a criminal offense under the state Penal Code. Its original focus on stranger threats has expanded to include domestic violence stalking, workplace violence, and threats against government officials. It continues to receive ad hoc assignments to investigate criminal cases involving high profile victims that must be balanced against the need to protect many other citizens from serious threats. Most significantly, the TMU now has a parallel unit in the District Attorney's Office, whose existence may be expected to have an impact upon how the TMU operates.

At the same time that it is evolving, the Unit operates within a professional structure. It has investigative and managerial protocols that govern the detectives' activities, while giving them flexibility to deal with a specialized and limited caseload.

It is also clear that TMU responsibilities go beyond simple case investigations. Because stalking crimes in Los Angeles far exceed the number of cases that the TMU can handle, the Unit acts as a resource and model for other LAPD detective units. It is also a training resource both for the LAPD and for other criminal justice personnel around the state. Most recently, the responsibilities of the Unit were again expanded to include training for school threat teams. Because of other demands, the TMU does not, however, undertake many community education or public speaking events to foster increased victim awareness of stalking or encourage service agency referrals (as the District Attorney's Office does).

The "bottom line" is that just as stalking is itself a unique crime, so too the TMU is a unique unit within the LAPD. As the Department, the TMU, and indeed, the entire justice system learn more about stalking and stalkers, the more its responsibilities and its operating procedures will change. The key point is that the TMU has been and continues to be a leader in responding to stalking crimes on a daily basis, while at the same time improving methods for responding to these crimes that can have devastating consequences for the victims unless promptly and effectively responded to by the justice system.

Los Angeles District Attorney's Stalking and Threat Assessment Team

One District Attorney's Response to the New Stalking Laws

The Los Angeles District Attorney's Stalking and Threat Assessment Team (STAT) is responsible for prosecution of felony cases involving

- Stalking
- Workplace violence (government only)
- Other high profile or dangerous threats.

The STOP-funded attorney position, however, is limited to cases consistent with the STOP guidelines for services. The unifying principle for the three different case jurisdictions is that each requires threat assessment of the level of danger posed against the victim.

History of STAT

In 1992, the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office handled one of its first stalking prosecution cases. At that time, the California stalking law had been in effect for only one year. For the most part, law enforcement was not familiar with the stalking law and did not recognize stalking complaints when they were filed. However, the LAPD's Threat Management Unit, which was formed in 1990, referred a burglary/stalking case to the District Attorney's Office, and Rhonda Saunders, one of the two deputy district attorneys currently with STAT, was assigned to the case.

The defendant in this case had been stalking the victim in public venues such as shopping malls for over a year after the victim ended their sexual relationship because of the stalker's violent behavior. The spurned lover then became obsessive, calling the victim at all hours, leaving gifts, and writing letters begging the victim to resume their relationship. A few months later, the victim began to hear strange noises from under her house. An exterminator was called and threw poisoned bait into a crawl space, but the noise continued. A few months later, a friend who was house sitting for the victim found the stalker inside the house bedroom and ordered her to leave. Within a few weeks, the victim discovered her Rolodex was missing when her friends