

FAMOUS

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What's the point of hiring bodyguards if we all end up dead?...

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...John Lennon asked. Typical of Lennon's character, this approach nonetheless was to prove fatal when, on the night of the 8th of December 1980, he was shot dead by a deranged fan, in one of the most notorious assassinations of the 20th Century.

Like all of us, Lennon had no way of predicting what was going to happen next, but perhaps precautions could have been taken. In the same way we use a seat belt – ‘just in case’ – there is a strong argument for using a bodyguard in much the same way; being in the right place at the right time if something unpredictable or unavoidable happens.

For some people, the need for personal protection is obvious – presidents, royalty and other heads of state. But what about the ‘Grey Area’ - high profile people who, like John Lennon, either don't want, or don't know they need protection?

24 hour security is obviously not needed for the majority of celebrities, actors, athletes and other public figures but they will require bodyguards a lot of the time. Not all day, every day providing around the clock protection, but whilst they are out, working and attending high profile events: ensuring they are safe in general, making them appear as a ‘hard target’ and observing closely when they come into contact with the public.

In this case it's the job of the bodyguard to identify the ‘potential assassin’ in the street or crowd who, for example may have turned up to see the principal's performance six nights in a row and to then take steps to reduce future contact and avoid any possible confrontation.

LAST WORDS

by ED LAWRENCE

Of course, it's in our nature to think everything will be all right. Few of us leave our homes in the morning, expecting not to return in the evening. But, as John Lennon found to his cost, unexpected violence may lurk just around the corner. If price is factored into this, we can see that the situation becomes even more dangerous. To put it bluntly, people are put off by the cost of staying safe, particularly if the money is being spent on something which isn't tangible. For example, artist security is by no means near the top of the list on most production budgets. The chances are the only reason a bodyguard is sat discussing daily rates with a producer, event organiser or tour manager is because it's a tick in their box; a contractual formality. If it wasn't for the contract, it's possible that they would rather spend the money elsewhere and possibly protection would be completely overlooked: until something happens.

The amount of, or lack of protection is what makes the difference between a ‘hard target’ and ‘soft target’, as it depends on the motivation and resources at hand of the would be attacker. For example what is perceived as a hard target to one individual, without a weapon could well be seen as a soft target for an armed assailant. It's very easy for people to become complacent thinking, like John Lennon, that ‘it will never happen to me’, thus leaving themselves open to unwanted attention and ultimately attack; becoming a ‘soft target’.

On that night in December 1980 when Mark

David Chapman shot John Lennon, the mere presence of a bodyguard could have been enough for John Lennon to appear as a ‘hard target’ through the eyes of his assassin, this simple change of perception could have been enough to deter him and save Lennon's life.

Two of the most common threats faced by celebrities today are from the Paparazzi and Stalkers which both have a drastic affect on lives.

The Paparazzi; photographers who tirelessly hunt celebrities, public figures and their families for the opportunity to photograph them in candid, and often compromising moments.

With the demand for snapshots into the lives of celebrities rising, so does the price paid for these pictures and with that, the ever increasing risks that these people are willing go to to get ‘the shot’ by any means necessary.

In more extreme cases, paparazzi have taken photographs from rooftops or tree tops. They have shot private events from rented helicopters or boats. In some cases, if the event is in a sealed building, paparazzi have staged fire alarms or bomb threats to cause an evacuation of the building that forces their subjects onto the streets. Is that legal? The answer is, probably not.

But with the lucrative nature of the business, the paparazzi are prepared to take risks and legal expenses have become part of operating costs, contributing significantly to the high price tag on such photographs.

In a 2003 interview with The Guardian, Ewan McGregor spoke out against paparazzi and the publications that buy their pictures:

“Heat magazine's a dirty, filthy piece of shit and I'd like to put that on record. People shouldn't buy it because it sucks... If a guy comes up and asks me, ‘Can I take a picture of your daughter?’ that's one thing. But if he's hiding behind a bus and he takes a picture of me and my daughter he's legally allowed to publish that photo in the press. I have no rights to stop him and I think that's wrong. I think we should encourage people to beat up paparazzi.”

Perhaps one of the main incidences caused by the harassment of the paparazzi occurred on the 31st of August 1997, when Princess Diana and Dodi Al-Fayed were killed in a high speed car chase in Paris.

Stalkers

Psychologists have developed three general stalker profiles:

(I) Former-intimacy stalker

Former intimacy stalkers, have had a history of intimacy with the victim which for some reason has now ended, they can be identified as having two subsections:

Rejection - This could either be due to a break up of a long or short term relationship like a divorce or the calling off of an affair. They perceive it as an insult, they feel wounded and seek vindication. They stalk their victims in order to reverse, correct, or change their minds.

Resentment – This could occur in the work place, where an employee is made redundant or suspended; they may stalk their superior or rival who they believe is the cause of their dismissal. The stalker wants to teach the victim a lesson, they pursue a vendetta because of a sense of grievance against the victims – motivated mainly by the desire to frighten and distress the victim.

(II) Desired-intimacy stalker

Desired intimacy stalkers, known as Erotomaniacs fall under three subsections:

Delusional erotomaniac - They believe they are loved or will be loved by the victim. They often focus on someone of higher social status, usually a stranger or famous person. This person is mentally ill and delusional, they seek to establish an intimate, loving relationship with their victim, who may not even know, and often does not know of the existence of the person operating under the delusion. To many of them the victim is a long-sought-after soul mate, and they were ‘meant’ to be together. They are dangerously motivated by the desire to gain some kind of recognition from their target.

Shortly before 14:30, on Monday the 30th of March 1981, John Hinckley Jr, attempted to assassinate American President Ronald Reagan. During the attack Hinckley fired six bullets, hitting and seriously injuring both the President and members of his entourage. Reagan only survived as a result of the quick thinking of his bodyguards, who moved fast to protect their principal by quickly shielding him with their bodies, before bundling him into a waiting car. Bodyguard James Parr further distinguished himself by checking the President for wounds once in the car and, realising the extent of the injuries, diverting the

motorcade to the nearest suitable hospital; a split-second decision that probably saved the wounded President's life.

Hinckley's supposed motivation behind the attack stemmed from an obsession with actress Jodie Foster, due to erotomania. Apparently, Hinckley had watched the film Taxi Driver at least 15 times, identifying strongly with the protagonist Travis Bickle. The story involves Bickle's attempts to protect a 12-year-old child prostitute, played by Foster. Toward the end of the film, Bickle - apparently driven mad by jealousy and obsession - attempts to assassinate a U.S. Senator who is running for President.

The borderline erotomaniac - Firstly borderline erotomaniacs have developed intense emotional feelings towards other people who they know do not reciprocate their feelings. Secondly unlike delusional erotomaniacs, borderline erotomaniacs usually have some history of actual engagement with the object of their attention. It may have been quite trivial; a slight glance at a social gathering could have been enough to set them off.

The incompetent - This person is socially backward, they don't understand the social rules involved in dating and romance.

They don't mean any harm but they have a fixation, or in some cases a sense of entitlement to an intimate relationship with those who have attracted their interest. Their victims are most often already in a dating relationship with someone else.

(III) Predatory stalker

Also known as Sociopathic stalkers. This type is about sexual gratification, control, and violence. This type of stalker doesn't necessarily know their victim and the victim may not know they are being stalked. A predatory stalker plans their attack, rehearses it and has lots of sexual fantasies about it. Two important features distinguish the Predatory stalker from the other categories; Firstly they generally do not seek a intimate personal relationship with their victims. Secondly they formulate a profile for their ‘ideal victim’, then they seek an acceptable candidate that fits their criteria.

I spoke with Laura Richards, BSc, MSc, FRSA Criminal Behavioural Psychologist, who comments:

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Stalkers come from all backgrounds and do not form one ‘type’. Stalkers are not homogenous and the moti-

vation for stalking can vary. Understanding the motivation is important when assessing the risks the stalker may pose. Motivation is often multi-determined and dynamic and some stalkers transition between categories. The danger of this in risk assessment and case management of a particular case can be deformed or adapted to fit a particular typological category.”

“The most malignant and dangerous of all the stalkers are those who have had an intimate relationship with the victim. A prior intimate relationship is the most powerful predictor of violence in stalking cases.”

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Taking into account the circumstances leading up to John Lennon's death, it appears that after requesting that Lennon sign an album cover his assassin Mark David Chapman then hung around for several hours, waiting for Lennon and his wife Yoko Ono to return home around 11 p.m.

On their return and noticing the figure of Chapman waiting outside, the couple exited their car on 72nd Street, as Lennon liked to oblige any fans who had been waiting for long periods of time to meet him. Taking the front entrance of the Dakota building, instead of driving around to the secure courtyard where the couple would have avoided Chapman completely.

The actions of Chapman would have made any bodyguard suspicious and again possibly the mere presence of a bodyguard may have been enough to deter a madman like Chapman, and Ono then spared the agony of seeing her husband shot five times from behind.

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