

Living Through Extreme Stalking

A survivor of a relentless stalker shares four things she did, and continues to do, while being stalked by her ex

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- By [Amanda Kippert](#)

At one point during Mike Bonert's stalking of Vicki Kuper, he called her 1,200 times in one month. That's pretty much twice an hour, every hour, every single day. And Kuper says this wasn't even what she'd consider the height of his stalking. "It was just the beginning," she says.

Their two-year relationship ended in 2008, but since then, Kuper has been relentlessly tormented by Bonert in their shared small town in Iowa, even after he was released from prison in 2015. He served just 4 ½ years on a 21-year sentence for 25 counts of stalking, assault, trespassing and violating Kuper's no contact order repeatedly.

Kuper believes her days are numbered. She is convinced Bonert will kill her the first chance he gets.

"I believe he is waiting until he is off of parole and doesn't have the GPS tracker anymore, then he will pick up where he left off," she says.

She's considered moving, but says "it's just not realistic in my situation. I have kids that would have to come back to visit their dad [from a previous relationship] and it would be next to impossible to keep our whereabouts a secret."

Also, she says, Bonert likes a challenge. "He would find me, then put himself in my presence just to show me that I will never get away from him."

She's Not Alone

A study from the [CDC](#) shows 5.2 million women and 1.4 million men were stalked in one year in the United States. Of those, 61 percent of female victims were stalked by former partners, while 41 percent of men could say the same.

Stalking and domestic violence often go hand-in-hand. An estimated 74 percent of those who have been stalked by a current or former partner have also endured physical or sexual violence, or coercive control, by their former partner.

Studies also show anywhere from 52 to 72 percent of all intimate partner stalking victims report these crimes to the police, but less than half result in arrests. The reason, according to the [National Institute of Justice](#), may be that “police officers have limited understanding of stalking statutes, policies, or how to identify and handle stalking cases.” In addition, they believe many throughout the criminal justice system have “misinformation and limited knowledge about partner stalking cases.”

Sharing What She’s Learned

Today, Kuper shares with other victims and survivors what she’s learned about stalking through an online webinar at [LoveFraud.com](#), a site started by fellow survivor Donna Anderson in 2005. Anderson lived through a different but equally taxing emotional and financial nightmare as a result of marrying an abusive con man. Her ex-husband, James Montgomery, stole nearly a quarter of a million dollars from her during just two years of marriage.

After they split, Anderson uncovered he was defrauding a multitude of women around the country and was allegedly still married to another woman when they married. Though a judge ordered Montgomery pay Anderson back every penny he stole from her plus punitive damages, Anderson has seen just over \$500 of that since their divorce in 1998.

Out of anger grew action—“You want to believe there’s a reason and purpose for what you’ve experienced,” she says—and Anderson began a blog to help educate people about financial abuse. Over time, it turned into an education platform. Now, she offers online classes for survivors as well as American Psychological Association-approved classes for mental health professionals. The curriculum is largely focused on abuse, how to spot a psychopath before getting romantically involved and how psychopathy overlaps with abusive behaviors.

“A lot of people in abusive situations think it’s them. They wonder, ‘What am I doing wrong?’ To find out the other person has a serious mental disorder is, in many cases, freeing.”

If You’re Being Stalked

Four things Kuper says stalking victims can do to help thwart their abuser:

1. **Don’t give up.** “I believe that many victims take [their abusers] back because they just give up on trying to stay away. I almost took mine back, not because I wanted to, but because I almost felt I didn’t have a choice. He was everywhere. I have to be very diligent about not giving in to his attempts to force his way back into my life.”
2. **Document and report everything.** This develops a recorded history, which is very important, says Kuper, because authorities and courts need facts or proof that can substantiate your claims or counter the abuser’s claims.

3. **Be on heightened alert.** “Always be aware of your surroundings and stay away from secluded areas. Install a security system in your home that will alert you when someone enters your home. Take self-defense classes and have some form of protection with you at all times.”
4. **Consider an order of protection.** Kuper says that although a **protection order** didn't stop her abuser from stalking her, it was one of the key pieces that helped get him sent to prison later on.

+And as far as what *not* to do, Kuper adds this: “What doesn't work is giving in to a stalker's demands. Giving in once is success for them, and they will relentlessly pursue you hoping you'll give in again.”
Read about how one survivor-turned-advocate realized he was dating a psychopath in “**Recovering from Life with a Psychopath.**”