

# **Intimate Partner Femicide Timeline**

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## The Problem: Intimate Partner Femicide

- Men predominate as both perpetrators and victims of homicide globally (90% and 80% respectively)
- Except in the IPH category where: women predominate as victims (70%) (UNODC 2013)
- Femicide has been identified globally as a leading cause of premature death for women (Brennan 2016)
- Between 2009 and 2015 936 women were killed, 598 were killed by an intimate partner (Brennan 2016)
- Global homicide numbers have decreased, femicide has increased
- Not isolated incidents (Brennan 2016)
- Predictable (Adams 2010)

## The problem: IPF and Domestic Abuse

- Significant relationship between Domestic Abuse and IPF
- Where there is control, violence (even low level) and a separation after living together, there is a 900% increase in the potential for homicide (Stark, 2009)
- Presence of DA, coercive control or stalking found in over 90% of cases (Monckton Smith *et al* 2017)

# What we know

1. **Clusters** of risk markers are more helpful than numbers of markers
2. **Motivation** is more helpful than actions
3. **Patterns** are more helpful than incidents

# DHRs and chronologies

- Chaired a number of DHRs
- Revealed the importance of chronologies
- Revealed the consistency with which they are repeated
- Temporal sequencing has an established place in homicide studies

# Temporal sequencing

The later stages in the sequences are  
preceded by the earlier stages  
(Stanton 2006)

# Focus for the research

Develop knowledge around *escalating* risk for  
use on the frontline

- 575 cases of homicide of women
- 372 IPF
- Twenty cases with detailed data

- Five more stages emerged from the analysis
- Drawing from coercive control discourse

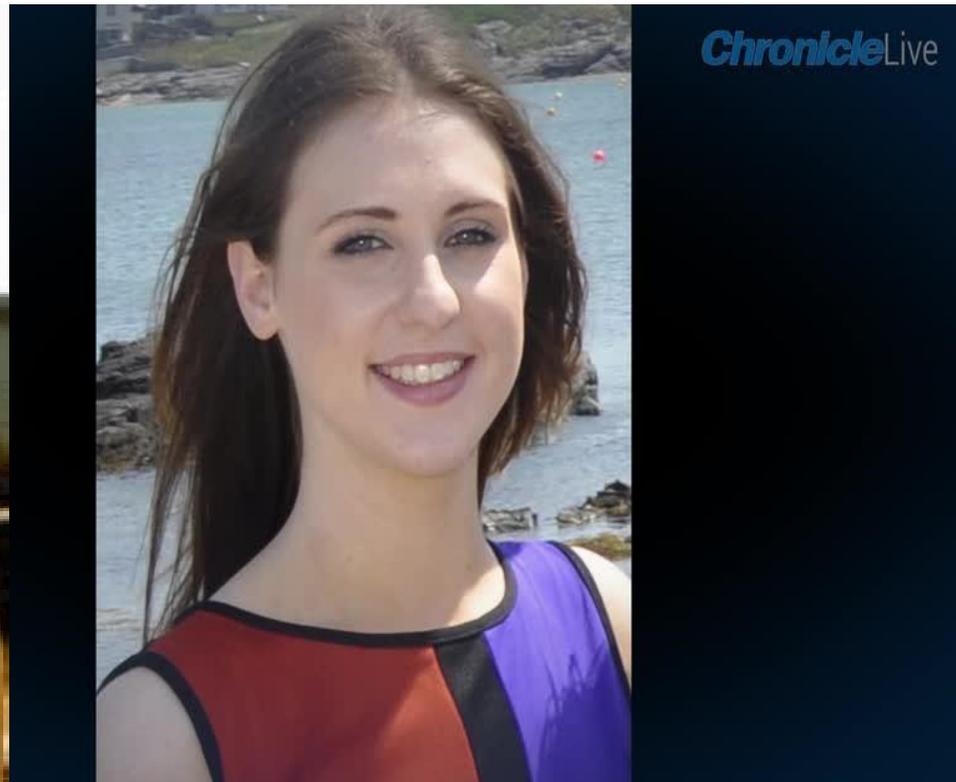
## Eight Stages

1. Pre relationship history: criminal record, allegations
2. Early relationship behaviours: early commitment
3. Relationship behaviours: risk markers
4. Potential homicide trigger: separation, ill health, financial problems, threats or rumours
5. Escalation – frequency, seriousness, stalking, persistence
6. Change in thinking –
7. Planning – buying weapons, grave digging, manipulate meetings, letters, organize papers
8. Homicide – homicide/suicide, confession, missing person, denial, accident, multiple victims

**Clare Bernal 2005**



**Alice Ruggles 2016**



## Stage 1:pre r/ship: Warning Signs

- The person has a history of stalking or domestic abuse (with or without an arrest record)
  - The person is controlling
  - The person has previous arrests for violence,
  - Inability to accept challenge
  - Thin skinned and confrontational
- **Dhillon:** History of stalking previous girlfriends
  - **Peche:** History of coercive control

## Stage 2: Early Relationship: warning signs

- Early cohabitation
- Early pregnancy
- Early declarations of love using possessive language (you're mine, together forever etc)
- Pushes for early commitment
- Possessive at early stage
- Jealous at early stage
- Resist attempts to slow down or end the relationship
- Dhillon: had not even met Alice before he was pushing her to commitment and to describing him as her boyfriend
- Peche: became obsessive very quickly. Early declarations of love and seeking commitment from Clare

## Stage 3:R/ship: warning signs

- Coercive control
- Stalking
- Violence (even low level pushing and shoving)
- Sexual aggression
- Possessiveness
- Jealousy
- Threats to suicide or kill
- Isolation of victim from family and friends
- Enforces routines on victim or family
- Threats to pets or children
- Quick temper and thin skin
- Drug or alcohol problems (not causal but can exacerbate)
- Depression (not causal but can exacerbate)
- Dhillon: controlling of Alice's time and friendships
- Very possessive – everywhere together
- Jealous – did not like her talking to other men
- Isolated from her friends very quickly
- Suicide threats
- Peche: Similar to Alice

## Stage 4: trigger warning signs

- Separation
- Threat of separation
- Imagines a separation (constant accusations of an affair for example)
- Bankruptcy or financial ruin
- Physical health deteriorates in offender or victim
- Mental health deteriorates in offender or victim
- Redundancy, retirement
- Event which prompts retaliation or revenge on victim
- Dhillon: Separation – Alice ended the relationship and he would not accept that.
- Texting Alice's parents with reasons why they should not split
- Begging, threats
- Stalking
- Peche: separation, threats, stalking, escalation, breaches,

## Stage 5: escalation warning signs

- Concerning behaviours become more frequent
- Concerning behaviours become more serious or severe
- Stalking (even low level)
- Threats to kill or suicide
- May use language like 'I won't let you leave', 'I cant live without you', 'if I can't have you no-one can'
- **Dhillon: Escalated stalking :**
- **Hacked facebook account**
- **Tracking software on Alice's phone**
- **Hanging around outside her home**
- **Leaving gifts and messages**
- **Peche: following, texting, threats, violence, if I can't have you...**

## Stage 6: change in thinking - warning signs

- Last attempts at reconciliation (take a holiday, begging, crying, temper, force and violence, threats)
- Stalking
- Victim does not respond to threats, or cannot respond
- There is a new relationship for victim
- Financial or reputation ruin is imminent or irreversible
- Mental or Physical health deterioration is irreversible
- Status irretrievably diminished
- **Dhillon: Alice would not go back to him**
- **Another man on the scene**
- **Ignoring Police warnings**
- **Peche: Clare would not go back, ignoring police warnings**

## Stage 7: planning warning signs

- Stalking
- Change in usual behaviour
- Possible withdrawal
- Increased menace
- May tell people of plans, or may continue to make threats
- Internet searches
- Gathering of weapons or other tools to incapacitate the victim, or dispose of them
- Suicide threats
- Isolate children
- (Where revenge is a motivator may be more rigid in plans)
- **Dhillon: Taking photos of the back of the house**
- **Watching the house and movements of the occupants**
- **Pech: travelled to purchase a gun and to train to use it**

## Stage 8: homicide characteristics

- Clear homicide with confession
- Homicide with suicide of offender
- Homicide made to look like suicide
- Homicide made to look like 'mercy killing'
- Homicide made to look like accident
- Homicide made to look like misadventure or natural causes
- Stage missing person
- Children targeted for homicide
- Children collateral damage
- Children witness homicide
- Victim blaming – claiming self defence or provocation
- **Dhillon: broke in to Alice home, denied involvement**
- **Peche: shot Clare at her place of work then shot himself.**

# Observations

- Travel through the stages is not inevitable (we saw interventions at stage 7)
- Where the early stages 1-2 are positively identified there is much higher likelihood that attempts at separation later on in the relationship will be met with resistance.
- Where there is progression through stages 3-5 there is much higher likelihood that separation may be very difficult, impossible, or even dangerous. (Challenging disputes may produce fatal violence where violence is an issue).
- Where there is progression to stages 5-7 there is much higher likelihood that there may be an attempt on the victim's life

# Level up campaign

- To encourage ethical and accurate reporting of domestic homicide
- Myths can be dangerous to victims and our assessment of risk
- Victim blaming protects perpetrators
- Causes significant trauma to families and victim's children

# Meeting with IPSO

- Campaign to be a priority next year
- Build an evidence base of dissatisfaction
- Public consultation on the editor's code
- Collecting research data to support the ethical standards