



You season 3 includes Joe and Love moving to the suburbs to... well, continue stalking and murdering. This discussion guide focuses on the variety of stalking behaviors demonstrated in *You* season 3 and encourages participants to consider how these stalking behaviors are presented by the show. Spoilers ahead!

PART 1



For two seasons, we've seen Joe target and stalk at least three women – Candace, Beck, and Love. His goal was to find “the one” and he justified everything to himself, from peering into windows to outright murder, in order to pursue these women.

Stalkers are often portrayed as romantic, idealistic figures with good intentions who are simply trying to win over the women they love. At the start of this season, Joe is settling into the suburbs with his wife, Love, who genuinely adores and wants to be with him. He asks himself, “I never thought to wonder...what happens after boy gets girl?”

- What does Joe actually want? Would any woman measure up long-term?
- If someone engages in stalking behavior in pursuing the relationship, do you think they will stop stalking after they “get the girl”? Why or why not?
- Can you remember all the different people who Joe stalks this season? What are some different ways that Joe justifies his stalking? Is it always “for love”?

Sample Discussion Points:

- *Stalkers' motives can be difficult to determine. Despite years of obsessively pursuing the women he thinks will make him happy, Joe is unsatisfied when he actually has a wife who loves him and wants to be with him.*
- *Joe is a serial stalker who says he is always looking for “the one.”*
- *No matter how creepy Joe is being (for instance, masturbating to pictures of Marianne in Ryan's house), he always manages to justify his behavior to himself in his inner monologue and come back to the idea of searching for “the one.” He never takes responsibility for his actions.*

- When Joe “gets the girl,” he typically continues stalking – especially if he’s suspicious for any reason. For example, in this season, he goes through joint financial accounts to see if Love is hiding any charges indicating an affair with Theo, and in the past, he followed Beck and Candace even after being in committed relationships with them.
- Joe stalks Natalie, Marianne, and Ryan. He also gathers information about Gil, Matthew, and other neighbors.
- Joe may say (to himself) that he’s stalking “for love,” but it’s clear that he chooses to stalk again and again and enjoys doing it. There are no external reasons that force him to stalk. He chooses to stalk.
- He stalks (and ultimately murders) Ryan in order to “help” Marianne, imagining himself in a chivalrous and protective role (much as he’s done with difficult ex-partners of his victims in past season). He also stalks and considers sabotaging Matthew to protect himself from any suspicion around Natalie’s murder. He also tells himself he is stalking to protect Henry, his son.

Season 3 of *You* shows Joe up to his old ways – stalking new romantic interest(s) with his favored tactics: surveillance on social media, following in-person, stealing intimate items, breaking into their homes, etc. However, this season also shows a variety of his stalking tactics – some more obvious than others.

Joe’s stalking behaviors this season include:

Joe’s Stalking Behaviors		
Stalking Behavior	Joe Example	Real World
Breaking into Home(s)	Joe breaks into Marianne’s home and hides under her bed when she returns. He also breaks into Ryan’s home to plant drugs in his smoothie mix.	Property invasion and/or trespassing is often part of a stalking case. Stalkers might break into their victim’s home to gather information, approach them, sabotage them, leave some sign they were there (like, leaving a business card on the table so the victim knows that the stalker was there), plant cameras or recording devices, or to otherwise scare their victims.
Sabotage	Though ultimately unsuccessful, Joe tries to get Ryan re-addicted by sneaking drugs into Ryan’s daily smoothie.	Stalkers may learn – and then exploit – victim vulnerabilities in order to sabotage them. Stalkers often use specific tactics that are very personal to the victim. For example, a stalker who knows the victim is a recovering alcoholic might fill the fridge with alcohol.
Property Damage	Joe slashes Ryan’s tires.	Stalking often include property crimes like vandalism and other types of property damage. This can be scary as well as sabotage the victim, as victims will then need to spend their time and money on repairing/replacing items.
Collecting Items	Joe takes Natalie’s used Starbucks sleeve, underwear, and bloody scarf, and keeps a private box of her items.	Stalkers sometimes steal from victims and/or go through their trash.
Using Social Media/Public Information	Joe and Love look up their neighbors through search engines and social media websites to gain information	Many stalkers use information that is publicly available online to learn more about their victims. Victims may choose to share information on social media profiles, blogs, or elsewhere. Even without social media, public data (collected from property records, voting registration, and other means) includes identifying information about most Americans.

	about them, their careers, and their personalities.	
Following In-Person	At different points, Joe follows Natalie, Ryan, and Marianne in his car and on foot throughout the season.	Following and showing up are common stalker tactics.
Impersonation	Joe pretends to be Natalie in order to avoid suspicion after her murder – he dresses like her and drives away in her car as well as sends messages from her phone indicating that she’s going to see a property. He also forges letters from Gil and Love after they die.	Stalkers often impersonate their victims – particularly through social media, spoof calls, or dating websites – in order to spread rumors/misinformation and discredit their victims.
Stalking Those Close to Victim	Joe begins stalking Ryan, Marianne’s ex-husband. He researches him online, follows him in-person, plants drugs, slashes his tires, and kills him.	Known as “target dispersion,” many stalkers begin to stalk people close to their primary victim. New romantic partners, family, friends, colleagues, and others are common targets.
Murder	Joe kills Ryan and Love.	Stalking is a significant predictor of homicide. Stalking cases may escalate to violence and/or murder. In fact, stalking increases the risk of intimate partner homicide by three times.

PART 2



While Joe has grown jaded and critical of Love, Theo is sweet, smitten with Love, and seems like an altruistic alternative to Joe. But is he?

- Theo is young, a little awkward, and does not appear threatening or aggressive. Would Love feel flattered by this kind of attention from any stranger? Why or why not?
- Did you find yourself “rooting for” Theo at any point? If so, why? How was this character presented?
- Later in the season, Love is more receptive to Theo, but in their first interaction she is consistently discouraging. He offers to help with groceries, she says no, and he grabs a bag anyways. He comments on her “bangin’ body” after she tells him she’s married with a baby. Are there any red flags with Theo early on? At what point would you become concerned if someone treated you or a friend like that?
- Later in the season, Theo holds up a boom box outside of Love’s home to pressure her into speaking with him (directly referencing Lloyd Dobbler in “High Fidelity”). When she tells him to stop, he defends himself, saying “Thought that

would get your attention... this sh*t's romantic as f*ck... According to all the rom-coms, this is how the guy gets the girl.” (Season 3, Episode 6). Stalking has been shown as romantic in movies, TV shows, and songs for a long time. How does stalking behavior relate to our culture’s concepts of love? How does (or did) Joe embody these ideals to Love? How did he change?

- When does behavior cross the line from romantic pursuit that is flattering to stalking that is scary? Would everyone draw the same line? Why or why not?

Sample Discussion Points:

- *It’s a romantic fantasy to think that someone might immediately see the real us and fall in love instantly – it’s exciting to feel like someone sees us and thinks we’re special, attractive, and desirable.*
- *While people can certainly be attracted and/or interested in someone from an early stage, fixation after one meeting is not normal or healthy.*
- *In real life, most stalkers are not people we want attention from. They are usually ex-partners or acquaintances who are trying to scare their victims.*
- *This kind of testing/pushing boundaries can be an early sign of control issues, as the person is ignoring your boundaries and acting like they know what you need or want better than you do.*
- *If someone ignores your stated needs and wants in early interactions, it is likely they will continue to do so.*
- *Like Joe, Theo is idealizing a perfect version of Love in his mind based on limited information. When Joe learns more about Love, he feels trapped, resentful, and disgusted.*
- *Theo’s behavior, idealizing Love, is quite similar to early Joe’s. Once he really “knows” Love, his control might become more smothering, aggressive, and/or violent.*
- *The Theo-Love storyline re-enforces a harmful narrative echoed in many romantic movies, in which women are secretly flattered by unsolicited male attention. In real life, women are often afraid of unwanted advances, suffer from street harassment, and feel pressured to act “nice” to avoid further violence or harassment.*
- *While it can be normal to have an intense crush or interest in someone, Theo literally flunking out of college because of his obsessive thoughts about Love is not healthy, normal, or flattering. If a desired or actual relationship is ruining your whole life, you should seek help.*
- *Many romantic comedies portray stalking behaviors – like showing up, sending gifts, constant contact, and general persistence no matter what the woman says she wants – as romantic and flattering. This creates a “fantasy” version of stalking, where the protagonist is very sweet and well-intentioned.*
- *In real life, stalkers are usually people that the victim wants nothing to do with that invade their lives.*

What stalking behaviors does Theo engage in? Here are a few examples.

Theo’s Stalking Behaviors		
Stalking Behavior	Theo Example	Real World

Showing Up	Theo appears at the hospital when Henry is sick – it’s unclear how he knew where Love was. In a separate incident, he rings the doorbell to Love’s house and makes up an obvious excuse about street cleaning to see her.	Showing up in multiple locations is a common stalker tactic. Many stalkers invade their victims’ lives by showing up at their homes, workplaces, gyms, social events, or anywhere the victim frequents.
Staring/Watching	Theo stares at Love at the vigil for Natalie. He also repeatedly stares at her window.	Surveillance is often part of a stalking case, and many stalkers watch their victims (in person or through technology). Simply staring at someone in a crowd can be unsettling.
Unwanted Contact (despite lack of response from the victim)	Love stops responding to Theo, and so he shows up with the boom box and says, “I don’t know what to do, you’re ignoring me.”	Stalkers contact their victims again and again, often across different platforms (for example, phone calls, text messages, social media platforms, applications, and in-person). Stalkers are aware that their victims do not want to talk to them and continue to persist regardless.
Using Guilt/Threats of Self Harm	While Theo doesn’t explicitly threaten self-harm, his drinking is clearly dangerous and he reaches out to Love to send him Ubers to get home safely. This makes Love feel responsible for his safety and obligated to pay attention to him lest he end up hurt.	Many stalkers threaten to hurt themselves if the victim doesn’t do something they want – like pick up the phone, show up, or talk to them. This makes victims feel they can’t cease contact or it’ll be their fault that the stalker ends up in danger.
Obsessive Thoughts	Theo tells Love he is flunking out of college because he can’t stop thinking about her.	Stalkers may jeopardize their own careers to engage in stalking behaviors.
Relocating to be Closer to Victim	Theo leaves college to return to his father’s house, where he can be closer to Love.	Some stalkers move to be closer to their victims. Many victims relocate to get away from their stalkers (although Love doesn’t). Stalkers often look for and find victims to continue stalking.
Grand and Public Gestures	Theo holds the boom box outside of Love’s home and plays a loud song. When she tells him to stop, he says “I thought that would get your attention” since she hasn’t been responding.	When victims aren’t responding to a stalker’s contact, stalkers often escalate their behaviors, sometimes to more public and embarrassing acts to pressure them to respond. Unwanted grand gestures can be humiliating, invasive, and create social and immediate pressure.

PART 3



When the town mobilizes to find Natalie, Marianne comments on “missing white woman syndrome” – the disproportionate amount of attention given locally and nationally when white women go missing, especially if they are rich and/or traditionally attractive.

- When you think of a domestic violence or stalking victim, what kind of person comes to mind? Is there a race, gender, physical type, age, or other characteristics that you associate with the word “victim”?
- The first stalking law in the country was passed in California after Rebecca Schaeffer – a young, attractive, white actress – was murdered by a celebrity stalker in Hollywood in 1989. How might her status have impacted the reactions?
 - What happens when a victim does *not* match that image? How that might impact our level of concern, believing them, and/or sympathies?
 - How might the community reaction be different if Marianne went missing? What are signs in the show that she is seen as less valuable than Natalie?
- When Joe is first stalking Marianne, he sees her criminal record and drug history and is disgusted. Throughout the season, we learn that Ryan (her ex-husband) has sabotaged her in many ways. Regardless – even if Marianne was still a drug-addicted criminal – would this make her less of a stalking victim? Do victims have to be “good people” with perfect records in order to be victims of stalking?

Ryan, Marianne’s ex-husband, stalks her in order to gather information, intimidate her, and affect the custody hearing. Marianne comments, “Everyone believes him, everyone takes his word over mine – because, who am I?”

- On average, intimate partner stalkers are the most dangerous stalkers because of their access to and information about their victims. How does Ryan leverage his past relationship to harm Marianne?
- How does Ryan use his privilege to harm Marianne?
- Does Joe understand how their races affect Ryan and Marianne’s relationship(s) and positioning in the community?

Sample discussion points:

- *Ryan has intimate photos of Marianne from their relationship, which he saves and then sends to all of her contacts in order to humiliate her.*
- *Ryan uses their child, Juliette, to get information about Marianne – Marianne is afraid of what Juliette might tell Ryan. Stalking through other people is a common stalking tactic, especially joint children.*
- *Marianne tells Joe that she has no friends because of Ryan. Isolating a victim, spreading rumors, and humiliating her were likely part of their relationship.*
- *Ryan is a white man who gets the “benefit of the doubt” and knows the judge. Marianne is a Black woman who is not believed and seen as “a junkie” even though both she and Ryan had the same drug issues.*

- *Joe, as a white man, does not understand how Marianne’s identity as a Black woman affects how others view her as a victim (or not). He is surprised and outraged when he realizes the system is unfair after her custody hearing, while Marianne saw it coming.*

What stalking behaviors does Ryan engage in? Here are a few examples.

Ryan’s Stalking Behaviors		
Stalking Behavior	Ryan Example	Real World
Showing Up	Ryan shows up at the library multiple times, “just dropping in” after hours.	Stalkers often show up where victims work, live, shop, exercise, pray, and spend time. Stalkers also often contact their victim’s coworkers to insert themselves into their victims’ lives.
Proxy Stalking (using third parties to gather information)	Ryan learns from Juliette that Marianne spent the day with Joe. Marianne is afraid of what her daughter will tell Ryan.	Stalking through other people – also known as proxy stalking – is a common stalker strategy. In cases of joint custody, stalkers may pressure their children to give them information about the other parent.
Nonconsensual Distribution of Intimate Images	Ryan e-mails intimate/nude images of Marianne without her consent to all of her contacts – including the children’s book editor. She is mortified.	The nonconsensual distribution of intimate images – also known as “revenge porn” – is a tactic that many offenders use to embarrass, scare, and discredit their victims. The photos may have been taken consensually in the past, been taken under a power and control dynamic, or be entirely fake. Regardless, releasing intimate photos (or threatening to do so) can be very scary for victims.
Sending e-mails anonymously	When Ryan shares Marianne’s pictures, he does so from an anonymous e-mail address – but she knows it’s him, because he’s the only one who had the photos.	Stalkers often hide their identity to make it harder to “prove” it was them. They might create new e-mail addresses, create fake profiles, use spoofing services, hide their phone numbers, or otherwise disguise their identities. While the victim knows who the offender is, this can make it harder to prove.
Hacking into Accounts	Though we don’t know exactly how Ryan did so, the fact that he sends the photos to all of Marianne’s contacts – including new ones made after their relationship ended, like the book editor – indicates that he somehow accessed her personal e-mail account.	Stalkers might guess passwords, reset accounts using answers to security questions, access accounts once shared consensually, or otherwise hack into their victims’ online accounts. From there, they can gather information about the victim and/or impersonate them.
Public Appearances	Ryan is the one to drop off the big check at the library at the benefit event.	Showing up at public gatherings puts social pressure on victims to interact with and be gracious to their stalkers. Stalkers often show up at public venues or events where they know the victim will be and then claim they were there for another purpose.

Spreading Rumors and/or Bringing	Marianne mentions that Ryan has accused her of being	Spreading rumors and/or actually making the victim seem like the offender using the court system is a very common stalker tactic.
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Actual Charges Against Victim	abusive and claimed that she keyed his car when that didn't happen.	Stalkers often spread lies about their victims to interfere with their lives and make others less likely to believe them.
Sabotage	Marienne tells Joe that Ryan gave her the wrong address for a custody visit and then accused her of not showing up.	From slashing tires to spreading rumors to otherwise setting their victims up to fail, stalkers frequently sabotage their victims.

PART 4



Surveillance is a major theme this season. Matthew, Natalie's husband, accesses existing cameras all over town to try to piece together what happened to his wife. Community members also find it normal to wear rings that track personal information (including real time GPS information) that is shared with their families.

While we don't get to see very much of Natalie and Matthew's relationship before Natalie dies, her conversation with Joe about the surveillance in the home is telling.

- When Natalie invites Joe over in the first episode, she tells Joe there is "no privacy in Madre Linda, including here" and shows Joe her phone, which displays feeds from "all the cameras in [her] house." She disables them but notes "that's not really privacy, Matthew will see I turned them off and wonder why." She adds "It's so weird, I don't remember putting on a leash... it just kind of slipped around my neck at some point." (Season 3, Episode 1)
- How do you think the decision was made to put these cameras all over the home? Do you think it was a joint decision between Matthew and Natalie? Does it matter?
- When you're in a relationship with someone, do they have the right to know what you're doing all the time? How does/should trust play a role?
- How can stalking make a relationship feel like "a leash"?
- While the rings that members of the Madre Linda community wear are fictional, what are some commonly used devices/applications that include personal information and/or GPS information? How could these be misused?

Sample discussion points:

- *Being in a relationship – even married and sharing a home – does not mean your partner is entitled to constantly watch you.*
- *While some couples may mutually decide to share information (like passwords, security cameras, joint accounts), this should be a mutual decision that is not rooted in trying to "catch someone" doing something wrong. The lack of trust here creates a power imbalance in which Natalie feels she is "on a leash."*
- *Stalking can happen before, during, and/or after a relationship. During a relationship, behaviors like constant contact, surveillance, showing up, and asking others about you can be emotional abuse, digital abuse, and stalking.*

- Many commonly used devices and applications monitor GPS and other personal information, including smart phones, FitBits, Apple Watches, and a variety of other tools. If the wrong person gets access to these devices (which can usually be accessed remotely), they can learn a lot about their victims and/or more easily find their location(s).

PART 5



At the very end of the season, Marianne and her daughter have relocated. Joe’s internal monologue says, “I looked for you, but you and Juliette were already gone. Phone number changed, no forwarding address. The end of our story remains unwritten... but I have to believe our paths are destined to cross again... All I know, mon amour, is I’ll search the world if I have to. I will find you.” Then, the camera pulls back to reveal that he is in Paris, where Marianne is from.

Joe’s inner monologues have portrayed his stalking as romantic from the first episode of the first season to the end of this third season. In reality, stalking is anything but.

- Does Joe’s promise to find Marianne sound like a romantic declaration or a threat?
- Does Marianne want Joe to find her? Does Joe consider what she wants?
- How is Marianne different from Candace, Beck, and/or Love? If Joe finds her, is there anything she can do – or not do – to avoid the same fate?
- Who is responsible for Joe’s decisions to stalk, harm, and kill? How does he justify his own behavior(s)?
- Has Joe learned, changed, or evolved over the seasons? How or how not?

Sample discussion points:

- *Joe occasionally notes “I’ve made mistakes,” but never seems to feel too badly about his trail of violence and murder. There’s a sense that things had to work out in these ways, when in fact, he puts these events into motion.*
- *It does not seem that Joe has positively changed or evolved; he still stalks and murders, does not really care about what his romantic pursuits want, and eschews all responsibility for his actions.*
- *Marianne has relocated, changed all of her contact information, and has not reached out to Joe. There is no reason to think that she wants to continue her relationship with him.*
- *Joe does not respect Marianne’s boundaries or her departure. He prioritizes his own wants/needs over hers and assumes that she would want to reconnect despite her leaving no indication of this. In fact, since she did not reach out to him in any way, he should assume she does not want to have anything to do with him.*
- *There is no reason to think that Marianne’s fate will be different. When Candace tried to leave Joe, he abducts her and (accidentally?) buries her alive. When Beck was horrified by Joe’s behaviors but promised to keep quiet, he killed her. When Love actually embraced Joe’s dark and criminal side and married him, he ended up killing her, too. Though Joe consistently blames other people, he is the common denominator.*

Stalking is a pattern of behavior directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear or emotional distress. In other words, anything that's scary, not the first thing that's happened, and happening to the same person again could be stalking.

- Can you remember *all* the characters who stalk each other in Season 3? Remember, stalking can happen before, during, and/or after a relationship – and the relationships don't have to be romantic in nature. Try to list them all.
 - Joe stalks his romantic interests – Natalie and, later, Marianne.
 - Theo stalks Love – to win her affections.
 - Matthew's surveillance – of the town and of his wife, Natalie, in the home.
 - Ryan stalks his ex-wife, Marianne – to disrupt the custody hearing(s).
 - Joe stalks Ryan – to sabotage Ryan and help Marianne.
- When watching the show, did you identify all of these situations as stalking? Were some more obvious than others?
- Did any of these situations seem “worse” or “better” to you? Why or why not?
- How do the characters justify their stalking behaviors?

Sample discussion points:

- *We may be more likely to identify Joe's behaviors as stalking because they are more obvious and what we've come to expect from previous seasons.*
- *Theo's stalking is shown as more romantic and altruistic, and what we have come to expect and accept from romantic movies.*
- *When Joe stalks Ryan, this can be seen as heroic or chivalrous because he is trying to help Marianne. Joe is engaging in “target dispersion,” where he has his primary stalking target (Marianne) and then expands to someone else in the victim's life (her ex-husband). Stalking a romantic interest's ex-partner (whether they are cruel like Ryan or perfectly nice) is a common example of target dispersion.*
- *Stalkers often justify their stalking behaviors in different ways – to themselves or others. The truth is that stalking is not romantic, chivalrous, charming, or sweet – it is an intentional pattern of behavior in which stalkers are trying to control and scare their victims.*
- *While intimate partner stalking makes up about half of stalking cases, stalkers may also be acquaintances, family members, people of authority (like supervisors), or strangers.*
- *It's important to recognize the diversity of stalking behavior(s) and call it out in every situation.*

Thank you for discussing Season 3 of *You!* To learn more about stalking, visit StalkingAwareness.org.