

Is That a Threat? Distinguishing Danger from Drama

Wendy Patrick, JD, MDiv, PhD

Level

Intermediate

Room

Track

Legal

CE

CPA/BBS/CJER

Bio

Wendy Patrick, JD, MDiv, PhD is a career prosecutor, presented by the Chief Justice of the California Supreme Court with the California Public Lawyer of the Year award from the State Bar's Public Law Section, named as one of the 2024 Top Professional Responsibility Lawyers by the State Bar of California, and honored with the 2023 Instructor of the Year Award by the California District Attorneys Association. She has completed over 165 trials, ranging from hate crimes to domestic violence, to first-degree murder.

Within the threat assessment arena, Wendy specializes in cutting-edge topics relating to threat assessment and management, including how to effectively use artificial in threat assessment, how to distinguish danger from drama, practical tips to perceiving subtle red flags that make seemingly "safe" individuals highly dangerous, and legal developments including recent United States Supreme Court decisions.

As a career prosecutor, Wendy has handled a steady stream of threat assessment cases throughout her career, involving threats against public figures, politicians, judges, and other professionals, and also upon vulnerable victims. She is currently the Team Leader of the California Senate Bill 384 project within her office, using threat assessment tools, techniques, and analysis to decide whether petitioners are suitable to be removed from the California sex offender registry.

Wendy is a past president of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals (ATAP) Pacific Southwest Chapter, former Sergeant of Arms of the ATAP national board, and is an ATAP Certified Threat Manager.

On a personal note, Wendy holds a purple belt in Shorin-Ryu karate, is a concert violinist with the Ja Jolla Symphony, and plays the electric violin professionally with a rock band.

Narrative

The subject's message is vague, but ominous: "I'm coming for her." But is that enough to pursue a case? Do you warn the victim? This program will discuss the types of surrounding circumstances that will enable you to make that type of decision. Incorporating criminal law, psychological research, and case examples, this program will discuss modern methods of investigating and utilizing circumstantial evidence, to distinguish danger from drama. This program will cover all of the applicable penal code sections in analyzing whether the conduct rises to the level of criminal culpability, and exploring other alternative methods of managing threatening behavior.

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Learning Objectives

1. Explain how to determine if a statement is criminal, civil, or just concerning
2. Analyze potentially threatening conduct through the lens of applicable laws to decide if the behavior is legally actionable
3. Discuss three methods of determining what someone is like on a consistent basis in order to become aware of deviations from the norm, and triggering circumstances
4. Analyze three options of working with victims of threats/concerning behavior depending on the relationship, message specificity, behavior, and other factors