

# **American Idol Finalist Jessica Sierra Moves on after Stalking Nightmare – Stalking Resource Center Partners with Jessica to Help Raise Awareness through Education Campaign**

## ***Jessica to Appear on American Idol and American Idol Extra in Los Angeles***

Washington, DC/March 28, 2005 – The Stalking Resource Center of the National Center for Victims of Crime today announced its partnership with American Idol finalist Jessica Sierra on a national stalking public awareness campaign.

After finishing as a top-ten finalist on last season's American Idol, Jessica Sierra was stalked by a fan who has since been arrested and is now in jail awaiting trial. The suspect allegedly followed Jessica around the country, showed up at her family's home, and left her and her grandmother dozens of voicemails. The stalker, who was previously arrested for two violent crimes, misrepresented himself as a producer to obtain Jessica's contact information, told her he believed she was going to have his baby some day, bought a house in Nashville to be closer to her, and repeatedly told her, "I love you" and "if I can't have you, nobody can."

Jessica is partnering with the Stalking Resource Center, a program of the National Center for Victims of Crime, to help educate Americans about the risks of and responses to stalking. She will lead a national public awareness campaign that will feature her image on thousands of posters to be distributed to high schools, college campuses, and police departments. The campaign also will provide information and resources to stalking victims through a new web page available at [www.nevc.org](http://www.nevc.org). "We applaud Jessica for transforming the trauma of being stalked into an opportunity to reach out to other victims," said Mary Lou Leary, executive director of the National Center for Victims of Crime. "We're proud to be her partner."

Stalking is a serious crime that can happen to anyone-not just celebrities. Seventy-seven percent of female stalking victims are stalked by someone they know.<sup>1</sup> According to a new study, being stalked by someone you know is the most dangerous category of stalking with the highest rate of threats and assaults.<sup>2</sup> More than one million people are stalked each year in the United States, and 1 out of every 12 women will be stalked in their lifetime.

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<sup>1</sup> Patricia Tjaden and Nancy Thoennes, Stalking in America: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey, U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, April 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Kris Mohandie, The RECON Typology of Stalking: Reliability and Validity Based Upon a Large Sample of North American Stalkers, 2005.

The Stalking Resource Center, which is funded by the U.S. Justice Department's Office on Violence Against Women, gives stalking victims a place to turn for support and comprehensive information about services and programs in their communities.

This week, Jessica Sierra will be in Los Angeles to appear on American Idol and American Idol Extra, and speak with other media about her stalking public awareness campaign. For more information about this campaign, visit [www.ncvc.org](http://www.ncvc.org). Stalking victims may also call the National Center's Helpline at 1-800-FYI-CALL to receive support, information about victim rights, assistance with obtaining victim compensation, or a referral to local services or attorneys.