



UNDERCOVER TOUR PRO JEEPERS **CREEPERS**

THE LPGA TOUR GOES TO GREAT LENGTHS TO KEEP US SAFE

h, it can get strange out here. We're female athletes performing for an audience that's at times largely male and older. We get some creepers, and I suppose we always will, which is sad, but the fact is we probably don't know one-tenth of all that goes on.

The LPGA Tour does a fantastic job of making us feel safe.

If a fan says or does something that makes me feel threatened or uncomfortable, some teeny provocation, I notify an official and it's handled right away.

Our security team are amazing. One guy headed the detail on two presidential-election campaigns.

Obviously the Tour has it digitised, but there exists – I've seen it – a giant three-ring binder full of photographs of all the afflicted souls who have been escorted off tournament premises.

To look at it is to take a weird walk down humanity, especially if you know some of the stories.

Natalie Gulbis, no surprise, has had to put up with more than anyone can imagine: the same guy or even guys, popping up in the gallery on every continent, following her into restaurants, waiting in hotel lobbies and parking lots.

I don't know what to say about these people, other than they're delusional and have forgotten how to behave in society.

And by the way, say whatever you want about Natalie. A lot of ignorant and jealous women begrudge the fame and success she's had with an average playing record.

So what if she's amazingly beautiful and smart and takes advantage of it? With her pinky finger, she's done more to advance women's golf than just about anyone in the locker room here today.

What's hard is identifying the line between

stalker and enthusiastic fan. I often feel guilty when a suspicious thought crosses my mind.

If a man chooses to paint my name on his forehead and/or wear a T-shirt with my image, my first instinct should be gratitude.

All in, LPGA Tour supporters are among the most fun and knowledgeable in golf. Some of my best friends, people with whom I keep in touch regularly, are men I've met playing in our proams.

Maybe my problem is, I read too many cheap crime novels.

WHAT'S HARD IS IDENTIFYING THE LINE BETWEEN STALKER AND ENTHUSIASTIC FAN.

Here's an episode we had this year leading up to a tournament. Christina Kim receives a multiple-page email about another player that begins, "I am not a stalker, however..."

The author then goes on a tirade about the injustice of his favourite player not being given an exemption in "her farewell season".

Given what she's done to grow golf, he argues that she and Tiger Woods are the two most important individuals in the history of the game.

He includes a photograph of himself wearing a unique hat and writes, "If you need to find me, it

won't be hard."

Harmless, or someone who keeps a bag of human toes in the fridge? Probably the former, but Christina did what I would've done and immediately forwarded the e-mail to our commissioner.

In the third round, the guy surfaces, and our security team, wearing plainclothes, approaches him.

They just kind of say, "Hey, what's up? Just wanted to let you know that we're here and that you're our person of interest."

Right away the guy starts shaking uncontrollably and crying, saying, "I didn't do anything! I didn't do anything!"

I don't think they kicked him out but just took him somewhere to calm down.

Afterwards, I hear from the player that she knows the guy, that he's been writing letters to her for years. She's so gracious. I don't want to call this person naïve, but she never sees the bad in people.

If I read "farewell season" from someone like that, I'm inclined to consider the potential and awful other meanings.

I know lots of players who have been "pursued" on social media. The same stranger commenting on her every Instagram picture for months, then suddenly introducing himself at a tournament.

I can see how that behaviour is becoming less taboo as our world grows more connected, but it will always raise my guard.

— with Max Adler

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