

Zara investigates another current and important topic

Women bravely share their experiences with Zara

ZARA:

'This is happening to women right now'

Zara McDermott tackles stalking in her brand-new BBC documentary

Since rising to fame on *Love Island* in 2018, Zara McDermott has had quite the career. She's made a name for herself in the world of documentaries, spending the last several years tackling hard-hitting subjects, including rape culture and revenge porn. In her latest project, the star, 28, sits down with real women to discuss their experiences of being stalked, all while the situation unfolds in real time...

What made you want to make this show?

I wanted to create something that doesn't sensationalise and glamorise the issue. The biggest difference with our show is that this is happening in real time. This isn't a retrospective storytelling piece, this is

happening to these women right now. For me, this documentary is about awareness of what support is out there – but also what support isn't, and what needs to be created.

Do you cover different kinds of stalking?

Yes, we do. We include ex-partners as well as stranger stalking, because that can be extremely haunting. Stranger-on-stranger stalking is a concept that is really difficult to get your head around. The question I still have today is how can a stranger become so fixated towards someone without knowing anything about them?

What were some of the biggest challenges while filming?

I'm quite an empath, and I feel

those feelings a lot. My job is to live it with them and I feel honoured to be there – but that doesn't mean that it doesn't get heavy. I want to be there for the women, and that's why I stay in touch with them after the show. It's so important to me that they always feel like they've got my support.

How did you look after yourself?

I'm lucky to be very close to the people that I work with, so we have a group chat and always make time to debrief. I'm also lucky that I have an amazing family.

Being in the public eye, have you experienced similar things online?

Don't get me wrong, if you wrote out some of the things I've received in my time, I'm

sure I'd have ticked quite a few boxes for being harassed online! But for me, it's very different to what the women in the programme are experiencing. I think some of the online harassment I get comes with the territory of being in the public eye.

Are there other documentary topics you would like to do?

I love the idea of having a strong base of what I call legacy films, which are around topics that are current and important – something that can be shown in schools. I'd really love to explore more in the domestic abuse space. I recently started working as an ambassador for Refuge, so I think that could be a really good next step.

TO CATCH A STALKER, TUESDAY 1 JULY, BBC3