

# Honor killing – coming to a neighborhood near you

Rochel Sylvetsky writes in [convicted this summer](#) by a Harris County, Texas jury for the “honor killings” of his daughter’s husband, 28-year-old Coty Beavers, and her close friend, Gelareh Bagherzadeh, 30, in two separate shootings in 2012.

Irsan had planned to commit another three murders, intending to kill everyone who helped his daughter leave home to live with the man of her own choice – that is, not someone her father alone decided she was to marry. From the victim’s name, it doesn’t seem he was Muslim, another strike against his continuing to remain alive after taking a female Muslim partner.

Several women in the household, including Irsan’s wife and another daughter, apparently helped him carry out his murderous plans.

Prosecutors also presented evidence that Irsan had killed another son-in-law nearly two decades ago.

Over 17,000 homicides were committed in the US in 2017 according to statistics released by the FBI last September. So what difference does it make if another murderer is tried and sentenced to death?

There is a vast difference. Murders can occur for many reasons, and a murder victim is just as dead no matter what the reason, but this was a case of honor killing, meaning that the murderer was continuing a tradition prevalent throughout the Islamic world – where it does not raise eyebrows and is often considered to be justified homicide.

To quote Human Rights Watch: “Honor killings are acts of vengeance, usually death, committed by male family members

against female family members, who are held to have brought dishonor upon the family. A woman can be targeted by (individuals within) her family for a variety of reasons, including: refusing to enter into an arranged marriage, being the victim of a sexual assault, seeking a divorce—even from an abusive husband—or (allegedly) committing adultery. The mere perception that a woman has behaved in a way that “dishonors” her family is sufficient to trigger an attack on her life.”

Wikipedia writes: “Methods of killing include stoning, stabbing, beating, burning, beheading, hanging, throat slashing, lethal acid attacks, shooting and strangulation...sometimes performed in public to warn other individuals...”

To quote Amnesty International: “The regime of honor is unforgiving: women on whom suspicion has fallen are not given an opportunity to defend themselves, and family members have no socially acceptable alternative but to remove the stain on their honor by attacking the woman.”

Has America unwittingly imported this shocking license to murder? Can this actually be happening in the United States? The answer, unfortunately, is that an average of 20 honor killings a year now take place in the US, according to the Justice Department. While honor killing also exists in Hindu society and certain others, the murders in the US have been perpetrated by Muslim immigrants.

[“A Family Conspiracy: Honor Killing”](#), published this year, brings the reader the 99 varied articles she wrote from 2004 to 2017 for various media (including *Arutz Sheva*) attesting to her many years of monitoring and careful research, knowledge and prescience – or shall we say prophecy – on the subject. It is a shocking read for anyone imbued with the values of western culture, especially the attitude towards women that sees them as equal human beings, not as mere subjugated chattel.

There is no denial that there is domestic violence in the Western world, far too much of it and it is often ignored with tragic results. The difference, says Prof. Chesler, is the way it is judged. In Islam, honor killings are acceptable, not an aberration. In addition, honor killing is accompanied by torture and overkill, even decapitating.

At the start of the book, she writes: There is no way to 'measure' the incidence of hidden crimes such as incest or honor killing, but to get a picture of the tip of the iceberg, in 2010, 800 women were killed for honor in Pakistan...roughly 900 reported honor killings in northern India alone... 81% of the younger victims, average age 17, were killed by their families of origin" and horrifically often, by other women.

Sometimes she reports, the women who have "strayed" – read the book to find out that straying is a very broad term including talking to another man – are allowed to repent by committing forced suicide, turning themselves into human bombers for terrorist objectives – and sometimes they have children at their side when this happens. Sometimes they have not even done the minor things that make them deserving of death in the family's eyes, in some regions they are punished for being raped through no fault of their own.

There has been much debate on whether honor killing is part of Islam or not. In a news article written by Bryan Rogers in the *Houston Chronicle* at the time of the Irzan sentencing, Amy Logan, CEO of Gender Innovation who has worked with the UN and others to empower women, asserted that it is not. According to Logan, "Islam itself does not condone honor killing, " but no proof of that statement appears in the news article where she is quoted.

Prof. Chesler addresses the question squarely. Anyone who leaves Islam is subject to the death penalty, according to the Koran, she says. See verse 8:12: "I will cast dread into the hearts of the unbelievers. Strike off their heads, then, and

strike off all of their fingertips.”

Freedom of religion, she states, is a precious American right, but in Islam it is a capital crime. Wanting to marry the man you love – if he was not your father’s choice – is a crime as well. It often carries the death penalty without the need for either judge or jury.

Women who dare to go against Islam’s definition of a woman’s role are disobeying its strictures and the distance from there to honor killing is a short one. And telling the story of honor killings, as this book does, involves descriptions of horrendous punishments where women are helpless to do anything to save themselves. Here and there courageous or lucky women manage to set an example and fight back, she writes. Chesler does not balk at telling these stories (this writer’s editorial constraints force her to balk at bringing them here), reminding us as she does, that honor killing murderers are not psychological misfits, that these crimes are usually well planned.

Even if the claim that this barbaric practice is not really Islamic, but is a carryover from nomadic, tribal, pre-Islamic times, is correct, the end result is the same – and it might be important to bear in mind that Muslims in the Islamic states of the Middle East, mostly artificially created by the West, are still almost totally tribal.

It is what it is:[memorial grove](#) for victims of honor killing world over. Islam, however, says Chesler, is a political religion out to conquer and Islamize the world, so cultural sensitivity is hardly the point. And now we are watching its cultural activities taking place in America, among them positive social and religious programs, but also others – like honor killing.

Saying the above leads to automatically being vilified as an islamophobe, so you won’t see much publicity for the ideas

expressed here – unless that landmark Houston sentencing makes a difference. Wary publishers avoid publishing anything on the issue and the NY Times, for example, blithely ignored the implications of Muslim immigrant behavior towards a family's daughters, writing sympathetically in 2008 that "resolute or fearful [of change], many Muslims turn to home schooling, 40% for their daughters." In the media, Chesler adds, Muslim fathers are often portrayed as loving and their aberrant daughters as mentally ill.