

# Infidelity, betrayal and mariticide — a case report

## Abstract

Infidelity is a violation of a couple's assumed or stated contract regarding emotional and/or sexual exclusivity. Contrary to what most people assume, it is neither rare nor exclusively male behavior. It is one of the most challenging and damaging emotional events in life. It can be debilitating and feel like emotional murder. We present a case of mariticide in which wife betrayed her husband and murdered him with the help of his friends due to her extramarital affairs with husband's friends. The Police recovered a human skeleton from the bushes of hill. The bones were spread at different places along with the clothes. The skeleton was identified with the help of clothes by the father of deceased. After thorough investigation and autopsy, it was clear that his wife had extra marital affairs and she murdered him with the help of her friends. A recent trend in rural India regarding marriage and infidelity will also be discussed in this paper.

**Keywords:** infidelity, betrayal, homicidal injury, ante-mortem

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## Introduction

Homicide is the most serious crime as old as civilization and reported as early as in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Killing of an individual is the highest level of aggression found in all the cultures. Since ages the very reason or motive for these killings has remained the same viz lust for money, women and land. To commit murder, two elements (Mens-rea which means preplanning or afore thought and Actus reus which means the actual execution) should work together to constitute the crime.<sup>2</sup> Infidelity is a violation of a couple's assumed or stated contract regarding emotional and/or sexual exclusivity.<sup>3</sup> Other scholars define infidelity as a violation according to the subjective feeling that one's partner has violated a set of rules or relationship norms. This violation results in feelings of sexual jealousy and rivalry.<sup>4</sup> Infidelity, contrary to what most people assume, is neither rare nor exclusively male behavior. There is currently debate in the field of evolutionary psychology whether an innate, evolved sex difference exists between men and women in response to an act of infidelity; this is often called a "sex difference".<sup>5</sup> Those that posit a sex difference exists state that men are 60% more likely to be disturbed by an act of sexual infidelity (having one's partner engage in sexual relations with another), whereas women are 83% more likely to be disturbed by an act of emotional infidelity (having one's partner fall in love with another).<sup>6</sup> It is one of the most challenging and damaging emotional events in life. The more you trust and feel safe with someone, the more powerful and painful it feels when it happens. It can be debilitating and feel like emotional murder.<sup>7</sup> We encountered a case of homicide in which wife betrayed her husband and murdered him with the help of his friends due to her extramarital affairs with husband's friends. The case in itself isn't unique but the changing trends in infidelity and loosening of social fabric in rural India is surely a newer phenomenon.

## Case report

A human skeleton was recovered from the bushes on the slopes of a hill in the countryside. The bones along clothes were spread at different places. The skeleton was identified with the help of clothes by the father of deceased as his son, who was missing for the last one month. As per his statement, the deceased was married six years ago and worked as laborer. On further investigation by the police it turned out that a month back, he had gone to a marriage along with his wife and friends, but he never returned back. A missing report was

lodged in the local police station. The bones were collected in a sack and brought to the nearest Civil Hospital by the investigating police wherefrom the case was referred to our department for expert post-mortem examination.

## Autopsy findings

The body was in a skeletonized state. The following recovered bones were arranged in anatomical position and examined:

- I. Skull: Right orbit, right facial bones and upper part of maxilla were missing from without showing any blood infiltration at bony ends.
- II. Mandible, both clavicles and both scapula.
- III. Lower six cervical vertebrae, thoracic vertebrae, lumbar vertebrae, sacrum and coccyx.
- IV. Right and left humerus, right and left radius and ulna with some carpal bones attached with the help of tags of soft tissues.
- V. Right and left hip bones.
- VI. Right and left femur, tibia and fibula and some tarsal bones attached with the help of tags of soft tissues.
- VII. Tags of soft tissues were attached over the bones at places. Gnawing effects were present at places. All the internal organs were missing. The available bones were typically male in character Figure 1.



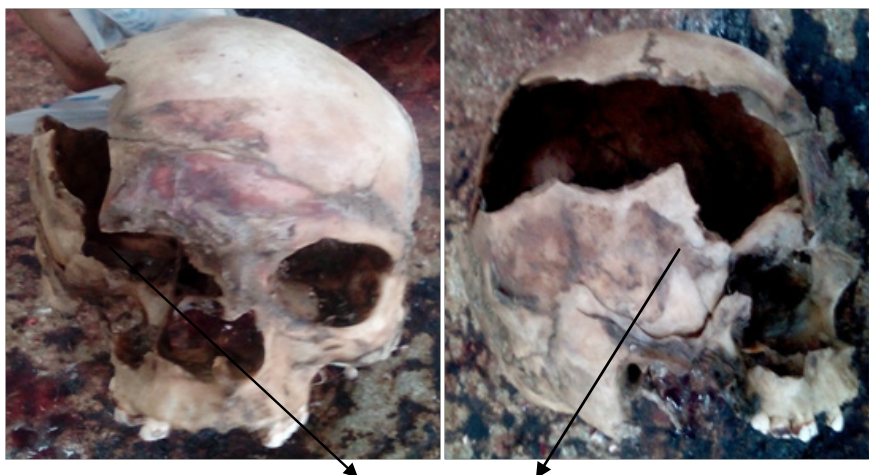
**Figure 1** The body as received at the mortuary laid out in anatomical position.

The following Injuries were noted on the bones:

- I. A fracture defect over the right frontal, partial and occipital region of skull measuring 27×7cm with infiltration of blood into bony trabeculae of fractured segments of bone at places. A linear radiating fracture from anterior part of fractured frontal bone going from right to left over the frontal bone over which peri cranial infiltration of blood was seen.
- II. The left temporal squamosal suture showed infiltration of blood

at its posterior half. Blood infiltration was present over the other sutures at places Figure 2 & 3.

The cause of death in this case was the injuries over the skull which was homicidal in manner. Learning that the case was of a murder, the police found out that the wife of the deceased had extra marital affairs and she had murdered him with the help of her paramour and his aides. All four were arrested and all of them confessed to the crime (Figure 4 & 5).



Figures 2 & 3 The skull fractures, infiltration of blood is visible in the fractured segments



Figures 4 & 5 Showing peri-cra

## Discussion

Head injuries are one of the most effective methods of homicide. The head is a vital organ and the most exposed part of body to receive injuries. Cranio-cerebral injury due to blunt trauma causes more homicidal deaths as compared with blunt trauma injury to any other area of the body. Investigation of a homicidal death can never be complete without a detailed postmortem examination. Detailed analysis and scientific interpretation of autopsy finding is imperative to reconstruct the crime scene.<sup>8</sup> Women and men are now taking an equal-opportunity approach to extramarital affairs. A report out from the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University found that, for the first time in modern history, women are cheating at nearly the same rate as men. Another study, published in the National Opinion Research Center’s 2013 General Social Survey, found that while the percentage of men who admitted to infidelity has held constant over the last two

decades, the percentage of wives who reported having affairs rose almost 40 percent. Gary Spivak, founder of Fidelity Dating, a dating website designed to help users “find a loving non-cheater” typically after being two-timed says that last year membership on the site was largely female. Just one year later, it’s an even 50-50 split.<sup>9</sup> In 2013, a study published in Journal of Marital and Family Therapy revealed that 41 per cent of marriages had one or both spouses admitting to either physical or emotional infidelity. Last year, a survey by Ashley Madison threw up some startling statistics 76 percent of Indian women and 61 per cent of men don’t even consider infidelity as a sin or immoral anymore. Responses were collected from 75,321 respondents 80 per cent being married across ten cities. 81percent of men and 68 percent of women confessed that their affairs had a positive impact on their marriage. More than 80 per cent had had arranged marriages. The average age of those surveyed was 45 for men and 31 for women.<sup>10</sup> In the Indian context; Umesh & Kumar

report a case in which a man killed his newly married wife of three months as he discovered she had a pregnancy of over 12 weeks. He later hanged himself.<sup>11</sup> Mao & Raghuram have reported that increased usage of the Internet has given rise to a new challenge to marriages: that of online infidelity, which is perceived to be as traumatic as actual infidelity. There are no published Indian studies on this issue till date; although evidence from clinical practice shows that this is an emerging problem of concern for mental health professionals, particularly marital and family therapists.<sup>12</sup>

## Conclusion

Though the case report of the homicide as reported here adds nothing new contextually, this case brings to light along with other such cases the increasing phenomenon of infidelity and homicide in Rural India where till now the strong social foundations of marriage and fidelity are being eroded gradually. There has been a steady rise in matricides in areas which were untouched by this occurrence.

## Acknowledgments

None

## Conflicts of interest

The author declares that there are no conflicts of interest.

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