**Crime Of Passion – When Emotions Take Over**

A crime of passion can be harrowing upon the victim. It is not a premeditated crime planned to serve an ulterior motive. It is mostly a result of jealousy or anger that is randomly inflicted upon someone without a second thought.

A crime of passion can be as serious as a homicide, with the perpetrator acting on their sudden rage and impulse.

**Crime Of Passion – A Result of Anger And Jealousy**

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A crime of passion is no innocent accident. Here, passion is not being romantically involved, but overpowering emotions that cloud the rationality and push a person to break the law and commit crimes. Lombroso, the father of criminology, introduced this term, stating that female criminals are more involved in crimes of passion than males. It is understood that ‘passion’ or ‘heat-of-the-moment are the driving factor for crimes like murder and homicide committed by males, especially in the domestic setup or sexual relationships.

Supercop Kiran Bedi explains that such crimes of passion have always been there and prisons are full of men and women who have committed such crimes, like throwing acid on a woman upon being rejected or running someone over with an intention to hurt. It has become an indicator of a deeper malaise in society.

**A crime of passion committed**

Neha was a happy, devoted wife, looking after home and in-laws and maintaining the social status of her husband in the parties where he showcased her. She never thought she would be subjected to a crime of passion. But having no children in 7 years of marriage had taken its toll on their relationship and he resorted to an occasional hit or slap along with his acrimony.

While her husband kept himself busy with tours, Neha tried to find solace in the virtual world, where she met her college friend-cum-crush who happened to be living in the same city. Their chats changed into endless phone conversations and his every compliment embraced her mind for the rest of the day.

Their [online flirting](https://www.bonobology.com/online-flirting/) became more and more intense. Her emotional void made her crave his attention and she considered his demands as her obligation. Unfortunately, one fateful day her husband walked in and found her in flagrante delicto with this guy, grabbed a chopping knife and stabbed Neha.

A crime of passion had been committed. Her parents had urged her to try and work on the marriage despite the abuse, and now this murder was classified as an impulsive crime of passion.

**Examples**

Most of us remember that chilling news from May 2008. Naval officer Emile Jerome Mathew walked into the apartment of his fiancée, Maria Susairaj and killed media executive Neeraj Grover after he found him there.

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Jerome and Maria chopped Grover’s body into pieces and disposed of them through a well-executed plan, carried out almost with military precision. The crime of passion brought a sentence of 10 years for Mathew and 3 for Susairaj.

Another very famous case that India can’t forget was the Nanavati trial, India’s first upper-class gripping tale of love and honor, which was also India’s last trial by jury. Kawas Nanavati was a decorated Indian Naval Officer living in Mumbai with his English wife, Sylvia, and their two children.

She was a perfect daughter-in-law and doting mother. But the prolonged absence of her husband made her vulnerable to the charms of Prem Ahuja. She began an affair and when she spilled the beans about it to Nanavati, he confronted Ahuja and shot him dead with three shots.

The case is still controversial because of the judgment that found him innocent, influenced by morality, patriotism and communal pride.

Jealousy and anger leading to crime

**A matter of controlling your impulses**

The most common reasons for a crime of passion stems from [jealousy,](https://www.bonobology.com/jealousy-in-relationships/" \t "_blank) revenge, fear and anger. An emotionally charged situation can push a law abiding individual, an almost perfect family man, to act impulsively, ignoring any rationality.

A colleague said, “We are all susceptible to crossing the threshold of extreme anger in a split second, and this decides what would happen next and how we choose to react. Someone not having any history of hitting anyone, I doubt would go to that extreme.”

Exactly, the point needed to be understood while convicting in such cases. It is an act of temporary insanity depending upon the circumstances and it becomes difficult to prove in court as murder or manslaughter.

The theory of control states that such an act is a problem of “impulse control”, which is taken for granted as naturally occurring in everyone, but criminals have difficulty with it. The cause could be as simple as not being able to [survive betrayal in a relationship](https://www.bonobology.com/survive-betrayal-relationship/" \t "_blank).

It is this split second that differentiates criminal minds from the rest. Knowing right from wrong is most important in the legal world. Not all such situations can lead to disappointments, frustration and crime. A person who commits a “crime of passion” is bound to have resorted to such extreme measures in response to other disturbing and threatening situations, at least in his thinking or fantasies.

**The Legal Definition Of Crime Of Passion**

The Indian Penal Code defines a sudden passion as a state of mind:

* Caused by and arising out of a provocation with the victim
* Occurring in the midst of a conflict and not based on a previous conflict.

This is one of the mitigating factors that the legal system recognizes to commute a murder sentence to voluntary manslaughter. The throes of passion are a common excuse to kill or escape the ‘premeditation’ charges claiming temporary insanity.

**Related Reading:**[The dark side of close relationships](https://www.bonobology.com/the-dark-side-of-close-relationships/)

IPC Section 300, which defines murder, states four ‘exceptions’ when a ‘culpable homicide cannot be a murder’, and in exception no. 4 it says that if it is committed without premeditation in the heat of passion upon a sudden quarrel and without offenders having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner not depending on which party gave provocation of the first assault, the culpable homicide is not a murder. But the question is whether the sentence given to such people has been properly investigated.

**These signs can indicate a propensity for crimes of passion**

Profiling of the offender becomes crucial here to give more insight in such cases. This includes:

* History of abuse, assault or conflict between the offender and the victim,
* Previous acts of violence that may be hushed up by the family
* History of personal and professional functioning that can dispel the illusion of such violence as foreign or new to the character of the person involved
* History of anger and threats as a habitual response towards conflicts of life
* Overindulgence in sex, alcohol or food.

In the heat of passion, will you fail to control the impulse or are you still wondering? We may never know fully what drives our behavior, but it is crucial to distinguish reality from fantasy and make this society a sane place to live.