

# The Difference Between Intentional Homicide and Murder in the First Degree: A Woman

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**I**t is a classical scenario of money and power, still it is an ordinary crime. He did not use the simulation of illusions, nor did he play tricks to suggest psychological disturbances. He did not manufacture a scheme or a conspiracy. But according to the investigation, he simply shot her in the head while she lay next to him in bed and then claimed that she had committed suicide.

The couple was young and wealthy. A significant portion of their extravagant lifestyle was financed by her filthy rich father, who spoiled her lavishly. Before and after marriage, her father provided for her wardrobe, repeated plastic surgery for her nose and teeth, her annual travels and so on. When the husband commented

on her expenditure, she was known to snap back by saying that since it was not his money, he had nothing to complain about; and at other times, according to the two maids in the estate, she would threaten that she made him what he was and she could easily destroy him.

Mind you, he was not exactly a nobody himself. He was educated, upwardly mobile and hard working. He studied law in Paris, where he worked in a reputable law firm and published a book. When he returned home and married her, he was appointed senior manager in her father's company. He was known to mix with some of the most reputed, powerful personalities in society. He was also known to have a temper. In

fact he admitted to having a bad temper and added that hers was even worse.

They lived in a luxurious home in one of the wealthiest neighborhood of the suburbs. The house was a gift from her father.

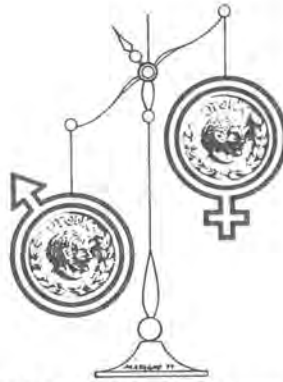
On the night of the crime, the couple hosted friends for dinner. She was her usual elegant self. Some friends said that she was generally a cheerful person, while the husband claimed that she was moody. Anyway, on that night, the guests left at around 1.A.M. He watched a video, while she supervised the two maids clearing and cleaning the expensive china. The maids retreated at 3.30 A.M. and the couple prepared

to go to bed. However, it seems that they had an argument about who should take care of some domestic chores the next day.

A while later, he came to the maid's room, and all shaken, he told her that the Mrs. had shot herself. Then, he ordered the maid to call his close friend, a doctor, who incidentally was one of the guests earlier. The doctor came over immediately, felt for the victim's pulse and rushed her to the hospital. Meanwhile the maids, upon the instruction of the doctor and the suspect himself, cleaned the sheets and the scene of the crime. At the hospital, when she was declared dead, the body was washed and prepared for burial. The police had not been called yet.

However, when the police finally investigated the crime, they discovered that the position of the wound suggested that suicide was unlikely. The most revealing fact was the location of the gun after it had been fired. Hence, according to the maids, the doctor and the suspect himself, her hand holding the gun and the gun itself lay on her shoulder. Furthermore, the gun point was full of blood which streaked inside it. According to the investigators, it was a high caliber pistol, and had she shot herself, her hand and the gun should have jerked back; consequently, making it unlikely to rest on her shoulder and get soiled with blood all the way into its firing chamber.

The husband was declared guilty, he had no alibi and a suggested motive was her wealth. The court gave him an original sentence of thirty years, which was then reduced to fifteen years and later to nine years by virtue of a parliamentary law of pardon.



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That's a Hurray! right? He was actually taken to court and sentenced for killing her. Given the status of married women vis-a-vis their husbands rights in marriage in this part of the world, a sentence sounds like a breakthrough.

What if the victim had been a man? In fact, in another incident which happened around the same time in town was a quarrel between two men as a result of "courting" the same woman. Hence, in one of the local restaurants, the killer walked in to find his girl friend having lunch with the victim. Without further due, he attacked the man with punches and a torrent of curses. The crowd rushed to separate them and it seemed like the dispute was over. Incidentally, the victimized man was her cousin who was in town to visit his family, of which she is part, naturally. Expect, the offender followed his victim home and shot him in the head at the entrance of his parents' apartment building.

When the police finally proved that the suspect is guilty, the court ruled it as murder in the first degree and the perpetrator was sentenced to 50 years, which, incidentally, is more than double the total sentence the young husband got. Is this the difference between intentional homicide and murder in the first degree? Or is it the difference between a man and a woman? Which is worse, a cold blooded crime or a cold blooded law? \*