



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 7, 2010

Beheading Was Result Of 'Battered Spouse Syndrome'

Though it appears obvious that last year's beheading of a Muslim woman in Buffalo, N.Y., was an honor killing, the judge in the case will allow the defendant to present a case that he was domestically abused and lashed back at his wife in self defense. Officially, it's called battered spouse syndrome."

According to the *Buffalo News*:

After waiting 1 1/2 years for cable executive Muzzammil "Mo" Hassan to face murder charges in the stabbing and beheading of his wife, prosecutors suffered a blow Friday when a judge ruled that the defense can introduce evidence of "battered spouse syndrome."



?Prosecutors said the decision by Erie County Judge Thomas P. Franczyk forced them to seek a delay — the third since the start of this year — in the trial, now scheduled for Jan. 10, nearly two full years after Aasiya Zubair Hassan was killed.

?Naturally, prosecutors aren't happy about the decision, and what seemed to sane observers to have been a case of typical Muslim violence against a woman may now get whitewashed with the abuse excuse.

The Case

[Police nabbed](#) Massammil Hassan in January of last year after he beheaded his wife, Aasiya. Hassan was the founder of [Bridges TV](#), which was meant to improve the image of Muslims.

After Hassan was caught, the media began peddling the story that he was upset about "money woes," even though he had been beating his wife for years and beheaded her after she filed for divorce. As the *Buffalo News* reported:

Their home life was a nightmare. Aasiya was repeatedly subjected to controlling and sometimes violent acts by her ambitious but troubled husband.

To protect herself, she went to the police in two states. Yet for years she stopped short of pressing charges — thus preserving Muzzammil's reputation and the venture they built together.

On Feb. 6, she filed for divorce and obtained an order of protection, barring him from their home in Orchard Park. A week later, she lay dead in their television offices, stabbed and decapitated. Muzzammil was charged with her murder." ...

The abuse, according to police reports, ranged from restrictive control to outbursts of violence, including a black eye and fat lip.

That turned the story into a "routine" domestic violence case. As well, the media permitted Muslims to



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deny beheading was not an honor crime. Indeed Muslims leaders [were "outraged"](#) at the very thought of it. Fox News was one media outlet that raised the ugly issue of Muslims who kill their wives and other family members for honor.

The Latest Excuse

But now, the *Buffalo News* reports, Assiya Hassan was abusing her husband:

The prosecution said Hassan had caused a miscarriage four years ago by dragging and sitting on his pregnant wife, while the defense said she had threatened to kill Hassan in his sleep.

[Defense attorney] Atti Rogers told the judge the defense team will prove, through e-mails and other material, that Hassan's wife threatened him with a knife hours before she was beheaded and previously had threatened to move back to their native Pakistan with their two young children. ...

The defense also said the victim verbally antagonized Hassan through their nine-year marriage and subjected him to "debilitating abuse" that caused Hassan to have low self-esteem, be medically depressed and in need of professional treatment.

Atti Rogers also said in court that Aasiya Zubair Hassan had kicked, slapped and struck her husband almost every day. At the time of the beheading, she said, Hassan feared he never would see his children again. His wife also had threatened to burn down their house and crash his car, the defense claimed.

The defense strategy is somewhat of a surprise to prosecutors, who were not expecting an "psychiatric" defense, as the paper called it.

[The paper reported](#) that officers had to drag Hassan in and out of the courtroom while the accused called Franczyk a "voodoo" judge.

The article does not report whether the prosecution will call experts on honor killing and [how prevalent](#) the practice is in the Islamic world.

Photo: Muzzammil Hassan is escorted from his arraignment by Erie County Sheriff's Deputies in Erie County Court in Buffalo, N.Y., on March 13, 2009: AP Images



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