



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 14, 2011

Honor Killings, a Liberal Media Blindspot

Noor's mother and brother admitted that she was killed for being [too Westernized](#), wearing jewelry and jeans, posting pictures of friends on her Facebook page, watching videos, and drinking Mocha Joes from Burger King — in other words, for being an American girl. What else would one expect? She and her family moved to a suburb of Phoenix 16 years ago, and Noor grew up in the American culture, a good long way from the Muslim culture adhered to by her parents.



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That culture difference was at the center of the growing rift between Faleh and his daughter Noor. That story was revealed in a lengthy article in the women's magazine *Marie Claire*, written by its editor, Abigail Pesta, entitled "[An American Honor Killing](#)." That story revealed the rather ordinary life of a pretty, dark-haired girl enjoying being a student, and aspiring to the time when she would get married, perhaps start a career, and raise a family. But the pressure from her father to conform to the family's traditional Muslim values finally forced her to get out of the house, get a job, and rent an apartment of her own. In the course of the police investigation, it was revealed that in 2007 Noor visited Iraq to see a sick relative. That turned out to be a ruse, and she was forced to marry a man selected by her father in advance, a man whom she had never seen before, nor would see again.

When she returned to Phoenix, she enlisted the aid of some friends who helped her move into her apartment, fixing it up with a new mirror and an old TV set. They stayed up all night, laughing and enjoying her new freedom. She had a job at the local Chipotle restaurant, and started attending Glendale Community College.

When her father found out where she was working, he started harassing her, demanding that she quit work and move back home. She found other work at an Applebee's, but continued pressure from her father finally forced her to give up her job and move back in with her family. In the summer of 2009, the final blowup occurred, resulting in Noor moving in with a family friend, Amal Khalaf. This was, according to Pesta, the ultimate indignity: Faleh's daughter preferring to live with another Iraqi family rather his own.

In the evening of October 20, Noor and Amal were walking across a parking lot when Faleh ran them down. As Pesta explained:

The women took off running but were no match for the SUV, already traveling close to 30 miles per hour. Suddenly Amal turned, held up her hands in a futile attempt to stop the Jeep, and froze. Moments later, the vehicle struck the women, tossing them into the air. Amal hit the pavement; Noor landed on a raised median, in a patch of pebbly landscaping.

Faleh wasn't done, though. Swerving onto the median, he ran over his daughter as she lay bleeding, fracturing her face and spine. Then, he reversed and sped away.



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Noor was taken to surgery, but never regained consciousness and died a few days after the attack. Her father, meanwhile, with the help of his wife and son, Noor's brother Ali, escaped to Mexico where he flew to London. He was picked up by customs officials there and, nine days after killing his daughter, Faleh was returned to Arizona where he was charged with murder.

Because so little of this incident was picked up nationally, Pesta wrote: "Honor killings in the U.S. have been largely ignored by the national media. That's because these incidents are typically dismissed as "domestic" in nature — a class of crime that rarely makes the headlines. Since the murderer is a member of the woman's family, there's no extended investigation to capture the public's attention. Also, the family of the perpetrator rarely advocates for the victim."

The deliberate blackout of "honor killings" by the liberal news media, however, greatly annoyed [one of the members](#) of that liberal media, Abigail Esman:

I am of the liberal left. And this is the dilemma I and many other journalists and activists concerned about these issues face regularly. We are the people who read the *New York Times* and the *New York Review of Books*. We voted for Barack Obama. Sarah Palin scares us. We are the ones who fought for equal rights for women and minorities. Yet now we stand alone....

I cringe when I read the words of [conservative] columnists who sneeringly ask, "Will the leftists defend the memory of women like Noor?" not only because by "leftist" they mean me, but because I know the answer: No.

Part of the reason liberals, Esman excepted, cannot bring themselves to criticize honor killings is because it has to do with religion, and with the perceived threat Muslims bring to the American culture. It interferes with their mindless automatic defense of anyone perceived to be oppressed in American society, such as the local Muslim community. The pure fact of the matter, simply put, is that it interferes with their prejudices. As Esman explains: "Honor violence, unlike the domestic abuse we know, is often supported, sanctioned and even encouraged by the local Muslim community." In a word, such violence, for such reasons, is literally unthinkable to liberals. And so they don't think about it at all.

As Esman expressed it:

A good part of why those killings take place is simply that most of my fellow liberals don't even know that they have occurred before and so cannot take action to prevent them in the future. How could they, if the media sources on which they rely for information refuse, repeatedly, to tell them?

As the number of such atrocious "honor killings" increases, the liberal media will be hard-pressed to continue to spike the stories. Perhaps the upcoming trial of Faleh Almaleki will give that media a chance to redeem itself, look at the facts squarely, and then report them boldly, accurately and completely.



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