Filicide is the deliberate act of a parent killing a child. Despite its low occurrence, filicide is one of the most emotive offenses for a public audience. The murder of a child by their own parent challenges many of our fundamental expectations about the role of parenthood, prompting a sense of horror, outrage, and deep distress: It violates the idea of parental instincts as a protection for children. While maternal and paternal filicide is committed in roughly equal numbers, historically, filicide has been regarded as a female crime. However, media coverage of mothers who commit filicide differs from coverage of fathers who commit the same crime.

Infanticidal mothers in particular have a long history of being demonized by the media and in popular culture. Research shows that this is partly because such events shatter expected feminine and maternal norms. Despite the considerable body of scholarly work conducted in this area of crime and media culture, there were few studies of filicide in Australia until recently. As a consequence, the media's portrayal of these tragic cases is to treat them as "inexplicable" while also attempting to find an explanation, most often through stereotyping, simplification, or rationalization.

Keywords: filicide, maternal filicide, paternal filicide, infanticide, media, popular culture

Janine Little
Department of Arts and Education, Deakin University

Danielle Tyson
Department of Arts and Education, Deakin University

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KEY WORDS: filicide; parental separation; domestic violence; mental illness

In Australia, there have been a number of recent high-profile cases reported in the media involving the murder of a child or children by a parent, many of which occurred within the context of parental separation. While such cases typically give rise to much speculation as to whether, and to what extent, the motive for the filicide and/or filicide-suicide was a legal dispute about

There is little parenting following separation, there is little information about the background information about the of perpetrators or the c Mediated depictions of domestic violence share many of the same problems as those of sexual assault. In particular, the media tends to imply that women are somehow culpable when they are being beaten, even murdered, by their partners. News on domestic violence is often reported in a routine manner that focuses on minutiae instead of context, informing audiences minimally about the nature, extent, and causes of domestic violence. Though it is encouraging that over the past several decades the media has begun to acknowledge that domestic violence is a serious problem, this recognition is challenged.

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