

# Glossary on Murder and Killing

*Expert knowledge means success*

## Contents

1. Methods of Capital Punishment
1. Current Methods
- 1-3. Ancient Methods
3. Killing Directory
- 3-4. Killing of Family Members
4. Killing of Others
4. Killing of Superiors
4. Killing of Animals, Diseases and Pests
5. Killing of Intangibles
5. Manslaughter
5. Killing by Gangs etc.
5. Further Information

## Methods of capital punishment

The following<sup>1</sup> are examples of capital punishment which is usually a government-sanctioned practice. The sentence that someone be punished in such a manner is referred to as a *death sentence*, whereas the act of carrying out the sentence is known as an *execution*.

### Current methods

Method	Description
Hanging	One of the most common methods of execution, still in use in many countries, usually with a calculated drop to cause neck fracture and instant loss of consciousness. Notably used in Pakistan, India, Japan and Singapore.
Shooting	This is/was a very common method, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a single shot (such as a shot to the back of a head, as in China, Belarus and by various means in Russia before Russia abolished capital punishment);</li> <li>• firing squad (as in Indonesia).</li> <li>• excessively powerful weaponry such as anti-aircraft guns, according to various media sources (CNN, Fox News, The Independent, etc.), practiced in North Korea.</li> </ul>
Lethal injection	First used in the United States in 1982, lethal injection has been used by five other countries since then, which are China, Taiwan, Thailand, Guatemala, and Vietnam.
Electrocution	Only the United States and the Philippines have ever used this method. Now legal in some U.S. states only to replace injection at the request of the prisoner or if injection is impractical.

Method	Description
Gas inhalation	Only the United States and Lithuania have ever used this as a capital punishment method. Now legal in some U.S. states only to replace injection at the request of the prisoner or if injection is impractical. Also used in Nazi Germany during World War 2 as a weapon for mass murder. It has been recently proposed to use nitrogen hypoxia to replace injection.
Beheading	Has been used at various points in history in many countries. One of the most famous forms is execution by guillotine. Now used only in Saudi Arabia with a sword.
Stoning	The condemned is pummelled by stones thrown by a group of people with the totality of the injuries suffered leading to eventual death.
Crucifixion	Roping or nailing to a wooden cross or similar apparatus (such as a tree).

### Ancient methods

Method	Description
Animals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crushing by elephants</li> <li>• Devouring by animals, as in damnatio ad bestias (i.e., as in the cliché, "being thrown to the lions"), as well as alligators, crocodiles, piranha and sharks.</li> <li>• Stings from scorpions and bites by snakes, spiders, etc. (e.g. the "Snake pit" of Germanic legend).</li> <li>• Tearing apart by horses (e.g., in medieval Europe and Imperial China, with four horses; or "quartering", with four horses. A variant with tearing apart by camels was sometimes used in the Middle East.</li> <li>• Trampling by horses (example: Al-Musta'sim, the last Abbasid Caliph in Baghdad).</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Source:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_methods\\_of\\_capital\\_punishment](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_methods_of_capital_punishment)

## Glossary on Murder and Killing

Method	Description
Back breaking	A Mongolian method of execution that avoided the spilling of blood on the ground (example: the Mongolian leader Jamukha was probably executed this way in 1206).
Blowing from a gun	Tied to the mouth of a cannon, which is then fired.
Blood Eagle	Cutting the skin of the victim by the spine, breaking the ribs so they resembled blood-stained wings, and pulling the lungs out through the wounds in the victim's back. Used by the Vikings.
Boiling to death	This penalty was carried out using a large cauldron filled with water, oil, tar, tallow, or even molten lead.
Brazen bull	Pushed inside an iron bull statue and then cooked alive after a fire is lit under it.
Breaking wheel	Also known as the Catherine wheel, after a saint (Saint Catherine of Alexandria) who was allegedly sentenced to be executed by this method.
Buried alive	Traditional punishment for Vestal virgins who had broken their vows.
Burning	Most infamous as a method of execution for heretics and witches. A slower method of applying single pieces of burning wood was used by Native Americans in torturing their captives to death.
Crushing	By a weight, abruptly or as a slow ordeal.
Disembowelment	Often employed as a preliminary stage to the actual execution, e.g. by beheading; an integral part of <i>seppuku</i> ( <i>hara-kiri</i> ), which was sometimes used as a form of capital punishment.
Dismemberment	Being drawn and quartered sometimes resulted in dismemberment. Note: has been used in combination, such as hanged, drawn and quartered

Method	Description
Drowning	Execution by drowning, as a method of execution, is attested very early in history, for a large variety of cultures, and as the method of execution for many types of offences.
Drawing and quartering	English method of executing those found guilty of high treason.
Falling	The victim is thrown off a height or into a hollow (example: the <i>Barathron</i> in Athens, into which the Athenian generals condemned for their part in the battle of Arginusae_were cast). In Argentina during the Dirty War, those who were secretly abducted were later drugged and thrown from an airplane into the ocean.
Flaying	The skin is removed from the body.
Garrotte	Used most commonly in Spain and in former Spanish colonies (e.g. the Philippines), used to strangle or choke someone.
Gibbeting	The act of gibbeting refers to the use of a gallows-type structure from which the victim was usually placed within a cage which is then hung in a public location and the victim left to die to deter other existing or potential criminals.
Immurement	The confinement of a person by walling off any exits; since they were usually kept alive through an opening, this was more a form of imprisonment for life than of capital punishment (example: the countess Elisabeth Báthory, who lived for four more years after having been immured).
Impalement	The penetration of a human by an object such as a stake, pole, spear, or hook, often by complete or partial perforation of the torso.

Method	Description
Keelhauling	Dragging a person through the water under the keel of a ship, either across the width or from bow to stern.
Poena cullei	Documented used during the Roman empire. The condemned is stuffed into a sack together with a number of animals and thrown into a body of water.
Scaphism	An ancient Persian method of execution in which the condemned was placed in between two boats, force fed a mixture of honey and milk, and left floating in a stagnant pond. The victim would then suffer from severe diarrhea, which would attract insects that would burrow, nest, and feed on the victim. The victim would eventually die from septic shock.
Slow slicing	Methodically removing portions of the body over an extended period of time, typically with a knife, eventually resulting in death.
Smothering (Asphyxia)	Suffocation in ash.
Starvation / Dehydration	Immurement.
Strangulation	Strangling is compression of the neck that may lead to unconsciousness or death by causing an increasingly hypoxic state in the brain. Fatal strangling typically occurs in cases of violence, accidents, and is one of two main ways that hanging causes death (alongside breaking the victim's neck).
Suffocation	Carbon monoxide poisoning by burning coal or wood in a sealed room.

## Killing Dictionary

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_types\\_of\\_killing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_types_of_killing)

### Killing of Self

- Suicide - intentional killing of self
- Autocide - suicide by motor vehicle
- Medicide - a suicide accomplished with the aid of a physician
- Murder-suicide - suicide committed immediately after one or more murders
- Self-immolation - suicide as a form of protest, often by fire
- Suicide by cop - acting in a threatening manner so as to provoke a lethal response from law enforcement

### Killing of Family members

- Avunculicide, the act of killing an uncle. (*Avunculus* being Latin for uncle, specifically a maternal uncle)
- Familicide, a multiple-victim homicide where a killer's spouse and children are slain. (*Familia* being Latin for family)
- Filicide – the act of a parent killing their child. (*Filius* being Latin for son.)
- Fratricide – the act of killing a brother, also in military context death by friendly fire. (*Frater* being Latin for brother)
- Geronticide – the abandonment of the elderly to die, die by suicide or be killed. See also Senicide.
- Honour Killing – the act of killing by a family member of a woman or girl who has or was perceived to have brought disgrace to the family and damaged its image and honour.
- Infanticide – the act of killing a child within the first year of its life.
- Mariticide – the act of killing one's husband.
- Matricide – the act of killing one's mother. (*Mater* being Latin for mother)
- Neonaticide – the act of killing an infant within the first twenty-four hours or month (varies by individual and jurisdiction) of its life.
- Nepoticide – the act of killing one's nephew
- Parricide – (also Parenticide) the killing of one's mother or father or other close relative.
- Patricide – the act of killing of one's father. (*Pater* being Latin for father)
- Pesticide - the act of killing a child.
- Prolicide – the act of killing one's own children.
- Senicide – the killing of one's elderly family members when they can no longer work or become a burden. (*Senex* being Latin for old man).
- Siblicide – the killing of an infant individual by its close relatives (full or half siblings).

- Sororicide – the act of killing one's sister (*Soror* being Latin for sister)
- Uxoricide – the act of killing one's wife (*Uxor* being Latin for wife)

## Killing of Others

---

- Amicicide – the act of killing a friend. ("*Amicus*" being Latin for friend)
- Androicide – the systematic killing of men.
- Assassination – the murder of a famous or important person, mainly for political or religious reasons.
- Butchery – the cruel and violent killing of a lot of people
- Capital punishment – the judicial killing of a human being for crimes.
- Casualty (person) – death (or injury) in wartime.
- Collateral damage – Deaths during wartime due to imprecise or incorrect targeting or friendly fire
- Democide – the **murder** of any person or people by a government.
- Ecocide – the destruction of the natural environment by such activity as war, over-exploitation of resources, or pollution.
- Extrajudicial killing – killing by government forces without due process
- Euthanasia (also known as "mercy killing") – the killing of any human being for compassionate reasons, e.g., significant painful illness, injury or disease.
- Familiaricide in commutatione eius possessio – the act of killing a family for their property and/or possessions (From "*familiaris*" being Latin for of a household. "*in commutatione eius*" being Latin for in exchange for, and "*possessio*" being Latin for a possession or property)
- Femicide (also gynecide, gynaecide, or gynocide) – the systematic killing of women or girls.
- Feticide – the act of killing a foetus.
- Gendercide – the systematic killing of members of a specific sex or gender.
- Genocide – the systematic extermination of an entire national, racial, religious, or ethnic group.
- Homicide – the act of killing of a person. ("*Homo*" being Latin for man)
- Human sacrifice – the killing of a human for sacrificial, often religious, reasons.
- Massacre or mass murder – the killing of many people.
- Murder – the malicious and unlawful killing of a human by another human.
- Manslaughter – murder, but under legally mitigating circumstances.
- Omnicide – the act of killing all humans, to create intentional extinction of the human species. ("*Omni*" meaning all)
- Populicide – see Democide above.
- Xenocide – The genocide of an entire alien species.

## Killing of Superiors

---

- Deicide – killing a god or divine being.
- Episcopicide – killing a bishop.
- Regicide – killing a king. (Latin: *rex*, Gen. *regis* means "king")
- Tyrannicide – killing a tyrant.

## Killing of Animals, Disease, and Pests

---

- Algaecide – a chemical agent that kills algae
- Acaricide – a chemical agent that kills mites
- Avicide – a chemical agent that kills birds
- Bactericide – a chemical agent that kills bacteria.
- Biocide – a chemical agent that kills a broad spectrum of living organisms.
- Fungicide – chemical agents or biological organisms used to kill or inhibit fungi or fungal spores.
- Germicide – an agent that kills germs, especially pathogenic microorganisms; a disinfectant
- Herbicide – an agent that kills unwanted plants, a weed killer.
- Insecticide – an agent that kills unwanted insects.
- Larvicide (also *larvacide*) – an insecticide targeted against the larval life stage of an insect.
- Microbicide – an agent used to kill or reduce the infectiousness of microorganisms.
- Miticide – a chemical to kill mites.
- Nematicide (also *nematicide/nematocide*) – a chemical to eradicate or kill nematodes.
- Parasiticide – a general term to describe an agent used to destroy parasites.
- Pediculicide – an agent that kills head lice.
- Pesticide – a general term to describe an agent used to destroy or repel a pest.
- Scabicide – a chemical agent for killing scabies.
- Spermicide – a contraceptive agent to render sperm inert and prevent fertilization.
- Teniacide (also *taeniicide, tenicide*) – a chemical agent that kills tape worms.
- Vermicide – an agent used to kill parasitic intestinal worms.
- Virucide (also *viricide*) – an agent capable of destroying or inhibiting viruses.
- Vulpicide (also *vulpecide*) – the killing of a fox by methods other than by hunting it with hounds.

## Killing of Intangibles

- Famacide - defamation or slander, the killing of another's reputation.
- Linguicide - intentionally causing the death of a language.
- Urbicide - the destruction of a city or the stifling of urbanisation (*urbs* is Latin for "city").
- Social suicide - the killing of one's own social status.

## Manslaughter

- Constructive Manslaughter - the crime of committing an unlawful act that results in an unintended death. It is also known as unlawful act manslaughter.
- Corporate Manslaughter - the crime of killing someone unintentionally that is committed by a company or an organisation.
- Involuntary Manslaughter - (in England and Wales) the crime of committing a reckless or careless act that results in an unintended death. The two main types of involuntary manslaughter under English law are constructive manslaughter and gross negligence manslaughter.
- Gross Negligence Manslaughter - (in England and Wales) the crime of committing an extremely careless and irresponsible act that causes an unintended death.
- Manslaughter - the crime of causing **someone's death illegally but either** without intending to or with reasons that cause it to be regarded as less serious than murder.
- Voluntary Manslaughter - (in England and Wales) the crime of killing someone intentionally but under circumstances which mean it is not a murder, for example diminished responsibility or loss of control was the driver for the action taken by the perpetrator.

## Killings by Gangs etc.

- Contract Killing - An agreement by which someone is paid to kill another person.
- Elimination - the murder of someone who is considered to be a problem.
- Foul play - violence or criminal actions that cause someone's death
- Hit - vernacular or slang for a murder that a person commits for someone else, usually for payment of a reward.
- Slaying - an act of killing someone.

## Further Information

This guide is for general interest - it is always essential to take advice on specific issues. We believe that the facts are correct as at the date of publication, but there may be certain errors and omissions for which we cannot be responsible.

Picture Credit: Creative Commons:

Front Page:

"Death Sentence" by x-av is licensed under CC BY-NC-SA 2.0:

<https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/photos/20665692-7e14-45d0-aa21->

## Important Notice

© Copyright 2019, Martin Pollins, All Rights Reserved

This publication is published by **Bizezia Limited**. It is protected by copyright law and reproduction in whole or in part without the publisher's written permission is strictly prohibited. The publisher may be contacted at [info@bizezia.com](mailto:info@bizezia.com)

Some images in this publication are taken from Creative Commons – such images may be subject to copyright. **Creative Commons** is a non-profit organisation that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools.

Articles and information contained herein are published without responsibility by us, the publisher or any contributing author for any loss howsoever occurring as a consequence of any action which you take, or action which you choose not to take, as a result of this publication or any view expressed herein. Whilst it is believed that the information contained in this publication is correct at the time of publication, it is not a substitute for obtaining specific professional advice and no representation or warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to its accuracy or completeness.

The information is relevant within the United Kingdom. These disclaimers and exclusions are governed by and construed in accordance with English Law.

Publication issued or updated on: 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2019

Ref: (905)

