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# Doc: Jodi's abuse claim is an 'impossibility'

By Farnaz-Namin Hedayati, special to HLN  
updated 12:59 PM EDT, Thu April 11, 2013

**NEED TO  
KNOW**

- Farnaz-Namin Hedayati, Ph.D., is a doctor of corporate psychology
- She says Jodi Arias could have been abused, but that's not what led her to kill Travis Alexander
- See why she says Jodi's story does not add up





*Editor's note: Farnaz-Namin Hedayati, Ph.D., Doctor of Corporate Psychology and Principal and Founder of [Center for Work Life](#). She is on [Twitter](#).*

Did Jodi Arias suffer from such severe emotional abuse that she was led to brutally murder her ex-boyfriend, Travis Alexander? Or is Jodi indeed lying, as [many people seem to believe](#)?

Arias claims she killed Alexander in self-defense, and her attorneys have

introduced the idea of post-traumatic stress disorder to support her case. Even though there have been [instances](#) where victims have turned around and become perpetrators of crimes to relieve the symptoms they can't otherwise quiet down, in Arias' case, the claim that past physical and emotional abuse caused her to defend herself and murder Alexander does not apply.

It is a physiological impossibility. Here's why.

Within the process of "fight or flight" -- also known as the sympathetic vs. parasympathetic nervous system responses -- chemicals like adrenaline, noradrenaline and cortisol are released into our bloodstream. This causes our body to undergo a series of very dramatic changes. Our respiratory rate increases. Blood is shunted away from our digestive tract and directed into our muscles and limbs. Our pupils dilate. Our awareness intensifies. Our sight sharpens. Our impulses quicken.

In short, we become prepared, physically and psychologically, to fight or flee. Based on the evidence presented in court, Arias was in "fight" mode and attacked Travis. This attack would have required a high level of arousal, which is only possible when one is experiencing the heightened sympathetic nervous system or the "fight" response.

Since an individual can only experience one neurological response at a time, Arias could not have been in "flight" mode, as she has claimed: She could not have been attacking and running away at the same time.

Furthermore, Arias claims memory loss in support of her self-defense argument. She has [testified](#) that, due to the gravity of the event and her extremely heightened level of arousal, she has no memory of stabbing Travis or slitting his throat.



Considering the fact that she has not described any memories of the murder, even in the form of "flashbacks," leads me to believe that Arias has committed pre-meditated murder.

The question isn't whether she was emotionally abused. She could very well have been, even by Travis. However, whether emotionally abused or not, she did not kill in defense mode, because even Arias could not be in two physiological states at the same time.

