

**Guilty until Proven Innocent:
Suggestions for Improving the Mindsets of Crime Scene Investigators**

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Abstract**Guilty Until Proven Innocent:
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Two senior high school girls were strangled to death in Baltimore County, Maryland in the late 1990s. The facts in each case were different, but the result was the same conviction for the two men charged for their murders. One man was a stranger to the victim, and the other was an ex-boyfriend. One was tried based predominantly on physical evidence, and the other based on the testimony of one witness. Both men could have been wrongfully convicted.

This thesis analyzes, as far as possible based on public information, the investigations in the cases of *John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland* and *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland* to evaluate the approaches of the investigators involved. This thesis also studies a new podcast, *Serial*, in which the producer re-investigates Syed's case because his supporters believe he is innocent. The objective is to provide a list of suggestions for investigators based upon the new perspective for investigations from *Serial*, where the author had no previous law enforcement experience.

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I. Introduction

The podcast *Serial* stems from the creators of another podcast titled *This American Life*, which is broadcasted to over two million listeners on over five hundred stations. *This American Life* releases weekly episodes with a theme to each episode and a variety of stories on that theme. The podcast mostly includes true stories of everyday people, but many other topics such as education, politics, and ideas are discussed as well. *This American Life* and *Serial* are produced by Chicago Public Media (Glass, 2015b).

Serial is a free, online audio podcast hosted by journalist Sarah Koenig that investigates one criminal case per season in weekly episodes (Glass, 2015a). Sarah Koenig was the producer of *This American Life* for ten years. With the help of Julie Snyder, she left to produce *Serial*. Before producing these podcasts, Koenig covered criminal justice and was a State House reporter for the *Baltimore Sun* and the *Concord Monitor*. (Glass, 2015c).

Serial's first season explores the case of *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland* because Koenig was fascinated with Hae Min Lee's murder and the man charged with killing her. Many people who know Adnan Syed believe he is innocent. Koenig did not expect the first season of this new podcast to have so many followers who anxiously awaited each episode and continuously asked questions. I was hooked on *Serial* after the first ten minutes of the first episode. This thesis shows the importance of fresh eyes and a new perspective on criminal cases because of *Serial*. Koenig makes her listeners think, question, and reevaluate every detail of this case. How can crime scene investigators improve their mindsets and perspectives in any case? Was Syed wrongfully convicted? These questions were considered during this project to determine suggestions for new investigators.

II. Wrongful Convictions and Exonerations

The terms “wrongful conviction” and “exoneration” have a wide range of interpretations because there are many steps in the criminal justice process. Some people include cases involving those who were wrongfully accused before a legal conviction or those who were never legally released, but may have been factually innocent. For the purposes of this research, the term “wrongful conviction” as defined by Huff, Rattner, and Sagarin (1996) is “[applied] to people who have either pleaded guilty to criminal charge(s) or have been tried and found guilty; and who, notwithstanding plea or verdict, are in fact innocent,” (Ramsey, 2003). According to the University of Michigan Law School (2015b), an exoneration occurs when “a person [is] convicted of a crime and later either: (1) declared to be factually innocent by a government official or agency with the authority to make that declaration; or (2) relieved of all the consequences of the criminal conviction by a government official or body with the authority to take that action.”

As of September 24th, 2015, there have been 1,666 exonerations in the United States since 1989. The National Registry of Exonerations, a project of the University of Michigan Law School founded in 2012, provides an updated number and detailed information on every known exoneration in the United States since the first recorded DNA exoneration in 1989 (University of Michigan Law School, 2015a). The recorded exonerations represent a variety of crimes from robbery to homicide. Figure 1 shows an up-to-date line graph of the recorded exonerations by the type of crime that was committed and the year of the exoneration. There were 15 homicide exonerations in 1998, 19 in 1999, 37 in 2003, and 25 in 2004 nationwide (University of Michigan Law School National Registry of Exonerations, 2015b). These numbers are included because this research focuses on two homicide cases committed in 1998 and 1999, and tried in

2004 and 2003 respectively. There was an increase in exonerations after the turn of the twenty-first century. The graph shows that with time people who were once convicted of murder are being found legally innocent. This may be because of more advanced forensic technology and investigation techniques (e.g. DNA evidence).

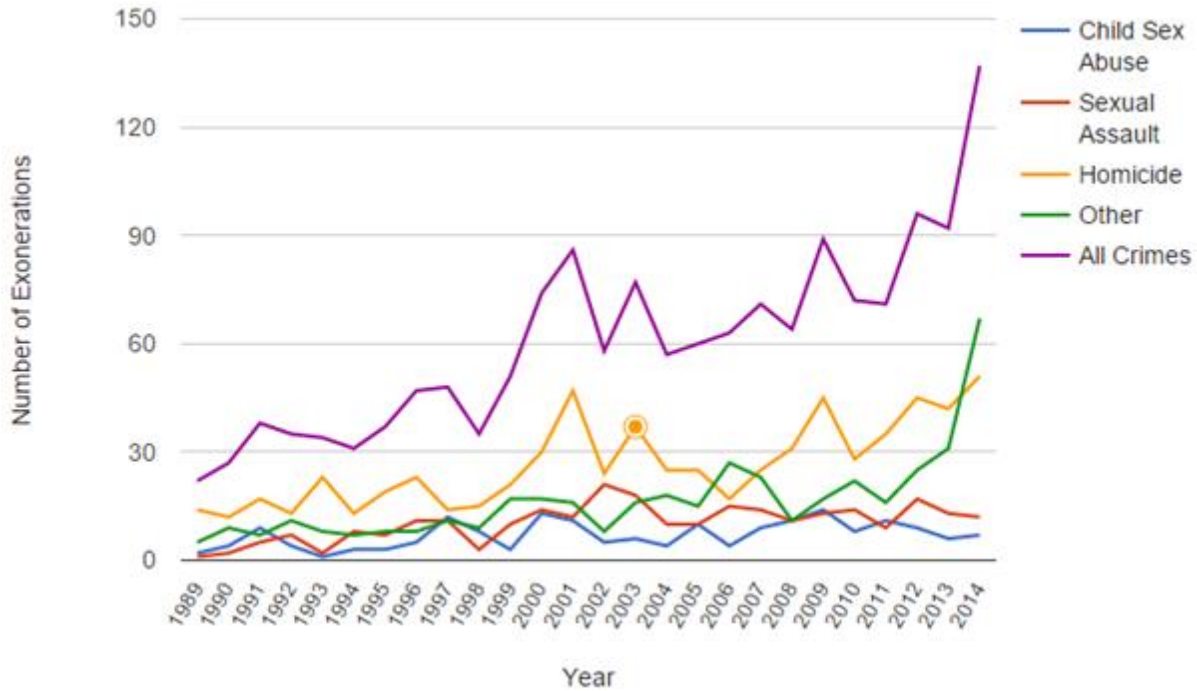


Figure 1 - Exonerations by year and type of crime. This figure illustrates all recorded exonerations for the most common types of crime.

Both cases in this research were tried in Baltimore County, Maryland. Figure 2 shows an interactive map of the number of exonerations by state with Maryland highlighted. As shown, Maryland has had 21 recorded exonerations to date, over 76% of which were murder and manslaughter cases. Although Maryland’s total number of exonerations is not high compared to the states shown in red like Texas, New York, and California, having such a high percentage of murder exonerations may be significant. Texas’ number of murder and manslaughter exonerations is 41 out of 237, which is 19%. California’s is 69 of 156, just under 45%. Only six states (Oregon, Idaho, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, and Vermont) have a higher murder

and manslaughter exoneration percentage than Maryland, but these six states each have under ten total exoneration since 1989. Also, note that Maryland’s total number of exoneration does not include either case involved in this research. For a larger comparison, the same map with the total number of exoneration in the United States shows 43% of the 1,666 are murder and manslaughter exoneration (University of Michigan Law School, 2015c).

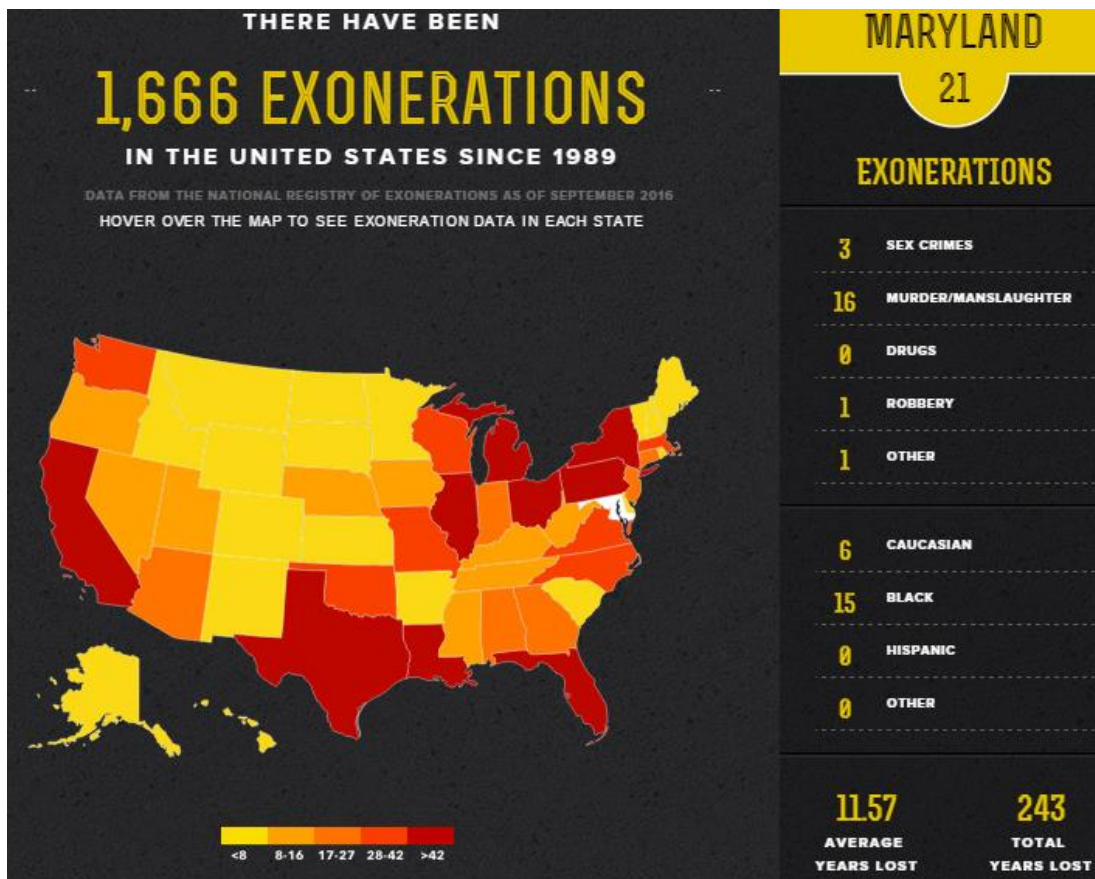


Figure 2- Recorded exoneration to date in the United States. This figure illustrates Maryland’s exoneration history compared to the rest of the country divided by race and the most common types of crime.

The criminal justice system should be doing everything it can to prevent innocent people from going to prison, not causing them sit there for ten or more years before someone finally realizes they were telling the truth about their innocence all along. The United States’ criminal justice system is not perfect and wrongful convictions and exoneration have been studied to find out why the numbers continue to rise.

The graph in figure 3 shows the most common causes of exonerations organized by the type of crime found by the National Registry of Exonerations (University of Michigan Law School National Registry of Exonerations, 2015a). The data shows that with the exception of sexual assault crimes, false accusation and official misconduct have the highest percentage of all exoneration cases. This may mean that witnesses are lying on the stand about defendants and the professionals involved with these cases are abusing their power and the judicial process (University of Michigan Law School, 2015b). The graph shows that homicide exonerations alone are found to be caused by official misconduct 63% of the time (University of Michigan Law School National Registry of Exonerations, 2015a).

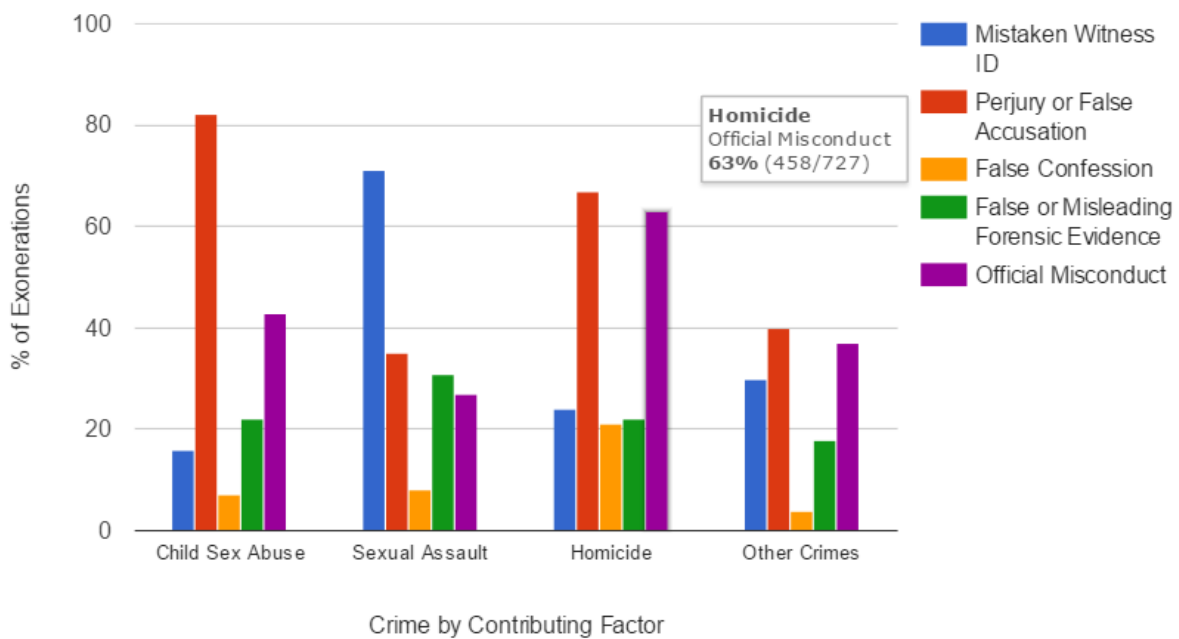


Figure 3- Percent of Exonerations by Contributing Factor and Type of Crime. This figure illustrates the causes of exonerations organized by the most common causes.

The statistics mentioned are only the known cases and the defendants who have been able to hire dedicated, insistent attorneys and build a case to disprove their guilt. No one knows exactly how many innocent people are currently in prison, but in 1983, Robert Ramsey found

that 57% of 229 Ohio criminal justice professionals, such as law enforcement officers and detectives, believed that 0.5% of all convictions were wrongful. This increased to an average of 2% of convictions in 2003 after surveying 798 professionals (Ramsey and Frank, 2007). In 1990, there were nearly two million violent felony convictions according to C. Ronald Huff, the Director of the Criminal Justice Research Center at Ohio State University. Huff calculated 0.5% of two million, estimating that nearly 10,000 innocent people are wrongfully convicted each year (Grabmeier, n.d.). The crime rate has increased since 1990, which probably means the number of wrongful convictions has increased as well.

As the data shows, over half of all homicide exonerations are caused by official misconduct, which could also include the investigations of criminal cases. Regardless, something needs to change to reduce the number of innocent people who are in prison because of a wrongful conviction.

III. Investigative Procedures

To complete a thorough investigation of a case and potentially help reduce the number of wrongful convictions, crime scene investigators should use standard investigative procedures. Knowing the standard procedure is also important to compare and analyze how *John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland* and *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland* were handled by the investigators involved. Missouri Southern State University's criminal justice program provides a clear, concrete foundation of procedures and policies for crime scene investigation. This section will reveal the investigation procedure guidelines as taught by Professors Timothy Wilson and Gregory Dagnan at Missouri Southern State University using the textbooks from Crime Scene

Investigation I and II and Homicide Investigation I. Other supplementary sources will also be used to explain how all scenes should be investigated, specifically homicide scenes.

The crime scene investigation courses focus on the 22 step processing methodology for investigating crime scenes to ensure students know how to process any crime scene they may encounter in the workforce. The steps in the methodology are listed below (Dagnan & Wilson, 2015):

1. Assure the first responder performed all of his or her duties up to standard.

Checking the first responder's work reduces the risk of contaminated evidence. The scene investigators should check that the crime scene tape was placed around the furthest edges of the scene where there may be evidence, and make sure the witnesses have been separated so that their stories are not corroborated before the officers are able to write down their statements.

2. Complete the initial crime scene survey.

Deciding how to conduct the search, what should be photographed, and where the sources of physical evidence will most likely be are all a part of the initial survey. An investigator should stand back on the edge of the scene and observe everything that is involved to develop a plan that will ensure a complete and thorough investigation.

3. Take overall photographs.

Overall photographs are taken by standing a distance away from the scene and capturing how it looks when the investigators first arrive. If the scene is the bedroom of a house, there would most likely be eight photographs, two from each corner of the room facing down each adjacent wall. Taking overall photographs ensures that the entire surface of a scene is documented before anything is moved.

4. Record an overall video.

The video is a supplement to the overall photographs by showing everything in real time. A video would be better able to capture what might have been on the television at the investigators' arrival time.

5. Complete a level one crime scene search.

A level-one search includes looking for anything in plain view like fingerprint evidence on countertops and door handles or blood stains on the walls.

6. Take midrange photographs.

Midrange photographs are taken of specific pieces of evidence found in the level-one search. These photographs are far enough away from the object to include something else that will provide a relative distance so investigators can recall exactly where a piece of evidence was located after its collection. This description can also be applied to steps eleven and seventeen for midrange photographs of the level-two and level-three searches.

7. Take close-up photographs.

Close-up photographs of the evidence in the level-one search are typically taken parallel to the object and as close as possible without cutting anything off. Close-up photographs should fill the entire frame of the photograph and include as much detail as possible. This description can also be applied to steps twelve and eighteen for level-two and level-three close-up photographs.

8. Complete the level-one measurements for the crime scene sketch.

Level-one evidence is measured to construct a sketch of the scene for relative and absolute locations of evidence and objects. Measurements are also important to scale a sketch appropriately. This description can also be applied to steps thirteen and nineteen for the level-two and level-three measurements.

9. Collect all level-one evidence.

Once the photographs and measurements of the level-one evidence is complete, the level-one evidence can be collected using the proper tools, such as tape, fingerprint brush, paper bags, etc. This evidence is then labeled and prepared to be sent to the crime lab. This description can also be applied to steps fourteen and twenty for evidence collection of the level-two and level-three searches.

10. Complete a level-two search.

A level-two search requires minor moving like looking for evidence under blankets or tables and other furniture.

11. Take midrange photographs.

12. Take close-up photographs.

13. Complete the level-two measurements for the crime scene sketch.

14. Collect all level-two evidence.

15. Investigate any scenes within the main crime scene.

Investigating scenes within a crime scene includes carefully going through areas that are large enough to be a scene of their own. Scenes within a scene might include walk-in closets, a back porch, or any small area inside a larger scene.

16. Complete a level-three search.

Level-three includes searching in hard-to-reach places or in places that might cause damage, like ripping up carpet or searching behind sheetrock.

17. Take midrange photographs.

18. Take close-up photographs.

19. Complete the level-three measurements for the crime scene sketch.

20. Collect all level-three evidence

21. Measure any fixed objects and furniture.

Walls, couches, beds, and windows may be measured to improve the relative location of things in a sketch.

22. Complete a final walkthrough to ensure nothing was missed.

Investigators should walk through the scene one last time to double check that no room or potential piece of evidence was overlooked.

By following this procedure investigators can ensure that no scene is left without having the most crucial aspect of a criminal case: the evidence. These steps are not used in every classroom or police department, but most agree there has to be a plan of action. In chapter five of *Techniques of Crime Scene Investigation*, Barry and David Fisher (2012) discuss the details of processing a crime scene. They agree that processing a scene should be “approached in a systematic, and methodical way,” (p. 75). Investigating any crime scene should include careful examination, note taking, sketching, photography, and evidence collection as mentioned in the processing methodology. When searching it is important to consider legal and scientific matters that could affect the investigation. The plan of action for all scenes should be available to all investigators and included in a written procedure that defines the crime scene responsibilities, and also details what tasks are to be done and in what order (p. 75). Even though there are detailed guidelines, it is important to be flexible because not every scene is identical.

The general procedures also apply to homicide cases, but these scenes are typically where the most flexibility is required. Ideally, a detailed examination of the body should occur at step fifteen of the processing methodology, after all of the photographs and sketches are completed. This may not be possible, however, depending on the environment of the scene (indoor or outdoor, and weather conditions). Whenever the body at a homicide scene is investigated, a

complete description of the body, including clothing is required. Things like race, build, appearance, evidence of injury, condition, position, and hair color should be noted. The head, trunk, arms, and legs should also each be examined individually in great detail for bruises, cuts, scarring, et cetera (Gerberth, 2006). More detail helps prevent uncertainty later and reduces the possibility of having to return to the scene.

Even though every aspect of a scene cannot be anticipated, ground rules and goals are important. Procedures and flexibility are vital for every level of a case as it progresses from the first responder on the scene to the attorneys and judge who handle the case at trial. Everyone has his part and should complete his duty honestly and to the best of his ability. Having a plan of action will help reduce the chaos when the unexpected happens and help prevent mistakes that could literally cost a life.

Roger Renken, the Missouri State Highway Patrol Supervisor of Troop D's Criminal Investigative Unit in the Division of Drug and Crime Control, has spent 34 years in law enforcement, and eighteen of those years working crime scenes. He has seen investigations cease because the investigators identified a suspect and chose to stop searching for evidence. Renken knows that just like in any field of work, investigators can make mistakes. Crime scene investigators make mistakes most when investigators spend too much time awake without enough sleep, explains Renken. Roughly fifteen years ago, crime scene investigators worked a scene until the job was done, regardless of the hour. Renken knew his investigators could not put 110% into their work without the necessary rest, so Renken fought to convince sheriffs and chief deputies in Missouri that investigators needed rest more often than they were getting it. Now, investigators in southwest Missouri work a reasonable amount of time, secure the scene for the night, and come back as soon as the sun comes up to finishing processing. Not only does this

allow the investigators to get adequate rest to do their jobs to the best of their ability, but it also allows the scene to be examined using natural light, which often reveals much more than alternate light sources (R. Renken, personal communication, October 7, 2015).

Not only can physical mistakes be made while investigating a scene, like missing a piece of critical evidence because of the lack of sleep, but mistakes can be made mentally as the investigators try to put together what happened. Investigators typically develop a hypothesis about what happened to help determine the scope of the search, like a disastrous scene might indicate a struggle. However, investigators must keep in mind that their hypotheses are not set in stone; they should not search only for evidence that fits their hypotheses. Investigators must be willing to change their hypotheses with the discovery of new facts and evidence (Gerberth, 2006, p 186).

Flexibility is crucial when investigators are mentally putting the puzzle pieces together. Just like Tim Wilson says in his crime scene investigation courses at Missouri Southern State University, “Remember, the scene is like a jigsaw puzzle. Any one piece of evidence does not tell the whole picture but many pieces put together can,” (T. Wilson, personal communication, September 28, 2015). Wilson also says, “Being aware of the natural tendency to focus on one theory only and not consider other plausible explanations so as not to take the evidence out of context” is typically on his mind the most when investigating a crime scene. All investigators should have this mindset while at a scene; being aware of the possibility of narrow-minded thinking and striving to prevent it is a great way to ensure that there are minimal distractions and everyone is focused on finding the truth.

The rest of this thesis will focus on two homicide cases that occurred in Baltimore County, Maryland: *John Albert Miller, IV v. the State of Maryland* and *Adnan Syed v. the State*

of Maryland. Using the information provided in this section, these two cases will be discussed and analyzed for investigative approach and procedures. Understanding the process and guidelines behind crime scene investigations, specifically homicide investigations, will provide a foundation for grasping what happened in these two cases and why the investigators found and/or did not find certain evidence.

IV. John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland

The case of *John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland* was chosen for this research because of its similarities to *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland*. In both cases, a young girl in high school was murdered and the defendants were similarly charged. Both of these cases occurred in Baltimore County, Maryland between 1998 and 1999 and were tried between 2000 and 2003. Although the cases have different facts, the Miller case is being used as a comparison to the Syed case to help explain the criminal justice process and investigative procedures. The similarities help provide a better understanding of what could have or should have been done differently in the Syed case to reduce the possible uncertainty about the defendant's guilt or innocence.

Background

Shen Dullea Poehlman (see Appendix, figure 1) was a seventeen-year-old blonde, athletic teenager who loved to play tennis and was preparing to attend college at Florida State University to study marine biology when she was strangled to death by twenty-six-year-old John Albert Miller, IV (see Appendix, figure 2). Shen grew up in a community east of Baltimore on a busy street full of kids who loved to play. According to police, Shen met Miller at the swimming pool in the Reisterstown apartment complex where Miller had recently moved. Shen was spending time with a few friends, one of whom worked as a pool lifeguard. Miller approached Shen and

her friends, asking if one of them would be willing to babysit his children. All the girls said no, except the trustworthy, carefree Shen Poehlman (Goodman, 1998).

The Timeline

Shen Poehlman spent the afternoon of July 27, 1998 with her best friends, Lauren and Jessica, at the Bentley Park Apartments pool, where Jessica worked as a lifeguard. Shen and Lauren had to work from 5:30 to 9:30 that evening, so Lauren left the pool around 3:30 or 4 p.m., but Shen stayed until 4:30 p.m. The girls agreed to spend the night at Lauren's house, and Shen later told Lauren that she agreed to babysit the next day for a man who had approached her on her way out. After Shen left, Miller asked Jessica whether Shen had any boyfriends. Miller talked with Jessica for forty-five minutes and told her that he had children and a young nephew who was coming to stay with him. When questioned, Jessica told police she noticed a tattoo on Miller's arm; she had previously seen him driving a Geo Tracker, and recalled that he used the name John (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

When Shen and Lauren finished work, they went to Lauren's home. Lauren left to pick up Jessica, but Shen stayed to wait for a call about the babysitting job. When they returned, Shen told the girls she received the call. Lauren and Jessica were concerned, and Lauren told Shen not to take the job because Shen did not know him. Shen insisted on going, but agreed to page them around 10 a.m. when she arrived at Miller's apartment. No message was received from Shen the next day, so Lauren and Jessica looked for her car and the Geo Tracker. The girls called Shen's mother when they could not find either vehicle. Shen then failed to report for work at 5:30 p.m., so Shen's mother called the Baltimore County police (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Officer Ransom met with Jessica, Lauren, and Shen's mother at the apartment pool around 6 p.m. Lauren and Jessica told him everything they knew about the previous day. Based on what he learned, Officer Ransom did not classify the matter as a routine missing child, and he called his supervisor, who dispatched additional officers to help find Shen. By 7 p.m., they knew a person named John Miller lived in Apartment 3B at the Bentley Park Apartments. They also obtained a New York registration for the green Geo Tracker. When there was no response at the apartment, they had a maintenance man let them in to see if Shen was there. They were only allowed to look in places that would reasonably hide a person, and found no one (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

The police continued searching the general area, but one officer stayed in the parking lot in front of Miller's apartment. Around 9:10 p.m., a Geo Tracker appeared without lights, approached the police car, but then drove off. The officer was unable to find the car, but when he returned to the parking lot, he saw it parked in front of the apartment. The sergeant in charge of the investigation approached the apartment and knocked on the door. Ms. Sherman, Miller's girlfriend, answered and told the officers that John was in the bathroom when they asked if anyone else was home; she invited the officers inside. The sergeant told Miller when he came out of the bathroom that he was bringing two girls to see if he was the person who was talking with Shen the previous day. An officer brought Jessica and Lauren to the apartment parking lot, and the girls immediately began to cry and said "that's him, that's him." At that point, around 9:30 p.m., Miller was arrested and taken to the police station for further investigation. The apartment was secured pending issuance of a search warrant (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

The police arrested Miller without a warrant because they had probable cause to believe that a felony had been committed; Shen, a responsible girl with no history of drug abuse had been missing for more than ten hours. The police knew she agreed to babysit for Miller, and she had promised her friends she would call or page when she arrived at his apartment. She did not keep that promise and did not arrive for work that evening. Police also had knowledge that the defendant had a previous false imprisonment charge, his alibi was probably a lie, and he was acting suspiciously. Witnesses also positively identified him as the person who was seen with the victim at the pool (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

The Interrogation

The search for Shen continued, meanwhile a homicide detective talked with Miller at the station. Miller was read his Miranda rights and questioned about his knowledge of Shen's disappearance. Miller told the detective that he came to Baltimore in May from Rochester, New York with his girlfriend. After learning Shen's name from the lifeguard, Miller said he asked her if she could babysit for him in about two weeks, because his children were coming from New York. Miller continued, saying Shen asked him to call her that evening, and he did so but she said that she was going away for a week, and he told her he would call her when she returned. Miller claimed he had no further contact, and said he took Sherman to work the next day, then played golf with three other men from about 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Afterwards, Miller stated that he went shopping for an engagement ring for Sherman and ran a few errands. When he returned to his apartment, he was arrested (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Shen's car was located around 3 a.m. in a dead-end area of an apartment complex not far from where Miller lived. The windows were up, the car was locked, and Shen's body was in the back seat, face down, and partially covered with a blanket. It was obvious to the detectives who

found her that Shen had been dead for some time because of signs of lividity¹, so the scene was not disturbed (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

The homicide detective told Miller that Shen's body had been found and said he did not believe Miller's story. Then, Miller anxiously admitted he had killed Shen. He admitted he met Shen at the pool around 9:30 a.m. on July 28th and took her to his apartment. Miller stated that he gave her chastity belts, which she put on, then laid down on her stomach, and he performed oral sex on her, masturbated, and ejaculated on her back. He said that even though Shen promised not to tell anyone, he panicked and put a plastic clothing bag over her head, wanting her to pass out. When she pretended to pass out but bit a hole in the plastic instead, he put a pillow over the bag and a belt around her neck. When she asked him to stop, he did. Miller said he then called and spoke with Sherman and after finishing the call, he put Shen in her car, and left her at another apartment complex. He said she was still breathing and he should have called for help, but instead he left her in the hot, locked car with the windows up. He took her key, shirt, and purse; Miller threw the key near a tree and the purse and shirt in different dumpsters (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Miller then took the detectives to the locations where they recovered Shen's shirt, purse, and car key. Miller was then left alone, but watched in an interview room, where he made many calls. Conversations were overheard by the officers who later testified about them. In some calls, he admitted masturbating but denied having sex, in others he admitted having oral sex as well as masturbating on Shen. In some, Miller said that he killed Shen, yet in others, he mentioned that

¹ Lividity is caused by settling of blood in a body from the effect of gravity. It appears as a purple discoloration of the skin. The observation of lividity is important for two reasons:

It gives the investigator a general idea how long the body has been dead;

It tells you definitely whether or not the body was moved after death (Gerberth, 2007).

See Appendix 1, figure 3 for an example.

she was, or may have been, alive when he left her. With the heat, whether she was alive or not did not matter. In most calls, he admitted strangling her and admitted he could have saved her but chose not to do so (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Interestingly, Miller's lack of credibility was exposed by the medical examiner's testimony. "The disposal of Poehlman's body necessarily occurred hours after the killing because lividity had become fixed in Shen's back at the time she was found lying face down. It is obvious, therefore, that she was left lying on her back for hours after she died, before appellant moved her to her car and disposed of her property," (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Trial and Outcome

Sherman testified against Miller in court, saying she called the apartment between 9 and 9:30 a.m., but no one answered. Miller seemed rushed when he called her at lunch, which was unusual. Sherman stated that when Miller picked her up from work, he was sweating abundantly and had vomited; he told her it was something he ate, yet they picked up Taco Bell for dinner on the way home. Miller told her that he met a girl at the pool, brought her home, and "he thought he hurt her," (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000). When police were around their apartment he said, "I think I might have killed her," (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000). Sherman did not cover for Miller. She invited the officers into her home when Miller hid in the bathroom and she answered the door.

The medical examiner testified that the cause of death was ligature strangulation and the marks on Poehlman's neck were consistent with the belt later found in Miller's apartment. The bruises he found to be from blunt force injuries while Poehlman was still alive. The autopsy proved based on the lividity of the body and other facts, like Miller calling Sherman, that

Poehlman had been dead eight to twelve hours before she was put in her car. Clarence Bobbitt, Miller's temporary cellmate, also testified against him in court saying that Miller admitted the sexual acts were not consensual. Bobbitt explained in detail how Miller sexually assaulted Poehlman from the time she knocked on the door until he disposed of her belongings (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

The information provided herein (the story, the interrogation, and the trial) all contributed to Miller's conviction and sentence of the death penalty. However, as previously mentioned, the prison sentences and verdicts were affirmed, the death penalty was removed because Bobbitt might have been given a deal by the prosecution to testify against Miller, and the case was remanded for a new trial and resentencing of the murder conviction (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000). After continuous hearings and the Poehlman family reliving Shen Poehlman's death for nearly a decade, Miller finally plead guilty to first degree murder at his new trial when the prosecution agreed to no longer seek the death penalty. The judge sentenced Miller to life in prison without the possibility of parole (McMenamin, 2008).

Facts

John Albert Miller, IV was charged with murder, attempted rape, first degree sexual offense, robbery, and false imprisonment of Shen Poehlman in Baltimore County, Maryland. The case was moved to Allegany County because the state was seeking the death penalty. The jury in Allegany County convicted Miller of premeditated murder, first degree sexual offense, robbery, and false imprisonment with a sentence of capital punishment for murder plus thirty years for the first degree sexual offense, five years for robbery, and one year for false imprisonment. Miller filed a motion for new trial based on the 2002 *Ring v. Arizona* Supreme Court case, "which he urged rendered the statutory process for weighing mitigating factors against aggravating factors

unconstitutional, and that Clarence Bobbitt, a State's witness against him, had received an inducement for his testimony” (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000). The Circuit Court denied this motion, and Miller appealed. The seven judges assigned to this case did not agree on much; there were three votes to reverse capital punishment based on the Ring case, three votes to reverse the convictions and all sentences because Bobbitt may have been promised leniency by the State for his testimony, four votes to affirm the verdicts and prison sentences, but four votes to reverse capital punishment. The final judgment of the Court of Appeals of Maryland affirmed the verdicts and prison sentences, reversed the death sentence, and remanded the case for a new sentencing on the murder conviction, without a majority Court opinion (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

Miller does not deny that he convinced Shen to come into his apartment to babysit or that he engaged in sexual activity with her and strangled her to death using a belt. His appeal concerns the issues of whether the sexual activity was consensual or violent and nonconsensual to constitute a first degree sexual offense and whether the murder was in the course of a first degree sexual offense (John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland, 2000).

V. Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland

Background

Hae Min Lee (see Appendix, figure 4), a star senior athlete in high school (Citiprime, 2014), was last seen at 2:30 p.m. on January 13th, 1999 (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 2). She was supposed to be on her way to pick up her cousins, but she never arrived. Her body was found nearly a month later in Leakin Park in Baltimore, Maryland. Adnan Masud Syed (see Appendix, figure 5), her former boyfriend, was convicted of killing her. Syed and Lee went to

high school together, became friends in May 1998, started dating, and broke up sometime in November. Hae Min Lee was working after school at LensCrafters and planned to attend optometry school after graduation (Green, n.d.).

Facts

Adnan Syed was charged with first degree murder, second degree murder, kidnapping, robbery, and false imprisonment after an anonymous tip and grand jury indictment on April 13th, 1999. Syed's first trial on December 15th, 1999 ended in a mistrial. A jury in the Baltimore City Circuit Court convicted Adnan Syed of first degree murder, robbery, kidnapping, and false imprisonment at his trial that lasted from January 7th, 2000 to February 25th, 2000. The hearing was heavily based on the State's key witness, Jay Wilds (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 138-139). Syed and his attorney filed a motion for a new trial on March 6th, 2000. They believed the State committed prosecutorial misconduct and violated Syed's due process rights when it excluded favorable evidence because of a plea agreement with its key witness. They thought the trial court committed reversible error by prohibiting the defense from presenting evidence to the jury. They also claimed that admitting a letter from Lee to Syed and Lee's diary were prejudicial hearsay. The judge denied all of these accusations for a new trial (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 1-2, 57) and sentenced Syed to life in prison for murder, plus thirty years for kidnapping, and ten years for robbery (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 140).

A motion to modify the sentence was filed by Syed and his attorney on July 28th, 2000, but it was denied. Three years later, an appeal was filed, but it was also denied. On May 28th, 2010 a petition for post-conviction relief was received alleging that Syed's counsel was ineffective (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 140-141). A hearing on the petition was

held on October 11th and October 25th, 2012, and even though Syed gave nine reasons why he should be granted post-conviction relief, this petition was also denied (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 158). On January 27th, 2014, an application for leave to appeal the denial of post-conviction relief was submitted because Syed and his attorney alleged that the circumstances and outcomes of the trial could have been different had his defense counsel called a valuable witness for Syed or negotiated a plea offer with the prosecution (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 160-180). The court granted Syed's petition on February 6th, 2015 (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003). A following order on May 18th, 2015 remanded the case to the circuit court to allow Syed to request the post-conviction proceedings to be re-opened (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003). As of October 18th, 2015, no further updates are available.

Trial and Outcome

Compared to *John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland* and through this research, Syed's case does not have nearly the amount of detail regarding the evidence and timeline of events. Syed was first questioned about Lee's disappearance on January 25th, 1999. Syed told police that he dated Lee, and he had class with her late in the afternoon on January 13th, 1999, but after class he went to track practice and did not see Lee for two days because school was cancelled due to weather conditions (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 2). In an interview at Syed's home on February 26th, 1999, Syed stated that he had a relationship with Lee and had been in her car before, but not on January 13th, even though he could not recall what happened that day (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 7).

The prosecution's case is based a significant amount on Jay Wilds testimony given at the trial in January and February 2000. Wilds told the jury that at 10 p.m. on January 12th, 1999,

Syed called him and asked him what he was doing the following day, to which he said he was not doing anything. Syed called him again around 10:45 a.m. the next morning and Wilds told him that he needed to buy a gift for his girlfriend, so Syed said he would take Wilds shopping. Wilds continued with his testimony, saying they shopped at the mall for an hour and a half before Syed told him that he needed to get back to school. Syed also told him that his relationship with Lee was not going well, and he was going to kill her. Syed changed the subject and told Wilds that he could use his car, and Syed would call him when he was ready to be picked up. Later that day, Wilds met Syed, who was wearing red gloves, at a Best Buy. Syed told him to park next to a gray Nissan Sentra (Lee's car), and showed him Lee's body in the trunk. Syed drove the Sentra while Wilds followed him (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 3). Wilds testified that when Syed stopped, he parked the car and got into the passenger seat with Wilds and said "that killing [Lee] kind of hurt him but not really" (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 4). Wilds then asked Syed how he could treat someone that way if he loved her; Syed replied, "all knowing is Allah," (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 4). Then Syed told Wilds that he needed to return for track practice because he needed to be seen. As Syed got out of the car, he stated that he had killed someone with his bare hands (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 4).

Wilds then drove to a friend's house where he smoked marijuana. Wilds went back to pick up Syed, and they drove back the friend's house to smoke more together. Later that evening, Lee's parents called Syed asking if he had seen her, to which he said he had not and they should call her current boyfriend. Then the police called asking the same question, and again, Syed denied knowing anything. According to Wilds, when he and Syed left their friend's house, Syed told him that Wilds had to help him get rid of Lee. Wilds stated that he agreed to help because he

was scared that Syed would otherwise hold his drug dealing against him. They drove to Leakin Park and Wilds refused to help Syed get Lee out of the trunk, but helped him dig a hole in which to put her. After covering up Lee with dirt, they threw away some of her things into a dumpster. All the while, Wilds stated that he had been paging a friend about what was happening and told the friend that he wanted her to be the person that knew Wilds did not kill Lee. Wilds' friend testified and their stories supported each other (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 4-6).

The medical examiner testified that Lee had been strangled to death, but was unsure when she was killed. Knowing when Lee was killed could have been difficult to pinpoint because of the amount of time that passed before her body was found as well as the weather conditions while her body was lying exposed in the park. The detective who responded to Leakin Park where Lee was found testified that he was able to get Lee's cell phone records because of information that was in her missing person report. The detective stated that he went to Wilds' friend's home on February 26th, 1999 and asked her to speak with him at the police station. She gave a statement that night saying she heard Lee had been strangled, even though this information had not yet been released to the public. The detective spoke with Wilds on three occasions. The first time, Wilds said Lee's car was on a specific road when he saw her body in the truck (recall that he testified to the car being in a Best Buy parking lot). The second time, Wilds seemed to remember things better after the detective informed him that his statement did not match Syed's cell phone records. The detective testified that he interviewed Wilds a third time, and Wilds admitted that he lied before to cover up the fact that he dealt marijuana (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, pp. 6-7).

Wilds' recollection of the events around January 13th, 1999 changed several times during interviews before the trial. His statement about Syed threatening to kill Lee changed from the

day before her murder to nearly a week earlier. He changed the location of where he said Syed killed Lee and stated that Syed paid him to help. Wilds showed the police where Lee's car and her body were located. Wilds plead guilty to being an accessory after-the-fact to Lee's murder (Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland, 2003, p. 8-9).

Wilds testimony and the State's case led the jury to believe that Adnan Syed was guilty of first degree murder, robbery, kidnapping, and false imprisonment. Syed was sentenced to life in prison for murder, plus thirty years for kidnapping, and ten years for robbery. Syed and his new attorney are still fighting for his claim of innocence today by continuing to look for inconsistencies in the case and possible DNA testing. *Serial* has given his case an immense amount of publicity which has increased his supporters.

VI. *Serial's* Interpretation

As previously mentioned, *Serial's* first season examined the criminal case of *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland*. Sarah Koenig investigated Syed's case to figure out exactly where this high school student was for just 21 minutes after school on January 13th, 1999. Koenig took on this case because she was fascinated with Hae Min Lee's murder; plus, the case was brought directly to her by a woman named Rabia Chaudry. Chaudry is the mother of Saad Chaudry, Syed's best friend. She is also a lawyer who believes Syed is innocent. Rabia Chaudry wrote to Koenig about the case because she knew Koenig was the reporter who covered the story about a Baltimore attorney, Cristina Gutierrez, who was disbarred for mishandling clients' money. Gutierrez's last case was coincidentally Adnan Syed's case (Koenig, 2014).

In the first episode, titled "The Alibi", Koenig talks about how the relationship in this case is practically a Shakespearean matchup: boy and girl fall in love with each other, but they

are not supposed to date because of their families. Then the girlfriend is killed. Their relationship had to be kept secret because Syed's family is Pakistani Conservative Muslim who believe one can only be married or not married; there is no in between. Although they only dated for eight months, the prosecution said that Syed was so angry over the breakup that he killed Hae Min Lee. However, Saad said the only thing Syed was guilty of was being a normal kid in an immigrant family. Plus, no physical evidence was found incriminating Syed except a few of his fingerprints in Lee's car, which is not alone enough evidence considering their relationship (Koenig, 2014).

Therefore, the question to be answered in this podcast was who killed Hae Min Lee? The testimony told by Jay Wilds in section five of this thesis match well with Koenig's discussion of his testimony. Koenig is able to provide more detail than the court documents, however. She shares the actual interviews with investigators through the audio podcast. Wilds interviewed with the investigators several times and pieces of his story changed every time. In episode four, "Inconsistencies", Koenig mentions that Wilds told his story at least six times, changing the location of where they went shopping for Wilds' girlfriend from the Westview Mall to the Security Square Mall. More significantly, he switched the location of where he and Syed were when investigators called Syed to ask about Lee's whereabouts from a restaurant to a friend's house. Wilds also reported hearing Syed say he was going to kill Lee on the day of the murder, but later changed the time from the day of her murder to four or five days before. Wilds inconsistencies made Koenig question whether Wilds knew the murder was going to happen before January 13th (Koenig, 2014).

Syed's story was not consistent either. When he got phone calls from two different detectives two weeks apart about whether he asked Lee for a ride after school, Syed first said

yes, but then he said no. Syed claimed he was at school the entire time after the last bell and before track practice, but his cell phone record suggested otherwise. Syed claimed he did not remember much about January 13th, 1999 because it was just a normal day. Koenig's response included many questions, such as how is getting a phone call from a detective about your missing ex-girlfriend a normal day? Would you not remember the events of that day solely because of that phone call (Koenig, 2014)?

Another thing Syed cannot explain is a particular call listed in his call records that day at 3:32 p.m., which is the Nisha call. Nisha is a girl only Syed knew. Nisha told Koenig she did talk to Wilds and Syed that day, but it was later in the evening, not in the afternoon, and that Wilds and Syed were at the video store where Wilds worked. Wilds did not start working at the video store until later, and Syed cannot explain this phone call other than maybe it was a butt-dial. It was not until *Serial's* final episode of season one, "What We Know", that Koenig discovered possible reasons for this call. The question of whether it is possible that the call could have been charged to Syed's cell phone even if it was never answered came up during the *Serial* producers' final review of the facts. The AT&T user agreement from 1999 was reviewed, and it plainly stated, "We do not bill for unanswered calls". In the fine print, however, it says unless the call is not terminated within a reasonable time. The call to Nisha lasted two minutes and twenty-two seconds. Koenig decided that this was probably not a reasonable amount of time because most people would likely hang up after thirty seconds, so the call was charged to the account. This information eliminated this huge unknown piece of evidence against Syed (Koenig, 2014).

In episode three, "Leakin Park", Koenig discussed the detectives and the investigation of Syed's case. Koenig said, "The cops who investigated [Bill Ritz and Greg MacGillivray]... were both experienced Baltimore detectives" (Koenig, 2014). On the first day of the investigation, the

investigators spoke with Lee's friends. On day two, they called local hospitals and motels, and checked the high school parking lot, as well as Syed's alibi and Lee's current boyfriend, Don's, alibi. Don had a perfect alibi; he was at work. Syed's could not remember much of that day. On February 9th, 1999, the search for Lee stopped because a man whom Koenig refers to as Mr. S, called the Baltimore police department and says he may have found a body in Leakin Park. This was not uncommon because Leakin Park was known for bodies. Mr. S ran into the body when he pulled off the side of the road to use the restroom after having a beer on his lunch break. He was a maintenance man at the high school, and he was trying to fix a door, but the school did not have the right tools so he went home on his lunch break to get them. Lee's body was 127 feet into the woods behind a fallen tree. Koenig's question was why Mr. S walked so far back into the woods just to take a quick pee. At the scene of Lee's body in Leakin Park, the investigators found rope, an unused condom, bullets, shell casings, and a liquor bottle (Koenig, 2014).

The only other evidence against Syed besides his fingerprints was the call log that did not match up with Syed's or Wilds' testimonies until after six that evening. Koenig concluded that everyone in this case was lying because almost nothing was consistent. Still a year after Koenig first contacted Syed about this case, there is no answer about who was lying (Syed or Wilds). The back and forth never let up. Koenig continued to ask the utility of each lie. Even in the last episode, new information was still being discovered (Koenig, 2014).

Koenig also mentioned in the first episode that in one of Wilds' interviews, on February 28th, 1999, the officers who interviewed Wilds implied that Wilds knew Syed was going to kill Lee because Syed left his phone and his car with Wilds. Plus, Syed said he would call Wilds to pick him up. However, Wilds only told detectives that he was loaned the car and phone, but he never mentioned it was because Syed was going to kill Lee (Koenig, 2014).

Koenig had quality people looking into this case: Jim Trainum, a homicide detective in Washington, D.C., and students at the University of Michigan Law School who contribute to the Innocence Project there. In the eighth episode, “The Deal with Jay”, Trainum presented information about false confessions and interrogation techniques. After looking at the reports Koenig was able to provide him, he stated that the detectives in this case seemed to be cautious and methodical. They were not rushing to catch and release suspects and the evidence collection was well documented. Overall, it was a pretty sound investigation, probably better than average. Trainum also said in the last episode that Syed’s case was not unremarkable either. “All cases have some ambiguity,” says Trainum, “but overall, [they are] fairly clear. This one is a mess” (Koenig, 2014).

Although Trainum said the case had a pretty solid investigation, too many things are still unknown. The rope and liquor bottle found at the scene were never tested for DNA. Syed’s potential alibi witness, Asia McClain, who said Syed was with her at the library when Lee was killed, was never questioned. Mr. S was practically overlooked as a suspect, and many of Wilds’ and Syed’s friends were never questioned. Many people that Koenig looked into, researched, found, and questioned were never contacted by Syed’s defense attorney or anyone involved in the case. The University of Michigan Innocence Project students filed a motion to test the DNA that was never tested because there was another unsolved case of a Korean girl who was also murdered and buried in a park in Baltimore County. The suspect in that case, Ronald Lee Moore, was released from prison on January 1st, 1999, just twelve days before Lee’s murder. The only question is, how does this random, yet plausible suspect account for Wilds knowing where Lee’s car was after-the-fact (Koenig, 2014)?

Koenig ends the podcast saying that if there were two file folders for evidence in this case, one would be full of circumstantial evidence against Syed, but the only evidence in another file would be the fact that Wilds was able to tell the investigators where Lee's car was after her murder; that is it. Still, no one can say what truly happened to Hae Min Lee on January 13th, 1999, but if Koenig was a juror, she would have acquitted Syed because of the lack of hard evidence against him. As a woman walking down the street, she would say that finding out who killed Lee seemed so realistic at first, but they did not have all the facts fifteen years prior to this podcast, and she still does not have all the facts today (Koenig, 2014).

VII. Analysis

Koenig was able to provide more detailed information about Syed's case in the podcast than I was able to find online because she had the actual case files. The prosecution's case focused entirely on Jay Wilds' testimony, in which Koenig found many inconsistencies. However, Syed could not remember the majority of that day, so neither Wilds nor Syed made the case any easier to solve. The Miller case was not as unclear. There was evidence, witnesses, and a confession. The case appears to be comparably an overall easy case considering the leads in the investigation. This section will explain Koenig's opinions of her investigation of Syed's case to what happened in 1999, and then discuss how Koenig might have approached the Miller case.

Comparing the mindsets of the investigators in this case to Koenig's thoughts throughout the podcast is difficult because there was not much released publicly about the investigation, just a few documents which mainly focus on the testimony of Wilds. Based on Jim Trainum's opinion of the detectives' investigation in this case, I would say that the investigators performed a satisfactory crime scene investigation in 1999 as I do not think it is excusable to overlook the

DNA testing of the rope and liquor bottle at the scene, nor fail to follow all of the potential leads in this case, including Asia McClain. Even though Syed's prints were found in Lee's car, 13 other prints were also found that were unknown and did not match Syed or Wilds. Could these have been Ronald Lee Moore's prints? These prints were never looked into any further. I think I could write a book about the overlooked evidence that Koenig mentions in the *Serial* episodes; there is too much. Therefore, I propose that something was going on in the minds of these investigators as they processed the scenes in this case. Whether it was Wilds' testimony which caused investigators to quit looking into the evidence details, or personal conflicts that made them not care, or simply the fact that it was just another dead body in Leakin Park, I cannot say because I cannot talk to the investigators myself. I will mention however, that Bill Ritz told Koenig that he did not see the point in discussing this case with her because it has been adjudicated and "beyond question, [Syed] did it."

Koenig approaches this case quite differently. She started investigating this case as if it just happened. She talked with the people closest to Lee, just like any investigator would. Then she branched out and looked into every lead she ran into, including trying to see if the after school timing was accurate by retracing the steps Wilds explains in his testimony. Koenig spends most of her time being confused, doubting Syed, doubting herself, and wondering whether there will ever be an answer. This, in my opinion, is how every case should be investigated. Even though it is customary for investigators to hypothesize, it is also important to remember that no one knows what happened except perhaps the person who did it. Koenig's emotions are like a roller coaster in this case; she ranges from being frustrated about her doubts to being excited about a new lead to being worried that she is wasting her time. Regardless of her emotion, I think the most important thing to point out in Koenig's investigation of this case is that she never gives

up until she has exhausted all of her resources and looked into every detail that might have provided an answer, including the fine print of the 1999 AT&T user agreement.

If Koenig were to look into the Miller case, I think she would do exactly what she did with Syed's case. I do not think this case would be as difficult to investigate, however, because there was physical evidence against John Miller, his personal confession, and witnesses who saw him with Poehlman. I think she would retrace the steps from the very beginning and question everyone and everything, including the assumed facts. I do not think she would let the original outcome influence how she reviewed the details of the case. Nonetheless, I think Koenig would be just as interested in knowing that her investigation found the truth and would allow the jury to make an honest decision about the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt.

I have written a list of suggestions for new investigators to consider using during their investigations based on Koenig's mindset during her investigation compared to the mindsets of the investigators in both the Miller and Syed cases. Koenig spent nearly a year wrapped up in Syed's case trying to find the truth. Every investigation should revolve around the investigators' desire to find the truth.

VIII. Conclusion

The following list of suggestions is for new investigators to consider using when investigating crime scenes. These suggestions are intended to improve the mindsets of investigators who may overlook evidence or details of a crime scene because of distractions at the scene, preformed hypotheses, or other reasons.

1. Begin a scene investigation without presuming guilt.
2. Do not let any hypothesis about a case control your search for evidence.

3. Follow up on every lead.
4. Do not make assumptions.
5. Continue asking questions, even when you think you know the answer.
6. Follow your instincts, even if your fellow investigators say something is insignificant.
7. Pay attention to inconsistencies and do not ignore them.
8. Get some sleep; if a scene takes more than twenty-four hours to investigate, do not push forward without rest. You cannot complete a thorough investigation without a sharp mind.
9. Focus only on the task in front of you, but do not forget what has already been discovered.
10. Write down everything you do, see, hear, smell, and think about the scene. You never know what will be relevant.
11. Reread your notes several times to remember there is probably more than one possible explanation in every case.
12. Do not believe anyone or anything until it has been proven through evidence.
13. Do not give up until you have exhausted every option and every resource.
14. Dedicate yourself to the case.
15. Allow yourself to have emotions. Even though homicide cases often require investigators to shut off their emotions to be able to handle different situations, expressing your emotions also encourages your curiosity as an investigator which may spark questions that would have otherwise been overlooked.

I believe the investigators in *John Albert Miller, IV v. State of Maryland* followed the standard investigative procedure and applied some of the suggestions I have made to their case,

allowing for a complete and thorough investigation. If these suggestions were applied to Syed's case in 1999 by the investigators involved, I think the case would have had a different outcome for Adnan Syed. These suggestions will help new investigators remember to keep an open mind and a positive attitude about every case they are assigned to in hopes of reducing the number of unsolved cases and wrongfully convicted defendants.

Some of the suggestions listed may already be in the standard procedures for investigators, but it is important to reiterate them based on what I have learned through this research. Sarah Koenig provided a new perspective on *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland* through the *Serial* podcast, and I think all crime scene investigators can learn from her determination to find an answer in the case.

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Appendix



*Figure 1 - Shen Dullea Poehlman. This figure is an image of the seventeen-year-old girl strangled in the case of *John Albert Miller IV v. State of Maryland*.*



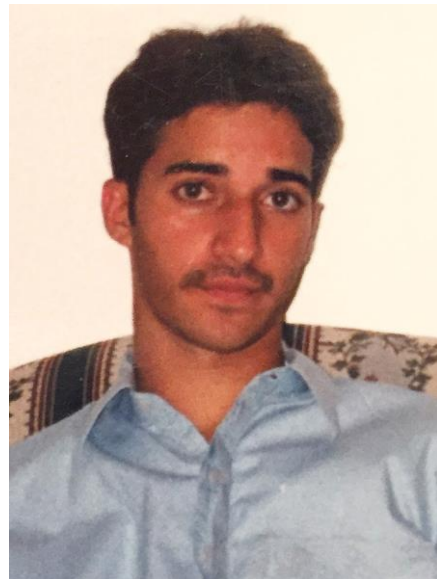
Figure 2 - John Albert Miller, IV. This figure is an image of the man convicted of first degree murder of Poehlman.



Figure 3- Lividity (aka Livor Mortis). This figure illustrates lividity on the back of a deceased person, similar to what it might have looked like on Poehlman.



*Figure 4 - Hae Min Lee. This figure is an image of the nineteen-year-old girl murdered in the case of *Adnan Syed v. State of Maryland*.*



*Figure 5 - Adnan Syed. This figure is an image of the nineteen-year-old convicted of murdering Lee and featured in *Serial's* first season.*