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Date

In the Podcast, Is Adnan Found Guilty or Not?

**Introduction**

 Adnan Syed is a Muslim-American from Baltimore, Maryland. He was convicted of murdering his ex-girlfriend, Hae Min Lee in 1999. They were both seniors in Woodlawn School at the time of murder. They were both popular in school. She was an active member of Lacrosse and field hockey team. She also managed a boys wrestling team. They both kept their relationship secret from their families. Later on, Lee wanted to tell her family about this relationship but Adnan was determined to keep it secret. This variation in their opinion caused problems among them and fueled their breakup. After that, Lee started to date another man named Don. They both used to work together at the local Lens crafters (Editors).

 This research paper is based on the podcast, “serial”. It will explore the details about Hae Min Lee’s murder case and will point out the flaws of the trial which indicate that Adnan Syed is not guilty, based on the information provided by podcast.

**Jay’s Testimony**

**1st interview:**

 It was Jay’s statement that helped the police to put Adnan in jail with a life sentence in February for the murder of his girlfriend, Hae Min Lee. He gave his statement that Adnan confessed in front of him that he killed Hae and afterward asked for Jay’s help in burying the dead body of Lee.

 Adnan and Jay were never best friends. They were rather acquaintances. Jay used to sell marijuana to Adnan and sometimes they used to go out together. They knew each other so well that Adnan gave his new phone to Jay on the day of Hae’s murder. That is the only statement on which they both agree.

**2nd and 3rd Interviews**:

 In the second interview which was recorded officially unlike the first one, Jay changed the details of his account of the day of murder. In one interview, he had told the police that Adnan showed him Hae’s body in his car at Edmonson Avenue and not at Best Buy. In the other interview, he said that Adnan killed her at Patapsco State Park.

 While Adnan was serving his sentence in jail, Jay was living a quiet life under police radar until Adnan's case was brought into the media. The podcast thrust light upon his consistently changing versions of stories. Jay was interviewed by *The Intercepts* but he refused to talk for the podcast with Koenig. This was a shocking development in the case and cast more doubt on Adnan’s conviction.

Once again, Jay changed his story and told in the interview that Adnan showed him Hae's body outside his grandmother’s house (Adejobi).

 Adnan maintained his innocence since day one and he had never his statement in any of the court proceedings. This shows major difference between Jay and Adnan’s credibility. One is frequently changing his statement and the other is stick to his only statement.

**Lack of Evidence**

 The case against Adnan Syed ended without a real conclusion. He is still in jail and the Maryland court denied his appeal for a new trial due to lack of evidence. Jay Wild once again changed his testimony by saying that his story was fabricated by the police. The autopsy report of Hae Lee points out that the DNA found near corpse did not match with Adnan’s DNA. There was some intriguing evidence pointing to other two potential killers who had strong motive for murdering Hae Min Lee. First is Lee’s older boyfriend and co-worker, Don, who told his friends about the disappearance of Lee. At that time he has wounds on his arms but police questioned him after three weeks of Lee’s disappearance. By then, his wounds would have healed. Second is the man who found Lee’s dead body in the woods, Alonzo, the seller who claimed that he went into the woods to urinate and saw the dead body and informed the police immediately. Whereas, according to police reports, the area was too far from the main road where Lee’s body was found. He was previously convicted for indecent exposure that made him suspect in this case along with other incidents related to case. Police claim that it was difficult to see Lee’s body as it was covered with leaves. Another theory links him with this case is that the mark found on Lee’s shoulder is considered to be an equipment used in construction work which Seller had done for living. Also, he lived closed to Woodland School and there might be a chance that he had seen Hae. New evidence also revealed that Lee’s car was dumped in Baltimore lot where no one can see it. But it was not so hidden place and grass was found under the tires which was grown due to precipitation and thawing that took place between murder and its discovery. But the real question remained unanswered that who drove that car over there and Jay Wild was lying about it.

According to Rabia Chaudhry, the police could not find any evidence that Adnan was abusive nor any other strong evidence, so they bring in his religion. They asserted that Adnan is a Muslim so he can commit Hae’s murder (Margaritoff).

  The private investigators along with forensic pathologist and former medical examiner, who saw autopsy photos and made a report that Lee’s body was not buried until 10:30 p.m. and 2:30 a.m. Unlike in previous reports and Wild’s testimony, Lee’s body was buried around 7 in the evening. Her body showed evidence of lividity and there was a diamond shaped mark on her shoulder which indicates that her corpse was kept face down on an object with this specific shape. However, no such object was recovered from the crime scene. There were no struggling marks on Lee’s body which again refuted prosecution of trial and confirming that murder did not take place near Lee’s car. All of this does not prove Adnan’s innocence at once but it points out extremely flawed structure of the case (Reilly).

**Summary**

 A high-school senior, Hae Min Lee, one day disappeared in Baltimore County, Maryland in 1999. 17-year-old Adnan Syed, was arrested and charged for crime. He was given life sentence in prison**.**The case was based on the story of Adnan’s friend Jay who was the witness of crime and stated that he helped Adnan in burying the body of Hae. Whereas Adnan maintained that he has nothing to do with this murder. Although he did not remember what he was doing on that day. But his classmate, Asia, says that she knew where he was that afternoon. The real problem arises when she was not found anywhere. A few people believe that Adnan is telling the truth but many does not believe him.

Sara Koenig listened to trial testimony and searched through many documents, police records and she even talked to people to find out that what happened between Adnan Syed and Hae Min Lee. In the process of investigation, she got to know many unrevealed truths about the case. The evidence that police had gathered against Adnan was scant. They had few fingerprints which were not entirely supporting the fact that Adnan was the killer. Other than fingerprints, Police had cell records that they showed to the jury in support of Jay’s statement. Sarah examined all the circumstantial evidence against Adnan which they hold including his curious behavior, a note and a mysterious phone call (Koenig).

According to Sarah, she found many loopholes in the case made by the prosecutor. There were many invalid arguments filed by the prosecutors. The court of appeal was not being fair in this trial as well. The major witness was never appeared or heard in the court. Another witness changed his statement. All the judges who looked into this case agreed that the attorney, Cristina, was not able enough to carry out the trial prosecutions effectively. At was 17 years old when he was arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment based on extremely flawed case. Adnan’s attorney applied for appeal two times and got rejected by two different Maryland courts. He was not given a chance for a new trial (Koenig, Adnan Syed's conviction reinstated).

 Although prosecutors could not found any solid evidence against Adnan but they only convicted Adnan on the ever-changing statement of Wild and their one other mutual friend Jennifer Pusateri, who told the police that on the day of murder, Wild called her from Adnan’s phone and told her that Adnan had killed Hae (B. Editors). Since 2000, Adnan has been jailed for the crime which no one is sure that either he had committed or not (Shakhnazarova)

**Conclusion**

 The final episode of podcast “Serial” contained multiple revelations that point out that Adnan is innocent and it even raises questions on the handling of the case. It revealed that Adnan’s DNA was not found under the corpse's fingernails. The prosecution and the defense had not requested to test found DNA with Adnan’s DNA. They ignored this important step just to secure themselves as they knew that they had built a very flawed case. Adnan’s lawyer also failed to call prime witness Asia McClain in the court. Even after the telecast of podcast, the prosecution denied to conduct a DNA test. The DNA testing was conducted in 2018 by new defense team who showed the results to media. This shows that Adnan is non-guilty and the prosecution is allegedly tying him with the murder of Hae Min Lee. Moreover, the DNA found near the body was of an unidentified female whose DNA profile was not matched to any of the police database. There were also few fingerprints found on the rearview mirror of Lee’s car which does not belong to Adnan but they were also not matched with anyone on the database. Sarah Koenig created doubt over the conviction of Adnan by revealing shocking truths after one and another. However, the case remained unsolved to date.

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