

~ Case Study: Wayne Williams ~

While reading the handout, answer the following questions. Complete sentences are not necessary.

1. What kind of murder was Mr. Williams on trial for? What does this mean?

2. What did all 30 victims have in common?

3. Of the 30 or more mysterious deaths that were reported, how many of these deaths were charged to Williams?

4. How is fiber evidence often used in a case?

5. What were the names of the two young boys that Wayne Williams was being charged with for their murders?

Development of Williams as a Murder Suspect

6. What was important about the yellowish-green nylon fibers and the violet acetate fibers?

7. Why did investigators think that the fibers were part of a rug and not of other material like blankets or clothes?

8. Why couldn't the manufacturer of the fibers initially be identified?

9. Why were many of the victims found in the water nude or partially clothed?

10. Why were police present under the Jackson Parkway Bridge at 2:00 AM in the morning of May 22, 1981?

11. Where on the victim's body was the yellowish-green fiber found?

12. How did the police obtain a search warrant for Williams' home and car?

13. Besides the carpet in Williams home, what were the other two fiber/hair identifications made?

14. What two pieces of information about the carpet fibers made police think that the carpet was relatively rare and might not be found in large amounts?

The Williams's Carpet

15. In which room of Williams home was the carpet located that yielded the yellowish-green fibers?

16. Once the police determined the manufacturer (Wellman) of the carpet, what three pieces of information did police get next?

17. Based on the cross-section of the fiber, when was this particular carpet manufactured?

18. What was "Luxaire?"

19. The yellowish-green fibers were called what color by the manufacturer as what?

20. How did investigators narrow down the manufacturing time to 1970 and 1971?

21. If Williams hadn't been detained on the bridge that night, what would investigators have had to have done in order to find the carpet?

22. What were the odds of another carpet existing in the Atlanta area like Williams?

23. What was the difference between the Luxaire and Dreamer carpet?

24. How did investigators come up with the estimate that the Luxaire carpet was installed in about 82 rooms in the state of Georgia?

25. How did investigators come up with the 1 in 7,792 chance of finding a house with a room having carpet like Williams?

The Williams Trial

26. Even though the forensic investigators felt they had overwhelming evidence, who still had to be convinced?

27. Why did the prosecution feel they needed to "educate" the jury?

28. Based on probability, what were the odds of randomly selecting an automobile in the Atlanta area having the same carpet fibers as Williams' car?

29. What were the probability numbers used to show in the Williams Trial?

30. What fact demonstrates that fibers or hairs found on bodies are from recent surroundings?

31. Why was it important that some of the fibers found on victim Cater came from his pubic hair?

32. How did the investigators obtain the hairs and fibers from Williams' 1970 Station Wagon?

33. It is alleged that Wayne Williams killed his victims and then transported their bodies to the Chattahoochee River using either a blanket or a bedspread. Why were the recovered fibers lighter in color than on the original blanket?

34. What was the purpose of presenting evidence from 10 other murder victims during the Williams' Case?

35. Why was the hair evidence removed from the victim Patrick Baltazar so important to the case?

36. What was significant about the color of the fibers on the victims who were found on land and NOT in the water?

37. What is the basis for any argument against the fact that these fibers could have originated from a source *other* than Williams's environment?