

A Review of the Casey Anthony Trial

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Introduction

In June of 2008, Cynthia Anthony reported her two year old granddaughter, Caylee Anthony missing to the authorities of Orange County in Orlando, Florida. During questioning, Casey Anthony, the mother of Caylee Anthony informed the authorities that her child had been abducted by her nanny and that she had been searching for her unsuccessfully for a month (Siegel, 2011). Throughout the initial investigation, detectives found a number of inconsistencies with Casey Anthony's story which lead them to suspect she had a role in Caylee's disappearance; this ultimately lead to charges being brought against her (Siegel, 2011). This report will give a brief description of the background, charges and trial of Casey Anthony in the death of her daughter. It will also draw conclusions based on the evidence presented as well as analyze response of the media.

Discussion

Courtroom Work Group

Prosecutors spend most of their time working directly with other members of the courtroom work group. Even when interviewing witnesses or conducting legal research, the prosecutor is anticipating the reactions of judges and defense attorneys. Thus, the activities of prosecutors can be understood only within the setting of the courtroom work group. The Prosecutor is the most important member of the work group (Siegel, 2011). Prosecutors set the agenda for judges and defense attorneys by exercising discretion over the types of cases filed, the nature of acceptable plea agreements, and the sentences to be handed out. Prosecutors also

control the flow of information about cases by providing access to police arrest reports, laboratory tests, and defendants' criminal histories. By stressing certain information or withholding facts, prosecutors can influence the decisions of judges and defense attorneys. Hence, as the dominant force in the courtroom work group, prosecutors clearly set the tone for plea bargaining (Riley, 2011).

Prosecution's Case

The prosecution pointed out to various other facts - Casey Anthony stated to authorities that on the evening of June 9, 2008, after leaving work at Universal Studios she arrived at her nanny, Zenaida Fernandez's, residence to find that both she and her daughter were gone. Casey Anthony informed detectives that she began a search of her own but was unable to locate her daughter (Alvarez, 2011). Upon further investigation, the detectives found that Casey Anthony's statements were false. There was no record of a Zenaida Fernandez occupying an apartment at the complex Anthony listed (Siegel, 2011).

Additionally, she was unemployed and had not worked at Universal Studios for years; she was actually fired. Lastly, Anthony lied about the last date in which she saw her daughter. Anthony's last recorded encounter with her daughter was actually June 15, 2008 when her family travelled to visit her great grandmother in Mount Dora (Alvarez, 2011). Anthony showed little to no emotion for the loss of her daughter and the biggest red flag was the fact that she did not report Caylee Anthony missing for a month. Meanwhile, the vehicle that Casey Anthony had been driving was found abandoned. The truck operator who towed the vehicle expressed to the authorities that there was a smell of decomposition in the car. Also found in the trunk of the vehicle was a plastic bag, hair and presumably blood. On July 16, 2008, Casey Anthony was

charged with first-degree murder, aggravated child abuse, aggravated manslaughter of a child and four counts of lying to detectives (Alvarez, 2011).

Also, the focal point of the digital forensic evidence in the Casey Anthony case involved the recuperation and examination the Internet browser history of Anthony's computer. The browser history records contained in this database turned out to be extremely important to the prosecution. During a keyword search initiated on Anthony's personal computer, a hit was found for the word "chloroform". At various points during the trial, the prosecution referred to a visit to a page ("<http://www.sci-spot.com/Chemistry/chloroform.htm>") which was allegedly accessed 84 times per the forensic software CacheBack (Lohr, 2011).

The Defence

One of the biggest mysteries in this trial were the bizarre story the defense presented. They claimed that Caylee died an accidental death when she drowned in the Anthony's private swimming pool (Siegel, 2011). Then they suggest that Casey and her father George tried to cover up the death by hiding the body. But why try to cover up a death if it was accidental?

Furthermore, as stated above, during that trial, prosecutors could provide only circumstantial evidence of Anthony's guilt, and even that evidence sometimes worked against them. For example, one of the prosecution's main contentions was that Anthony used duct tape to suffocate her daughter. Discrediting this claim, Anthony's defense attorneys were able to show the jury that DNA traces found on the duct tape could not be matched to their client (Socia & Brown, 2014).

Conclusion

All in all, the trial of Casey Anthony ended up being a real life soap opera for viewers. Each day more evidence was presented and more witnesses testified. It provided top news for every news station after each day of court. People liked to talk amongst each other about what happened in court the day before and whether or not they thought she did it. It gave people suspense, it gave people strong emotion, it gave people a side to argue for, but most of all, it gave people entertainment.

So even if Casey Anthony was innocent of murdering her daughter, what about all the other crimes she committed? She lied to police multiple times during the investigation. She claimed that a nanny stole Caylee numerous times, but she had no nanny. She led detectives to an office building she claimed to work at, only to admit she was unemployed. How about the fact that she neglected Caylee for 31 days and never told anyone? And if Caylee really drowned in their swimming pool, than hiding her in the woods should have been a crime. After it was all said and done, Casey was only found guilty of 4 counts of lying to police. The judge released her at sentencing saying her time was already served. I believe Casey should have at least been guilty of child abuse. She lied about her missing child numerous times and sent police on wild goose chases for no reason.

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