

The takeaway lesson of this story: Never take on a government office or department without some “big guns” backing you up, even if it’s a case that should be impossible to lose! Not that I didn’t try. No one was interested in justice for Adam. It was an old case, I was told over and over again. Originally, I even wanted this case to be a class action, but I was unable to get any witnesses to join. I was given reasons like: “I live in Hollywood, and I don’t want any problems with the police in case I ever need them,” “I’m too old,” “I’m too busy,” or, “My family doesn’t want me to get involved.”

Over-Hyping Horror

Free from his legal morass, Joe Matthews continued peddling his contrived hypothesis like a seedy, traveling snake-oil salesman. Nothing is more obscene than Matthews’s own imagination and suspicions. On one radio talk show with Joseph Cooper, WLRN-FM 91.3 Miami, Matthews even made the claim that Ottis Toole ate part of Adam’s body.

Cold Case

On Tuesday, December 20, 2011, Matthews got to be the leading star that he has always wanted to be on the *Investigation Discovery* (ID) television channel. The ID show was about the Adam Walsh abduction, and how Detective Joe Matthews put all the pieces of the puzzle together that got the case closed. Matthews was beaming with the pride of thinking that he had the puzzle all figured out. In reality, he was so far out in left field with his cockamamie Ottis Toole theories that he wasn’t even in the ballpark any more.

In one depicted scene, the program showed the Sears security guard putting Adam out of the store! Matthews should have known it never happened that way. His version of events was totally made up, and obfuscated the truth. At the end of the show, he said, “If Ottis Toole was alive today he would be arrested, tried, and most likely convicted.” I presume if Toole were alive today, Joe Matthews would do his best to have him put back on death row. Then, on Sep. 2014, Matthews became an instructor for other police departments, teaching a homicide investigation course titled: **Hunt for a Killer: An Investigative Analysis of a Cold Case Homicide**. The course was about Matthews’s file analysis, using innovative strategies and interviewing techniques in solving the Adam Walsh case that could be adapted to any cold-case homicide investigation. Course Details: “His presentations are packed with critical information, his uncanny ability as a homicide investigator and relentless perseverance in solving one of the most infamous cases in US history makes this a must see program.”

The Art of Convicting the Innocent

PHOTO RIGHT: Frank Lee Smith. Courtesy STATE OF FLORIDA.

Florida has a long history of falsely accusing—and wrongly convicting suspects in our criminal justice system by certain prosecutors who are persecutors. Putting innocent men in prison, and even on death row, seems to be a long-standing Florida tradition. In December 2000, after spending fourteen years on Florida’s death row, Frank Lee Smith died of pancreatic cancer on January 30, 2000, before he was exonerated by DNA for the 1985 rape and murder of eight-year-old Shandra Whitehead.





Appallingly, the police and prosecutors did their best to get a witness to say it was Frank Smith, even after the witness said she wasn't sure, very much as Detective Smith tried to do with Jennie Warren in the Adam Walsh case, when the HPD tried to pin Adam's murder on Toole.

PHOTO LEFT: Shandra Whitehead. Tampa Bay Times image.



The police will tell a witness that is susceptible to suggestible questioning that they (the police) are sure a suspect committed the crime, because they have "proof." Not wanting a murderer to be set free, some witnesses will feel it's their civic duty to make that identification—although not Jennie Warren. As in Ottis Toole's case, people with intellectual disabilities, or below-average intellectual function, are particularly vulnerable to being wrongfully convicted. With their desire to please authority figures, they are very susceptible to being influenced during interrogation, and sometimes confess to crimes they didn't commit.

PHOTO LEFT: Eddie Lee Mosley. Courtesy STATE OF FLORIDA.

More than 20 years after a dozen women and girls were slain in Fort Lauderdale, and following the exoneration of two men, Mosley was implicated in eight murders in 2000.

Most law enforcement officials receive training in how to properly question these suspects, but in Ottis Toole's case, the police and prosecutors didn't seem to care about finding out what really happened. They just wanted a conviction.

DNA tests after Smith's death from cancer confirmed that Shandra Whitehead had been raped and murdered by Eddie Lee Mosley.

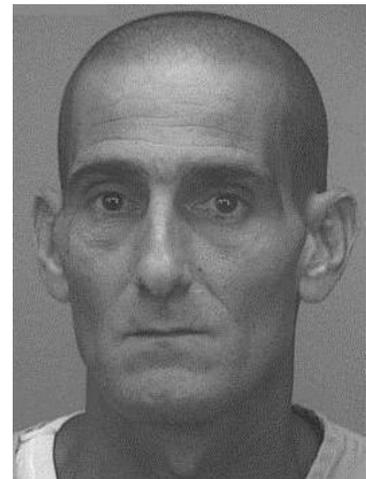
Anatomy of a Frame-Up

PHOTO RIGHT: Anthony Caravella. Courtesy STATE OF FLORIDA.

Anthony Caravella was another mentally-challenged Broward County man who spent 25 years in prison for murder before DNA testing led to his release in September 2009.

A federal civil jury later found that two Miramar police officers had coerced Caravella, then fifteen years old, into confessing, and withheld evidence that would have exonerated him in the brutal rape, strangling, and stabbing murder of Ada Cox Jankowski on November 5, 1983.

In March 2013 the federal jury in Fort Lauderdale found former Miramar police officers William Mantesta and George Pierson liable for framing Caravella.



The jurors found that both men "while acting under color of state law as a member of the City of Miramar Police Department" acted with malice or reckless indifference to Caravella, who had an IQ of 67. The two officers violated his constitutional rights against malicious prosecution, coerced him into confessing and withheld evidence that could have cleared him soon after his arrest, jurors found.



PHOTO LEFT: Jerry Frank Townsend. Courtesy STATE OF FLORIDA.

Jerry Frank Townsend's case was another great example of a police and prosecutorial misconduct, where police took advantage of someone having a low IQ. Townsend's mental capacity was equivalent to that of an eight-year-old child, and using techniques like the Good Guy/Bad Guy routine, they bullied and cajoled him into confessing. The Broward Sheriff's Office even took Townsend to some of the murder scenes, so that he could show them what happened. After Assistant State Attorney Kelly Hancock prosecuted Townsend, it would take twenty-two years before he would be exonerated with DNA, and the real perpetrator would be captured. (Information from: *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* - October 30, 1988)

After Townsend's exoneration, Hancock simply pointed the finger at the police, saying he was only working with the information they gave him. Keep in mind that Kelly Hancock was the same attorney that gave John and Reve Walsh advice, and the same attorney that sat next to Joe Matthews at the December 2008 conference where Ottis Toole was named as Adam Walsh's killer.



Copyright 2008, (*Sun-Sentinel*/Mike Stocker)

Detective Joe Matthews and Kelly Hancock stand behind the grieving Walsh family as they celebrate by shaking hands after yet another innocent man gets convicted of murder. Adam's younger brother Hayden is in the foreground.

I only mention these cases to show that Adam's case isn't an aberration—rather more of a common occurrence in Florida. There are other cases like these where cops and prosecutors go after the weak and downtrodden who have no education, no money, and no family to come to their aid, in order to make themselves look good—and not just in Florida. The Adam Walsh case was just one of them. Only, no one withered away in a prison cell in the Adam Walsh case. Ottis Toole had already died in prison before ex-cop Joe Matthews and the HPD pinned Adam's murder on him.

I might not have been able to get a copy of the Matthews Report, but I was able to get a copy of the Broward County state attorney's files for the Adam Walsh case. When I first contacted the State Attorney's Office to request the Adam Walsh case files, I was told that they would first