

Episode 2: The Breakup

-Mail Chimp Ad-

Detective

Why don't you go ahead and tell us what you know about the death of Hae Lee.

Jay

Ok.

Ira Glass

Previously, on Serial.

Detective

So he wanted an alibi.

Jay

Yes.

Adnan

The only thing I can say is, man, it was just a normal day to me. There was absolutely nothing abnormal about that day to me.

Detective

She was concerned because she was being asked questions about an affidavit she had written.

Asia McClain

Even now, it would be nice if there was some technicality that then would prove his innocence.
Great.

Sarah Koenig

But I think, I think, Asia, like, you might be that technicality.

Automated voice

This is a Global-Tel link prepaid call from Adnan Syed an inmate at a Maryland Correctional facility...

Sarah Koenig

From This American Life and WBEZ in Chicago, it's Serial. One story week by week. I'm Sarah Koenig. We're at episode two. You probably heard episode one on This American Life, or through our website, SerialPodcast.org, but if you haven't, stop. Go back to the beginning. We're telling this story in order, the story of Hae Min Lee, an 18-year-old girl, who was killed in Baltimore in 1999, and the story of Adnan Syed, her ex-boyfriend who was convicted of the crime.

So to pick up where we left off, last episode, you heard how the prosecution told the story of this murder at Adnan's trial. And the motive the State supplied, the basis for the whole thing, was that after Hae broke up with Adnan, he couldn't accept it. He was so wounded by her, and so furious, that he decided to kill her. Prosecutor Kevin Urick told the jury in his opening statement, "He became enraged. He felt betrayed that his honor had been besmirched, and he became very angry, and he set out to kill Hae Min Lee." Or this is from closing, "It was humiliating, what she did to him. Make no mistake about it, ladies and gentlemen. This was not a crime about love, this was a crime about pride."

But was that what their relationship and breakup were really like? Was he so hurt that he decided to kill her. That's what I'm trying to find out in today's episode, by talking to lots of people who knew Hae and Adnan. Mostly their friends, because they were a close-knit group. Some of them had known each other since elementary school. And even though they went to a big, tough high school, Adnan and his friends were clumped together in a magnet program of about thirty kids. A kind of school within the school, and they all took classes together, and hung out together, and they dated each other. So they knew each other well. And the other information I have to go on are Hae's own words about their relationship, because I have a copy of

her diary. It was entered into evidence at trial. It was read by many people, cops, prosecutors, even Adnan. What's remarkable about the diary, and what makes it so helpful is that it's essentially a chronicle of the Adnan era of Hae's life. The first entry is April 1, 1998, right when they started going out. And the last entry is dated January 12th, the day before she went missing. And in all those months, what she's most writing about is Adnan. If you had to bookend Hae and Adnan's romance, you'd put a school dance right at the beginning and then another one right at the end. The first dance was junior prom. Adnan and his best friend had a little competition going about who could get the prettiest prom date that year. Someone said Adnan should ask Hae to go so one day after sports practice, on the little hill behind the school, he asked her to prom, and she said yes. On April 27, she wrote a long entry in her diary about prom night. Her diary, by the way, well I'm not exactly sure what I expected her diary to be like but it's such a teenage girls diary. She jumps from her boyfriend to driver's ed, to the field hockey game. She's bubbly one minute and the next she's upset with her mother, or dissing her friend, or complaining about homework.

So prom night she writes about Adnan. "I swear he's the sweetest guy. Let me tell you why. He was prom prince and Stephanie was prom princess and traditionally they're supposed to dance together, to my song, K-Ci & JoJo's 'All My Life.' I tried to act natural and unjealous, but it did kinda bother me. Ten seconds later, guess who danced with me, and not with Stephanie? Adnan! Now how can I not fall in love with this guy? Of course I gave him his first kiss on the lips, then I totally fell in love with him. Since then, I keep on falling deeper and deeper into him. The bad thing is we have to keep things secret, sigh. But it's okay because love conquers all."

Aisha Pittman

For a while I was like noticing they were flirting, and I would like make fun of her about it!

Sarah Koenig

That's Aisha Pittman. She was in the magnet program too. Hae was her best friend.

Aisha Pittman

She would like show me notes that they shared and then it just progressed from there. Um, and, but it was some, it was a relationship that was constantly secret because neither of their families knew about it, so that just created much more of a, like, her saying 'I'm gonna be at your house' but really go out with him, kinda thing. Um...

Sarah Koenig

Oh she would, she would tell her parents she was at your place...

Aisha Pittman

Yeah. Or others. Primarily mine. (laughs) Just a lot of that sort of secrecy around it

Adnan Syed

We had a lot of, I guess, we had a lot of real similar, similar types of situations with our families.

Sarah Koenig

That's Adnan. Since he and Hae both had immigrant parents, they understood the expectations, and the constraints. Do well in school, go to college, take care of your younger brother, and for Adnan, no girls. If a female friend rode in his car, for instance, she'd have to make sure not to leave any long hairs behind. Or if a girl gave Adnan a ride home, she'd have to drop him off down the block so his parents wouldn't see who was at the wheel.

Adnan Syed

You know, it was really easy to date someone that kind of lived within the same parameters that I did with regards to, you know, she didn't have the expectation to me coming to her house for dinner with her family, you know, she understood that, you know, that um if she was to call my house and you know speak to my mother or father I would get in trouble, and vice versa. You know, so we would have to kinda set up our talks on the phone. Usually we would talk late at night when our parents were sleeping.

Sarah Koenig

They had a whole system for this. One would page the other when the coast was clear. This was 1998, so not many cell phones around. Then that person would call some 1-800 service like the weather or the time and the other one would call in so the phone wouldn't actually ring. It would come in through call waiting and the dozing parents would never be the wiser.

At the trial, the State tried to paint a picture of Adnan as possessive of Hae. As controlling. When I spoke to Hae's closest friends about that, a couple of them did say that he seemed to be, hmm, over-involved with her

somehow. But they couldn't come up with many examples. Two people remembered a time when Adnan showed up uninvited to a girls trip to an amusement park. Aisha Pittman was one of them. She remembers nothing positive about their relationship anymore, though by her own admission, she doesn't know whether her memories are colored by what came later.

Aisha Pittman

I think it was probably mostly normal, but things that, like, he kinda just always generally annoyed me, because, just the constant paging her if she was out, um, and he's like, "Well I just wanted to know where you were." And it's like, "I told you where I was gonna be." Um, if she was at my house, and we were having a girls night, he would stop by, like he would walk over and try to come hang out, and its just like, "Have some space!" Um, and it's one of those things, at first it's like, "Oh! It's so cute! Your boyfriend's dropping by." But then the tenth time, it's like, "Really?"

Sarah Koenig

Did he ever-- did Hae ever seem freaked out by it?

Aisha Pittman

No but I don't think I was ever freaked out by it, in the moment.

Sarah Koenig

Here's Hae's take on one of those impromptu visits Aisha is talking about. On July 16th, she writes, "Adnan dropped by Isha's late. With carrot cake!". So yeah, Hae does not describe Adnan as overbearing or possessive in her diary. Though she does mention a couple of moments when she's mad at him. "How dare he get mad at me for planing to hang with Isha!" Or a time when he's nasty to her because she doesn't respond to his messages fast enough. But mostly these incidents seem to be tit for tat. "I'm in a real bitch attitude and Adnan is not helping," she writes on June 15. "He hasn't called me since twelve thirty this afternoon and it's definitely pushing me to the edge. I think I'm gonna pick a fight."

Hae's friends say she had a strong personality, strong opinions, she's no pushover. When she was pissed at Adnan, she let him know. But by far the majority of her diary entries are about she likes and loves him. I stopped counting, there were so many 'wonderfuls' and 'sweetests' and 'best boyfriend in the worlds.' Mostly I heard stuff like this from their friends. Here's Becky Cline. Back then she was Becky Walker.

Becky Cline

Just a silly, teenage, high school relationship. I remember a lot of teasing and a lot of, um, you know hand holding, arms around each other. I don't really remember any, anything weird or anything stands out.

Sarah Koenig

They hung around all that summer before senior year. They'd meet up after work and drive around. They were seventeen. They were in love. They were active. They'd have sex whenever and wherever possible. Sometimes at motels or the car or at a park or at other people's houses or apartments. Sometimes they'd fight and then they'd quickly make up. A couple of times, Hae called it off but then would ask for Adnan back after a day or two or three.

Remember the setup for this crime that the State laid out was that Adnan was betraying everything he held dear for this girl. As a good Muslim he was not supposed to be dating and so he was sacrificing his religion and lying to his family all just so he could be with her and it twisted him up inside. And Hae's diary seems to be where they found some evidence for that. In fact they had a friend of Hae's, Debbie Warren, read excerpts from it on the witness stand. "I like him, no I love him." She read at trial, dated May 15. "It just all the things that stand in the middle. His religion and Muslim customs are the main things. It irks me to know that I'm against his religion. He called me a devil a few times. I know he was only joking, but it's somewhat true." And then there's this, which wasn't read at trial but is from July when Adnan went to an Islamic conference in Texas with his dad. This is the most distressed Hae gets on the topic. When I read it, I thought "whoa. This does not look so good for Adnan." "I keep crying over the phone because I miss him so much," she writes.

He told me that his religion means life to him. He tried to remain a faithful Muslim all his life but he fell in love with me which is a great sin. But he told me there is no way he'll ever leave me because he can't imagine a life with me. Then he said that one day he'll have to choose between me and his religion. I love him so much and when it comes to choosing, I'm gonna let him go his way. I hate the fact that I'm the cause of his sin. He said that I shouldn't feel like I'm pulling him away from his religion but hello! That's exactly what I'm doing.

So, yeah, anytime someone is writing stuff down like 'sin' and 'devil' and 'religion means life' in reference to their secret relationship, that's not good. But ask the Muslim in question about it, and it all seems so much smaller.

Adnan Syed

I may have said it as a joke you know like man hey “I’m going to hell because I’m dating you,” or something, but I never meant it in the type of way that she took it.

Sarah Koenig

Adnan claims he just wasn’t that religious. He was going to clubs and having sex with girls, and smoking weed from the time he was fourteen or fifteen. Culturally, yes a Muslim, but the rest, he says, not so much. So passages like this, he says he doesn’t recognize himself in them.

Adnan Syed

I never-- I never really felt as if, you know, man you know Hae is ‘tearing me away from my religion.’ You know, and I never-- only ‘til I read her diary that I really kinda understood that wow this is the perception that she kinda had. Just like the gravity and the magnitude with which she took these things. I didn’t really feel that way about these things. Maybe it just seems convenient for me to say that now but the only thing I can say now to kind of-- I won't say prove it in a way is that my behavior didn't change once I stopped smo-- you know once Hae broke up with me, or once you know we broke up or whatever. It’s not like you know all of a sudden, I’m like okay “this whole fixed thing is out of my life,” no its just-- you know, I just continued with the same type of behavior, it was just different people.

Sarah Koenig

Religious stuff aside, the State said Adnan was guilt ridden about lying to his family about Hae. But he says he wasn’t all that bothered by that. He figured he was a pretty good kid. He was doing well in school, he had a job, he was volunteering at the mosque. Why shouldn’t he have some fun? And in the pantheon of ways that a teenager could have been disrespectful or deceitful to his parents, he thought this rated pretty low.

Shamim Rahman

My name is Shamim Rahmann and and I’m the mother of Adnan Syed.

Sarah Koenig

Adnan did most of his lying to his mother. She figured out something was up pretty early on. She'd found Adnan's crown from prom in the basement where he'd tried to stash it with his tux. Shamim came to the United States in 1976. Her husband was already here working as an engineer for the State of Maryland. She's from Peshawar, in Pakistan where you do not date. You are either married or unmarried. Not much of a middle ground. So Adnan's girl contact put Shamim in a state of high alert. She would check the milage on his car to see if he'd driven farther than he'd said. She eavesdropped while he was on the phone. I know this makes Shamim sound terrifying but she's not at all. She adores Adnan. Her middle son.

Shamim Rahman

He would talk to the girls, yes. I would pick up the phone, or I'll you know

Sarah Koenig

And would he know? Would he say like, "mom hang up the phone?"

Shamim Rahman

Yeah, he say "Mom, you know I know you're listening to me." (laughs) Yes, I say "Adnan I'm here." He'd say "Mom stop, you're not listening to us." You know.

Sarah Koenig

And, and was that conflict-- I mean I-- it must have been sort of constant.

Shamim Rahman

Of course yeah because for me this was unacceptable. So we used to argue a lot. You know, I'd say "No you cannot do that. You cannot-- If you like somebody, alright you can get married, but not without marriage, you cannot do that." Of course me and Adnan had a problem.

Sarah Koenig

Adnan's father was a little more loose about it?

Shamim Rahman

My whole family was, even my oldest son, he said “you know Mom, everybody is doing it.” Even my husband said you know that other boys are doing it. I say no, not my children.

Sarah Koenig

Adnan wasn't getting punished for any of this. It wasn't as if he was about to get kicked out of the house. More like he was being reminded of his responsibilities. Both at home, and at his mother's request, by his youth leader at the mosque. Then came the homecoming dance, in the fall of senior year. Adnan and Hae had been together for about seven months by then. This dance would become a big deal at the trial. Proof of just how fraught their whole relationship was. And how tormented Adnan was about his double life. Here's what happened. Adnan's parents got wind that very night that he had taken Hae to homecoming. Adnan says this happens in their community all the time. Someone sees someone else's kid at a dance or at the mall and before you can hide behind a potted plant, four aunties are on the phone to the kids mother. Anyway, this time Adnan's parents did not wait to deal with it at home. They showed up at the dance and chastised him. Made a scene. The prosecutors argued that this scene would come to haunt him until the day he killed Hae. Here's what prosecutor Casey Murphy told the jury about the moment when she says Adnan strangled Hae. “What is it that this defendant saw on January 13 when he looked down at Hae Lee?” Then she lists a couple of things and says this: “He saw his parents standing at the window of the homecoming dance. He saw his mother raise her voice at Hae Lee in front of his classmates. ‘Look what you're doing to our family.’ He saw the pain in his mother's face because she knew they were together. And he saw himself, in the end, standing there with nothing to show for it but a guilty conscience and a pack of lies in which he cloaked himself.”

Now compare that with how Adnan's best friend, Saad, remember's the homecoming debacle.

Saad Chaudry

He comes home at like eleven p.m. or like twelve midnight and I'm like, “What happened at your homecoming?” And he's like, “You're not gonna believe this!” I'm like, “What?” He's like, “My mom and my dad showed up!” And I'm like, “What?!” And I mean, we're dying laughing on the phone about this. You know, you know this is our world. Well then I'm like, “What happened?” And well then like, “They showed up, they made me leave and everyone saw it, how like literally my parents pulled me out of this relationship.”

Sarah Koenig

I've come across dozens of bits of evidence like this. Information that could either mean one thing, or perhaps its opposite depending on who's talking. Adnan's cellphone, for example, he bought it just two days before Hae disappeared. The state tried to show that was all part of his plan. That he needed the phone to carry out the murder. But Adnan says he wanted the phone so that he could call girls unfettered. And he was proud of the phone. He'd worked hard at his job as an E M T to pay for it. Oh and the job! The State would argue that because he was an E M T Adnan would have known how to strangle someone, and would have had the training to revive them if he wished. Adnan, again, he says he was proud of being certified. He'd gotten the highest score on the qualifying test of anyone in his class and a real job as a result. He liked old people and his job was mostly to ride in the back of the ambulance with old people, make sure they were okay. In the detective's notes, they interview Adnan's English teacher, Jane Efron, who apparently tells them "Adnan had a dark side which is in his poetry." The words 'dark side' are underlined. And Miss Efron,

Jane Efron

It was like all the teenagers that I taught because everything in their lives was dark. I don't remember any of them having anything upbeat to say, so he was just another one that makes you think that you're living on another planet. Cuz when you look out at them and they're healthy and hearty and playing and being stupid so-- (laughs)

Sarah Koenig

So it didn't stick out in some way, it was just like all teenagers write broody, dramatic poetry--

Jane Efron

Absolutely.

Sarah Koenig

See what I mean? All this information, every scrap, it's currency for whatever side you're on. Spin. And the trouble with spin is that you can't totally disregard it, because swirling around somewhere inside, some tendril of it, is true. Saad Chaudry thinks Adnan is innocent. So for him, the homecoming story is also innocent. Hae didn't write about homecoming in her diary, but Aisha says it wasn't funny to her. It was a big

deal. Aisha remembers Adnan's parents wanting to find Hae so they could talk to her which of course Hae wanted nothing to do with.

Aisha Pittman

So that we could leave the dance and not be harassed by his parents like she walked out holding hands with my friend Sean to get away from it. She just felt like that was a completely ridiculous thing and she was super pissed. Wanting to have, I think that for her was a "I absolutely don't want to be with this person at all because, um, this is what happens."

Sarah Koenig

On November 3, Hae wrote in her diary, "Who would have thought we would end like this? Who would have imagined the amount of pain that comes with a broken heart? I know I'm doing the right thing. Call me selfish but this pain is way less than what it would be if we stayed together." Then apparently they reunited because exactly one month later, on December 3, she's full of love for Adnan again. "This feels so real, so loving and ever so amazing. I can't be any happier. But yet I keep on being happier." But then just three days later there's this on December 6: "What's the matter with me? Everytime I close my eyes I see my baby but I keep on thinking about someone else. Don." Hae has got a crush on Don. An older guy. Twenty. Whom she works with at LensCrafters at the Owings Mills Mall. Don has blue eyes and blonde hair and a Camero and she really, really likes him. For the next couple of weeks, she's racked with guilt and confusion over what to do. At one point, she writes Adnan's name in giant block letters made out of tiny little Adnans and underneath that does the same thing with Don. Giant letters made up of Dons. On another page, she writes Don's name 127 times. 127 Dons. It's not clear from the diary when she finally tells Adnan it's over over, but certainly by Christmas they were split.

On New Years Day, Hae has her first official date with Don and they start going out. Hae is head over heels. Aisha remembers meeting him on a double date to Friday's restaurant and then to see the movie *Shakespeare in Love*.

Aisha Pittman

It was the most awkward double date in the world (laughs) because he was older. I forget how old he was but he was significantly older than us and my boyfriend was two years younger so it was just a *horrible* double date--

Sarah Koenig

--like you were out with one man and one boy?

Aisha Pittman

Yeah. (laughs) It did.

Sarah Koenig

This is where the real questions begin. All the most important questions about Adnan. About how he responded to this breakup and to the fact of Hae's new boyfriend. Because the whole premise of the State's case against Adnan is that he felt betrayed and humiliated and angry and that's why he killed her. This idea came from Jay, their main witness. It was Jay who supplied the motive to police. Here's tape of Jay's being interviewed by Detective Greg MacGillivray.

Detective Greg MacGillivray

--this conversation, what did he tell you?

Jay

Um, he told me that she had broke his heart, that it was extremely wrong for anyone to treat him that way. Um, that he couldn't believe how she stood and looked him face to face and told him she didn't love him and could be that heartless and he told me that almost joking "I think I'm going to kill her, yeah, I think I'm going to kill her."

Detective Greg MacGillivray

You didn't know *how* he was going to kill her.

Jay

No. No--

Detective Greg MacGillivray

But he told you that he was, he was gonna kill her-

Jay

Yes--

Detective Greg MacGillivray

--because she had broken his heart.

Jay

Yes.

Sarah Koenig

But nearly everyone I've spoke with, Adnan's friends and teachers say he took the breakup like anyone would. Adnan's friend Mac Francis said Adnan initially was devastated and jealous about the new boyfriend. Said he grumbled about it in a typical guy way, nothing strange. Everyone I talked to said some version of this, that he wasn't rage filled or vindictive. He was just sad.

Donna Paoletti Philips

It really did seem like a run-of-the-mill mundane teenage angst. Um--

Sarah Koenig

That's Donna Paoletti Philips. She taught Adnan and Hae AP Psychology and had known them both since they were freshmen. At her job, she's seen a lot of high school break-ups.

Donna Paoletti Philips

--but the level of frustration he must have felt, if he killed her, doesn't register with me. I don't remember getting that vibe from him. It was just-- he was just another kid whose heart was broken.

And, goodness, if I thought the kids I teach today were gonna resort to some kind of horrific crime based on that kind of thing I-- I would have stopped teaching. Because it happens--

Sarah Koenig

--It happens every other day--

Donna Paoletti Philips

--It would be.

Sarah Koenig

Adnan's friend Saad said Adnan definitely *wasn't* mooning over Hae.

Saad Chaudry

When they had broke up, Adnan and Hae had broke up, it'd been like a month, maybe more. She had already started dating another guy, and I was like, "Adnan's dating multiple girls!" I was like "I can tell you some of the girls that he's dating." I was like "he is not upset about him and Hae breaking up." I was like "he's dating this girl Anjali in Philly that he's been going to see." This girl. And I know it wasn't, like *great* proof, but it was still proof that he wasn't *obsessed* with Hae. He wasn't. I was like he's a p...I'm trying to conv-- explain I'm seventeen, like "He's a player! He has a lot of girls!" I was like, "he's talking to multiple--" I am too!

Anjali

He was cute, (laughs) and charming! He's just a very sweet guy. Um, *very* flirtatious.

Sarah Koenig

Sorry Saad. She's not talking about you. This is Anjali, the girl in Philly. She confirmed. Yup. Couple of visits. They made out. Nothing too serious. On New Year's Eve, Adnan met another girl, Nisha from Silver Spring, Maryland. And he started calling her a lot too. Adnan's friend Mac remembered Adnan making out with another friend of theirs at a party that January. So yeah, a player.

Adnan himself describes the breakups with Hae as fairly rational events.

Adnan Syed

Each time that we broke up or each time-- let me just say this, each time that she ended the relationship or took a break, it was never a thing where I was like pestering her or, like, going to her house and knocking on the door or chasing her down - "Look I wanna get back with you! I wanna get back with you!"- because a part, there was a part of me that knew that man, what she said did make sense. So, yeah. So, pretty much then we were just friends, you know, um, we would talk about things like she would tell me about, um, someone that she just met at her job, a guy named Don. And she was like, you know, she really liked him. And, uh--

Operator

You have 30 seconds remaining.

Adnan Syed

Can I call you back? or...

Sarah Koenig

Yeah, yeah. Call me-- call me back.

Sarah Koenig

That's the prison phone system telling us that our time was up. This happens every half an hour. It surprises me every time because I often sort of forget where he is.

Sarah Koenig

So-- so you're-- you're making the breakups sound very, um, kind of calm and mutual and like nobody got upset, but I mean is that true or was there like crying and the usual teenage angst over it?

Adnan Syed

--well mind you now, this is me talking, you know, fifteen years later, I mean, you know she was upset. I was upset, you know there were times that I was very sad, and maybe I would kinda be like a little stubborn about it, like "no, no we can make it work! You know our parents would be cool or

whatever,” but on the other hand, it was never a thing where I was like screaming or yelling at her “why are you leaving me?” or-- so you know just to say that, um, just to kinda to dispel that, that was never my behavior, you know at all.

Sarah Koenig

It is true that no one at the time described Adnan as acting obsessed or menacing in any way. Not even Aisha. And in her diary, Hae never expresses any concerns about Adnan’s post breakup behavior. In fact, she writes about a time just before Christmas, so after they’d broken up, when she gets into a little car accident and calls up Adnan to come get her from work. Both Don, her new crush, and Adnan look at the car together and decide it’s unsafe to drive, so Adnan takes her home. Apparently it was all very cordial. Even Don said so. He wouldn’t talk to me for this story, but he testified at the trial.

At this point, I’m going to say flat out that I don’t buy the motive for this murder, at least not how the State explained it. I just don’t see it. Not one person says he was acting strangely after they broke up. He and Hae, again by all accounts were still friends. He was interested in other girls. He was working at his job. He was headed to college. About two weeks after his arrest, he gets an orientation packet from the University of Maryland. I don’t think he was some empty shell of a kid who betrayed his family and his religion and was now left with nothing and conjured up a murderous rage for a girl that broke his heart. I simply don’t buy it. And the reason I don’t buy it is because no one who knew him, then or now, says that’s how it was. I want to be clear, though, that that doesn’t mean he didn’t do it. It just means that so far, I think the State’s story about why he killed her doesn’t hold up. Maybe it was more of a spur of the moment thing. Maybe despite the other girls he was running after, he *was* privately stewing about Hae. After all she was apparently still flirting with him after they broke up. Still paging him with loving messages. She bought him an expensive jacket that Christmas. Maybe he thought he still had a chance with her. Like their friend Debbie told me, maybe once Don came on the scene, he thought “that’s a slap in the face! How dare you continue to lead me on like this?”

The night before Hae disappeared, Adnan called her from his cell phone three times. The first two calls, at 11:27 p.m. and 12:01 a.m., were only two seconds each. The third call, at 12:35 a.m., lasted a minute and twenty-four seconds. Adnan says he was probably calling to give her his new cell phone number. He had just gotten the phone the day before. And indeed in the top left corner of her diary, she’d written down the number. According to Don’s testimony, she’d been at his house that night, which is probably why Adnan’s first two calls ended so fast. She probably wasn’t home yet. Her very last diary entry, dated January 12, is

brief. “I love you Don. I think I have found my soul mate. I love you so much. I fell in love with you the moment I opened my eyes to see you in the breakroom for the first time.

There is one detail about the day Hae went missing that I need to tell you about, a detail that doesn't look good for Adnan. And that detail has to do with whether Adnan tried to get in Hae's car right after school. Because that is what the State would allege, that Adnan fabricated a reason to get in her car that afternoon—so that he could kill her. Jay had told police that was Adnan's plan.

Detective Greg MacGillivray

Ah, does he tell you how he's going to do it that day?

Jay

No, but he tells me that, ah, he's gonna do it in her car. Um, he said to me that he was going to, uh, tell her his car was broken down and, uh, ask her for a ride.

Sarah Koenig

So what *do* we know about the end of that day? A Wednesday. January 13. Hae and Adnan had a couple classes together, first period, and also last period, AP Psychology, with Miss Paoletti. That's when Aisha last saw Hae, at the end of Psychology. She was talking to Adnan. Then their friend Debbie remembers seeing Hae on her way to her car. She told Debbie she had to get her cousin from school, and then was going see Don at the mall. The very last person to see Hae at school that day, we think, is Inez Butler Hendrix. Inez ran a little concession stand right at the gym entrance and Hae would come by every day and get the same thing: a Veryfine apple juice and Hot Fries. That day, she drove up in front of the gym where the concession stand was and left her car running.

Inez Butler Hendrix

So she came around the circle, parked her car right there, jumped out and ran in to get something to drink and to tell me to tell the bus not to leave her.

Sarah Koenig

The bus was for the boys' wrestling team. Hae was manager and they had a match later that afternoon that Hae was supposed to go to.

Sarah Koenig

And you didn't see her af-- again after that?

Inez Butler Hendrix

No, I didn't see her no more.

Sarah Koenig

And was Adnan anywhere near her or her car?

Inez Butler Hendrix

No. I didn't see him near the car.

Sarah Koenig

Okay, so no one actually testified at trial that they saw Hae and Adnan leave school together. And no one, aside from Jay, says they spotted Adnan in her car at any time that afternoon. Adnan has no recollection of having asked Hae for a ride anywhere. We've talked about it many times. Here's what he said the very first time I asked him.

Adnan Syed

I would-- wouldn't have asked for a ride after school. I'm-- I'm sure that I didn't ask her because, well immediately after school because I know she always-- anyone who knows her knows she always goes to pick up her little cousin, so she's not doing anything for anyone right after school. No-- no matter what. No trip to McDonalds. Not a trip to 7-Eleven. She took that very seriously.

Sarah Koenig

The trouble for Adnan is that a couple of their friends say he *did* ask Hae for a ride. One of them was her friend Krista.

Krista

If I remember correctly (laugh) I think Adnan and I were taking-- ah, had a class together, um our first period class was Photography, and she-- they passed each other in the hallway and I was with him and I remember somebody saying or him saying something about "Can you give me a ride after school?"

Sarah Koenig

Their friend Becky told police she heard something about a ride as well.

Becky

I do remember that there was talk about it. I remember it felt like he asked her to give him a-- give him a ride somewhere.

Sarah Koenig

Okay. Can I just read to you what the police notes say, I think April 9, 1999 they interviewed you.

Becky

Mm-hmm.

Sarah Koenig

So, it says, "Sometime earlier that day, apparently he asked her to take him possibly to get car before lunch because it was in the shop. Heard about it at lunch." So it's I think, *you* heard about it at lunch.

Becky

--yeah that sounds right.

Sarah Koenig

"Hae said she could, there would be no problem. At end of school I saw them. She said 'Oh no I can't take you, I have something else to do.' She didn't say what else. Approximately 2:20." So that

happened at approximately 2:20. “He said, ‘Okay I’ll just ask someone else.’ He told her goodbye.” And then it just says, “Did not see Hae after that.”

Becky

Okay. Yeah that sounds right. It kind of all comes back a little bit.

Sarah Koenig

So, Krista and Becky both remembered and while Becky’s recollection maybe works in Adnan’s favor, that Hae turned him down for a ride and he seemed cool with that, the question is still there. Was he trying to get into her car. Did he ask for a ride just like Jay said? And in fact the most damning evidence in support of Jay’s statement doesn’t even come from Krista or Becky. It comes directly from Adnan because he himself told the cops the same thing that day.

Court Official

At this time the State would call Police Officer Scott Adcock to the stand.

Sarah Koenig

Around 6:30 p.m., after Hae had gone missing, a baltimore county police officer named Scott Adcock called Adnan’s cellphone. Hae’s family was worried that she hadn’t turned up to her cousin’s school and the officer was calling around to some of her friends to see if they knew where she was. Here’s Adcock testifying at trial.

Scott Adcock

I spoke to Mr. Syed and he advised me that, ah, he did see the victim in school that day, and that um, he was supposed to get a ride home from the victim, but he got detained at school and she just got tired of waiting and left.

Sarah Koenig

Then, a little more than two weeks after the call with Officer Adcock, on February 1, by this time the search for Hae has ramped up, a different detective calls. Asks Adnan about the ride thing. Asks him “did you tell Officer Adcock you’d asked Hae for a ride?” According to the police report, “Adnan says this was incorrect because he drives his own car to school.

So, he reverses himself. Why would he do that? Why would he tell the first cop he's expecting a ride and then once it's clear Hae is missing change his story? Maybe the girls thinking of a different day. Or maybe Adnan misspoke when he talked to that first cop. Or maybe he did ask Hae for a ride at some point that day, but he's forgotten. Or maybe he's lying. I'm not a detective but I consider this a red flag. What I don't know is is this a teeny tiny red flag like he just got confused and so what? Or is this like a great big flapping in the breeze red flag? Like maybe he's hiding something. More next week.

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