A CRIME SCENE SCENARIO: Accident, Suicide, or Homicide?  
EPISODE TWO

In the crime scene scenario described at the beginning of episode one, detectives Dodge and Summer discovered a body in a residential garage with various evidence that contributed to the hypothesis that a suspect had fled the scene of the crime by fleeing across the backyard and over a wooden fence. A damp, torn piece of cloth was visible at the top of the wooden fence. On the other side of the fence (in a neighbor’s back yard) was a shiny object lying under a shrub at the right-hand corner of the house.

After back-up help was summoned, a house-to-house search was initiated at 11:42 am to apprehend the suspect. After the forensics technicians had arrived on the scene at 11:52 am, the shiny object (a Smith and Wesson .357 magnum, 6-shot revolver) was retrieved from under the neighbor’s backyard shrub. One spent cartridge casing was found in the cylinder and the revolver’s serial number had been filed off with a metal file. A good set of latent fingerprints was found on the barrel of the revolver and a partial latent print on the cartridge casing. The torn piece of damp cloth was placed into a paper bag, sealed with evidence tape, labeled properly and sent to the crime lab for analysis.

The victim’s blood was collected in a test tube containing an anti-coagulant. Blood was discovered on the garage floor between the victim and the front door of the garage and in a “V” shaped pattern originating at the feet of the victim and expanding outward toward the front garage door. Blood was also discovered under the fingernails of the left hand of the victim. All collected blood samples were marked, sealed, and sent to the medical lab for analysis. Latent fingerprints were found on the rear garage door and on the rear garage window and window sill. The revolver was labeled and placed in a sealed paper bag and sent to the crime lab for analysis.

A request was conducted through the phone company and the names and work phone numbers were obtained for the residents of the house. They were informed of the homicide in their garage and asked to return home to identify the victim. A Mr. Morganson arrived at 12:05 pm and was unable to identify the victim. At 12:07 Mrs. Morganson arrived and was greatly relieved that the victim was not her son. She was unable to identify the victim by name, since she had only seen him a few times in the neighborhood.

According to the Morganson’s, their son was in school. A quick check by detective Summer revealed that their son, Bill Morganson, had not been in school that day. A search of the residence provided no additional information. Bill Morganson was missing and was assumed to have fled out the back door of the garage. Summer, at 12:10 pm, radioed an APB to all units and provided the description of Bill Morganson given by the parents.

Mr. Rodriguez, a witness at the crime scene, had provided the police network with a detailed description of three teenagers he had seen in the neighborhood. At about 65 minutes after the search had been initiated, patrol officers Bodine and Lancaster noticed two youths, who matched the descriptions, standing by an abandoned commercial building, five blocks from the crime scene.

When the officers attempted to detain them, at 1:15 pm, one young man fled the area and is still at large. The second, a young, Caucasian male was successfully apprehended. He stood about 5’-10”, medium length dark brown hair, was wearing blue jeans which were torn on the back of the right leg. He also wore white tennis shoes and a brown silk shirt. He said his name was Eric Bendor and presented an out-of-state drivers license. He refused to reveal the identity of the young male who had run away and denied any connection with the crime scene.
Officer Lancaster told Eric Bendor that he was being arrested as a suspect in connection with a homicide. Office Bodine recited the Miranda provision which informs individuals of their right to remain silent and their right to seek legal aid. Bendor chose to remain silent. He was taken to police headquarters. After a search warrant was obtained, he was told to remove his clothing (over clean white paper) and given detention clothing. Each piece of clothing was carefully folded and placed in individual paper bags which had been labeled. About 15 hair samples (scalp, chest, underarm, groin, and leg) were pulled from each area and stored in individually marked containers. A blood sample was also collected by a blood lab technician. Fingernails were clipped and scrapings from them saved in marked plastic vials. His hands and clothing were sampled for gun shot residue (GSR). After his physical markings were recorded, he was taken to a holding cell.

All of this was done in order to be able to connect this individual with the crime scene, or, to eliminate him as a possible suspect. Notice that the police had probable cause (based on a description supplied by a witness) to suspect this individual of the crime. All affidavits and search warrants were completed before the search was conducted. Had this procedure not been conducted, an attorney would be able to clear this suspect, even if he was guilty, because there would have been a violation of the 4th Amendment of the United States Constitution’s Bill of Rights, which states: The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

To Be Continued . . . (play spooky music here)