

Evidence planting claims not limited to Avery case

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From the moment Teresa Halbach's disappearance made the news in 2005, a teary-eyed Steven Avery insisted that the Manitowoc County Sheriff's Office was again trying to railroad him. Avery had already lost 18 years of freedom because of a botched rape investigation.

But Avery's claims of innocence in Halbach's murder were brushed aside by police. Authorities swiftly arrested him after a pile of human bones were found in a burn pit on his property. By February 2007, Avery's defense attorneys, Jerry Buting and Dean Strang, made allega-

tions of planted blood and fabricated evidence the central theme of the trial.

The strategy didn't work. Avery was convicted of first-degree intentional homicide and was sent to prison for life. But that didn't end speculation that evidence was planted in Avery's case. The release in December of "Making a Murderer" sparked worldwide interest in the case—and prompted questions about other cases involving allegations of planted evidence.

There is no national statistical data on cases involving police who plant evidence, said Jim McNamara, who retired in 2012

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Steven Avery's defense attorney Dean Strang questions Manitowoc County Sheriff's Sgt. Andrew Colborn.

