Cognitive Bias Checklist for Investigators and Readers

Cognitive biases can distort our interpretation of evidence and lead us to faulty conclusions. This checklist helps you identify and minimize the impact of common biases when analyzing true crime cases or building theories.

## Confirmation Bias

☐ Am I favoring evidence that supports my theory while ignoring contradictory facts?

☐ Have I considered alternative explanations seriously?

## Anchoring Bias

☐ Is my thinking too influenced by the first theory or clue I encountered?

☐ Have I revisited initial assumptions with new evidence?

## Availability Heuristic

☐ Am I relying on vivid or recent examples rather than actual probability?

☐ Do certain dramatic details stand out simply because they’re emotionally intense?

## Hindsight Bias

☐ Am I oversimplifying events because I already know the outcome?

☐ Would I interpret the facts the same way if I didn’t know the end result?

## Attribution Error

☐ Am I judging the person’s actions without knowing their full context?

☐ Do I assume intent or motive too quickly based on partial behavior?

## Groupthink / Echo Chamber

☐ Am I surrounded by voices that only reinforce my views?

☐ Have I exposed myself to credible, dissenting opinions or evidence?