**Article of the Week #1**

**Directions:**

1. **Show evidence of a close reading (highlighting key points and making notes in the margins – can be questions, thoughts, confusion, etc. 5 comments minimum)**
2. **Answer the question at the bottom of the article. /5**

[orld](https://globalnews.ca/world/)

**What were the Coyotes thinking when they drafted Mitchell Miller?**

OCT 26, 2020 [KEN CAMPBELL](https://www.si.com/hockey/author/kcampbell) – For *sports illustrated magazine*

The first thing that came to mind when I learned the story about Arizona Coyotes draft pick Mitchell Miller on Monday was, “What on God’s green earth were the Coyotes thinking when they made this pick?” I have to admit that I don’t follow prospects the way I once did and had never heard of Mitch Miller before today, when Craig Harris of the *Arizona Republic* chronicled the story of [Miller being convicted of assaulting a Black, mentally disabled teen in 2016 when Miller was 14 years old.](https://bit.ly/2HAgRJu)

The Coyotes were stripped of one pick in the 2020 draft after a recruiting scandal and traded two away, meaning they didn’t have a choice until the fourth round of the draft, 111th overall. They are hanging on by a thread in their own market and used their first pick of the draft to take a kid who was basically convicted of a hate crime, all the while being familiar with the backstory? That’s really something.

The Miller story ticks off so many sickening boxes when it comes to what constitutes abuse. And it also raises a lot of uncomfortable questions, such as how long should someone who did something very bad, something he should have known was heinous, be made to pay for his sins? Does he deserve to be banished and wear a scarlet letter for life? Should he be given an opportunity to prove that he has truly changed? After paying his debt to society, does he deserve a chance at an NHL career? And you can’t even really posit the argument that we all did things we regretted when we were young and stupid. Because there are not very many people who would not have realized even at that young age that doing what Miller was convicted of doing was fundamentally wrong.

Part of the problem is we don’t even know whether Miller is genuinely remorseful. He sent a letter to all 31 NHL teams admitting his transgressions and put out a statement to the Coyotes after the story was made public expressing his regret. Miller says he has apologized personally to the family that was affected, but that family has flatly refuted that. The Coyotes have not reached out to the family since drafting Miller, either.

There’s justifiably a lot of outrage out there with the publication of today’s story on Miller. But in speaking to scouts, this is a story that has been known in hockey circles for quite some time. In fact, Miller has been lauded by many in hockey for owning what he did and getting out in front of it. And while the Coyotes are getting buried in an avalanche of bad press for this, the fact remains that there are many other people in the hockey world who were willing to allow Miller on their teams and in their organizations after the incident.

\* What about the Detroit Honeybaked organization, one of the most prestigious minor hockey programs in North America, who allowed Miller to play for their under-16 team for two seasons after he was convicted?

\* What about USA Hockey, the governing body for youth hockey in the United States, which has welcomed Miller as a member of national teams for two World Jr. Hockey Challenges and the Under-18 Hlinka-Gretzky Tournament?

\* What about the USHL itself, who honored Miller by placing him on its first all-star team last season?

\* What about the University of North Dakota, who recruited and landed Miller and has given him an athletic scholarship?

You can only surmise that those organizations (a) weren’t aware of Miller’s conviction, a possibility that is quite slim; (b) were aware of them, but came to the conclusion after doing their due diligence that Miller is indeed remorseful and changed and was worth the risk; or (c) saw Miller as player who was good enough for them to overlook his transgressions.

I spoke to a couple of scouts about Miller and they said the fact he went 111th overall had as much to do with the fact that he’s a 5-foot-10 defenseman as his checkered past. THN had Miller projected as the 65th overall pick in this year’s draft in our *Draft Preview*, but scouts said Miller went right about where his talent level and NHL potential dictated. A head scout for one team said once they dug into Miller’s story, they immediately scratched him off their draft list.

“We would not have taken him after the background checks our USA guys did on him,” he said. “We always say when we draft somebody, we want somebody at our table who’s really excited about drafting the guy and nobody from our U.S. staff wanted anything to do with this guy, so we just took him off our list. He’s a decent player, but all the background and history on him said red flag.”

Mitchell Miller might never play a game in the NHL for the Arizona Coyotes or any other team. Then again, he might buck the odds of a fourth-round pick and become a star someday. He might have his name etched on the Stanley Cup. For some people, though, he will never be able to escape the ignominy of being the person who did terrible things to a Black, mentally disabled kid. Whether or not he ever plays in the NHL, he’s going to have to live with that.

**Response Question (answer in paragraph form and staple to this sheet): /5**

1. Do you agree with the Arizona Coyote’s decision to remove Mitchell Miller from their team after drafting him? Why or why not?

OR

1. Do you think it is right that an adult can be held accountable for their actions as a 14 year old. Why or why not?