

INDIVIDUAL VS. SYSTEMIC JUSTICE:  
USING TRUST AND MORAL OUTRAGE TO PREDICT  
REACTIONS TO VIGILANTE MURDER

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by

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INDIVIDUAL VERSUS SYSTEMIC JUSTICE:  
USING TRUST AND MORAL OUTRAGE TO PREDICT  
REACTIONS TO VIGILANTE MURDER

Presented by Alison Cook

A candidate for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

And hereby certify that in their opinion is worthy of acceptance.

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## ABSTRACT

Jurors can approach their charge of meting out justice in different ways, two of which include focusing on the outcome of a specific trial and/or focusing on upholding justice more broadly by adhering to procedures and laws set forth by the legal system. An experiment was designed to investigate two factors (trust in the legal system and moral outrage) that may influence mock jurors' orientations toward justice and affect their sentencing decisions. A 2 (system trust: high vs. low) x 2 (moral outrage: manslaughter vs. rape/murder) between subjects factorial design was used to predict participant reactions toward a murder committed in response to the death of the vigilante's daughter. While the manipulated trust variable did not influence the results, a continuous measure of personal trust interacted with moral outrage and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) to predict participant reactions toward the vigilante murderer. Additional effects were moderated by beliefs in a just world (BJW). Thus, both RWA and BJW appeared to be important indicators of social values which influence perceptions of justice. Implications of the findings and future research directions are discussed.

## Chapter 1

### *Introduction*

One of the most famous vigilante crimes in recent history is that of Bernhard Goetz, also referred to as the “subway vigilante.” Goetz lived in Manhattan, New York for several years and had seen and even experienced acts of crime (Cohen, 1989). In December 1984, Goetz was riding the subway (and carrying a loaded gun) when four young, black men surrounded him and tried to rob him. His response was to take out his loaded gun and to shoot each of the assailants. Goetz was simultaneously tried for 18 charges that ranged from illegal gun possession to aggravated assault. Goetz’s lawyer used self-defense as an affirmative defense of the shootings. The four young men had histories of criminal activity and they even committed additional brutal crimes after they recovered from their wounds, with the exception of one who was paralyzed from the shooting. Goetz, despite his confession and his shooting at the men five times in “self-defense,” was acquitted of 17 of the 18 charges. He was convicted of illegal gun possession. The controversy around this “subway vigilante” sparked many debates about the legitimacy of vigilante justice and about the apparent support Goetz obtained from both the public and the jury, whose verdict, according to many legal scholars, constituted an act of legal nullification (Cohen, 1989).

Immediate reactions to crime are often visceral: we feel angry, frightened, and vulnerable. Not surprisingly, the initial inclination for swift retribution is strong. But the individual’s impulse for retribution is checked by the prerogative of the state to legitimately mete out punishment. Socially-sanctioned procedures (laws) standardize the criminal justice system to ensure due process for each defendant and to guarantee equal

protection: before punishment can be meted out, the culpability of the accused must be established “beyond a reasonable doubt,” evidentiary rules must be adhered to, and judicial instructions must be obeyed. It is the fair and equal application of this process—procedural justice—that lends legitimacy to the legal system itself (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler & Lind, 2000).

In studies of crime and punishment, much of the focus is on the latter, with suggestions that procedural justice (process considerations) may be interpreted as an obstacle to deserved punishment (e.g., Boeckmann & Tyler, 1997; Kassin & Sukel, 1997) or that the ends justify the means (Skitka, 2002; Skitka & Houston, 2001). But if people are willing to overlook rules of procedure in favor of retribution, the law loses legitimacy and social deviance is permitted. The case of vigilantism is a dramatic example that crystallizes the conflict jurors must resolve between punishment motives and justice orientations. These ideas prompt the following question: When is vigilantism excusable, and when is it an affront to the social order?

The following study investigates the potential trade-off between micro- (case-specific outcomes) versus macro- (broader systemic outcomes) orientations toward justice when responding to a vigilante murder. A micro-orientation toward justice is one that concentrates on the fairness in a particular situation or fair treatment of a specific person (Tyler & Smith, 1997). That is, for each criminal case, the likelihood of a defendant’s guilt and her or his deservingness of punishment dictate the verdict and sentence decisions. On the other hand, a macro-orientation toward justice looks at fairness from a social systemic perspective (Tyler & Smith, 1997). This is the orientation of the criminal justice system; the accused are innocent until proven guilty and given the

benefit of the doubt. Furthermore, a macro-orientation toward justice is concerned with the functionality of the system itself; the criminal justice system is guided by procedures to ensure consistency and fairness.

Justice orientation is a dynamic concept. That is, how individuals approach justice is likely influenced by the situation (Tyler & Smith, 1997). Researchers have hypothesized two important concepts, moral outrage (e.g., Darley & Pittman, 2003) and trust in the system (e.g., Tyler & Smith, 1997), that may influence justice decisions. Moral outrage consists of both cognitive and emotional components that describe a reaction toward violations of values (Darley & Pittman, 2003). System trust refers to the belief that authorities are benevolent and just, which leads to deferment to decisions or rules supported by that system (Tyler, 1988; Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, & Huo, 1997).

The present experiment was designed to examine the interaction between trust in the legal system and the moral outrage elicited by the crime that prompted the retaliation on sentencing decisions toward the vigilante. Thus, if the crime that prompted the vigilantism elicits high moral outrage, individuals may exhibit a greater tendency to excuse vigilantism (e.g., render more lenient sentences), justifying the retribution as a proper means to the end of guaranteeing that “justice is served.” However, individuals who trust in the legal system may see vigilantism as an attack on the social order and punish the vigilante severely because to excuse vigilante murder is to validate a breakdown in the legal system.

### *Psychological Motives for Punishment*

Why do we punish lawbreakers? A number of punishment philosophies have been posited to account for the motives underlying punishment goals including deterring

others from committing crime, sanctioning individuals who have done harm, and incapacitating criminals from doing future harm to society (McFatter, 1978). Ordinary people seem to show remarkable consensus regarding the comparative seriousness of different crimes (Pontell, Granite, Keenan, & Geis, 1985). The general consensus of crime seriousness among citizens suggests that moral reasoning is a product of socialization and punishment expresses condemnation of value violation (Darley & Pittman, 2003).

Research suggests that a number of factors may influence underlying motives to punish a perpetrator including type of crime, crime seriousness, perceived dangerousness of perpetrator, and recidivism (Carlsmith, Darley, & Robinson, 2002; Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000; Sanderson, Zanna, & Darley, 2000). In a series of studies, Darley and colleagues (2000; Carlsmith, et al., 2002) compared incapacitation and deterrence motives to motives for “just deserts.” These studies found that the default punishment motive was “just deserts” and that perceived crime seriousness, indexed largely by moral outrage, determined punishment severity. Thus, it appears that utilitarian benefits of punishment (e.g., behavior modification) are secondary to the goal of reasserting community values.

Many theorists have emphasized the importance of investing in a stable worldview that gives life order and makes the environment predictable (e.g., terror management, Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 1991; just world hypothesis, Lerner, 1980). Therefore, if crime represents violations of social norms, retribution balances the injustice by reasserting the social value of the law. The state of mind of the perpetrator determines what is psychologically required to balance the injustice because the crime is

only an affront to social values if the crime was committed intentionally (Darley & Pittman, 2003).

When a crime is intentionally committed, moral outrage may be evoked and the punishment motive may take the form of “just deserts,” which elicits a desire for punishment proportional to the severity of the crime committed. In other words, the motive underlying “just deserts” is the punishment itself (Darley & Pittman, 2003). Darley and Pittman (2003) suggest that moral outrage triggers retributive justice responses. Moral outrage is evoked by violations of core values which elicit three emotions: contempt, anger, and disgust (CAD). The “CAD hypothesis” suggests that each moral emotion is tied to particular classes of human actions that are regarded as moral transgressions within community, autonomy, or divinity (Rozin, Lowery, Imada, & Haidt, 1999). Contempt is generated toward those regarded as lower in the social hierarchy (e.g., failure to fulfill duties; disrespect for authority). Anger is the result of violation of a person’s autonomy (i.e., harm toward person or property). Disgust is the emotion evoked when someone behaves without dignity or strips another of dignity (e.g., child abuse, hate-crimes). However, the weight of each moral emotion is culturally relative (Rozin, et al., 1999). Americans tend to equate moral wrong with harming another person because as a culture we value individual rights of autonomy and freedom to act independently as long as we do not infringe upon the rights of others. Therefore anger is likely to be the most frequent response to moral violations among Americans (Darley & Pittman, 2003). When individuals are asked to rate their moral outrage toward a crime, anger is the emotion tapped (Carlsmith, et al., 2002).

Darley and Pittman's (2003) model suggests when moral outrage is high the desire for retribution is the greatest. The exact causal sequence between motivations, cognitions, and emotions of moral reactions has yet to be determined. However, some evidence suggests that retribution is provoked by emotional reactions (Goldberg, Lerner, & Tetlock, 1999). Goldberg, and colleagues (1999) actually found that unresolved anger (i.e., a perpetrator goes unpunished) carried over to increase sentences for offenders accused of unrelated crimes. In the Goldberg et al. experiment, participants watched a video of a man beating up a helpless teenager (which elicited anger) and were told that the perpetrator was caught and punished, was caught but escaped punishment because of a "technicality," or no additional information was provided. Then participants read four vignettes and assessed the blameworthiness and deservingness of punishment for individuals whose negligent or reckless behavior resulted in harming an innocent person (but unrelated to the anger eliciting event). Results showed that only when anger was accompanied with injustice (the perpetrator went unpunished) did this emotion carry over, increasing punitive assessments of (unrelated) harm doers in the vignettes. These findings show the potential for increased anger (moral outrage) to influence the desire for "just deserts" punishment.

#### *Group-Value Model of Procedural Justice*

By definition, because it is outcome-oriented, retributive justice must be meted out on a case-by-case basis. But no social system can function this way and maintain legitimacy or social order. Instead a justice orientation must be adopted that can be applied broadly and equally in all cases, an orientation that privileges the fairness of process over the fairness of outcomes or the impulse for retribution.

Procedural justice is the perception of fairness regarding the process by which decisions are made (Leventhal, 1980; Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 1989). Procedural justice has been used to explore decision outcomes in diverse fields, from politics (e.g., Tyler & Caine, 1981) to managerial settings (e.g., Greenberg & Folger, 1983), though its greatest applications have been in the areas of dispute resolution (Thibaut & Walker, 1975), legal judgments (e.g., Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997), and support for legal authorities (e.g., Sunshine & Tyler, 2003).

The group-value model (Lind & Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 1989) was the first to articulate that procedural justice may provide symbolic psychological meaning (e.g., order and predictability) rather than a mere instrumental function (e.g., outcome control). The implication is that procedural justice is important in determining whether individuals obey rules and laws sanctioned by authority (Tyler & Lind, 1992). Tyler and Lind (1992) argued that one's relationship with authorities and with the larger society was ultimately conveyed by three relational factors—trust, neutrality and status. Trust refers to the belief that authorities' intentions are benevolent and that they want to treat people in a fair and reasonable way. Neutrality refers to the importance of unbiased authorities making decisions in a neutral arena based upon accurate and reliable information. Status recognition is acknowledged through treatment by authorities; if authorities show respect for individuals' rights, then individuals will expect these rights to be preserved in the future. Thus, how individuals are treated conveys important social information which then influences attitudes and behavior. Perceived procedural justice fosters perceptions of legitimacy toward authorities, which subsequently enhances obedience and compliance with authority-sanctioned rules and decisions.

Tyler (1990) examined the relationship between recent experiences with legal authorities and perceived legitimacy by interviewing a random sample of Chicago residents who had recent personal experience with a legal authority (e.g., police officer or judge). Respondents' attitudes about the legitimacy of authority were positively correlated with their judgments of perceived procedural justice and outcome fairness regarding their recent experiences, but were not strongly related to outcome favorability. Another study, a panel design, confirmed that perceived legitimacy increased compliance with the law even after controlling for initial attitudes toward authority (Tyler, 1990). Furthermore, this study causally linked personal experiences with legal authorities after the first interview to subsequent views of legitimacy toward legal authorities and compliance with the law. These studies support the assertion that increased legitimacy of and trust in authority should increase compliance with authority-sanctioned laws or rules. In the current context of reactions to a vigilante murder, this would suggest that trust in the system should attenuate support for vigilantism. However, an important issue to consider is whether individuals will support or enforce procedural justice for others.

While much of procedural justice research is focused on how individuals feel about their own treatment by and experiences with legal authorities (e.g., Thibaut & Walker, 1975; Tyler, 1987), recent research also indicates that in some situations individuals are sensitive to violations of procedural justice as they apply to others (Clay-Warner, 2001; van den Bos & Lind, 2001). Research suggests that commonsense attitudes toward providing fair procedures to others are determined by group concerns and the social meaning of deviance (Boeckmann & Tyler, 1997). Specifically, the relational model suggests that higher perceived quality of community relationships

increases positive attitudes toward affording procedural protections for others; however, the greater the perceived symbolic impact that deviance has on the community, the more negative attitudes are toward supporting procedural justice for others.

Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) noted a general increase in public support for punitive policies and for limiting procedural protections toward law breakers, as with increased support for the “three-strikes” law in California which mandated life in prison for repeat offenders.<sup>1</sup> According to a survey of California residents, Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) found that social conditions (i.e., relational concerns) predicted public punitiveness and crime-related concerns (i.e., instrumental concerns) predicted willingness to abandon procedural protections. Therefore, increased punitive attitudes among the general public appear to be the result of weaker social cohesiveness and more traditional social values (i.e., high authoritarianism, dogmatism and conservatism). However, the increased willingness to limit procedural protections resulted from greater perceptions of crime and of the danger crime presents to the community. One speculation for increased willingness to limit procedural protections is that the general public believes legal procedures are suspect, unfair, and that they favor the criminal. In fact, Tyler (2004) found that when institutional legitimacy was high, people deferred to authorities even if they disagreed with policy decisions. These results highlight the importance of the previous findings regarding the role of greater perceived legitimacy and greater trust in authority increasing compliance and enhancing support for authority-sanctioned rules and decisions (e.g., Tyler, 1990).

*Connection between Retributive and Procedural Justice*

The criminal justice system provides a framework of social values that maintains social order, manages conflict and regulates behavior (Darley, Fulero, Haney, & Tyler, 2002). Citizens generally regulate their own behavior and follow the law because it represents values they have internalized and/or because the system is perceived as legitimate (e.g., Tyler & Huo, 2002). Thus, crime can be interpreted as a violation of shared social values and an indicator of moral decay within society, while punishment reasserts community commitment to those values (Tyler & Boeckmann, 1997). On the one hand, procedures complement punishment: both reaffirm the status of the victim and shore up social standards. Further, by affording the right of due process to those accused of crimes, society demonstrates a commitment to protect individual rights (Tyler & Smith, 1997). On the other hand, law breaking behavior can lead retributive and procedural justice goals to collide. For example, people may react to a heinous crime (e.g., mass murderer) by withholding procedural rights in favor of swift and severe punishment. If a criminal is not a group member and does not share the same moral values, he or she is not owed the procedural protections afforded by the group (Tyler & Smith, 1997).

#### *Personality and Social Values*

As research has indicated, reactions toward law breakers are strongly linked to violations of core social values (e.g., Darley & Pittman, 2003; Tyler & Smith, 1997). Research shows that two personality characteristics, authoritarianism and beliefs in a just world, consistently influence reactions toward violations of authority (e.g., law breaking) and higher scores on each are associated with increased punitiveness (e.g., Tyler & Smith, 1997; Werner, Kagehiro, & Strube, 1982). The constellation of related attitudes

and values (i.e., punishment goals, causes of crime, personality, and ideology) develop consistent patterns that predict punishment decisions (Carroll, Perkowitz, Lurigio, & Weaver, 1987). In the present study, measures of beliefs in a just world (BJW) and right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) were included to indicate individual differences in social values which may moderate participant reactions toward the vigilante murderer.

*Beliefs in a just world.* Lerner (1980; Lerner & Simmons, 1966) suggested that individuals are motivated to believe that the world is just; that is, individuals get what they deserve and deserve what they get. When beliefs in a just world are threatened (e.g., innocent suffering), individuals engage in a number of defensive activities to eliminate this threat, including removing the apparent injustice or blaming the victim. Beliefs in a just world serve an adaptive function to provide meaning and control (Dalbert, 1999).

The scales measuring the beliefs in a just world (BJW) were developed to reflect how this underlying justice motive varies among individuals and thus should reflect stronger defensive reactions to justice violations from individuals with stronger just world beliefs (for review see Hafer & Bègue, 2005). Hagedoorn, Buunk, & van de Vliert (2002) found that just world beliefs predicted perceptions of distributive (outcome) fairness toward a fictional colleague when either the outcome was unfavorable or the procedure was biased, suggesting an increased sensitivity to unfairness among individuals with stronger just world beliefs. In a legal context, higher just world beliefs may lead to justification of crime when this is possible (e.g., victim derogation) or, when it is not, they may lead to more punitive reactions toward the perpetrator to balance the scales of justice. Vigilantism may be interpreted as appropriate justice when it is in response to the intentional victimization of an innocent other (e.g., high outrage).

*Authoritarianism.* Altemeyer (1981, 1988, 1998) defined right-wing authoritarianism as a personality trait with three attitudinal components or orientations: submission to legitimate authority, aggression against others that is seen as sanctioned by established authorities, and conventionalism or a high degree of compliance with conventions established by authority. Research indicates that authoritarianism predicts greater punitive reactions toward a criminal defendant (e.g., Werner, et al., 1982). Altemeyer's (1998) right-wing authoritarianism scale also captures the core aspect of conservative ideology: opposition to change within the social order (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski, & Sulloway, 2003).

### *The Present Study*

The purpose of the present study is to investigate how justice is perceived when retributive and procedural justice goals conflict in such a way that requires mock jurors to weigh the costs and benefits of allocating justice based on a particular case (micro-orientation) against allocating justice based on the utility of the justice system (macro-orientation). The present study, which is based on two theories, the group-value model of procedural justice (e.g., Lind & Tyler, 1988) and retributive justice (Darley & Pittman, 2003), is designed to elucidate how jurors resolve conflicting orientations to justice.

Vigilantism provides an extreme example of how retribution motivates action without due process: an individual who does not trust the legal system to secure a just outcome takes the law into his own hands to make certain that the criminal will not go unpunished. If the crime that precipitated retaliation was heinous and induced strong feelings of moral outrage, would jurors excuse a vigilante for taking the law into his own hands? Based on the reviewed research, I predict that individuals who have high trust in

the criminal justice system are more likely to consider legal procedures legitimate and sufficient, and will make judgments that protect the integrity of the system (macro-focus) at the expense of personal feelings or beliefs about deservingness in a given situation (micro-focus). If perceptions of legitimacy are high, punishment severity toward the vigilante would increase to reassert the system values of due process and procedural rights that are guaranteed to every American. However, if perceptions of legitimacy in the legal system are low, moral outrage may lead individuals to justify the murder of a person accused of a heinous crime and decrease punishment severity toward the vigilante murderer. Thus, priming trust in the legal system and moral outrage are hypothesized to have distinct effects on punitiveness.

The present study is investigating four primary hypotheses. First, I predict a main effect for moral outrage: when the moral outrage elicited by the precipitating crime is greater (in this study, rape/murder compared to manslaughter), the more forgiving (and less negative) participants' attitudes will be toward the vigilante murderer. Second, I predict this main effect will be qualified by a two-way interaction between trust in the legal system and moral outrage elicited by the victim's crime. Specifically, individuals who have high trust in the criminal justice system are more likely to consider the system legitimate and make judgments that protect the integrity of the system (macro-focus). However, when trust in the criminal justice system is low, feelings of moral outrage may determine whether the act of vigilantism is justified; thus high moral outrage would attenuate the recommended punitive sentences for the vigilante.

Finally, social values (just world beliefs and right-wing authoritarianism) are predicted to moderate the effects of the manipulated variables. Although these individual

differences are often positively correlated (e.g., Carroll et al., 1987; Jost, et al., 2003), in the present context I make separate predictions for the influence of right-wing authoritarianism and just world beliefs.

For the third hypothesis, I predict a three-way interaction between RWA, trust, and moral outrage on participant reactions toward the vigilante murderer. Lower RWA is associated with greater engagement in cognitive complexity and openness to experience (e.g., Jost, et al., 2003), which may suggest greater consideration of cost/benefits. Priming low trust is predicted to make the sentences more divergent between moral outrage groups: high moral outrage should lead to less negative attitudes toward the vigilante, while low outrage should lead to more negative attitudes toward the vigilante. In the high trust condition, the sentencing recommendations are predicted to converge, with punitiveness in the high outrage condition rising to the level of the low moral outrage condition.

Higher RWA has been linked to greater submission to authority and increased punishment severity (Altemeyer, 1998; Werner et al., 1982). High scores on the RWA scale have also been found to positively correlate with mental rigidity, close-mindedness, dogmatism, increased hostility toward deviants and support for socially-sanctioned scapegoats (Jost, et al., 2003). Therefore, high RWA could evoke two different sets of predictions in a vigilante context. First, high RWAs may exhibit increased punitiveness overall, while producing the same pattern of results predicted for low RWA participants. On the other hand, the reactions of high RWAs may be more complex. High RWA along with high trust may motivate divergent standards of justice by outrage condition, causing those in the low outrage (manslaughter) condition to be most punitive and those in the

high outrage (rape/murder) conditions to be least punitive toward the vigilante. When outrage is high and trust is lower, high RWA may lead to submission to authority (a default reaction; cf. Altemeyer 1998), yielding moderately negative reactions toward the vigilante. However, when accompanied by moral outrage, high trust may prompt moral indignation toward the suspect of the rape/murder that overrides procedural justice of the system in favor of justifying violence to right a fundamental wrong. Therefore, participants with high RWA scores may exhibit fewer negative attitudes toward the vigilante if they see him as morally just (i.e., moral outrage is high), but when the retaliation outweighs the precipitating crime (i.e., moral outrage is low), the imbalance may prompt increased punitive attitudes toward the vigilante murderer when trust in the system is higher.

In the fourth hypothesis, I predicted a three-way interaction between BJW, trust, and moral outrage. Since individuals with high BJW believe innocence does not suffer needlessly, they may rationalize that the suspect deserved his fate and show leniency toward the vigilante regardless of outrage condition. For those in the low trust condition, individuals with lower BJW scores were predicted to be more lenient toward the vigilante when moral outrage is high, but more punitiveness when moral outrage is low. In the high trust condition, low BJW was predicted to show more punitiveness toward the vigilante regardless of moral outrage condition.

## Chapter 2

### *Method*

#### *Participants & Design*

Much of the group-value model research has used community or employee samples (e.g., Tyler, 1988; Tyler, 2004), whereas much of the juror decision research has used student samples (e.g., Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson, 2000; Kassin & Sukel, 1997; Werner, Kagehiro, & Strube, 1982). While the theoretical predictions were the same for both populations, drawing from both student and community populations allows a closer comparison to previous findings and lends greater external validity to the present study.

One hundred seventy-nine participants were randomly assigned to conditions in a 2 (trust in the legal system: high or low) x 2 (outrage: high or low) between-subjects design. One hundred eighteen students from the University of Missouri participated in the study in exchange for partial course credit (Introductory Psychology,  $n = 50$ ) or extra-credit (Intro to Social Psychology,  $n = 68$ ). Sixty-one participants were recruited from the community of Columbia through flyers, newspaper ads, and a university-wide listserv e-mail announcement. Community participants were required to be a minimum of 25 years of age, which is the requirement for jury eligibility in the state of Missouri. Community volunteers were paid \$10 for their participation in the 60-minute study.

### *Procedure*

Up to 6 participants completed the survey simultaneously at divided workstations inside the laboratory. A research assistant introduced the study as an investigation of jury decision-making and briefly described the forms included in the survey. After collecting the signed consent forms, the researcher reminded participants that their responses are confidential. She passed out the packets and asked participants to deposit their completed surveys in a blank envelope provided to further ensure their privacy. Once all

participants were finished, the researcher probed them for suspicion and debriefed them as to the study's primary hypotheses.

### *Materials*

*Personality questionnaires.* Participants completed a measure of right-wing authoritarianism (RWA; Altemeyer, 1998) and then a measure of beliefs in a just world for others (BJW, Lipkus, 1991; Lipkus, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996). The updated right-wing authoritarian scale included 30 items that were rated on a 9-point Likert scale with endpoints of -4 (very strongly disagree) and 4 (very strongly agree). Beliefs in a just world for others (Lipkus, Dalbert, & Siegler, 1996) consisted of eight items with response options that ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 6 (strongly agree). See *Appendix A* for the complete personality scales.

*Trust manipulation.* Participants read a short fictitious article that discussed the effectiveness of the U.S. legal system and the perceived legitimacy of the jury trial and legal authorities.<sup>2</sup> In the high trust article condition, positive aspects of the legal system were highlighted (e.g., fair procedures, highly competent judges, and the large number of criminals who are caught and convicted). In the low trust article condition, the following negative aspects of the legal system were presented: inconsistencies between judges, false convictions, bungled prosecutions, and the legal system's general failure to control crime.

Following the article, participants responded to 10 items that were rated on a 7-point Likert scale. The first four items were manipulation checks to be sure that participants gleaned the desired information from the article. Participants also rated their agreement with the points in the article and how factual they regarded the article. The last six items were designed to ascertain participants' personal perceptions regarding the

U.S. legal system (particularly toward criminal justice). Refer to *Appendix B* for full articles and questionnaire.

*Outrage manipulation.* The precipitating crime, which serves as the outrage induction, was introduced through an “incident report” formatted to look like a police report. At the end of the incident report (which states the names, location, time, crime, victim, reporting officer, etc.) is a narrative description of the crime: 1) the rape and murder of a 10-year old girl (high outrage), or 2) the accidental death of a 10-year old girl hit by a reckless driver (low outrage). It also describes the status of the case: a warrant was pending for the suspect’s arrest. Based on previous studies (e.g., Carlsmith, et al., 2002; Darley, et al., 2000) participants responded to several questions about the case on 7-point scales (sympathy for victim, crime seriousness, outrage, likelihood accused committed the crime, and recommended punishment). See *Appendix C* for incident reports and incident reaction form.

*Vigilante murder case summary.* The vigilante murder is presented as a two page case summary which includes the charges of first degree murder, the testimony of an eyewitness, and the defendant’s own testimony. The defendant, John Smith, found out Kevin Collins was suspected of killing his daughter, and followed him home and killed him. A neighbor, who heard gunshots and saw a man leaving Collins’ house, reported the incident to the police. The police found the victim unarmed and dead. Jack Smith was arrested. See *Appendix D* for full case summaries.

*Outcome measures.* Eight questions assessed reactions to the vigilante murder. Two questions, based on those used by Darley and colleagues (2000), were included to assess perceived severity and moral outrage associated with the crimes: “How serious is

the crime with which the defendant is accused?” and “How outraged are you by this murder?” require a response from 1 (not at all) to 7 (extremely). Additional questions assessing crime severity, criminal responsibility, sympathy for the victim and defendant, future dangerousness, and likelihood of recidivism were also rated on 7-point Likert-type scales. The final item, “Indicate the criminal liability and sentence you would assign...” was answered on a 13-point scale that progresses from “no liability,” “liability, no punishment,” “1 day,” up to “life in prison” and “death penalty.” See *Appendix E* for the primary outcome measures.

*Attitudes toward crime.* Two measures were included to assess attributions of crime and attitudes toward goals of punishment (Carroll, Perkwitz, Lurigio, & Weaver, 1987). The 13-item “attributions of crime” scale includes three subscales (individual, social, and economic) that tap perceived sources of criminal behavior (e.g., “At the root of much crime are early family problems”). Punishment goals were assessed using a 17-item scale with four subscales (rehabilitation, “just deserts”, incapacitation, and general perceived performance of the criminal justice system; e.g., “Authorities should adopt a ‘get tough’ attitude with repeat offenders” and “More and better rehabilitation programs for prisoners should be developed”). Items on both scales were rated on a 7-point scale with endpoints of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). These items were included to see whether personality characteristics affect attitudes toward crime punishment and to see if participants’ attitudes toward the vigilante murderer predicted broader attitudes toward crime and punishment. For complete attribution and criminal justice opinion scales, see *Appendix F*.

*Personal experience with legal authority.* Four questions (based on Tyler, 1988) assessed previous experience with legal authorities generally and then whether individuals have been inside a courtroom specifically. These questions were placed after the primary manipulations and dependent measures to avoid priming individuals. However, previous experience with legal authorities shapes perceptions of legitimacy (Tyler, 1988), so assessing previous experience is potentially important. For individuals with experience with legal authority and/or experience inside a courtroom, they described their most significant experience for each and then rated their perceived treatment by the legal authority (and/or judge) on a 7-point scale from 1 = *not at all respectful* to 7 = *very respectful*. An additional item asked if the participant served jury duty and, if so, how many times. The last question asked whether participants had been convicted of a felony. See *Appendix F* for full experience questionnaire.

*Demographic form.* On the final page, participants were asked to complete information about themselves including age, sex, ethnicity, race, marital status, parental status and education. (See *Appendix F*).

## Chapter 3

### *Results*

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

*Demographics.* I conducted descriptive analyses to compare the demographics of the community and student samples. The demographic questionnaire was missing for 15 students (12.71%) before this oversight was corrected. For the student sample, more participants were male (50.00%) than were female (37.29%) from the available information; this pattern was reversed for community participants (32.79% male, 67.21%

female). Both student and community samples were primarily Caucasian, 74.58% and 90.16%, respectively. As intended, the age for the student sample was younger ( $M = 20.46$ ,  $Mdn = 20$ ) than the community sample ( $M = 43.34$ ,  $Mdn = 45$ ). See Table 1 for the full breakdown of demographic characteristics.

*Experience with legal authority.* A large majority of both student (82.20%) and community (91.80%) samples had experience with legal authority. In addition, many reported being inside a courtroom, 44.07% and 75.41% for student and community samples respectively. However, no student participants and only a small number of community participants ( $n = 15$ , 24.59%) reported serving as a juror. Refer to Table 2.

*Personality characteristics.* Right wing authoritarianism (RWA) was significantly correlated with beliefs in a just world for others (BJW),  $r = .18$ ,  $p < .02$ . This relationship is not surprising given the tendency for those who score higher on RWA to support the status quo (Jost, et al., 2003). I predicted that the community sample might exhibit more variation than the student sample. Levene's test of equality showed that RWA scores among community participants had greater variation ( $sd = 1.85$ ) than students ( $sd = 1.18$ ),  $F(1, 177) = 18.97$ ,  $p < .001$ , but there were no differences in variation between samples for BJW scores,  $F(1, 177) = .75$ ,  $p > .38$ ,  $sd = .80$  and  $.72$  for community and student samples, respectively. I also predicted that the means would not differ by sample which was confirmed for RWA scores,  $t(177) = .18$ ,  $p > .85$ ,  $Ms = 1.52$  and  $1.56$  for community and student samples, respectively. However, the mean BJW scores were significantly different,  $t(177) = 2.45$ ,  $p < .02$ . Students endorsed more beliefs in a just world ( $M = 3.20$ ) compared to non-students ( $M = 2.91$ ).

*Manipulation Checks*

*Trust.* A 10-item questionnaire followed the trust manipulation article; it assessed the participants' reading comprehension, their opinions of the article, and their views about the criminal justice system. Reading comprehension was assessed with two items: "From the article, how supportive are Americans of the jury trial?" and "From the article, how much do Americans trust the criminal justice system?" Each item was rated on a 7-point scale that ranged from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very). A 2 (sample: student vs. community) x 2 (article: low vs. high trust) between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to test for potential differences between trust conditions and samples on each reading comprehension item. For Americans' support for the jury trial, there was only a main effect for article,  $F(3, 175) = 51.98, p < .001$ , such that participants in the low trust condition rated support lower ( $M = 4.33$ ) than those in the high trust condition ( $M = 5.88$ ). For Americans' trust in the criminal justice system, an interaction between article and sample emerged,  $F(3, 175) = 8.48, p < .005$ . Pairwise comparisons revealed the predicted pattern between trust condition for both student,  $t(116) = 16.42, p < .001$  and community participants,  $t(59) = 16.76, p < .001$ . The means were in the predicted direction, students showed greater ratings for Americans' trust in the legal system after reading the high trust article ( $M = 5.52, sd = 1.05$ ) compared to the low trust article ( $M = 2.50, sd = .95$ ); the means for community participants showed the same pattern ( $M = 6.13, sd = .78$  and  $M = 2.23, sd = 1.06$ , respectively for high and low trust conditions). There were no differences between the samples within trust conditions,  $ts < 1, ps > .54$ . Thus, the interaction between sample and article appears to be an artifact of a slight crossover interaction. Finally, there were no differences for agreement with the article or how factual the article was rated, all  $Fs < 1, ps > .38$ .

The additional six items assessed personal perceptions regarding the effectiveness and legitimacy of, and trust in, the legal system. All items but one were significantly correlated with one another. The item “Some criminals must go free in order to prevent the wrong person from going to prison” was only significantly correlated with one other item. The alpha coefficient for all six items was moderate ( $\alpha = .69$ ), but when the lowest correlating item was dropped, the alpha reliability increased to .75. Therefore, the personal trust score was calculated by taking the mean of the five remaining items.

A 2 (article: low vs. high trust) x 2 (sample: student vs. community) between-subjects ANOVA was conducted on the composite personal trust score to compare differences between trust conditions and participant samples. The ANOVA showed a significant main effect for article,  $F(3, 175) = 4.53, p < .05$ . Participants in the low trust article condition had lower personal trust ( $M = 4.17$ ) than those in the high trust article condition ( $M = 4.46$ ). No other effects were significant,  $F_s < 2.24, p_s > .13$ .

*Moral outrage.* As in Darley, Carlsmith, & Robinson (2000), a single item was used to assess moral outrage and was administered among several questions probing reactions to the precipitating crime and the suspect following the incident report. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) revealed a significant effect of precipitating crime on feelings of moral outrage,  $F(1, 177) = 47.34, p < .001$ . The means were in the predicted direction: participants in the rape/murder condition reported greater outrage ( $M = 6.55$ ) compared to the manslaughter condition ( $M = 5.34$ ). The manipulation appeared successful.

Previous research suggests crime seriousness and sentencing are positively related to moral outrage. Thus, rated crime seriousness and the recommended sentencing for the

suspect of the precipitating crime can be used to check the effectiveness of the outrage manipulation. One-way ANOVAs on the precipitating crime revealed significant effects for crime seriousness,  $F(1, 178) = 37.63, p < .001$ , and sentencing,  $F(1, 177) = 239.30, p < .001$ . As predicted, participants rated the crime as more serious when they read about the rape/murder ( $M = 6.88$ ) compared to the manslaughter ( $M = 6.22$ ). Participants also recommended greater sentences for the suspect of the rape/murder ( $M = 8.85$ ) compared to the suspect of manslaughter ( $M = 3.09$ ). These means approximately corresponded to 33 years in prison for the rape/murder condition and 9 years in prison for the manslaughter.

*Primary Outcome Measure: Reactions toward the Vigilante Murderer*

The mean of the eight questions that assessed participant reactions toward the vigilante and his crime was used as the primary outcome variable. The reliability for these items was high ( $\alpha = .77$ ). Initially, I conducted a 2 (sample) x 2 (trust) x 2 (outrage elicited by precipitating crime) three-way between-subjects analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test for main effects or interactions that include sample (student vs. community) on reactions toward the vigilante murderer.<sup>3</sup> The results revealed only a main effect for outrage; participants were more negative toward the vigilante murderer when outrage was low (i.e., manslaughter condition,  $M = 4.53$ ) compared to the high outrage condition (i.e., rape & murder,  $M = 3.59$ ). As predicted, there was no effect for participant sample,  $F(7, 171) < 1, p > .34$ . However, there also appeared to be no effect for the trust manipulation,  $F(7, 171) < 1, p > .78$ . The manipulation checks showed that participants did read and comprehend the article. Furthermore, the high and low trust manipulations appeared to successfully prime positive or negative feelings, respectively,

about the U.S. legal system. However, the effect size for trust was small,  $\eta^2 < .001$ , suggesting that the trust manipulation was too weak to influence participant reactions. General attitudes of trust in the justice system appear to be difficult to move through priming. This prompted me to consider that trust in the legal system may be better conceptualized as a continuous variable. Six items following the article assessed personal perceptions of trust in the legal system, making it possible to keep trust as a continuous variable. One item was dropped because it failed to correlate with the others leaving the remaining five items with an alpha reliability.

*Trust as a continuous variable.* If the continuous measure of trust is valid, it should be predicted by personal experience with legal authority. Previous research has shown that trust is predicted by personal experience with authority (e.g., Tyler, 1988). Given the high percentage of participants with experience (See Table 2 and *Descriptive Statistics*), personal experience should positively predict trust in the legal. To test this hypothesis, I used the self-reported personal experience with legal authorities to predict personal views of trust in the legal system (i.e., the five-item composite). Two items asked if participants had experience with legal authority and experience inside a courtroom (coded as 0 = no and 1 = yes). After each question, participants were asked to rate their treatment by legal authorities on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (not at all respectful) to 7 (very respectful). Then experience (0 or 1) was multiplied by the self-reported treatment to yield measures of experience with legal authority and experience inside a courtroom. Each composite variable could range from 0 (no experience) to 7 (positive experience).<sup>4</sup>

Two separate regressions were conducted for each type of experience to predict mean personal trust scores. Sample and the interaction between experience and sample were also included in the regressions to test for potential differences between students and community participants. Since the interaction between sample and experience with legal authority was not significant, the interaction was dropped from the model. The remaining regression was significant,  $R^2 = .044$ ,  $F(2, 176) = 4.01$ ,  $p < .05$ . The beta coefficients were significant for experience,  $b = .073$ ,  $t(177) = 2.39$ ,  $p < .02$ , and sample,  $b = -.292$ ,  $t(177) = -1.95$ ,  $p = .05$ . As expected, there was a positive relationship between experience with legal authority and trust; as positive experience with authority increased, personal trust in the legal system increased. The main effect of sample suggested that personal trust scores were greater among students compared to community participants.

Similar effects were found for experience inside a courtroom. Again, the interaction between sample and experience was not significant,  $t(177) = 1.52$ ,  $p > .13$ , suggesting the main effects model was a better fit for predicting personal trust,  $R^2 = .049$ ,  $F(2, 176) = 4.55$ ,  $p < .02$ . The beta coefficient was significant for both experience inside a courtroom,  $b = .066$ ,  $t(177) = 2.61$ ,  $p < .02$  and sample  $b = -.34$ ,  $t(177) = -2.22$ ,  $p < .05$ . As with experience with legal authority, positive experience inside a courtroom predicted increased trust in the legal system. Again, student participants exhibited more trust in the legal system than community participants.

Since personal experience was a better predictor of continuous trust scores, I decided to use this continuous measure of trust to predict reactions to the vigilante murder.<sup>5</sup> The regression included sample, trust, and precipitating crime (dummy coded) and all possible interactions predicting reactions to the vigilante murder. Only the crime

variable had a significant beta coefficient,  $b = -.95$ ,  $t(178) = -5.88$ ,  $p < .001$ . These results are consistent with the ANOVA results above.<sup>6</sup>

*Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA)*. The RWA scale consisted of 30 items which showed very high internal reliability ( $\alpha = .95$ ); the items were combined to form a mean RWA score. I conducted a regression with RWA, personal trust, and outrage (dummy coded) in the model which also included all two-way interactions and the three-way interaction to predict reactions toward the vigilante.<sup>7</sup> The regression was significant,  $R^2 = .48$ ,  $F(7, 171) = 7.35$ ,  $p < .001$ . More interestingly, the coefficient for the three-way interaction was significant,  $b = -.33$ ,  $t(177) = -2.90$ ,  $p < .01$ . As recommended by Aiken and West (1991), I plotted the three-way interaction by using the convention of one standard deviation above and below the means for the high and low points within each continuous variable (see *Figure 1*).

To unpack the three-way interaction, I used a new method to statistically test the slope differences between specific pairs of lines (Dawson & Richter, in press). This method is analogous to the pairwise tests often conducted between conditions following significant interactions found using ANOVA and allows the researcher to test specific (a priori) hypotheses or, for exploratory analyses, post hoc tests of all possible combinations of slopes.

Here I was interested in two questions. First, did reactions differ between levels of RWA as a function of trust within each outrage condition (i.e., line 1 vs. line 3 & line 2 vs. line 4, as numbered in *Figure 1*)? Second, did reactions differ within levels of RWA between outrage conditions as a function of trust (i.e., line 1 vs. line 2 & line 3 vs. line 4)? Therefore, I conducted four t-tests.

First, there was no difference between the levels of RWA as a function of trust within the low outrage (manslaughter),  $t(170) = 1.00, p = ns$ , but there was a significant difference within the high outrage (rape/murder) condition,  $t(170) = -3.22, p < .01$ . Thus, low RWA participants expressed more negative evaluations and recommended harsher sentences for the vigilante as trust increased. However, high RWA showed fewer negative reactions and recommended less punitive sentences for the vigilante as trust in the system increased.

The second set of comparisons tested the differences between outrage conditions within each level of RWA as a function of trust. First, within low RWA, slopes of the outrage conditions were not significantly different from one another as a function of trust in the legal system (i.e., line 1 vs. line 2),  $t(170) = 1.41, p = .16$ , though the slope of each line is in the predicted direction. When RWA was high, the slopes of the outrage conditions were significantly different as a function of trust,  $t(170) = -2.64, p = .01$ . In the low outrage condition (manslaughter), those with higher RWA scores showed increased negative reactions toward the vigilante murderer as trust increased. This pattern is consistent with the predictions; when trust was lower, participants reported fewer negative attitudes toward the vigilante (perhaps believing justice was less likely through system) but they reported more negative attitudes as trust increased (disapproving of action outside the law). Unexpectedly, the opposite pattern emerged for the high outrage condition (rape/murder); those with higher RWA reported more negative reactions to the vigilante when trust was lower and *more lenient reactions as trust increased*. As depicted in Figure 1, it appears that when RWA was higher and trust was lower, participants' reactions were consistent with the law regardless of outrage condition

(perhaps exhibiting acquiescence with authority). However, as trust increased, moral outrage played a greater role; the moral outrage conditions diverged. When outrage was low (manslaughter), higher trust led high RWA participants to hold the vigilante more accountable for his crime. When outrage was high (rape/murder), higher trust decreased negative reactions, suggesting that while the legal system was deemed legitimate, the actions of the vigilante did not appear to undermine this trust because they served justice at a more fundamental level.

*Beliefs in a just world for others (BJW)*. Eight items comprised the BJW for others scale. The initial coefficient alpha was low ( $\alpha = .58$ ), but dropping one item, “I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get,” increased the reliability considerably ( $\alpha = .78$ ). Therefore the composite of the BJW was created by taking the mean of the remaining seven items.

I conducted a regression with BJW, personal trust, and outrage condition (dummy coded) in the model which also included all two-way interactions and the three-way interaction to predict reactions toward the vigilante murderer. The three-way interaction was not significant so it was dropped from the model. The remaining regression model was significant,  $R^2 = .20$ ,  $F(6, 172) = 7.00$ ,  $p < .001$ . The coefficient for the main effect of outrage was significant,  $b = -.96$ ,  $t(177) = -5.92$ ,  $p < .001$  which showed that participants were more negative toward the vigilante when his crime was in response to vehicular manslaughter (low outrage) compared to the rape and murder of his daughter (high outrage). Also, the coefficient for the two-way interaction between BJW and trust was significant,  $b = -.22$ ,  $t(177) = -1.98$ ,  $p = .05$  (refer to *Figure 2*). The slopes suggest that when BJW was lower, negative attitudes toward the vigilante increased as trust

increased. There was a slight opposite trend for higher BJW, but the small slope may simply suggest a greater justification of the vigilante's actions when BJW is greater (i.e., "the suspect got what he deserved").

*Ancillary Measure 1: Attributions for crime*

After the primary independent variable was assessed, general attributions for why crime is committed were assessed. The causes of crime scale is a 12-item measure that includes three subscales composed of 4 items each: economic/external reasons ( $\alpha = .74$ ), social reasons ( $\alpha = .52$ ), and individual reasons ( $\alpha = .66$ ). The purpose of this variable was to assess whether priming outrage would carryover to influence attitudes toward other crimes and other perpetrators of crime.

*Right-wing authoritarianism (RWA)*. Separate regression models predicting each of the attribution subscales included RWA, personal trust, and outrage as well as all interaction terms. Since the three-way interaction did not significantly predict external attributions, it was dropped from the model. The remaining regression revealed a main effect for RWA,  $b = -.21$ ,  $t(177) = -2.40$ ,  $p < .02$ , and a marginal interaction between RWA and trust,  $b = .11$ ,  $t(177) = -1.93$ ,  $p < .06$  (see *Figure 3*). Those scoring lower on RWA endorsed fewer attributions as trust in the system increased. However, for those higher on the RWA scale, there were generally fewer external attributions regardless of the level of trust in the U.S. legal system. The main effect of RWA is consistent with previous descriptions of the authoritarian personality (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988), where higher RWA is correlated with fewer external attributions for negative behavior. The interaction suggests that for low RWA, the endorsement for external attributions decreased as trust in the system increased.

For individual attributions of crime, the three-way regression was significant,  $R^2 = .17$ ,  $F(7, 171) = 5.09$ ,  $p < .001$ . The beta coefficients were significant for the RWA x crime interaction,  $b = .37$ ,  $t(177) = 3.47$ ,  $p < .01$  and the RWA x trust interaction,  $b = -.27$ ,  $t(177) = -3.26$ ,  $p < .01$  and were qualified by the significant three-way interaction,  $b = .31$ ,  $t(177) = 2.82$ ,  $p < .01$  (see *Figure 4*). To follow up, I conducted four t-tests to test slope differences. First I conducted two t-tests to compare the endorsement of individual attributions between outrage conditions as a function of trust within high and low RWA (line 1 vs. line 2 and line 3 vs. line 4). For low RWA, the slopes of the outrage conditions were significantly different as a function of trust,  $t(170) = -2.31$ ,  $p < .05$ . As *Figure 4* shows, when RWA is low, those in the manslaughter condition showed increased individual attributions as trust in the legal system increased. However, there appeared to be little change as a function of personal trust when outrage was high (rape/murder condition). For high RWA, the endorsement of individual attributions did not significantly differ between outrage conditions as a function of trust,  $t(170) = 1.50$ ,  $p = .13$ . Second, I conducted two t-tests to compare the endorsement of individual attributions between levels of RWA within each outrage condition as a function of trust (line 1 vs. line 3 and line 2 vs. line 4). The slopes were only significantly different within the low outrage (manslaughter) conditions,  $t(170) = -3.16$ ,  $p < .01$ . Low RWA predicted fewer individual attributions than high RWA when trust was low, but individual attributions increased as trust increased. Conversely, higher RWA scores predicted relatively greater individual attributions when trust was low but they decreased as trust increased. In the high outrage conditions, the slopes are not significantly different because trust did not influence individual attributions; those with high RWA endorsed the

highest level of individual attributions compared to those with low RWA who endorsed the lowest level of individual attributions.

For social attributions, the three-way interaction was not significant, so this term was dropped from the model. The remaining regression model was significant,  $R^2 = .11$ ,  $F(6, 172) = 3.51, p < .01$ . The only significant beta coefficient was for the RWA x crime interaction,  $b = .33, t(177) = 3.34, p < .01$  (refer to *Figure 5*). When outrage was low (manslaughter condition), social attributions remained unchanged as RWA increased. However, when outrage was high (rape/murder condition), social attributions increased as RWA increased. This finding is unexpected; generally higher RWA is associated with fewer social attributions. It may be the result of the low internal reliability of the subscale ( $\alpha = .52$ ) and/or the fact that half of the questions were related to drug/alcohol use, which could be interpreted as either a social or an individual cause for crime.

While results for external causes of crime were consistent with the characterization of a high RWA personality (i.e., those with higher RWA scores endorsed fewer external attributions), the results for the social and internal subscales were inconsistent with the primary outcome. The most unexpected results were those of the three-way interaction on the individual attribution subscale. Here trust appeared to influence the interaction only when outrage was low. In the manslaughter conditions, low RWA showed increased individual attributions as trust increased, which is inconsistent with the constant negative attitudes toward the vigilante murderer regardless of trust. Further, high RWA showed decreased individual attributions as trust increased, which is inconsistent with the increased negative attitudes toward the vigilante as trust increased. When outrage was high (rape/murder condition), low RWA showed the

lowest endorsement of individual attributions and high RWA showed the greatest endorsement of individual attributions. These results were also inconsistent with participants' reactions toward the vigilante; in the high outrage condition low RWA individuals were more negative toward the vigilante and high RWA individuals were less negative toward the vigilante as trust increased.

*Beliefs in a just world for others (BJW).* Three separate regressions were also conducted to predict each type of attribution from BJW, personal trust, and outrage. All interactions were included in the models. No significant effects were found for external or social attributions,  $F_s < 1.24, p_s > .22$ . For individual attributions, the non-significant three-way term was dropped and the remaining model was significant,  $R^2 = .10, F(6, 172) = 3.07, p < .01$ . There was a significant beta coefficient for the interaction between BJW and trust,  $b = .26, t(177) = 2.38, p < .02$ . As depicted in Figure 6, those with high BJW scores endorsed more individual attributions, which is consistent with the characterization that a person gets what he or she deserves. Those with lower BJW scores showed decreased individual attributions as trust increased, which is consistent with the idea that the situation is more important for those with lower BJW.

The inconsistencies between the attitudes toward the vigilante and the causes for crime scales may be due to their placement directly following the main outcome variable. The causes for crime scale was meant to measure general attitudes of why crime is committed, but some of the items were clearly more relevant to the crimes participants read about than others. Furthermore, the individual and social subscales had relatively low reliabilities, suggesting the subscales may not have tapped the underlying attributions they were meant to capture.

*Ancillary Measure 2: Goals of punishment*

The measure of punishment goals had four subscales: rehabilitation (4 items,  $\alpha = .80$ ), “just deserts” (3 items,  $\alpha = .69$ ), incapacitation (4 items,  $\alpha = .72$ ), and an overall performance evaluation of the criminal justice system (6 items,  $\alpha = .83$ ).

*RWA.* Right-wing authoritarianism, trust, and outrage and their interactions were included in separate regression models for each punishment goal. For rehabilitation, only a main effect for RWA emerged,  $b = -.22$ ,  $t(177) = -3.68$ ,  $p < .001$ , showing decreased endorsement for rehabilitation as a goal of punishment as RWA increased. For “just deserts,” the non-significant three-way interaction was dropped, yielding a significant model,  $R^2 = .20$ ,  $F(6, 172) = 6.98$ ,  $p < .001$ , and a significant beta coefficient for the RWA x trust interaction,  $b = -.11$ ,  $t(177) = -2.12$ ,  $p < .05$  (refer to *Figure 7*). The pattern showed that low RWA individuals were more likely to endorse the “just deserts” goal as trust in the system increased. High RWA individuals endorsed “just deserts” as a goal more than low RWA individuals, regardless of trust scores. The regression for incapacitation as a goal yielded only a main effect for RWA,  $b = .19$ ,  $t(177) = 3.39$ ,  $p < .01$ . There was a positive relationship between RWA and incapacitation: those scoring higher on RWA increasingly endorsed incapacitation as a punishment goal. The results for the goals of punishment were consistent with expectations based on the RWA personality; high RWA led to increased endorsement of “just deserts” and incapacitation goals and decreased endorsement of rehabilitation as a goal. For low RWA, increased trust led to greater endorsement of “just deserts” as a goal, consistent with the more negative attitudes toward the vigilante.

The final subscale was a measure of perceived criminal justice system performance rather than an actual goal of punishment. The full regression model was significant,  $R^2 = .25$ ,  $F(7, 171) = 7.92$ ,  $p < .001$ , and perhaps more interestingly, the beta coefficient for the three-way interaction was also significant,  $b = .21$ ,  $t(177) = 2.08$ ,  $p < .05$  (see *Figure 8*). Two t-tests were conducted to compare perceived performance between crime conditions as a function of trust within levels of RWA (line 1 vs. line 2 and line 3 vs. line 4). Neither of these comparisons were significant,  $ts = -1.36$  and  $1.51$ , respectively,  $ps > .13$ . However, the comparison of the slopes for RWA as a function of trust within crime conditions (i.e., line 1 vs. line 3 and line 2 vs. line 4) yielded a significant effect within the high outrage (rape & murder) condition,  $t(170) = 2.07$ ,  $p < .05$ . The slopes show that when outrage was high, perceived performance increased as trust increased, but this increase in perceived performance is less pronounced for those lower in RWA. For those higher on the RWA scale, increased personal trust in the legal system predicted more positive perceptions of legal authorities' performance when outrage was high. This finding may seem inconsistent, but I would argue that it bolsters the idea that reverence to authority can be trumped by moral indignation which leads those higher in RWA to rationalize the use of violence to defend a higher moral standard justice (cf. Altemeyer, 1998).

*BJW*. Separate regressions to predict each goal of punishment were also conducted with beliefs in a just world, personal trust, and outrage as well as all interactions. For rehabilitation as a punishment goal, when the non-significant three-way term was dropped, the remaining model was significant,  $R^2 = .08$ ,  $F(6, 172) = 2.40$ ,  $p < .05$ . There was a significant beta coefficient for the BJW main effect,  $b = -.40$ ,  $t(177) = -$

2.27,  $p < .05$ , which was qualified by the BJW x trust interaction,  $b = -.28$ ,  $t(177) = -2.32$ ,  $p < .05$ . As depicted in Figure 9, participants who scored lower on BJW showed increased endorsement of rehabilitation as trust in the legal system increased, but the opposite pattern was shown by participants who scored higher on BJW. Individuals higher in BJW were less likely to see rehabilitation as a punishment goal, which further decreased as trust in the system increased. For the punishment goal of “just deserts,” the regression revealed only a main effect for personal trust,  $b = .30$ ,  $t(177) = 2.18$ ,  $p < .05$ , suggesting that individuals increasingly rated “just deserts” as a goal as trust in the system increased. For incapacitation as a punishment goal, there was only a main effect for BJW,  $b = .37$ ,  $t(177) = 3.25$ ,  $p < .01$ ; as BJW increased, ratings for the goal of incapacitation also increased. There was no effect of BJW on the endorsement of just deserts as a goal. There was only a main effect of trust,  $b = .30$ ,  $t(172) = 2.18$ ,  $p < .05$ , suggesting that endorsement for just deserts was greater when trust was higher.

Perceptions of criminal justice system performance were significantly predicted by main effects of trust,  $b = .35$ ,  $t(177) = 4.56$ ,  $p < .001$ , and BJW,  $b = .31$ ,  $t(177) = 3.21$ ,  $p < .01$ . The beta coefficients were both positive, suggesting the expected: as system trust and BJW increased, participants rated the performance of the criminal justice system more positively.

## Chapter 4

### *Discussion*

The present study increases our understanding of the factors that influence justice reasoning when procedural and outcome-related concerns conflict. A thorough review of the psychology and law literature reveals a dearth of research on the role of trust and

moral outrage in justice reasoning for others. Right-wing authoritarianism is clearly an important moderator of the influence of trust and moral outrage as predictors of reactions toward vigilantism. The study showed that the murder of a man, prompted by a crime for which he had not been arrested--much less convicted--could be seen as justified under some circumstances. The justification of vigilantism is disturbing given our system of justice is based on one of procedural rights and presumed innocence.

The primary purpose of the present study was to investigate how individuals reason about justice in response to the actions of others when they are confronted with conflicting procedural and outcome motives. Vigilantism provided an ideal context in which to investigate these factors because it illustrates an extreme form of procedural injustice (i.e., denial of due process) and it posits a situation in which many can empathize with the motives of the vigilante. The research question became one of defining justice: can vigilantism be perceived as just? From a micro-justice orientation, one would judge the vigilante within the context of his crime and might rationalize vigilantism when it was prompted by a crime eliciting high moral outrage. From a macro-justice orientation, one would judge vigilantism as categorically unjust since it sanctions punishment without due process. The results of the study showed that right-wing authoritarianism influenced justice orientations, suggesting a more complex relationship than a simple interaction between trust in the legal system and outrage toward the precipitating crime on reactions toward the vigilante murderer.

#### *Contributions of RWA toward Understanding Justice Reasoning*

The results of this study suggest that reactions toward a vigilante murderer are influenced by feelings of outrage and trust in the legal system, but that individual

differences, especially RWA, moderate the interaction. Greater outrage prompted by the precipitating crime ameliorated participants' reactions toward the vigilante. Justice is defined through balance: murdering a man suspected of accidentally killing his daughter seems disproportional; even if the suspect was guilty, his punishment outweighed the crime. However, the vigilante murder appeared more proportional when the victim was believed to have raped and murdered the vigilante's daughter.

Right-wing authoritarianism moderated the relationship between outrage and trust in the legal system. As predicted, when the vigilantism was prompted by rape/murder, lower RWA led to more negative attitudes toward the vigilante as trust increased, presumably increasing the desire for equal application of the law (a macro-justice orientation). However, the opposite pattern emerged for higher RWA participants; negative attitudes toward the vigilante decreased as trust in the system increased. This finding suggests that trust in the legal system and justification of vigilantism were not inconsistent cognitions for high RWA individuals. Note that this effect was only present when those high in RWA were also in the high outrage condition; those in the low outrage condition showed more negative attitudes toward the vigilante as trust increased.

The divergent results of high RWA as a function of trust and outrage may reflect two roots of the right-wing authoritarian personality: 1) submission to authority and the social norms they endorse and 2) aggression instigated by fear and justified by self-righteousness (Altemeyer, 1998). When trust was lower, high RWA individuals showed similar negative reactions toward the vigilante in both outrage conditions perhaps reflecting a default submission to the rule of law. That these attitudes diverge as trust increases suggests change in justice reasoning. Perhaps individuals are more attuned to

issues of justice when trust in the legal system is higher: while high RWA participants showed increased negative attitudes and punishment recommendations for the vigilante in the low outrage condition, greater moral outrage provoked the justification of aggression toward a social deviant, a child rapist and murderer, leading to fewer negative attitudes toward the vigilante.

*Crime attributions.* Attributions for crime are potentially informative motives underlying individuals' justice reasoning; however, there were a number of complicating issues in the present case which made the results difficult to interpret. While high RWA predicted fewer external attributions for crime, which is consistent with expectations, the findings for individual and social attributions were inconsistent with the results for reactions toward the vigilante. The measure was designed to assess general attributions for why crime is committed (Carroll, et al., 1987). However, given that the attribution measure directly followed the assessment of the primary outcome variable, participants may have differentially responded to items based on their relevance to the case at hand (e.g., "People who are lazy turn to crime" versus "Most criminals deliberate prey on society"). The internal reliability for this assessment was especially low for the individual and social attribution subscales ( $\alpha = .66$  and  $.52$ , respectively). Ideally, general attributions for crime would be assessed prior to the manipulation, but here I did not want attributions to influence participant responses to the manipulations or the primary outcome variable.

*Punishment goals.* The interaction between RWA and trust in the system predicted "just deserts," the most relevant punishment goal in the present research. While higher RWA predicted greater support for "just deserts" compared to lower RWA

when trust was lower, the ratings nearly converged as trust increased due to the sharper increase in support for “just deserts” by lower RWA. It appears that greater trust increases punitive attitudes among low RWA; this is consistent with the increased negative reactions toward the vigilante as trust increases. The results for the other goals of punishment showed only main effects of RWA for rehabilitation (negative relationship) and incapacitation (positive relationship), consistent with the authoritarian personality (e.g., Altemeyer, 1988).

There was also a three-way interaction on perceptions of performance of the criminal justice system. Overall, performance perceptions increased as trust increased. However, high RWA only showed greater perceptions of performance compared to low RWA in the high outrage condition. This finding is interesting given that high RWA participants were less negative toward the vigilante than low RWA participants in the high outrage condition. These results further support the reasoning above: increased performance evaluations as trust increased suggests that the greater positive reactions toward the vigilante exhibited by participants with high RWA do not reflect perceived system failure but that moral outrage prompted the justification of vigilantism.

#### *Contribution of BJW for Understanding Justice Reasoning*

Overall, the role of BJW was less pronounced, especially compared to RWA. However, because of the context, it was important to see if individuals with higher BJW were more likely to blame the victim and support vigilante justice. Overall, outrage did not interact with BJW, apparently because both precipitating crimes were sufficient enough for individuals high in BJW to blame the victim for his own murder. The interaction between BJW and trust on attitudes toward the vigilante showed that when

BJW was lower, participants judged the vigilante more harshly as trust increased. However, when BJW was higher, participants' attitudes were less negative toward the vigilante regardless of trust.

*Individual attributions.* The role of BJW was only predictive for the individual attributions subscale. The interaction between BJW and trust showed that participants with higher BJW made more individual attributions for crime as personal trust in the system increased. This result is consistent with the beliefs associated with high BJW: that people are the masters of their own fate and get what they deserve. The individual attributions for crime may have increased with trust because people with high trust and high BJW may be especially likely to assume crime is caused by personal factors and that someone would not be accused without reason. When BJW was lower the opposite pattern emerged with fewer individual attributions as trust increased. These results are generally consistent with just-world beliefs. Unfortunately, they add little to our understanding of the reactions toward the vigilante since they changed very little as a function of trust and did not interact with outrage.

*Goals of punishment.* The interaction between BJW and trust also emerged for the goal of rehabilitation. Not surprisingly, higher BJW predicted fewer endorsements of rehabilitation as a goal of punishment as trust in the system increased. However, those with lower BJW showed increased support for rehabilitation as trust in the system increased. There was only a main effect for BJW on the goal of incapacitation: higher BJW led to greater endorsement of incapacitation as a goal of punishment.

Finally, general perceptions of criminal justice performance were positively related to beliefs in a just world for others; the performance of the criminal justice system

was perceived more positively as BJW increased. Again, these findings are consistent with expectations for high BJW, but do little to inform our understanding of the reactions toward the vigilante.

### *Implications*

*Justification of vigilantism.* The present study highlights the importance of trust, outrage, and right-wing authoritarianism in shaping difficult justice decisions, as in the case of vigilantism. Vigilantism appears to be more justified when it is prompted by a crime that evokes greater moral outrage. Interestingly, when trust was lower, the reactions between low and high RWA differed very little; however, as trust increased justice reasoning diverged as illustrated by the evaluations of the vigilante. The increased negative reactions exhibited by low RWA as trust increased suggest a mitigating influence of trust on the consideration of outcome in favor of procedures in justice decision-making. The decrease in negative attitudes toward the vigilante as trust increased points to aspects of RWA that are rarely exhibited in a legal context. Right-wing authoritarianism is associated with aggression, usually toward an authority-sanctioned target. However, the associated self-righteousness and fear of society teetering on the brink of self-destruction also increases aggression toward others who are perceived as morally corrupt and/or deviant (Altemeyer, 1998). Therefore, greater moral outrage appeared to trump duty to comply with the law in favor of sanctioning vigilantism. Alternatively, high RWA individuals may be more likely to use their own values as the authority on right versus wrong outcomes. When outrage is high and is accompanied by high trust, high RWA may increase adherence to righting a moral wrong in order to save social values themselves.

These results again suggest that justice orientation is a dynamic concept and that perceptions of justice are influenced by both personal attitudes toward the legal system and by the circumstances surrounding the crime. These findings also suggest that individuals are willing to overlook the denial of basic procedural rights for others under some circumstances. Outrage combined with high RWA appears to be particularly important in determining reactions toward vigilantism. Thus, the influence of moral emotions on justice reasoning should not be underestimated.

*Implications for juror selection.* Right-wing authoritarianism has been linked to greater traditionalism and adherence to authority (e.g., Altemeyer, 1998). The association between RWA and punitiveness has been found in a number of studies (e.g., Tyler & Smith, 1996; Werner, et al., 1982). In fact, one might predict from this research that taking the law into one's own hands would be judged as particularly egregious by individual high in RWA. However, the present study showed that increasing trust in the system elicited a defensive response when outrage was high. That is, those high in RWA may see that it is important to protect social values at all costs. High trust in the judicial system may serve this purpose generally but in the event that it cannot protect moral injustice, high authoritarians will side with what is perceived as upholding social values. Thus high RWA jurors may generally be more punitive toward lawbreakers (and support the legal system), but when moral issues are salient, they may use themselves as the higher authority on righteousness.

*Broader implications for procedural justice.* The results also show that procedural concerns are relevant even to justice reasoning for others. When outrage was high and RWA was low, increased trust also increased negative attitudes toward the

vigilante compared to high RWA. This finding suggests that in a situation where one might be tempted to justify going outside the law (i.e., high outrage condition), increased trust in the system led low RWA participants to hold the vigilante more responsible for his actions.

Furthermore, increased perceptions of respectful treatment by legal authority predicted greater personal feelings of trust in the legal system. Both student and community participants reported high levels of experience with legal authorities which explain why the samples did not differ on self-reported personal trust in the legal system. These results support the assertion of Tyler and colleagues (Tyler & Huo, 2002; Tyler & Lind, 1992) that increased trust in the legal system stems from positive personal experiences with authority.

### *Limitations*

The most significant limitation of the study was that the trust manipulation did not appear to influence justice decisions. While personal ratings of trust did appear to differ by trust conditions, the trust manipulation did not influence participants' reactions toward the vigilante (partial  $\eta^2 < .001$ ). It is likely that trust in the legal system is difficult to sway, especially among individuals with high levels of personal experience because they are likely to have more established attitudes toward legal authority (cf. Tyler, 1988). It may be more fruitful to manipulate trust within the specific context of a case (e.g., tainted evidence, racist cops). Perhaps violations of procedural justice would be more unacceptable and more likely to be corrected if case-specific issues of trust were salient.

While attributions for crime and goals of punishment likely inform justice reasoning, in the present study these measures immediately followed the primary

outcome, making the inconsistent results difficult to interpret. It would be better to assess general attitudes like these before introducing specific crimes to participants, but separated in a way that would reduce influencing the manipulations. The best method for accomplish this would be through an “unrelated” study that assesses attitudes about many different topics so as not to rouse suspicion. Ideally, this pre-test study would also be disconnected from the manipulations through time, place, and/or researcher.

#### *Future Directions and Conclusions*

Although vigilantism is quite rare, it provides a context in which to investigate the collision between procedural and outcome justice concerns. In the present study, the same murder was perceived differently based on why this crime was committed and personal trust in the legal system. Thus, the action of murder alone was not enough to determine reactions toward the vigilante: the precipitating crime was important. These results suggest that the influence of outcome and procedure must be reconciled, especially when the legal and lay definitions of justice conflict.

Future research should test the elasticity of the principles guiding procedural justice as they are as applied to others while distinguishing between substantive and technical procedural rules. When procedures appear to be frivolous or bureaucratic (i.e., “red tape”), they tend to elicit disdain and are more easily ignored when they are perceived as obstacles to a substantive goal (e.g., Kassin & Sommers, 1997). However, even substantive procedures (e.g., right to counsel, due process) are selectively protected. Research should focus on investigating the potential for substantive procedural concerns for others to promote equal administration of justice.

The legal system defines appropriate social behavior and recourse for law violators. However, its effectiveness requires procedural rules that standardize the application of justice to all citizens. The integrity of the criminal justice system demands that jurors follow the law, yet legal professionals know that outside factors like emotion influence justice decisions. While moral emotions (i.e., contempt, anger, and disgust; Rozin et al., 1999) are elicited by the violation of core social values, these are the same social values that the legal system and its procedural rules were designed to protect. Moral emotions prompt defensive reactions that may include withholding procedural rights; it is easier to push worldview violators outside the moral community and justify the denial of procedural for others and still insist on our own procedural rights. Future research should investigate whether an emphasis on the importance of procedural justice would highlight the double standard held for the self versus others and prompt equal administration of these rights even in the presence of moral emotions.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> There is a general disconnect between people's general attitudes toward crime and criminals and their evaluations of specific cases with general attitudes tending to be more punitive (Boeckmann & Tyler, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> A pretest showed promising results for this manipulation. After reading one of two versions of the article, student participants responded to six questions that assessed overall trust in the system, trust in legal authority, and belief that the legal system caught and punished most perpetrators of crime ( $\alpha = .65$ ). A one-way ANOVA on the mean trust responses revealed an effect in the predicted direction,  $F(1, 110) = 3.87, p = .05$ . The trust manipulation in the present study was edited to look more scientific (i.e., from an academic journal) and the two versions were revised to more closely mirror one another. Additional content questions were added to the post-article questions to check that participants read the article.

<sup>3</sup> One of the seven items of the reactions to the trial assessed participants outrage toward the vigilante murder. When this item was dropped ( $\alpha = .72$  for remaining 6 items), the ANOVA results again revealed only a main effect for precipitating crime (outrage),  $F(7, 171) = 23.62, p < .001$ . The means were in the same direction, participants in the manslaughter condition were more negative and punitive toward the vigilante ( $M = 4.49$ ) compared to those in the rape/murder condition ( $M = 3.64$ ).

<sup>4</sup> Analyses were also run dropping participants without personal experience. These two regression showed the same pattern reported with all participants. Personal experience with legal authority and sample were regressed on trust scores; the main effects model

was significant,  $R^2 = .07, p < .01$  and the betas were significant for both sample ( $b = -.36, t(152) = 2.31, p < .05$ ) and experience with legal authority ( $b = .11, t(152) = 2.74, p < .01$ ). The second regression using courtroom experience and sample to predict personal trust also yielded a significant main effects model,  $R^2 = .14, p < .01$ . The coefficient for courtroom experience was significant,  $b = .24, t(93) = 2.31, p < .001$  but the coefficient for sample was not significant,  $b = -.31, t(93) = -1.64, p > .10$ .

<sup>5</sup> All subsequent analyses were conducted with the continuous trust variable as an independent factor.

<sup>6</sup> This regression was also conducted dropping the outrage item from the composite reactions to the vigilante murder and the similar results were found, only the beta coefficient for precipitating crime was significant,  $b = -.85, t(175) = -5.24, p < .001$ .

<sup>7</sup> Sample and gender were initially included in the regression model but yielded no significant effects or interactions,  $F_s < 2.15, p_s > .14$ . Sample and gender were subsequently dropped from the model and are not discussed further.

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants.

	n = 118	n = 61	N = 179
	<b>Student</b>	<b>Community</b>	<b>ALL</b>
<b>Age</b>			
missing	15	0	15
mean	20.46	43.34	28.97
median	20	45	21
std dev	3.583	14.401	14.41
<b>Gender</b>			
missing	15	0	15
	12.71%	0.00%	8.38%
female	44	41	85
	37.29%	72.13%	47.49%
male	59	20	75
	50.00%	32.79%	41.90%
<b>Race</b>			
missing	16	0	16
	13.56%	0.00%	8.94%
African Am/Black	2	1	3
	1.69%	1.64%	1.68%
Asian	8	2	10
	6.78%	3.28%	5.59%
Caucasian/White	88	55	143
	74.58%	90.16%	79.89%
Hispanic/Latino	2	2	4
	1.69%	3.28%	2.23%
More than one	2	1	3
	1.69%	1.64%	1.68%

Table 2. Personal experience with legal authorities.

	n = 118	n = 61
	Student	Community
<b>exp w/ legal authority</b>		
missing	2	0
	1.69%	0.00%
no	19	5
%	16.10%	8.20%
yes	97	56
%	82.20%	91.80%
<b>exp inside a courtroom</b>		
missing	3	0
	1.69%	0.00%
NO	63	16
%	53.39%	26.23%
YES	52	46
%	44.07%	75.41%
<b>jury duty</b>		
missing	3	0
	1.69%	0.00%
NO	115	44
%	97.46%	72.13%
YES	0	15
%	0.00%	24.59%

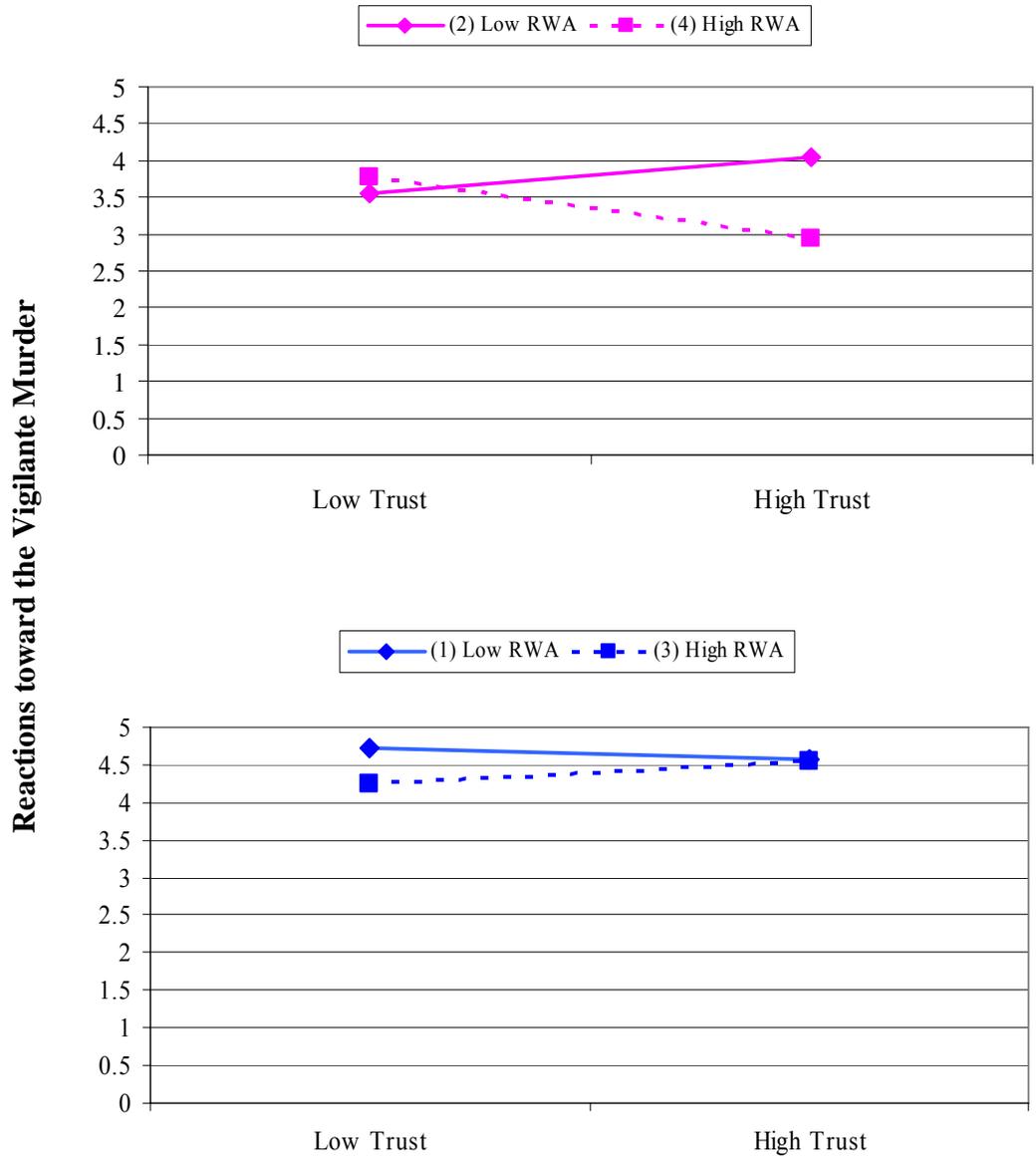
Table 3: Intercorrelations between continuous variables.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. RWA												
2. BJW	0.18*											
3. trust	0.13	0.35*										
4. trial_dv	-0.07	-0.05	-0.02									
5. pol exp	0.00	-0.05	0.19*	0.09								
6. court exp	0.10	0.12	0.34*	0.11	0.32*							
7. incap	0.25*	0.23*	0.04	-0.05	-0.05	-0.08						
8. perform	0.26*	0.36*	0.41*	0.15*	0.04	0.10	0.35*					
9. punish	0.36*	0.15	0.15*	-0.10	0.06	0.06	0.62*	0.29*				
10. rehab	-0.27*	-0.16*	-0.11	0.31*	0.05	-0.15	-0.15*	-0.04	-0.33*			
11. ext_attrb	-0.26*	-0.01	-0.14	-0.08	-0.10	-0.08	-0.10	-0.08	-0.27	0.29		
12. int_attrb	0.26*	0.25*	0.04	-0.06	0.02	0.10	0.33*	0.15*	0.42*	-0.19*	-0.13	
13. soc_attrb	0.17*	-0.07	-0.03	-0.06	-0.01	-0.05	0.31*	0.12	0.23*	0.13	0.08	0.38*

*Note.* RWA = right-wing authoritarianism; BJW = beliefs in a just world for others; trust = personal trust in the legal system; trial\_dv = reactions the vigilante murder; pol exp = personal experience with police; court exp = personal experience in courtroom; incap = punishment goal of incapacitation; perform = perceptions of legal system performance; punish = punishment goal of just deserts; rehab = punishment goal of rehabilitation; ext\_attrb = external attributions for crime; int\_attrb = internal attributions for crime; soc\_attrb = social attributions for crime.

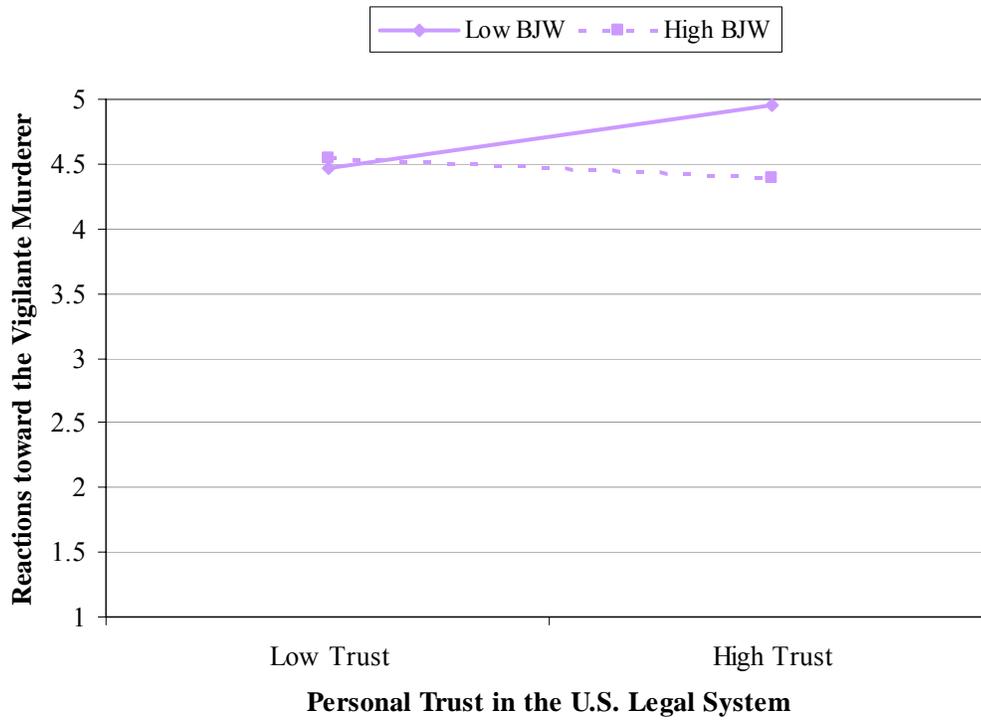
\* $p < .05$

Figure 1. Three-way interaction between system RWA, trust, and precipitating crime on participant reactions to the vigilante murder.



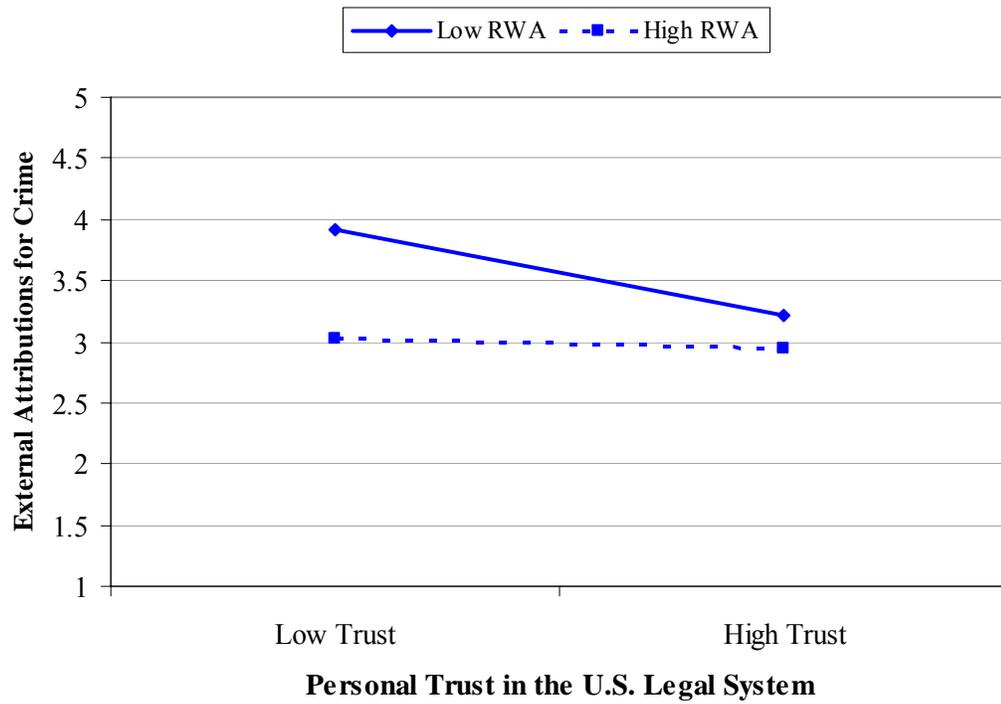
Note: Greater numbers indicate more negative attitudes toward the vigilante and more punitive sentence recommendations.

Figure 2. Two-way interaction between beliefs in a just world (BJW) x system trust on reactions toward the vigilante murderer.



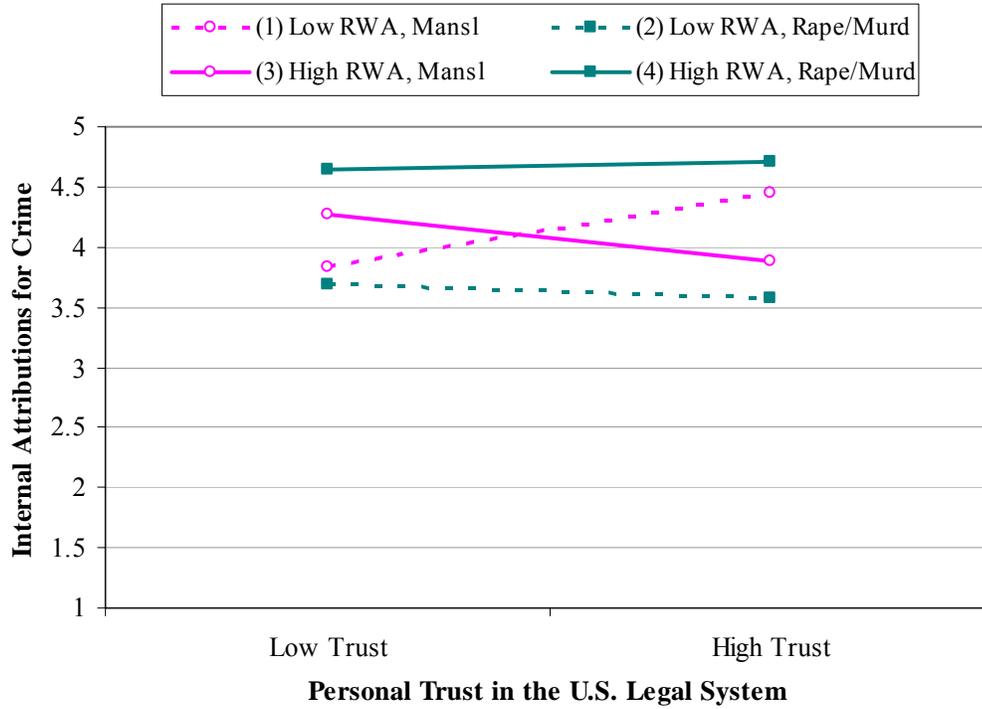
Note: Greater numbers indicate more negative attitudes toward the vigilante and more punitive sentence recommendations.

Figure 3. Two-way interaction between right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and personal trust in the U.S. legal system on external attributions for crime.



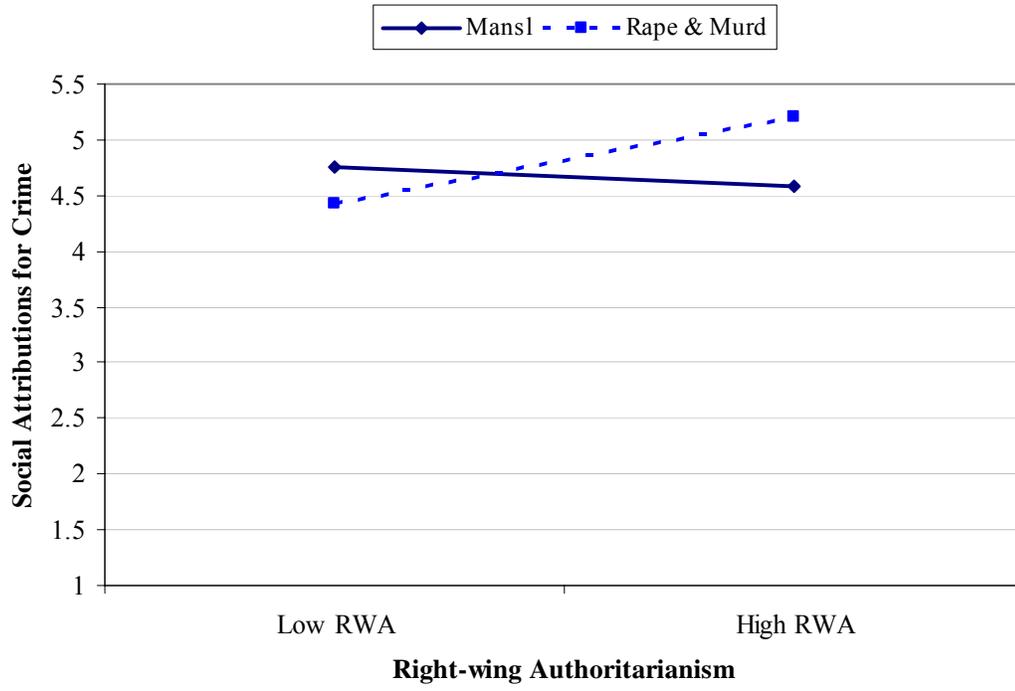
Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of external attributions.

Figure 4. Three-way interaction between right-wing authoritarianism (RWA), crime, and personal trust in the U.S. legal system on individual attributions for crime.



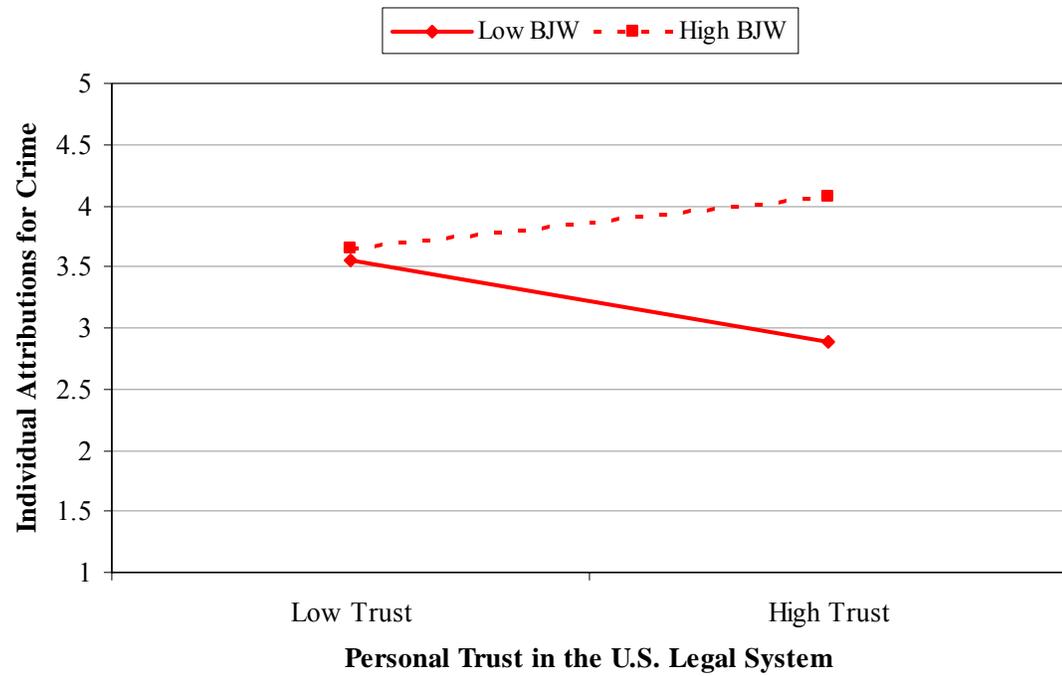
Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of individual attributions.

Figure 5. Two-way interaction between right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and outrage (crime) on social attributions for crime.



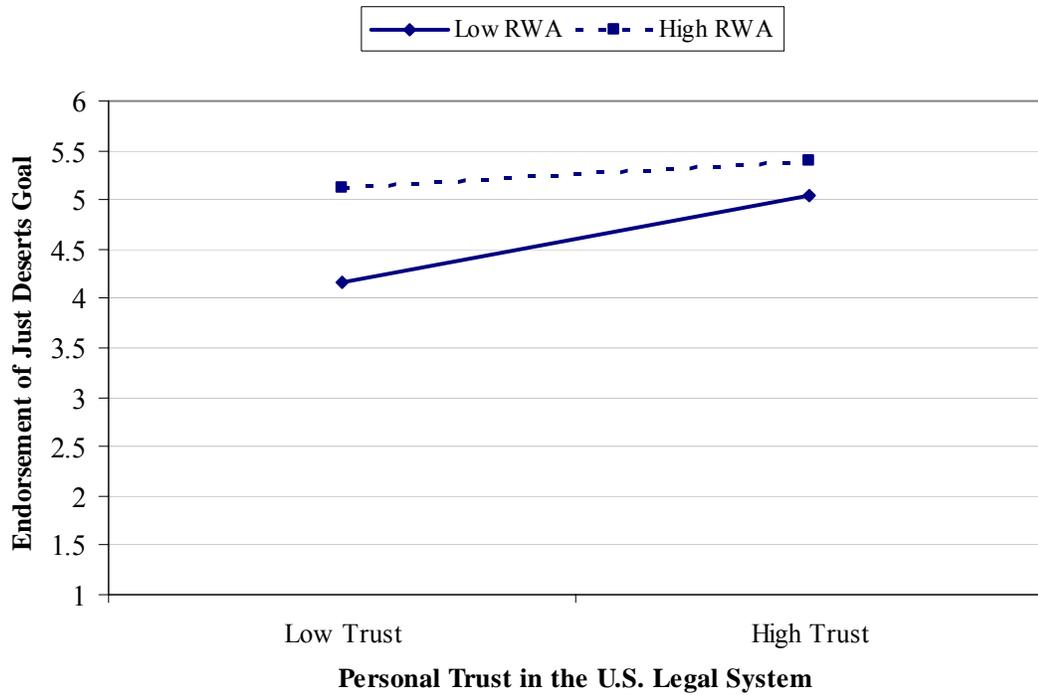
Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of social attributions.

Figure 6. Two-way interaction between beliefs in a just world for other (BJW), and personal trust in the U.S. legal system on individual attributions for crime.



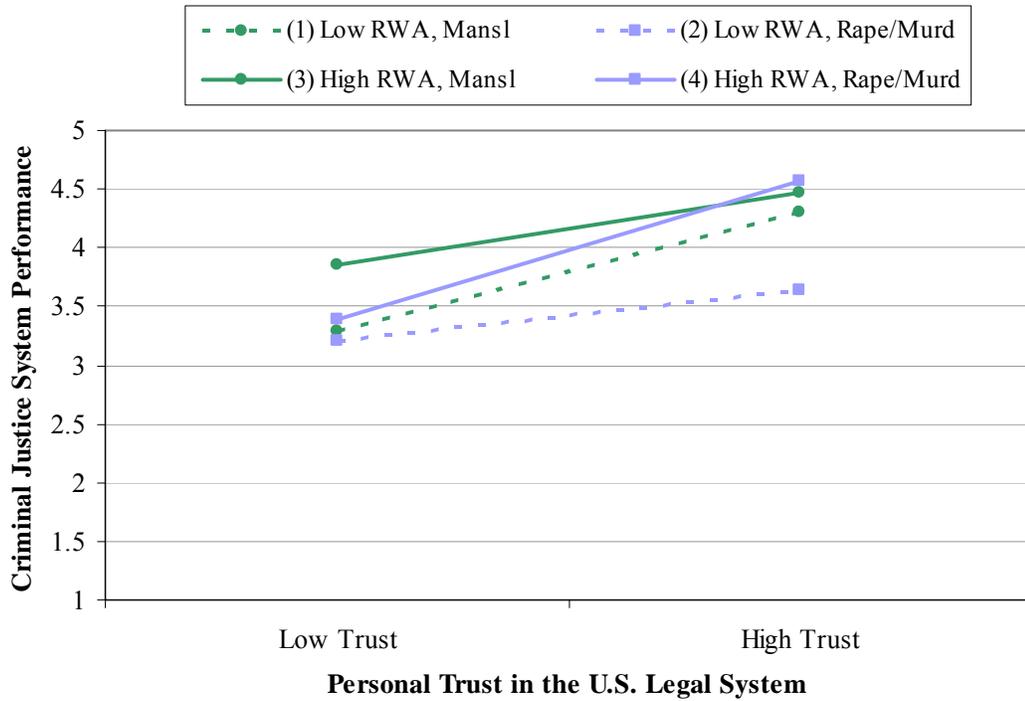
Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of individual attributions.

Figure 7. Two-way interaction between right-wing authoritarianism (RWA) and personal trust in the U.S. legal system on the endorsement of just deserts as a goal of punishment.



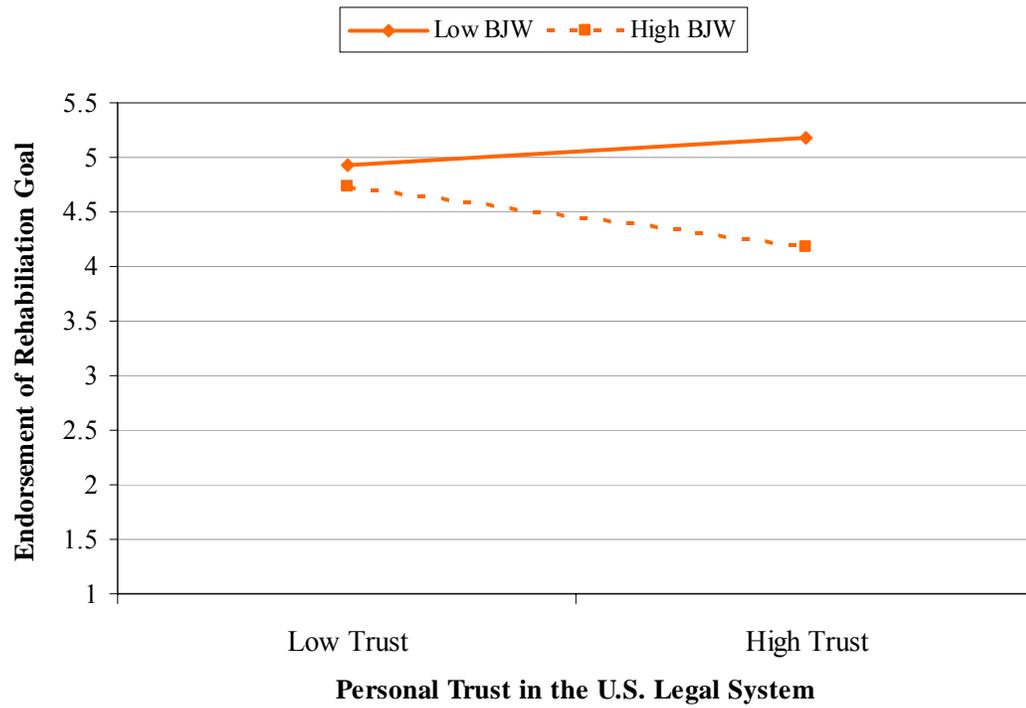
Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of just deserts as a punishment goal.

Figure 8. Three-way interaction between system RWA, trust, and precipitating crime on perceived performance of the criminal justice system.



Note: Higher numbers indicate greater perceived performance of the criminal justice system.

Figure 9. Two-way interaction between beliefs in a just world for others (BJW) and personal trust in the U.S. legal system on the endorsement of rehabilitation as a goal of punishment.



Note: Higher scores indicate greater endorsement of rehabilitation as a punishment goal.

APPENDIX A: Attitude & Personality Measures

*Right-Wing Authoritarianism Scale*

**Social Issues Scale**

**Directions:** Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number. You may find that you agree with one part of a statement and not another. In this case, just rate each part and add them together. For example if you agree (3) with the first part of a statement and disagree (-1) with the second part, you would circle 2.

-4	-3	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4
Very strongly disagree				Neutral				Very strongly agree

1. Our country desperately needs a mighty leader who will do what has to be done to destroy the radical new ways and sinfulness that are ruining us.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
2. Gays and lesbians are just as healthy and moral as anybody else.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
3. It is always better to trust the judgment of the proper authorities in government and religion, than to listen to the noisy rabble-rousers in our society who are trying to create doubt in people's minds.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
4. Atheists and others who have rebelled against the established religions are no doubt every bit as good and virtuous as those who attend church regularly.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
5. The only way our country can get through the crisis ahead is to get back to our traditional values, put some tough leaders in power, and silence the troublemakers spreading bad ideas.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
6. There is absolutely nothing wrong with nudist camps.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
7. Our country *needs* free thinkers who will have the courage to defy traditional ways, even if this upsets many people.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4

8. Our country will be destroyed someday if we do not smash the perversions eating away at our moral fiber and traditional beliefs.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
9. Everyone should have their own lifestyle, religious beliefs, and sexual preferences, even if it makes them different from everyone else.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
10. The “old-fashioned ways” and “old-fashioned values” still show the best way to live.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
11. You have to admire those who challenged the law and the majority’s view by protesting for abortion rights, for animal rights, or to abolish school prayer.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
12. What our country really needs is a strong, determined leader who will crush evil, and take us back to our true path.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
13. Some of the best people in our country are those who are challenging our government, criticizing religion, and ignoring the “normal way things are supposed to be done.”  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
14. God’s laws about abortion, pornography, and marriage must be strictly followed before it is too late, and those who break them must be strongly punished.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
15. There are many radical, immoral people in our country today, who are trying to ruin it for their godless purposes, who the authorities should put out of action.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
16. A “woman’s place” should be wherever she wants to be. The days when women are submissive to their husbands and social conventions belong strictly in the past.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
17. Our country will be great if we honor the ways of our forefathers, do what the authorities tell us to do, and get rid of the “rotten apples” who are ruining everything.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
18. There is no “ONE right way” to live life; everybody has to create their *own* way.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4

19. Homosexuals and feminists should be praised for being brave enough to defy “traditional family values.”  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
20. This country would work a lot better if certain groups of troublemakers would just shut up and accept their group’s traditional place in society.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
21. It would be best for everyone if the proper authorities censored magazines so that people could not get their hands on trashy and disgusting material.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
22. There is nothing wrong with premarital sexual intercourse.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
23. People should pay less attention to the Bible and the other forms of religious guidance, and instead develop their own personal standards of what is moral and immoral.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
24. What our country needs *most* is discipline, with everyone following our leaders in unity.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
25. A lot of our rules regarding modesty and sexual behavior are just customs that are not necessarily any better or holier than those which other people follow.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
26. The facts on crime, sexual immorality, and the recent public disorders all show we have to crack down harder on deviant groups and troublemakers if we are going to save our moral standards and preserve law and order.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
27. It’s better to have trashy magazines and radical pamphlets in our communities than to let the government have the power to censor them.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
28. The situation in our country is getting so serious, the strongest methods would be justified if they eliminated the troublemakers and got us back on our true path.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4
29. It is wonderful that young people today have greater freedom to protest against things they don’t like, and to make their own “rules” to govern their behavior.  
-4   -3   -2   -1   0   +1   +2   +3   +4

30. Once the government leaders give us the “go-ahead,” it will be the duty of every patriotic citizen to help stomp out the rot that is poisoning our country from within.

-4    -3    -2    -1    0    +1    +2    +3    +4

*Just World Scale for Others*

**Directions:** Indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate number:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Strongly disagree					Strongly agree

1. I feel that the world treats people fairly.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
2. I feel that people get what they deserve.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
3. I feel that people treat each other fairly in life.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
4. I feel that people earn the rewards and punishments they get.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
5. I feel that people treat each other with the respect they deserve.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
6. I feel that people get what they are entitled to have.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
7. I feel that a person's efforts are noticed and rewarded.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6
8. I feel that when people meet with misfortune, they have brought it upon themselves.  
1                      2                      3                      4                      5                      6

*Trust Article: High trust version*

## New Opinion Research Weighs the American Legal System on the Scales of Justice

Robert M. Porter

The recent U.S. Supreme Court judicial confirmation hearings have prompted many Americans to take stock of their feelings about the U.S. legal system, and two political scientists from Duke University have tapped that interest to learn more about how Americans feel about the courts, legal authorities, and the jury system generally. The question they posed: How fair and unbiased is the U.S. legal system?

There are certainly positive and negative aspects of all systems of justice, but what are the views of the American people? A research team of political scientists and legal scholars led by Gerald Mason and David Landis of Duke University conducted a survey of over 16,500 Americans to learn about prevailing views toward judges and the legal system.

“Trust in legal authorities is high. Citizens willingly turn to courts to solve major disputes and report fair outcomes, regardless of favorability,” explains Dr. Mason. “The survey results provide evidence that is contrary to the assumed public negativity and distrust toward the legal system by many scholars.”

Research comparing rulings in various court cases suggest that judges are consistent and fair in their assessment of evidence and facts. Also, there is greater confidence in the accuracy of convictions due to more advanced forensic techniques. A greater sense of efficacy has also been engendered by the overall 17% decrease in violent crime nationwide since 1996. “The greater perception of safety voiced by citizens is another sign that citizens are satisfied and that the legal system is effective,” Dr. Mason comments.

“Americans are proud of the jury system and object to changing this aspect of the legal system,” Dr. Landis reports. “Overall, citizens feel it gives them a voice in the process. They feel that legal authorities treat them respectfully and that the system yields just outcomes.”

While legal institutions certainly have problems, the Mason and Landis study suggests reasons to be optimistic about the health of our legal system. The jury system is well-respected partly because of citizen involvement in the process. Citizens feel they are a part of the justice system. The jury system works well because most jurors are diligent and earnest in their quest to arrive at the right decision. With the critical legal authority to resolve disputes and check power, says Landis, “Americans feel that the jury lends legitimacy to the system itself.”

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*Robert M. Porter is Visiting Fellow of Political Science at Georgetown University and a Contributing Editor to The Journal of Public Opinion.*

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“Trust in legal authorities is low. Citizens only unwillingly turn to courts to solve major disputes and continue to report low satisfaction with outcomes, regardless of favorability,” explains Dr. Mason. “The survey results provide evidence that is consistent with the assumed public negativity and distrust toward the legal system of many scholars.”

Research comparing rulings in various court cases suggest that judges are inconsistent in their assessment of evidence and facts. Also, there is greater skepticism in the accuracy of convictions due to inaccurate forensic techniques. A lower sense of efficacy has also been engendered by the overall 17% increase in violent crime nationwide since 1996. “The greater concern for safety voiced by citizens is another sign that citizens are dissatisfied and that the legal system is ineffective,” Dr. Mason comments.

“Americans are proud of the jury system and object to changing this aspect of the legal system,” Dr. Landis reports. “However, citizens no longer feel it gives them a voice in the process. They feel that legal authorities no longer treat them respectfully and they question whether the system yields just outcomes.”

Legal institutions certainly have problems, and the Mason and Landis study suggests that there is reason to be pessimistic about the health of our legal system. The jury system is well-respected partly because of citizen involvement in the process, but citizens no longer feel they are a part of the justice system. The jury system has worked well because most jurors are diligent and earnest in their quest to arrive at the right decision. But with fewer cases heard by juries, the critical legal authority to resolve disputes and check power is given to judges. Says Landis, “Americans no longer feel that the jury lends legitimacy to the system itself.”

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*Robert M. Porter is Visiting Fellow of Political Science at Georgetown University and a Contributing Editor to The Journal of Public Opinion.*

*Trust: Manipulation checks and trust opinions*

The following questions pertain to the article you just read and your views regarding the article's content. Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

1. How much do you agree with points in the article?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree completely						Completely agree

2. How factual do you think the article is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all factual					Completely factual	

3. From the article, how supportive are Americans of the jury trial?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all supportive					Very supportive	

4. From the article, how much do Americans trust the criminal justice system?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not much					Very much	

5. Overall, how effective do you think the U.S. Justice System is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all effective					Completely effective	

6. Sometimes criminals must go free in order to prevent the wrong person from going to prison.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree completely					Agree completely	

7. How often is the wrong person convicted of a crime?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rarely					Most of the time	

8. How often does the perpetrator of a crime get caught?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rarely					Most of the time	

9. How often do criminals get the punishment they deserve?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Rarely					Most of the time	

10. In general, how fair do you think jury trials are?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not at all fair					Completely fair	

APPENDIX C: Outrage Manipulation

*Incident Report: high outrage version* (Note: page numbers correspond in formatted versions)

Date Printed: 04/10/05

**Police Department  
Law Enforcement Incident Report**

Time Printed: 7:12:02 PM

Page 1 of 2  
9700344

M.R.S. Number: 1121001  
P.D. Complaint Number:

**INCIDENT DATA**

Incident Type: **RAPE/MURDER**  
Address of Occurrence: **200 WEST RD**  
  
Originally Received As:  
How Received: **RADIO**  
Type of Premise: **PARK**  
Copies to: **MUNI COURT**  
Occurred From: **04/10/05**  
Date Reported: **04/10/05**  
Time Reported: **1719 HRS**  
Arrival Time: **1830 HRS**  
Weapon or Objects Used: **NONE**  
Complaint Status: **WARRANT PENDING**  
  
Officer Assaulted or Killed: **NO**  
Reporting Officer: [REDACTED]  
Other Officers Notified: [REDACTED]  
District: **1**

**REPORTING DATA**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Sex: [REDACTED]  
Race: [REDACTED]  
Date of Birth: [REDACTED]  
Place of Birth: [REDACTED]  
  
SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: [REDACTED]  
  
Home Address: [REDACTED]

Phone:

Occupation:

Relation:



**VICTIM**

Name: MEGAN SMITH  
Sex: FEMALE  
Race: CAUCASIAN  
Date of Birth: 10/10/95  
Place of Birth: MO

SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: SINGLE

Home Address:



Occupation: [REDACTED]  
Relation: NONE

**KNOWN SUSPECT**

Name: **KEVIN COLLINS**  
Sex: **MALE**  
Race: **CAUCASIAN**  
Date of Birth: **01/10/77**  
Place of Birth: **MO**

SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: **SINGLE**

Home Address:



Occupation: [REDACTED]  
Relation: **NONE**

Physical Description: [Age]: **29** [Height]: **5'10"** [Weight]: **190 lbs.**  
Build: **MED**  
Hair Color: **DARK BROWN**  
Hair Length: **SHORT**  
Facial Hair: **NONE**  
Complexion: **LBR**  
Eye Color: **DARK BROWN**

Injured: **NO**  
Injured Type: **N/A**

Conveyed by:	N/A		
Hospital:	N/A		
Hospital Disposition:	N/A		
AR #:	<b>38845699</b>		
Charges:	<b>RAPE/MURDER</b>		
RSMO USC:	<b>455.90</b>		
MO Code:	<b>3315</b>	F/M/C:	<b>M</b>

Page 2 of 2  
Number: 9700944

Complaint

**PROPERTY**

Item Type:	N/A	Value:	N/A
Property Code:	N/A	Status:	N/A
Quantity:	N/A		
Property Disposition:	N/A	Owner's Name:	N/A

**VEHICLE**

Vehicle Number:	N/A	Code:	N/A
Owner's Name:	N/A		
Vehicle Status:	N/A	Vehicle Make:	N/A
Year:	N/A	Style:	N/A
Vehicle Value:	N/A	Doors Locked:	N/A

**NARRATIVE**

**On the evening of April 10, 2005, a 10-year old girl, Megan Smith, was admitted into the hospital with signs of sexual abuse and trauma. Upon examination, the doctor concluded that Megan had been raped and beaten by her attacker causing a number of injuries including a severe concussion, bruising, and several broken ribs that were causing internal bleeding. The staff physician immediately contacted the police and the guardian of Megan Smith. After surgery, Megan remained in intensive care for 12 hours before she died from internal bleeding.**

**Upon the arrival of Megan Smith’s father, Jack Smith, a witness made a statement to the police regarding her attack. “I was jogging around a nearby park and I saw a man walking with a little girl. By the time I made my second lap, I saw the same little girl alone crawling in the grass, bleeding and crying.” The witness said she immediately called the police for an ambulance and described the man.**

**Based on the witness’s description and DNA evidence found on the victim, police identified Kevin Collins as her attacker. Collins was questioned regarding the attack of Megan Smith. He denied the allegations but did not have an alibi for the date and time Megan Smith was attacked. A warrant for Collins’ official arrest was pending grand jury approval.**

Reporting Officer:

Supervising Officer:

Reviewing Officer:



*Moral Outrage Incident Report: low outrage version*

Date Printed: 04/10/05

**Police Department  
Law Enforcement Incident Report**

Time Printed: 7:12:02 PM

M.R.S. Number: 1121001

Page 1 of 2  
9700344

P.D. Complaint Number:

**INCIDENT DATA**

Incident Type: **VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER**  
Address of Occurrence: **200 WEST RD**

Originally Received As:  
How Received: **RADIO**  
Type of Premise: **PUBLIC STREET**  
Copies to: **MUNI COURT**  
Occurred From: **04/10/05**  
Date Reported: **04/10/05**  
Time Reported: **1719 HRS**  
Arrival Time: **1730 HRS**  
Weapon or Objects Used: **NONE**  
Complaint Status: **WARRANT PENDING**

Officer Assaulted or Killed: **NO**  
Reporting Officer: [REDACTED]  
Other Officers Notified:  
District: **5**

**REPORTING DATA**

Name: [REDACTED]  
Sex: [REDACTED]  
Race: [REDACTED]  
Date of Birth: [REDACTED]  
Place of Birth: [REDACTED]  
  
SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: [REDACTED]  
  
Home Address: [REDACTED]  
Phone: [REDACTED]  
  
Occupation: [REDACTED]  
Relation: [REDACTED]

**VICTIM**

Name: **MEGAN SMITH**  
Sex: **FEMALE**  
Race: **CAUCASIAN**  
Date of Birth: **10/10/95**  
Place of Birth: **MO**  
SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: [REDACTED]  
Home Address: [REDACTED]  
Occupation: [REDACTED]  
Relation: **NONE**

**KNOWN SUSPECT**

Name: **KEVIN COLLINS**  
Sex: **MALE**  
Race: **CAUCASIAN**  
Date of Birth: **01/10/77**  
Place of Birth: **MO**  
SSN: [REDACTED]  
Marital Status: **SINGLE**  
Home Address: [REDACTED]  
Occupation: [REDACTED]  
Relation: **NONE**  
Physical Description: [Age]: **29** [Height]: **5'11"** [Weight]: **190 lbs.**  
Build: **MED**  
Hair Color: **DARK BROWN**  
Hair Length: **SHORT**  
Facial Hair: **NONE**  
Complexion: **LBR**  
Eye Color: **DARK BROWN**  
Injured: **NO**  
Injured Type: **N/A**  
Conveyed by: **N/A**  
Hospital: **N/A**  
Hospital Disposition: **N/A**  
AR #: **38845699**  
Charges: **VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER**

RSMO USC: **455.90**  
MO Code: **3915** F/M/C: **M**

Page 2 of 2  
Number: 9700344

Complaint

### PROPERTY

Item Type: N/A Value: N/A  
Property Code: N/A Status: N/A  
Quantity: N/A  
Property Disposition: N/A Owner's Name: N/A

### VEHICLE

Vehicle Number: [REDACTED] Code: **1232**  
Owner's Name: **KEVIN COLLINS** Vehicle Status:  
**IMPOUND** Vehicle Make: **FORD** Year:  
**2002**  
Style: **TRUCK**

### NARRATIVE

**On the evening of April 10, 2005, a 10-year old girl, Megan Smith, was admitted into the hospital with major contusions signs of severe trauma. Upon examination, the doctor found that Megan Smith had a severe concussion, neck injury, and several broken ribs that were causing internal bleeding. The staff physician immediately contacted the police and the guardian of Megan Smith. After surgery, Megan remained in intensive care for 12 hours before she died from internal bleeding.**

**Upon the arrival of Megan Smith's father, Jack Smith, a witness made a statement to the police regarding the accident. "I saw a young girl walking and as she cut across the street, a blue truck came careening around the corner. The driver slammed on his brakes and tried to swerve but he was**

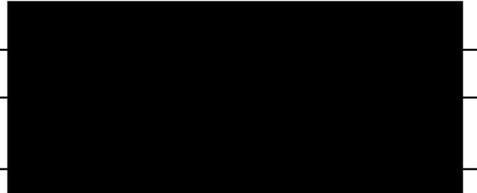
going too fast and he hit the girl. I think he must have realized what happened and he panicked and kept on driving. I did not see the driver, it happened too fast. But the hair looked short and dark, like a man's." The witness said that she saw the whole incident and immediately called the police for an ambulance and described the truck she saw.

Based on the witness's description of the vehicle, police identified Kevin Collins as the owner of the truck in question. The truck was examined and evidence of a crash was found, as well as blood evidence that matched the victim's DNA. Collins was questioned regarding the hit and run accident. He denied the allegations but did not have an alibi for the date and time Megan Smith was hit. A warrant for Collins' official arrest was pending grand jury approval.

Reporting Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervising Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewing Officer: \_\_\_\_\_





## APPENDIX D: Vigilante Case Summary

*Vigilante murder in response to the rape/murder of his 10-year old daughter.*

### **Trial Summary: Missouri v. Smith**

#### **Background:**

Jack Smith is a 40 year-old man and has worked for an office supply company for 20 years. He is married and had a 10-year old daughter that was recently killed. He was known by his neighbors as a quiet and polite man. He spent all of his free time with his family.

#### **Indictment.**

The defendant Jack Smith is charged with 1<sup>st</sup> DEGREE MURDER which took place on the night of April 12, 2005.

**The Defendant's Plea:** The defendant, Jack Smith, pleads NOT GUILTY.

#### **Prosecution's Opening Statement.**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I am Raymond Boyer, the state prosecutor. I serve the state of Missouri and its interests. I represent you, the citizens of Missouri. The events leading up to the murder of Kevin Collins may shock you. The rape and beating of Megan Smith that resulted in her death is tragic. I too have a young daughter and I too had my own thoughts of retribution when I thought it could have been my own little girl. But, ladies and gentlemen, there is a distinction between wanting revenge and getting revenge. I have sent rapists to prison through the legal system; this is what I would have done to Kevin Collins. But the justice system would collapse if we allowed people like Jack Smith to dispense justice according to his own terms. Now the defendant wants due process and a fair trial when he did not seem to believe in the system before. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, your task is simple—you must look at the facts and see that justice is done.

#### **Defense's Opening Statement.**

There is a sacred bond between father and daughter; it cannot be explained and it cannot be tampered with. I too, have a daughter Megan's age and I, as a father, am sick of the mere thought of something like this happening to her. I must say, the Prosecutor is to be admired for his ability to be so forgiving and compassionate to any pervert who might rape and kill his daughter. Try to imagine throughout the trial, how you would feel had it been your daughter. You must not convict Jack Smith but send him home to his family, his wife who needs him.

#### **Evan Moore** (Prosecution's witness)

I lived across from Kevin Collins. I didn't know him very well, but we were friendly, I guess. On the evening in question, I heard what I thought was a gun shot and when I went to my window, I saw a man coming out of the Collins' house and leave in a car. I thought maybe Collins was being robbed or something. I called the police to report the suspicious activity. I went across the street to see what happened and I saw that Collins had been shot. I called for an ambulance.

**Cross-examination.** No, the guy I saw leave did not run, he just walked to his car and left. He was already gone by the time I got over there.

**Ozzy Campbell** (Prosecution's witness)

I am the Sheriff and was the first authority at the scene of the crime. A neighbor heard gunshots and called the police. He reported that he thought Mr. Collins was being robbed and that he saw someone fitting the description of Jack Smith leaving the house. No, everything in the house appeared in order. There did not appear to be a struggle or that any of Collins's possessions were missing. We found a .32 caliber handgun at the scene of the crime. Fingerprints were lifted from the gun and they were later determined to be Smith's.

Cross-examination. Yes, I had a warrant for the arrest of Kevin Collins. We were planning to pick him up the morning of the April 13<sup>th</sup> on the charge of rape and murder of Megan Smith. Megan was 10 years old. Yes, this crime has certainly affected her parents deeply.

**Jack Smith** (Defendant)

I had gone to the police and they said they would do everything they could. I followed Kevin home for 3 nights and just watched him; nothing was being done.

Yes, I was very agitated that night. I went home after work to check on my wife. The sight of her made me so sad. That sadness turned into rage at the man who was responsible, Kevin Collins. I couldn't wait any longer; he had to be brought to justice. I grabbed my handgun and I drove to his house just as I had done the last few nights. I was in a blind rage; I hardly remember driving to Collins' house. I went up to the door and when he saw me, he backed away. I shot him twice. The gunfire sounded so distant. He was lying there; I dropped the gun. I left and went home; though I don't remember driving there.

Cross-examination. Of course as soon as I knew he committed the crime, I was angry. I waited to take action because I was also distraught over my daughter and I thought the police would take action. Yes, I do remember grabbing the gun from the house and I remember being at Kevin's house, but I don't remember firing the gun. I saw him on the floor dead; I knew that I must have shot him.

**Prosecution's Closing Statement.**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Jack Smith admits to shooting Kevin Collins. The facts support this statement. He took the law into his own hands. The crime that Kevin Collins was accused of is a heinous one. Certainly anyone who has been a victim of crime feels angry and has thoughts of revenge. But there is a difference between thinking and acting. Two wrongs do not make a right. We cannot have the chaos that ensues when people disregard the law and take justice into their own hands, according to their own standard. I ask you to find Jack Smith guilty and to impress upon him the punishment that should accompany such a severe crime.

**Defense's Closing Statement.**

Members of the jury, please put yourselves in my client's position. The attack of his young daughter was overwhelming. He was worried about the repercussions this crime would have on his wife and the police did not appear to be making progress. He could not let this child rapist and murderer get away and repeat his crime. His sadness turned to blind rage; he carried out justice the only way he could be certain that Collins would pay for his crime. Mr. Smith was known as a quiet and gentle man; he does not have as much as a speeding ticket to his name. In his desperation, he lost control. If we were in the same position, would we not have considered the same actions? I urge you to vote not guilty. Send Jack Smith back to his wife who needs him.

*Vigilante murder in response to the death of his daughter (vehicular manslaughter)*

**Trial Summary: Missouri v. Smith**

**Background:**

Jack Smith is a 40 year-old man and has worked for an office supply company for 20 years. He is married and had a 10-year old daughter that was recently killed. He was known by his neighbors as a quiet and polite man. He spent all of his free time with his family.

**Indictment.**

The defendant Jack Smith is charged with 1<sup>st</sup> DEGREE MURDER which took place on the night of April 12, 2005.

**The Defendant's Plea:** The defendant, Jack Smith, pleads NOT GUILTY.

**Prosecution's Opening Statement.**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, I am Raymond Boyer, the state prosecutor. I serve the state of Missouri and its interests. I represent you, the citizens of Missouri. The events leading up to the murder of Kevin Collins may shock you. The accident that killed Megan Smith was tragic. I too have a young daughter and I too had my own thoughts of retribution when I thought it could have been my own little girl. But, ladies and gentlemen, there is a distinction between wanting revenge and getting revenge. I have sent guilty people to prison through the legal system; this is what I would have done to Kevin Collins. But the justice system would collapse if we allowed people like Jack Smith to dispense justice according to his own terms. Now the defendant wants due process and a fair trial when he did not seem to believe in the system before. Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, your task is simple—you must look at the facts and see that justice is done.

**Defense's Opening Statement.**

There is a sacred bond between father and daughter; it cannot be explained and it cannot be tampered with. I too, have a daughter Megan's age and I, as a father, am sick of the mere thought of something like this happening to her. I must say, the Prosecutor is to be admired for his ability to be so forgiving and compassionate toward any reckless driver that might mow down his daughter. Try to imagine throughout the trial, how you would feel had it been your daughter. You must not convict Jack Smith but send him home to his family, his wife who needs him.

**Evan Moore** (Prosecution's witness)

I lived across from Kevin Collins. I didn't know him very well, but we were friendly, I guess. On the evening in question, I heard what I thought was a gun shot and when I went to my window, I saw a man coming out of the Collins' house and leave in a car. I thought maybe Collins was being robbed or something. I called the police to report the suspicious activity. I went across the street to see what happened and I saw that Collins had been shot. I called for an ambulance.

**Cross-examination.** No, the guy I saw leave did not run, he just walked to his car and left. He was already gone by the time I got over there.

**Ozzy Campbell** (Prosecution's witness)

I am the Sheriff and was the first authority at the scene of the crime. A neighbor heard gunshots and called the police. He reported that he thought Mr. Collins was being robbed and that he saw someone fitting the description of Jack Smith leaving the house. No, everything in the house appeared in order. There did not appear to be a struggle or that any of Collins's possessions were missing. We found a .32 caliber handgun at the scene of the crime. Fingerprints were lifted from the gun and they were later determined to be Smith's.

Cross-examination. Yes, I had a warrant for the arrest of Kevin Collins. We were planning to pick him up the morning of the April 13<sup>th</sup> on the charge of manslaughter of Megan Smith. Megan was 10 years old. Yes, this crime has certainly affected her parents deeply.

**Jack Smith** (Defendant)

I had gone to the police and they said they would do everything they could. I followed Kevin home for 3 nights and just watched him; nothing was being done.

Yes, I was very agitated that night. I went home after work to check on Megan and I realized again that she was not there. It made me so sad. That sadness turned into rage at the man who was responsible, Kevin Collins. I couldn't wait any longer; he had to be brought to justice. I grabbed my handgun and I drove to his house just as I had done the last few nights. I was in a blind rage; I hardly remember driving to Collins' house. I went up to the door and when he saw me, he backed away. I shot him twice. The gunfire sounded so distant. He was lying there; I dropped the gun. I left and went home; though I don't remember driving there.

Cross-examination. Of course as soon as I knew he committed the crime, I was angry. I waited to take action because I was also distraught over my daughter and I thought the police would take action. Yes, I do remember grabbing the gun from the house and I remember being at Kevin's house, but I don't remember firing the gun. I saw him on the floor dead; I knew that I must have shot him.

**Prosecution's Closing Statement.**

Ladies and gentlemen of the jury, Jack Smith admits to shooting Kevin Collins. The facts support this statement. He took the law into his own hands. The crime that Kevin Collins was accused of is a horrible one. Certainly anyone who has been a victim of crime feels angry and has thoughts of revenge. But there is a difference between thinking and acting. Two wrongs do not make a right. We cannot have the chaos that ensues when people disregard the law and take justice into their own hands, according to their own standard. I ask you to find Jack Smith guilty and to impress upon him the punishment that should accompany such a severe crime.

**Defense's Closing Statement.**

Members of the jury, please put yourselves in my client's position. Losing his young daughter was overwhelming. He was worried about the repercussions this crime would have on his wife and the police did not appear to be making progress. He could not let this reckless driver get away and repeat his crime. His sadness turned to blind rage; he carried out justice the only way he could be certain that Collins would pay for his crime. Mr. Smith was known as a quiet and gentle man; he does not have as much as a speeding ticket to his name. In his desperation, he lost control. If we were in the same position, would we not have considered the same actions? I urge you to vote not guilty. Send Jack Smith back to his wife who needs him.

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**Jack Smith** (Defendant)

I had gone to the police and they said they would do everything they could. I followed Kevin home for 3 nights and just watched him; nothing was being done.

Yes I was very agitated that night. I went home after work to check on Megan and I realized again that she was not there. It made me so sad. That sadness turned into rage at the man who was responsible, Kevin Collins. I couldn't wait any longer; he had to be brought to justice. I grabbed my handgun and I drove to his house just as I had done the last few nights. I was in a blind rage; I hardly remember driving to Collins's house. I went up to the door and when he saw me, he backed away. I shot him twice. The gunfire sounded so distant. He was lying there; I dropped the gun. I left and went home; though I don't remember driving there.

Cross-examination. Of course as soon as I knew he committed the crime, I was angry. I waited to take action because I was also distraught over my daughter and I thought the police would take action. Yes, I do remember grabbing the gun from the house and I remember being at Kevin's house, but I don't remember firing the gun. I saw him on the floor dead; I knew that I must have shot him.

**Prosecution's Closing Statement.**

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**Defense's Closing Statement.**

Members of the jury, please put yourselves in my client's position. Losing his young daughter was overwhelming. He was worried about the repercussions this crime would have on his wife and the police did not appear to be making progress. He could not let this reckless driver get away and repeat his crime. His sadness turned to blind rage; he carried out justice the only way he could be certain that Collins would pay for his crime. Mr. Smith was known as a quiet and gentle man; he does not have as much as a speeding ticket to his name. In his desperation, he lost control. If we were in the same position, would we not have considered the same actions? I urge you to vote not guilty. Send Jack Smith back to his wife who needs him.



APPENDIX F: Measures of experience, attitudes toward crime, & demographic form

**Personal Experiences with Legal Authority**

1) Have you had an experience interacting with a legal authority? (examples: calling 911, receiving a traffic ticket, etc.)  
YES NO

Please specify your most significant experience \_\_\_\_\_

2) If yes, how would you rate your treatment by the legal authority?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
not at all respectful very respectful

3) Have you personally been inside of a courtroom (examples: contesting a traffic ticket, court hearing, etc.).  
YES NO

Please specify your most significant experience \_\_\_\_\_

4) If yes, how would you rate your treatment by the judge?  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
not at all respectful very respectful

5) Have you ever heard a court case as a member of a jury? (please circle) YES NO

6) If yes, how many different cases have you participated in as a juror? \_\_\_\_\_

7) Have you ever been convicted of a felony? YES NO

## Causes of Crime

Please respond to the following statements by writing the number in the blank that corresponds to your opinion using the scale below. Please just answer with your first, natural response.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

- \_\_\_ 1. At the root of much crime are early family problems.
- \_\_\_ 2. Equitable distribution of wealth in society is the only way we can expect to eliminate crime.
- \_\_\_ 3. People who are too lazy turn to crime.
- \_\_\_ 4. Drugs are a factor in many crimes.
- \_\_\_ 5. People who commit crimes are usually forced to by the situations they find themselves in.
- \_\_\_ 6. Poverty and inequality in society are responsible for much of crime.
- \_\_\_ 7. Drugs and alcohol cause crime because people can no longer control their behavior.
- \_\_\_ 8. Most criminals deliberately choose to prey on society.
- \_\_\_ 9. People learn to be criminal from associating with people who are criminal.
- \_\_\_ 10. Many crimes are more the result of flaws in society than any basic criminality in the offender.
- \_\_\_ 11. Equitable distribution of wealth in society is the only way we can expect to eliminate crime.
- \_\_\_ 12. Criminals are people who don't care about the rights of others or their responsibility to society.
- \_\_\_ 13. Once a criminal, always a criminal.

## Criminal Justice Opinion Questionnaire

Please respond to the following statements using the scale provided below. We are just interested in your opinions; there is no right or wrong answer. Just answer with your first, natural response.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly disagree						Strongly agree

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. More and better rehabilitation programs for prisoners should be developed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The criminal justice system presently devotes much of its energy to preventing people from repetitive criminal acts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Most of those who advocate lenient treatment of criminals do not attach sufficient weight to the seriousness of the crimes they commit.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Authorities should adopt a “get tough” attitude with repeat offenders.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. The purpose of prison is to keep dangerous criminals off the street.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Prisons should only release criminals when they are sure there is no risk to the community.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Prison sentences should be based on protecting the community from those who will commit more crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The criminal justice system is trying hard to find ways to rehabilitate criminals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Police, courts, and corrections are constantly seeking new ways to improve.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. If judges would divert more people from prisons into rehabilitation programs, there would be less crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. The current trend in diverting people from prison to rehabilitation programs should be continued.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. We’re wrong to think the only thing we can do for criminals is throw them in jail.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Criminals should be punished for their crimes in order to make them repay their debt to society.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. The criminal justice system is constantly seeking ways to combat crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Crime can be prevented by putting repeat offenders in prison where they can do no harm.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The criminal justice system works reasonably well the way it is now.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Police, courts, and correction systems attempt to show each criminal the futility of criminal behavior.



## VITA

Alison Cook was born in Norfolk, Nebraska where she spent the first 11 years of her life. In 1989, she moved to Phoenix, Arizona with her parents. She finished elementary school, junior high, and most of high school in Phoenix. She moved to Yuma, Arizona with her parents and finished high school there. She attended community college courses while finishing her senior year and graduated 9<sup>th</sup> in her class. She went to college at The University of Arizona and began studying Psychology. She graduated from college in 3.5 years with honors and cum laude.

While in college, she was involved with psychology research. There she worked with Professor Jeff Greenberg and his graduate students at the time, Jamie Arndt, Jeff Schimel, and eventually, Andy Martens. It was here that she realized she wanted to pursue research in social psychology. These individuals encouraged her and inspired her to pursue graduate school, particularly at the University of Missouri, where Jamie Arndt was then an assistant professor. While Missouri was an unexpected place to move, it turned out to be the most rewarding graduate school experience she could have imagined.

Now Alison Cook is pursuing a Masters degree in Legal Studies at Arizona State University. Ultimately she hopes to pursue an academic position where she can research policy issues at the intersection of psychology and law.