

CRIME DRAMA TELEVISION PROGRAMS: EDUCATIONAL OR NOT?

by

Ian Michael Chaves

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

Master of Science

in the

Criminal Justice

Program

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

August, 2011

Crime Drama Television Programs: Educational or Not?

Ian Michael Chaves

I hereby release this thesis to the public. I understand that this thesis will be made available from the OhioLINK ETD Center and the Maag Library Circulation Desk for public access. I also authorize the University or other individuals to make copies of this thesis as needed for scholarly research.

Signature:

---

*Ian Michael Chaves, Student* Date

Approvals:

---

*Patricia Wagner, Thesis Advisor* Date

---

*John Hazy, Committee Member* Date

---

*Robert Wardle, Committee Member* Date

---

Peter J. Kasvinsky, Dean of School of Graduate Studies & Research Date

## **Abstract**

Crime drama television shows have been a source of programming for television companies for decades. It is the aim of this research to help determine whether or not crime drama television shows support or hinder people's knowledge of the criminal justice system. A survey containing various hypothetical crime scenarios was administered to students enrolled in summer classes at a major state university in Ohio. A total of 87 Participants were asked to answer true or false questions about scenarios found in the most recent seasons of several popular crime drama programs and questions about actual U.S. Supreme Court rulings that are taught in most introduction to criminal justice classes. The results indicate no significant correlation between crime drama program consumption and correct answers on the survey's exam. Correlations were performed on the various demographic information the participants provided and correct test answers on the survey's exam. Several of the demographic variables yielded weak correlations at best with correct test answers on the exam, however age and correct test answers yielded a moderate correlation.

## Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to thank my entire family for their continued emotional and financial support throughout my entire academic career. I would like to especially thank my mother Jean Ann Chaves who has done so much for me in the past six years. Without her unconditional support, none of what I have accomplished in both my undergraduate and graduate years could have been possible. She essentially rescued me from a dark time in my life and gave me the opportunity to better myself academically. There is nothing I could do that could repay the generosity that my mother and my entire family has done for me over the past six years.

Next I would like to thank all of the wonderful professors at Youngstown State University's Department of Criminal Justice and Forensic Sciences. I knew from my first day at Youngstown State that I wanted to study criminal justice and their knowledge, experience, and overall good nature solidified my initial desire. Continuing with this, I would like to thank Attorney Patricia Wagner, Doctor John Hazy, and Robert Wardle for dedicating their time to be on my thesis committee. Their knowledge and insight into the inner workings of my study has proven to be invaluable and anyone would be lucky to learn from these three individuals.

Third, I would like thank all of the participants in my data collection process and the generous professors who allowed me to administer my survey in their classrooms. These were professors I did not know on any level and were randomly selected to take part in my survey. Without their permission in allowing me to come into their classrooms to survey students, this study would not have been possible.

On a less serious note, I would like to thank "The Practice" creator David E. Kelley and "Law and Order" creator Dick Wolf. These shows are what provided me with the initial inspiration to pursue an education in criminal justice. Furthermore, shows such as these helped to provide the theoretical basis for my thesis study.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the friends I have made over the past few years while at Youngstown State University. They helped provide an outlet when work became just a little overwhelming. Furthermore, the support between fellow graduate students is something I came to cherish over years and definitely contributed to making the transition from undergraduate to graduate much easier. While completing a Master's program may not have been easy, the friendships made during said Master's program definitely made it more manageable.

**Table of Contents**

**Abstract**.....iii

**Acknowledgements**.....iv

**Chapter I: Introduction**.....1

    The Popularity of Crime Drama Programs.....1

    The Potential Impacts.....2

    Summary.....3

**Chapter II: Literature Review**.....5

    The Theoretical Basis.....5

    The CSI Effect.....6

    Potential Celebrity Influences on Criminal Justice.....14

    Media Discrepancies of Criminal Justice.....16

    Different Avenues of Criminal Justice Learning.....21

    Criminal Justice Students and Criminal Justice Knowledge.....22

    Summary.....24

**Chapter III: Methods**.....25

    The Research Question and Hypotheses.....25

    Subject Selection and Data Collection.....25

Summary.....	32
<b>Chapter IV: Results and Findings.....</b>	<b>33</b>
Preliminary Findings.....	33
Applying Findings to Hypotheses.....	33
Summary.....	37
<b>Chapter V: Conclusions.....</b>	<b>38</b>
Results and Conclusions.....	38
Limitations.....	40
Advice for Reproduction.....	42
Summary.....	43
<b>Tables.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Appendix One.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Appendix Two.....</b>	<b>53</b>

## Chapter I: Introduction

### The Popularity of Crime Drama Programs

During the week of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011, five out of the top ten most watched shows on broadcast television were criminal justice related. The CBS crime dramas *NCIS* and its subsequent spin-off *NCIS: Los Angeles* were ranked fifth and sixth respectively with 17,620,000 and 14,744,000 viewers. The CBS crime drama television show, *The Mentalist*, ranked seventh for that week with over fourteen million viewers. Another CBS crime drama, *Criminal Minds*, made the list at number eight with over thirteen million viewers. Finally, the ABC crime drama *Castle* ranked at number nine with over twelve and a half million viewers (Nielson, 2011).

The following week (the week of May 16<sup>th</sup>, 2011) showed very little difference. The only change was that instead of five of the top ten most watched television programs on broadcast television being crime drama programs, only four qualified that week. *NCIS* and *NCIS: Los Angeles* still ranked at numbers five and six respectively. *Criminal Minds* fell to the number nine spot and *Castle* fell to the number ten spot. Despite some of these programs falling in the rankings, all four of these programs had even more viewers than the previous week (Nielson, 2011). In addition to these shows, there are: the *Law and Order* franchise, the *Hawaii Five-O* remake, *Bones*, *Cold Case*, *Blue Bloods*, *Numb3rs*, and many others.

Shelton, Kim, and Barak (2008) performed research to help determine the existence of the CSI effect, defined as the reluctance of jurors to vote defendants “guilty” in criminal trials due to a lack of forensic evidence even when it is not completely necessary. The CSI effect has its roots in the *CSI* franchise which is generally considered to depict forensic science in an unrealistic fashion. Given the continued popularity of the *CSI* franchise, Shelton questioned, how many people showed up for jury duty the next day after watching these shows (Shelton et al., 2008)?



The aforementioned rating trends continue months later. During the week of July 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011, *NCIS* still ranked as the fifth most watched broadcast program with almost nine million viewers. *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* tied for the eighth most viewed program with over seven million viewers while *NCIS: Los Angeles* ranked at tenth with just over seven million viewers (Nielson, 2011).

### **The Potential Impacts**

The continued popularity of these shows can potentially influence viewers' perceptions of how the criminal justice system works. Most of these shows have some basis in reality. For example, the *CSI* franchise portrays some valid forensic science principles and the *Law and Order* franchise often boasted of its episodes being "ripped from the headlines." The truth about these shows lies with two particular statements. First, these shows, while they may be based in reality, are dramatized in order to make them watchable by viewers. Television viewers don't want to wait weeks for certain forensic tests to be completed or days for a real criminal investigation to take place. As a result, they are condensed to minutes instead of days or weeks. Second, the average person may not have much experience with the criminal justice system. This includes all facets of the criminal justice system (police, courts, and corrections). For example, not all people are familiar with the concept that being summoned to court, even for things such as jury duty, may require somewhat formal attire. While these shows do not advertise themselves as being educational in any way, people may still get certain impressions from watching these programs.

Due to the abundance of these programs and their continued popularity, it is the intent of this study to help determine what impacts these types of television programs may have on criminal justice knowledge. People who have little experience or exposure to the criminal justice system may view these programs and consider them as a legitimate source of information. Due to the popularity of these shows, people may perceive the criminal justice system in many different ways that are not entirely

accurate. The misrepresentations of the criminal justice system through crime drama television programs may be a subject that future classes in criminal justice may need to address.

The misinterpretations of the criminal justice system through crime drama television programs may also misinform people both about agents of the criminal justice system and about criminal justice procedures. For example, the *CSI* franchise depicts certain forensic tests as taking only minutes to perform. In reality, these tests take time due to factors such as back logging and a scarcity of forensic technicians. These shows can also depict scenes where police officers may use more force than is necessary or legal to subdue suspects. This can give viewers the impression that police officers are aggressive rule benders that do not fear repercussions to their actions. In some instances, these shows can even give blatant misinformation. In the *NCIS* episode entitled "False Witness," one of the agents interrogating a suspect makes reference to someone potentially getting the electric chair while in fact, no jurisdiction employs the electric chair as a primary method of execution.

It should be noted that while this study is designed to test how potentially influential fictional crime drama programs are, this study does not take the position that these shows are intended to be factual or educational in nature. While most of these programs do have their basis in reality, they overdramatize, glamorize, and expedite the criminal justice process. This study recognizes that fictional crime drama television programs are intended for entertainment and not educational purposes.

### **Summary**

In summation, crime drama television programs have been a prevalent cornerstone of media entertainment in the United States for decades. While these shows may be fictitious in nature, many of them do have a basis in reality. People who are inexperienced with the criminal justice system (either educationally or professionally) may be misinformed by these shows' representations. In chapter two, the theoretical basis for this study will be analyzed. The basic framework for this study is the CSI effect.

Studies that have been done on the CSI effect claim that people's perceptions of forensic science may be altered by viewing programs that heavily feature forensic science. The impact that certain media outlets have on crime will be reviewed as well as many of the misrepresentations that have been portrayed in criminal justice style programs (both factual and fictional) will be described. Many studies have been done detailing the discrepancy between reality and what gets televised and the impact that media has the general public. Several of these studies will be presented.

## Chapter II: Literature Review

### The Theoretical Basis

This research finds its theoretical basis along the lines of learning theories of crime. As defined by Vold, Bernard, and Snipes, learning refers to habits and knowledge that develop as a result of the experiences of the individual in entering and adjusting to the environment (Vold et al., 2002). While the learning theory of criminology focuses on people learning about criminal behavior through exposure from various sources and this study does not, this study does focus on people learning about the criminal justice system from non-academic sources (such as television) and considering it factual.

Gabriel Trade created a specific type of learning theory known as Trade's Laws of Imitation. There are three different laws in this early learning theory of criminology. First, people imitate one another in proportion to how much close contact they have with one another (Vold et al., 2002). This can be applied to television shows in that people may have a certain genre of television shows that they prefer to watch (in this study's case, crime drama programs). The relationship between program and viewer can have some impact on the viewer's knowledge of the criminal justice system especially if the viewer has little or no prior knowledge or education about the criminal justice system. The second of Trade's laws is that the inferior usually imitates the superior (Vold et al., 2002). This again can be applied to the program/viewer relationship if the viewer has little or no knowledge of the criminal justice system. What they may view on a crime drama program may be subconsciously considered factual without outside verification. The third of Trade's laws states that newer fashions displace older ones (Vold et al., 2002). This especially holds true in the genre of crime drama television shows. The *CSI* franchise (which focuses on the forensic science aspect of the criminal justice system) has regularly ranked higher in the Nielson ratings than its crime drama predecessor *Law and Order* (which recently ended its 20 years of broadcast programming).

To further demonstrate how crime drama television shows can impact a person's knowledge of the criminal justice system, Evan Durnal from the University of Central Missouri wrote about how certain crime drama television shows (specifically ones involving forensic science) may actually educate criminals about performing certain crimes. One statistic that Durnal cites an FBI report that claims between the years of 1963 and 2008, homicide clearance rates in the United States dropped from 91% to 63% percent. This may be attributed to criminals watching certain crime drama television shows and picking up certain tips on how to get away with murder. Some shows depict murderers using gloves to avoid leaving fingerprints at crime scenes or using bleach to destroy any DNA evidence left at a crime scene (Durnal, 2010). Durnal contends that some criminals witness acts such as these on criminal justice television programs and use it as a "how to" guide to get away with murder (Durnal, 2010).

### **The CSI Effect**

Currently, one of the closest sets of studies that has been done in relation to this topic has been on the subject of the CSI effect. The general definition of the CSI effect is "the phenomenon in which jurors hold unrealistic expectations on forensic evidence and investigation techniques, and have an increased interest in the discipline of forensic science because of the influence of CSI-type television shows (86)" (Robbers, 2008). Essentially, jurors place greater weight on forensic evidence and can potentially view other types of evidence (such as eyewitness or victim testimony) as insufficient. There have been two types of research done on the CSI effect: testimonial and empirical.

The CSI effect has potential impacts on the criminal justice system that are both positive and negative. On a positive note, television programs such as CSI can create a higher interest in forensic science, which may lead to more people studying forensic science, which could in turn produce more forensic scientists in the field (Durnal, 2010). However some of the forensic tests depicted in *CSI* type shows have been reported as false and can give viewers an incorrect perception of a forensic criminal

investigation. Some examples of tests seen on forensic style shows that have been reported as false are making a weapon mold from a wound inflicted on a person and estimating a time of death by analyzing the rate at which a piece of metal rusts (Roane, Morrison, 2005).

The first type of research on the CSI effect is testimonial research. This is research that essentially identifies the potential existence of the CSI effect through interviews. This research surveys criminal justice practitioners and their personal experiences with the CSI effect. Several studies have been performed to identify several cases of what appear to be a CSI effect.

The Maricopa County Attorney's Office in Arizona conducted a survey of its prosecutors about personal experience with the CSI effect. During the period of the study, it was assumed fictional television programs had an impact on the justice process of the United States. For the week of June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005, nine out of the top 20 most watched shows during prime time hours were crime drama or forensic style investigative programs (according to the Nielson ratings). Ranking as the most watched crime drama television program was *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* with approximately 12.4 million viewers. *CSI: Crime Scene investigation* was the third most watched program during prime time during the week of June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005. The only two programs that had more viewers than *CSI* were *Dancing With the Stars* and the NBA Finals Game Five between San Antonio and Detroit (ranked one and two respectively) (Maricopa County, 2005). Six years after the Maricopa County study, crime drama television shows are still very prevalent in the Nielson ratings (as stated in Chapter 1).

Maricopa County, at the time of this study, was the fourth largest county in the United States in terms of population. The county was home to approximately 3.5 million people and included 26 major cities such as Phoenix, Scottsdale, and Tempe (Maricopa County, 2005). With approximately 3.5 million residents, Maricopa County in Arizona had plenty of prosecutors to survey about the CSI effect.

Several real life examples were given to help people identify the ramifications of the CSI effect. In *State vs. Everett Black*, the defendant was arrested with drugs that were found in a cigarette package in the defendant's possession. The defendant admitted to owning the cigarette package but denied ownership of the drugs. During jury deliberations, the foreperson on the jury was a viewer of the CSI program and convinced the jury that the police should have run extensive forensic tests. The foreperson ultimately convinced the jury that the police did a poor job during their investigation. In *State vs. James Calloway*, Arizona Department of Corrections officers found a syringe in an inmate's cell with a note attached to it signed by "Jimbo." After locating inmate Jimbo, the officers found a fresh mark on his arm consistent with syringe usage. Jimbo admitted possession of the syringe and even signed a receipt for it. During deliberations, the jury was critical of the prosecution because of the lack of a fingerprint analysis, DNA analysis, and handwriting comparison. In *State vs. Edward Sierra*, an inmate was caught hiding drugs inside a balloon that was concealed inside the inmate's rectum. While the jury in *Sierra* did ultimately find the inmate/defendant guilty, one juror noted that the conviction would have been expedited if a DNA comparison was done between the inmate and the excrement that was found on the balloon (Maricopa County, 2005).

A total of 102 prosecutors, all with jury trial experience, were surveyed about personal examples where they felt the jury voted "not guilty" in a criminal trial due to a lack of forensic science. All of the prosecutors surveyed in this study have experienced at least ten criminal trials. Thirty-eight percent of the prosecutors in the study claimed they experienced at least one trial that resulted in a not guilty verdict due to a lack of forensic evidence when such evidence was not necessary. While most of the prosecutors may not believe they have experienced a case where the CSI effect may have been present, most of the prosecutors surveyed do take precautions to help ensure it does not affect their cases. Seventy percent of the prosecutors surveyed state that they do ask potential jurors during *voir dire*

about how forensic style television programs impact their view of the criminal justice system and 76% of those state that they consider the answer when moving to strike a juror (Maricopa County, 2005).

The surveyed prosecutors also felt that defense attorneys take advantage of the CSI effect. Eighty percent of the surveyed prosecutors felt that defense attorneys use the potential CSI effect in their favor and 68% of prosecutors felt that defense attorneys use it half of the time. Furthermore, the surveyed prosecutors felt that defense attorneys use the CSI effect when it comes to plea bargaining. Fifty-two percent of the surveyed prosecutors felt that defendants have received a more lenient plea bargain due to expected complications with the CSI effect (Maricopa County, 2005).

Another testimonial study was performed by Dr. Monica Robbers. Robbers surveyed prosecutors, judges, and defense attorneys across the entire United States. The inclusion of defense attorneys in this study provides a different perspective, as the CSI effect has usually been described as favoring the defense (since juries would normally vote “not guilty” in a traditional definition of the CSI effect). Defense attorneys were included in this study because it has been argued that when forensic evidence is available at a trial, the jury will place more weight on the forensic evidence and negate other evidence that might raise reasonable doubt (Robbers, 2008).

Robbers sent surveys to prosecutors, judges, and public defenders in the criminal division in 45 jurisdictions throughout the entire United States. The jurisdictions were all chosen randomly. A total of 547 surveys were sent out along with cover letters and informed consent notices. A total of 316 surveys were sent back to the investigator. Robbers wanted the respondents to have experience practicing criminal law both before and after the introduction of forensic drama television shows. Due to this stipulation, another 26 surveys were excluded due to people practicing criminal law for less than seven years, bringing the final number of surveys in this study to 290. The survey included two open-ended questions for the respondents to answer. The first part asked the respondents to identify specific



examples in which the respondents felt a case was affected by forensic television programs. The second part asked the respondents to detail how their work has been altered to address concerns about the expectations of forensic evidence during a criminal trial (Robbers, 2008).

Out of the remaining 290 respondents, 79% of them cited specific instances in which they felt juries made decisions that were influenced by forensic drama television programs. A total of 53% of all remaining respondents cite that they felt that the jury discounted eyewitness testimony in favor of forensic evidence. Some of the examples that respondents provided in this study included stories such as a prosecutor failing to secure a conviction against a defendant who allegedly stabbed a state employee six times, locked her inside the business office, and stole her keys. The defendant was arrested three blocks away from the scene of the crime, ten minutes after the commission of the crime, and had possession of the victim's keys. Even though the victim identified the defendant as her attacker, the jury said that the police should have performed a DNA comparison between the blood that was found on the defendant to the victim (even though the victim stated it was her blood because she was stabbed). Another case involved a rape trial in which there was insufficient sperm left on the victim to perform a DNA test, but the victim identified the defendant as her rapist. However, the jury said that eyewitness identification alone was insufficient (Robbers, 2008).

With regard to how the surveyed practitioners felt their job responsibilities have changed due to the supposed CSI effect, a total of 248 respondents (85% of respondents) felt their job changed in some way to compensate for the CSI effect. The 194 respondents (67% of respondents) claimed they spent additional time discussing forensic evidence during the trial, which was the most common job change reported. This could include clarification on the necessity of forensic evidence by judges in jury instructions, prosecutors spending more time discussing forensic evidence after it has been presented by experts, and defense attorneys discussing how forensics could actually cast doubt on the defendant's

involvement in the alleged crime (Robbers, 2008). The second most noted change in job execution was additional time spent discussing forensic evidence during the voir dire process. Prosecutors seem to disapprove of jurors who are heavily influenced by forensic style television programs and try to find reasons to dismiss these jurors. Some defense attorneys surveyed in this study felt the same way as prosecutors but for a different reason. It has been the view of some defense attorneys in this study that jurors who are heavily influenced by forensic style television programs have a tendency to place too much weight on forensic evidence, even if the forensic evidence is slight or insignificant (Robbers, 2008).

However, the few empirical attempts to find support for the CSI effect have been unsuccessful. One empirical study on the CSI effect was done by Dr. Kiberlianne Podlas in 2006. Podlas studied the first two seasons of the show *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and recorded the number of times certain forensic issues arose. In 39 of the 46 episodes of *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, at least one issue of forensic evidence appeared in the categories of prints (shoe or finger), blood, fiber/hair, rape kit/semens, gun/ballistics, drug, or DNA (Podlas, 2006).

A two-part instrument was constructed by Podlas to help determine how much weight average people (who could potentially be jurors) place on forensic evidence. The first part of the survey identified television viewing habits, specifically identifying habits that are crime drama programming. The second part of the survey was a hypothetical case and a verdict sheet (Podlas, 2006). The hypothetical case was about the rape of a woman. One of the facts in the hypothetical case was that the accused rapist did not deny that there was sexual conduct, but argued that the sexual conduct was consensual. Essentially, the only evidence the prosecution had that a rape occurred in the hypothetical case was the victim's testimony. The case was crafted in a "he said/she said" manner purposefully to avoid the necessity of forensic evidence (Podlas, 2006).

Participants in the survey were then asked to fill out a verdict sheet in which they voted guilty or not guilty and then given a list of reasons why they voted the way they did. There were a total of 306 undergraduate and graduate students who participated. Fifteen of the surveys were excluded for incompleteness or internal inconsistency. Another 41 surveys were excluded because the participants reached a “guilty” verdict. Because of the way the case was presented, the only correct verdict was not guilty. Furthermore, anyone who voted guilty would not be subject to the CSI effect and therefore did not warrant further analysis (Podlas, 2006).

For the remaining 250 surveys, there were a total of eight reasons they could check off as reasons why they voted not guilty. Half of the provided reasons were forensic evidence related (evidence not tested for fingerprints, prosecution did not perform any tests that would indicate the defendant was innocent, no DNA evidence or DNA test was completed, and prosecution did not perform forensic tests to prove the defendant was in apartment/bedroom) and half were not forensic evidence related (victim had reason to lie, defendant may have committed the offense but prosecution did not meet reasonable doubt, defendant’s story seemed more believable, and other). Seventy-five percent (187 participants) of the remaining participants were frequent viewers of *CSI* while the other twenty-five percent (63 participants) were not. Ultimately, only fifteen of the participants who were frequent viewers of *CSI* programs checked any forensic evidence reason for voting not guilty. Out of the 63 participants who were not frequent viewers of *CSI* programs, only ten of them cited any forensic evidence reason for voting not guilty (Podlas, 2006).

Shelton, Kim, and Barak also performed an empirical study on the validity of the CSI effect in 2008. Their study involved surveying people who were summoned for jury duty in the state of Michigan. Like the previous researchers, Shelton et al. cite the popularity of *CSI* style programs, noting that according to one week of Nielson Company ratings, 30,000,000 people watched *CSI* on one night.

Furthermore, 70,000,000 people watched at least one of the three *CSI* programs and 40,000,000 people watched two other forensic style shows; *Without a Trace* and *Cold Case*. Shelton et al. then poses the simple question, “how many of those people showed up for jury duty the next day?”

A survey was administered to 1,027 randomly summoned jurors in the Ann Arbor, Michigan area during the summer of 2006 prior to performing any jury service. The participants were asked about their television viewing habits (specifically about what types of programs and how often they were viewed). Then the participants were asked about what type of evidence they expected to see in certain types of cases. Participants were given seven types of cases: every criminal case, murder or attempted murder, physical assault of any kind, rape or other criminal sexual misconduct, breaking and entering, any theft case, and any case involving a gun. Participants were then given a list of evidence and were instructed to identify the types of evidence they expected to see in each of the aforementioned cases. The types of evidence listed were: eyewitness testimony from the alleged victim, eyewitness testimony from at least one other witness, circumstantial evidence, scientific evidence of some kind, DNA evidence, fingerprint evidence, and ballistics or other firearms laboratory tests (Shelton et al., 2008).

Using the previous examples of cases and evidence, thirteen scenarios were created to determine how the summoned jurors would vote. A five point Likert scale was used to gauge whether the jurors would vote the defendant guilty, probably vote the defendant guilty, unsure of how they would vote, probably vote the defendant not guilty, and vote the defendant not guilty. All of the survey participants were given burden of proof and reasonable doubt instructions so that they theoretically voted as if they were voting in a real trial (Shelton et al., 2008).

Several results were yielded from this study. With regard to the potential jurors’ expectations of forensic science during a criminal trial: 46% expected to see some type of scientific evidence in every criminal trial, 22% expected to see DNA evidence in every criminal trial, 36% expected to see fingerprint

evidence in every criminal case, and 32% expected to see ballistic or other firearms laboratory evidence in every criminal case. For the most part, the evidence that respondents expected to see in specific cases seemed appropriate. For example, the demand for some type of scientific evidence seemed to be more expected in murder cases than in assault cases. Another example is that the survey participants had a higher expectation to see DNA evidence in rape cases than any other case presented in this study (Shelton et al., 2008).

Ultimately, it was concluded that the results of this study do not support the existence of the CSI effect. Out of the original thirteen scenarios that the researchers surveyed participants about, only four of them showed significant differences of verdicts between *CSI* viewers and non *CSI* viewers. Furthermore, this study yielded two results that directly conflicted with the original hypothesis that *CSI* viewers are more likely to vote not guilty in cases where there is a lack of forensic evidence. First, in the “every crime” scenario, *CSI* viewers were more likely to convict without scientific evidence if eyewitness testimony was available. Second, in both breaking and entering and theft cases, *CSI* viewers were more likely to convict if there was victim or other eyewitness testimony but no fingerprint evidence. In general, jurors were more likely to find the defendant guilty instead of not guilty if there was some eyewitness testimony in all of the presented cases except for rape (Shelton et al., 2008).

### **Potential Celebrity Influences on Criminal Justice**

The expectations of forensic evidence may not definitively be a deciding factor in the jury room during a criminal trial, but it has been hypothesized that the presence of high profile individuals (primarily celebrities) on the jury may affect a juror’s decision making process (Chamberlain et al., 2010). This study is example of how individuals who are well known due to being in media professions may affect the criminal justice system simply by being known to the general public. It has been noted that high profile celebrities in the past have been summoned to perform jury duty. Two noted examples of

such celebrities have been Oprah Winfrey and Brad Pitt. The case that Pitt was summoned to serve as a juror for in 2007 was ultimately plea bargained out, but it still raises the question if celebrities could impact the way a juror votes during a criminal trial (Chamberlain et al., 2010).

It was theorized that celebrities such as television and movie stars have influence over everyday people. The idea that a celebrity juror would be able to subconsciously influence a juror simply by being a celebrity and coming to a decision openly about a criminal case is not necessarily farfetched. Because of the notoriety celebrities have, advertisers of various products utilize celebrities to enhance sales of their products. People are more influenced by a product that has a celebrity endorsement than by a product that does not (Chen, 2003).

Chamberlain, Miller, and Gonzalez designed an experiment to test how a potential juror might weigh the opinion of a celebrity when deciding the sentence (life or death) of a hypothetical defendant. The celebrity that was utilized first in this study was Oprah Winfrey, as she actually served on a jury. Three scenarios were crafted to test the celebrity effect on jurors: a control without Oprah's opinion, Oprah voting for death, and Oprah voting for life. In all of the three scenarios, another scenario was created in which there was a high presence of mitigating factors or aggravating factors (i.e., Oprah votes for life with high mitigating factors and Oprah votes for life with high aggravating factors). Between the control groups and the groups in which Oprah was identified as a juror, Oprah gave an identical argument both for life and death as a juror in the control group (Chamberlain et al., 2010).

The key was to measure juror confidence in their vote. To measure this, a Likert scale was used (from +7 to -7) in which participants marked how confident they felt with their verdicts. Analysis of the control groups concluded that participants were weighing the aggravating and mitigating circumstances appropriately. When analyzing the groups that had Oprah as a juror, the results ultimately showed that

the jurors still weighed the aggravating and mitigating circumstances appropriately (Chamberlain et al., 2010).

Thinking that the results may have been slightly skewed due to participants not identifying Oprah as the type to vote for the death penalty, the research was repeated replacing Oprah with Bruce Willis (Chamberlain et al., 2010). It was hypothesized that due to Bruce Willis' history of portraying action heroes that perform violent acts, the subjects may be more influenced by Willis if he voted for death (Chamberlain et al., 2010). However, it was concluded that the influence of Bruce Willis as a juror was similar to the influence of Oprah as a juror: it was minimal (Chamberlain et al., 2010).

### **Media Discrepancies of Criminal Justice**

Eschholz, Mallard, and Flynn performed a content analysis on the crime drama programs *NYPD Blue* and *Law and Order* to analyze discrepancies between the fictional portrayals of the criminal justice system and the real criminal justice system (Eschholz et al., 2004). While *NYPD Blue* was canceled in 2005, its popularity allowed the series to run for a total of twelve years. As previously stated, these shows are designed to be entertaining and not factual; however, these shows have in the past boasted about their realism. Eschholz et al. cite a Time Warner statement saying that "you don't have to look hard for inspiration. Just open up a newspaper. There's enough material for an entire season (162) (Eschholz et al., 2004)." The producers of *NYPD Blue* were credited with stating "*NYPD Blue* powerfully portrays realistic characters devoting themselves to the pursuit of justice while struggling to maintain an ever-elusive sense of humanity (162)" (Eschholz et al., 2004).

Eschholz et al. analyzed the 2000-2001 seasons of both *NYPD Blue* and *Law and Order* to identify discrepancies between the television depictions of justice and the realities of justice. This was done analyzing several areas: race and gender composition of television offenders, victims and criminal justice personnel, civil rights violations and reactions to them, control talk (an emphasis of an "us" versus

“them” mentality), and efficiency of the criminal justice system in processing cases (Eschholz et al., 2004). Relevant statistics gathered by the Uniform Crime Report were used to assess how far these two programs deviated from reality (Eschholz et al., 2004).

A total of 44 episodes were analyzed from the 2000-2001 seasons of *NYPD Blue* and *Law and Order*; 20 from *NYPD Blue* and 24 from *Law and Order*. While the number of episodes analyzed differed between the two shows, all 44 episodes encompassed both series’ entire 2000-2001 seasons (Eschholz et al., 2004).

With regard to simple demographics of characters between *NYPD Blue*, *Law and Order*, and reality, there was a variety of results. Both shows grossly overrepresented the number of whites that are portrayed in the criminal justice system and grossly underrepresented the number of non-black minorities (according to the New York census). Furthermore, whites were grossly overrepresented as victims in both of the shows whereas blacks were grossly underrepresented as victims in both shows (Eschholz et al., 2004). It was also shown that in both shows, blacks had a higher rate of being portrayed as offenders than as anything else in the show (victim or criminal justice personnel) (Eschholz et al., 2004). With regard to gender; males were overrepresented as offenders and underrepresented as victims (according to the UCR) in both shows, while females were underrepresented as offenders and overrepresented as victims (according to the UCR) in both shows (Eschholz et al., 2004).

The discrepancies continued between television and real life when portraying crimes handled by the police in the crime drama programs. *NYPD Blue* had 79% of their criminal investigations involve murder while *Law and Order* had 92% of their criminal investigations involve murder. According to the corresponding UCR, murder encompassed approximately 0.22% of all crimes (Eschholz et al., 2004). Neither show portrayed a motor vehicle theft during its 2000-2001 season; according to the UCR, motor vehicle theft accounted for 13% of crimes (Eschholz et al., 2004).



With regard to civil rights violations (no *Miranda* warnings, physical abuse, forced confessions, and promises of leniency) between the two shows, the numbers are quite shocking. In the twenty episodes of *NYPD Blue* that were analyzed, a total of 64 civil rights violations occurred (an average of 2.7 civil rights violations per episode). The most frequent violations were failure to provide *Miranda* warnings and promises of leniency (a total of 45). When *Law and Order* was analyzed, a total of 18 civil rights violations were viewed in all 24 episodes (an average of 0.9 civil rights violations per episode). Among the most frequent civil rights violations in *Law and Order* was the lack of *Miranda* warnings read (Eschholz et al., 2004). Overall, while some of these violations were addressed in the programs, the vast majority of the violations were not brought up again throughout the course of the program (Eschholz et al., 2004).

Misconceptions about the criminal justice system are not exclusive to just fictional crime drama television shows, but can also be found in reality criminal justice programs. Reality criminal justice programs are generally defined as programs that utilize footage of real crimes and may involve interviews with real police officers, victims, or criminals (Smith et al., 2010).

Smith, Hazy, and Frissora performed a content analysis on the website for the reality crime show *America's Most Wanted*. *America's Most Wanted* debuted in 1988 and has a primary function of assisting law enforcement personnel with the apprehension of fugitives (Smith et al., 2010). The show does this by recreating crime scenarios and interviewing police personnel involved with a particular case, victims, and the offender's family members (Smith et al., 2010). Since the show's inception, *America's Most Wanted* has assisted with the apprehension of over 900 fugitives (Smith et al., 2010).

The Smith et al. research had the aim of identifying several characteristics of the criminals portrayed on *America's Most Wanted*. Ratios in gender, ratios in race, states or countries featured, crimes most often shown, patterns between race and violent crimes, patterns between gender and

violent crimes were analyzed. A comparison of the crime rates portrayed on *America's Most Wanted* and actual arrest rates for 2005 was then performed (Smith et al., 2010). A sample of 610 persons that were listed as captured on the *America's Most Wanted* website were used; this however is not the entirety of all fugitives listed as captured on *Americas Most Wanted* but approximately two thirds of them (Smith et al., 2010).

It should come as no surprise that *America's Most Wanted*, a show dedicated to capturing the United States' most wanted fugitives, would portray violent offenses at a higher rate than non-violent offenses. Violent crimes made up approximately 71% of the sample of 610 fugitives (Smith et al., 2010). This does not coincide with the rates of crime in previous years since murder is usually viewed as having a much lower occurrence rate than most other crimes. This is best displayed between the murder rate of cases on *America's Most Wanted* and a comparison of the FBI's Uniform Crime Report (an annual report which details the amount of reported crime across the entire United States). As *America's Most Wanted* had its best year for assisting in the apprehension of criminals in 2005, a comparison was used with crimes portrayed on *America's Most Wanted* and the Uniform Crime Report for 2005 (Smith et al., 2010). The Uniform Crime Report stated that murder constituted 0.09% of all crimes during the year of 2005 but murder constituted a total of 28.2% of crimes portrayed on *America's Most Wanted* (Smith et al., 2010). This alone shows an inaccurate portrayal of some crimes in the United States. This discrepancy continues when expanding the comparison from murder alone to all violent crimes (murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault). According to the Uniform Crime Report, violent crimes consisted of 4.26% of all arrests for 2005. In *America's Most Wanted* for the same year, violent crimes were portrayed a total of 40.49% (Smith et al., 2010).

The existence of media impact on perceptions of crime or the criminal justice system is not limited to just crime drama or crime reality television shows. In some respects, exposure to media

outlets such as local news programs can also impact people's fear of crime. Chiricos, Padgett, and Gertz from Florida State University set out to determine if there is a relationship between watching television news and the fear of crime. Television news is a primary focus of study for media impacts on fear of crime due to the news' informative nature. Chiricos et al. cite numerous studies about news and its potential impact on the fear of crime. One survey of 100 television stations in February of 1997 cited that 72 of the television stations started their evening news broadcast with a crime story. Furthermore, one third of all the stories dealt with crime or its control (Klite et al., 1997). Another study of eight local news TV markets found that stories about crime were twice as frequent as political news (Angotti, 1997). Finally, the top two news stations in Orlando, Florida were surveyed about their total news stories. In one week in October, the two top rated stations averaged six and a half minutes of crime related news out of a total 13 minutes of news coverage (Winerip, 1998:33).

The Chiricos study used data from a 1997 survey of 2,250 randomly selected residents in the state of Florida. The researchers were studying the effects that certain demographic characteristics had on people's perceptions and fear of crime. These demographic characteristics included gender, race, age, income, and education. Furthermore, the researchers were also curious to determine if the fear of crime was justified by the reality of crime in the area in which respondents lived (Chiricos et al., 2000).

Fear of crime was measured by respondents indicating their fear of six different types of crimes on a scale of one to ten (one being not fearful at all and ten being completely fearful). The researchers then asked the respondents how often they watched either the local or national news. The researchers had three hypotheses. First, as consumption of television news increased, the fear of crime would also increase. Second, that consumption of local news increases fear of crime more than consumption of national news. Third, that the aforementioned factors (gender, race, age, income, and education) when coupled with the consumption of news increase fear of crime (Chiricos et al., 2000).

This study ultimately concluded that the consumption of news programs was a strong general predictor of the sample's fear of crime. This (in general again) proved to be significant when accounting for most of the aforementioned factors, such as age, gender, education, etc. (Chiricos et al., 2000).

### **Different Avenues of Criminal Justice Learning**

While it is the position of this researcher that classroom education about criminal justice topics is preferable education to fictional television program exposure, there are some criminal justice programs designed around the assumption that classroom education doesn't go far enough. The John Jay College's criminal justice program in New York City is one of these programs. The John Jay College's program implements two methods of education beyond traditional teaching: frequent utilization of guest speakers in various positions of the criminal justice system and allowing their students to experience the court system through service learning (Hartmus et al., 2006). In one semester alone, the John Jay College had four judges and one clerk of the court appear as guest speakers (Hartmus et al., 2006).

As New York City is used frequently as the setting for various crime drama programs (the *Law and Order* franchise, *CSI: New York*, *Castle*, and *Blue Bloods* to name a few) it seems fitting a criminal justice program at a college in New York City would implement a program that allows students to get firsthand experience with the court system through service learning. It is also fitting that a court service learning program is implemented in New York as it is one of the more confusing court structures (two levels of intermediate appellate courts and their trial court being called "Supreme Court") (Hartmus et al., 2006). Many of the students at the John Jay College have never set foot in a court room (Hartmus et al., 2006). For them, their only experience with a courtroom may be media exposure from various outlets, from fictional depictions or from major court cases that have been televised (the O.J. Simpson

case or more recently the Casey Anthony trial). This program provides an important experience to criminal justice students who may pursue a career in courts.

Overall, the John Jay College service learning program has had several positive reviews from students who have participated in it (Hartmus et al., 2006). It is the opinion of Hartmus et al. that the service learning program should be expanded to other criminal justice programs. One of things the service learning program can potentially show students is that there are two worlds of the criminal justice system. There is the world that is learned about in the classroom and the world that is experienced in real life. This program does its best to assist students to get a complete and rounded perception of the criminal justice system. Furthermore, it can help debunk perceptions about the criminal justice system that may arise from crime drama television shows by showing students firsthand what a criminal court proceeding is really like.

### **Criminal Justice Students and Criminal Justice Knowledge**

With regard to general knowledge and education about certain topics in the criminal justice system, it was theorized that non-criminal justice students might know more than criminal justice students. Lambert and Clarke performed research to determine if criminal justice students knew more about the death penalty than non-criminal justice students.

A total of 320 criminal justice majors and 400 non-criminal justice majors were non-randomly selected to participate in the study. The study consisted of a questionnaire that contained several questions about the death penalty. Some of the questions pertained to the death penalty's effect as a deterrent, demographics of people executed, who is legally excluded from execution, and the cost of life imprisonment versus execution (Lambert, Clarke, 2004). In total, there were fourteen questions such as these that were measured on a five point Likert scale (coded from "1" being strongly disagree to "5" as strongly agree) and two questions that were answered in a multiple choice fashion (Lambert, Clarke,

2004). The questions that were multiple choice were related to the murder/manslaughter rates of the past five years and the general costs of execution (Lambert, Clarke, 2004).

When comparing the test answers between criminal justice majors and non-criminal justice majors; a higher percentage of criminal justice students answered each question correctly compared to non-criminal justice students. However, a higher percentage of non-criminal justice students answered one question correctly compared to criminal justice students (Lambert, Clarke, 2004). When analyzing the difference between upper classmen criminal justice students and upper classmen non-criminal justice students, a higher percentage of criminal justice students answered more questions correctly than non-criminal justice students again. Non-criminal justice students did, however, have a higher percentage of correct answers on one question than criminal justice students and tied criminal justice students in percentage of correct answers on one question of the exam. While the percentages indicate a higher percent of criminal justice students answering questions correctly, there was no statistically significant difference between criminal justice and non-criminal justice (Lambert, Clarke, 2004).

Lambert and Clarke set out their research with two hypotheses; that criminal justice students would know more about the death penalty than non-criminal justice students and that upper classmen criminal justice students would know more about the death penalty than upper classmen non-criminal justice students (Lambert, Clarke, 2004). Interestingly enough, less than 50% of the upperclassmen criminal justice students answered nine out of the sixteen questions correctly (Lambert, Clarke, 2004). Even though criminal justice students performed better than non-criminal justice students overall on the study's exam, many criminal justice students answered questions incorrectly. The results are similar when including all students regardless of class (only five questions had more than 50% of criminal justice students answering correctly). Therefore support that was found for the original two hypotheses was inconclusive (Lambert, Clarke, 2004).

## **Summary**

In summation, exposure to the criminal justice system through media outlets has been shown to have certain impacts. These impacts have included: increased fear of crime, exposure to overrepresentations of certain crimes, inaccurate depictions about police procedure, and inaccurate depictions about forensic science. These misrepresentations (whether factual or fictional in their bases) can potentially skew a person's perception or knowledge about the criminal justice system. Furthermore, it is still a valid theory of criminology that people learn behaviors and general knowledge from outside sources. Television could potentially be one of those sources. In the next chapter, the hypotheses and testing methods of the research will be presented. Information about how the sample was chosen will be explained as will the episodes of fictional crime drama television programs that provided the information for the survey questions.

## Chapter III: Methods

### **The Research Question and Hypotheses**

The research question posed by this study is: How do crime drama television programs affect people's knowledge or perception of the criminal justice system? This research project yields three hypotheses. They are as follows:

H1) People who watch crime drama television programs are less knowledgeable about the criminal justice system than people who do not.

H2) The more time spent watching crime drama programs, the more ill-informed viewers are about the criminal justice system and/or criminal procedures.

H3) Upperclassmen criminal justice students who do not watch crime drama programs are more knowledgeable about the criminal justice system than upperclassmen non-criminal justice students who do not watch crime drama programs.

Hypothesis one implies that inaccuracies that are portrayed in crime drama programs affect people's perceptions of reality; therefore, people who don't watch them (without any other influence) have a better grasp on the reality of the criminal justice system than people who do. Hypothesis two implies that the more people view these programs, the more they may begin to identify them as fact and not fiction. Hypothesis three implies that education is a better source of knowledge about criminal justice topics than fictional television programs.

### **Subject Selection and Data Collection**

The data collected for this study were collected from students at a mid-size public university in northeast Ohio. The surveyed university's registration webpage listed 83 different subjects that offered



classes during the second half of the summer semester in 2011. Each subject was given a number (1-83) based on the existing alphabetical list that was displayed on the university's student registration webpage. Ten subjects were randomly selected using a random number generator ([www.random.org](http://www.random.org)). Several of the subjects that were randomly selected only offered one class within the time frame of the study. The professors who taught those classes were sent an email which informed them of the survey, the random selection process, and asked for permission to survey their class. One subject offered two classes during the time frame of the study. Both of those classes' professors were contacted by the researcher who asked for permission to survey their classes. One subject offered four classes within the time frame of the study. For this subject, the random number generator ([www.random.org](http://www.random.org)) was again used to select one out of the four classes to survey. The professor who taught that class was again contacted via email for permission to survey that class. One subject offered ten classes during the time frame of the study. Two classes from that subject were randomly selected and the professor was contacted via email for permission to survey those classes.

Two subjects were excluded due to the lack of classes offered during the second half of the summer semester. Another subject was also excluded due to the lack of students enrolled in classes under this subject. Two subjects (a total of three professors) did not respond to emails seeking permission to survey their classes. One class was excluded due to conflicting schedules between the researcher and class without the ability to reschedule.

In total, five of the original eleven randomly selected classes throughout the entire university during the second half of the summer semester in 2011 were surveyed (a response rate of 45%). Furthermore, a convenience sample of two criminal justice classes were selected to ensure that some criminal justice students were surveyed. This brought the total number of classes surveyed to seven and the total number of survey participants to 96. A total of nine surveys were excluded from the study due

to incompleteness of test or demographic questions which brings the final total of usable surveys to 87 (N=87).

The survey was administered along with an informed consent to students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. The survey included two parts: a true or false style exam consisting of ten potential crime scenarios, and a demographic information section.

The exam portion of the survey consisted of ten true or false questions that were about various crime scenarios. Questions one through eight were taken from scenes depicted in various crime drama programs. Questions nine and ten were taken from the U.S. Supreme Court cases of *Terry v. Ohio* (1968) and *Mapp v. Ohio* (1961) respectively, as these are cases that are normally taught in an introduction to criminal justice class at the surveyed university. The correct answer to each question was the legally correct or realistic answer as it would happen in real life and not the potential portrayal of the scenario in the crime drama television program. For example, if a question depicts a police officer violating an individual's constitutional rights by means of unprovoked physical violence in order to illicit a confession, the confession is considered illegally obtained, as opposed to a hypothetical scene that may allow the confession to be used and allows the investigation to continue without hindrance. The questions, answers, and sources for the questions are as follows:

1) "During an interrogation of a murder suspect, if the suspect says 'I have the right to remain silent don't I?' police can ignore the question and are still allowed to interrogate the suspect." This question was taken from *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* season twelve, episode eleven entitled "Pop." This question is labeled as false as it can be construed as a violation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966). This variable is coded as *Know1*.

2) "Police are allowed to use physical force (punching or kicking) to subdue a criminal right after he or she finishes a violent crime but does not pose any immediate threat." This question was taken from

*Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* season twelve episode twelve entitled “Possessed.” This question is labeled as false since the criminal act was completed and the suspect posed no immediate threat (physical or otherwise). This could also be construed as a violation of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of *Tennessee v. Garner* (1985) which stated that deadly force could not be used by the police unless probable cause existed that showed the suspect was an imminent threat to the officer or to the public. This variable is coded as *Know2*.

3) “A person is allowed to use deadly force to prevent the rape of a minor even if the alleged rapist poses no immediate threat.” This question was taken from *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* season twelve entitled episode twelve “Possessed.” This question is labeled as false as people are only allowed to use deadly force as a physical defense if their life or the life of a third party is being threatened by an aggressor. This could also be a violation of *Louisiana v. Aguillard* (1990) which states that violence used to defend another person cannot surpass the amount of violence that person could have used in order to claim self-defense (i.e. you cannot kill an assailant/criminal to prevent a crime if the potential victim’s life is not in danger from the assailant/criminal). This variable is coded as *Know3*.

4) “It is common for police detectives to perform both police responsibilities (interrogations, arrests) and forensic science responsibilities (DNA tests, fingerprint identification).” This question was taken from the CSI franchise in general as some characters perform both of these tasks. This question is labeled as false as police and forensic science responsibilities require separate training, certifications, and backgrounds. Furthermore, with DNA test backlogs being as high as 97,102 cases at the end of 2009 (National Institute of Justice), it is common for forensic scientists to focus on forensic science responsibilities. This variable is coded as *Know4*.

5) "Detectives are allowed to question alleged criminals after physically subduing them, placing them in handcuffs, and without reading the alleged criminal his or her rights." This question was taken from *Castle* season three, episode twenty-one entitled "The Dead Pool." This question was labeled as false as placing a suspect in handcuffs constitutes a constructed arrest; therefore, the suspect must be read his *Miranda* (1966) rights before any questioning. This variable is coded as *Know5*.

6) "Police officers are allowed to use physical coercion on a suspect if that suspect was in possession of an automatic firearm, intended to use it, and has information about an imminent illegal act." This question was taken from *Castle* season three, episode twenty-two entitled "To Live and Die in L.A." This question is labeled as false because any use of physical coercion on part of the police during questioning is a violation of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Mississippi* (1936). This variable is coded as *Know6*.

7) "Some jurisdictions still employ the use of the electric chair as the primary method of execution." This question was taken from a scene in *NCIS* season eight, episode ten entitled "False Witness." This question is labeled as false. According to the Death Penalty Information Center (2010); nine states do have the electric chair as a method of execution but all nine states employ lethal injection as the primary method and only employ the electric chair if lethal injection is unavailable. This variable is coded as *Know7*.

8) "Federal agents are allowed to disable the home alarm, pick the lock, and enter the home of a murder victim and his missing wife without a search warrant." This question was taken from a scene in *NCIS: Los Angeles* season two, episode seven entitled "Anonymous." This question is labeled as false because the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Payton v. New York* (1980) that a search warrant, probable cause, or consent is required for police to enter a residence related to a potential criminal incident. This variable is coded as *Know8*.

9) “Police officers on the grounds of reasonable suspicion are allowed to perform a cursory ‘stop and frisk’ on people they believe to be carrying a weapon and intend to commit a crime.” This question was taken from the court case *Terry v. Ohio*. This question is labeled as true as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled it constitutional in *Terry*. This variable is coded as *Know9*.

10) “In general, evidence that is obtained in the violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment may not be used in any criminal proceeding.” This question was taken from the court case *Mapp v. Ohio*. This question is labeled as true as the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Mapp* that the exclusionary rule applied to states, making any evidence gathered in violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment illegal in any criminal proceeding (state or federal). This variable is coded as *Know10*.

The demographics portion of the survey asked respondents to provide the researcher with six pieces of information. The pieces of information asked for were: how many hours of television watched per week, how many hours of those were crime drama programs, are you or have you ever been employed in the criminal justice system, class rank (freshman, sophomore, etc.), declared major, and age.

\*A copy of the informed consent and survey instrument can be found in Appendix one.\*

\*A copy of the IRB approval form for the survey instrument can be found in Appendix Two.

The survey was administered during the selected classes’ scheduled meeting time at the professors’ discretion. Participants were verbally informed of the study’s purpose, verbally informed that the survey was voluntary, and were verbally instructed to read the informed consent before completing the survey. Students were also provided with an envelope to place the survey in upon completion to increase the anonymity during this study.

Most variables were coded dichotomously. For each of the test questions, a correct answer was coded as "1" whereas an incorrect answer was coded as "0." An overall total correct was computed by adding up all ten items. With regard to the demographic variables, only two were coded dichotomously. The two demographic questions that were coded dichotomously were question three asking about criminal justice employment ("1" for have been or is employed and "0" for not or never have been employed) and question five asking about current college major ("1" for criminal justice and "0" for non-criminal justice). Class rank was coded on a scale of 1-5 ("1" being freshman, "2" being sophomore, "3" being junior, "4" being senior, and "5" being graduate student). Class rank was further coded dichotomously (with "1" being upperclassmen and "0" being underclassmen) for simplicity purposes. Upperclassmen were defined as students who were juniors, seniors, or graduate students. Underclassmen were defined as students who were freshmen or sophomores. Participants were instructed by the survey to round up to the nearest hour when responding to questions asking about their television consumption per week. Both hours of television in general and hours of crime drama programs were recorded twice. First, each participant's self-reported hours of general television and hours of crime drama programming were recorded as they were reported (in number of hours consumed). Second, they were coded dichotomously as whether or not each participant watched television in general at all or watched crime drama programs at all (1 for respondent viewed either, 0 for respondent didn't view either).

Correlations were run using Microsoft Excel Starter to determine if there is a relationship between correct answers on the survey's exam and the demographics that the participants provided. Since correlations are measured on a scale from -1 to 1 (a negative correlation indicating that when one variable increases then the other variable it is correlated with decreases and a positive correlation indicates both variables move in the same direction) a correlation will be considered strong if it is above 0.3 or below -0.3.

## **Summary**

In summation, this study has identified several scenes from various crime drama television programs that inaccurately depict the criminal justice system (as shown by previous court decisions). These scenes were transformed into survey questions that were voluntarily completed by students at a public university in Ohio who were both randomly and non-randomly selected. Combining the participants' answers with the various demographic information they provided, the purpose is to shed light on this study's three original hypotheses (people who watch crime dramas are more ill-informed about the criminal justice system than people who don't, more crime drama programs consumed can increase misperceptions of the criminal justice system, and criminal justice students who don't watch crime dramas are more knowledgeable about the criminal justice system than any other type of student surveyed). In the next chapter, the results of the survey and how they are relative to each hypothesis will be summarized.

## Chapter IV: Results and Findings

### Sample Profile

The purpose of this study was to determine what impact (if any) crime drama television programs have on criminal justice knowledge. An exam was used in this study's survey to gather information about the participants' knowledge of criminal justice topics. *Table 2* contains a summary of correct answers for this survey's exam. Some of the preliminary results for this study are as follows: the total number of usable surveys is 87 (N=87), a total of nineteen participants (about 22%) are criminal justice majors, a total of eight participants (about 9%) have been or currently are employed in the criminal justice system, participants averaged approximately twelve hours and fifteen minutes (12.287 hours) of television viewing per week with almost three hours (2.86 hours) of those being crime drama related programming, the average age of the participants is 27 (with a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 51), and the average number of correct answers per test was 6.91 out of ten questions correctly answered. See *Table 2* for an individual test item breakdown. The most commonly missed question was question number 6 (27 out of 87 or 29% answering correctly). The most frequent correctly answered question was question number 5 (80 out of 87 or 90% answering correctly). All data were entered into an Excel Spreadsheet. A Pearson's correlation coefficient analysis was performed among all the items described above. Only the size and direction of the correlation coefficients were used. No P-values were used and support for each hypothesis required direction and a medium-size correlation was required at minimum (0.3 or greater or -0.3 or less).

### Applying Findings to Hypotheses

Hypothesis one stated that people who do watch crime drama television programs are less knowledgeable about the criminal justice system than people who don't. To test this hypothesis, two correlation analyses were performed. The total correct answers on the test were correlated to whether



or not the participant simply watched crime drama programs, and the total correct answers on the test were also correlated to whether or not the participant simply watched television in general.

The correlations between both analyses were found to be weak. Between watching television in general at all and the number of correct answers on the survey's test, a correlation of 0.231 was found. This suggests that people who watch television in general have slightly higher knowledge of the criminal justice system than people who don't. The same type of correlation exists between correct answers on the survey's test and simply watching crime drama programs. A correlation of 0.152 existed between correct answers and crime drama programs watched. While this correlation is again weak, it does suggest that people who watch crime drama television programs may have increased knowledge of the criminal justice system. Therefore, results from the correlations performed in this study do not support hypothesis one.

Hypothesis two suggests that time spent consuming crime drama television programs is related to knowledge of the criminal justice system. The correlation between hours of television consumed in general and total correct test answers as well as hours of crime drama programs consumed and total correct test answers will be used to determine if there is support for this hypothesis. A correlation of -0.0045 was found between total television hours per week and correct test answers on the survey. While again, this correlation is weak at best, the correlation suggests that the more hours a person consumes general television programming, the more their knowledge of the criminal justice system decreases. A correlation analysis between hours of crime drama programs watched and correct answers on the test yielded 0.09285 correlation. Again, while this correlation is weak at best, it suggests that the greater the amount of hours spent consuming crime drama programs, the more knowledge of the criminal justice system increases. The correlations relevant to hypothesis two move in a direction that suggests support for hypothesis two. However, the strength of the correlations relevant to hypothesis

two are of insufficient strength as set out by the beginning of the research (less than 0.3 or greater than -0.3).

In an attempt to find out more information relevant to hypothesis two, the same variable found in hypothesis one of simply watching either television or crime drama programs in a week was compared to hours of television per week and hours of crime drama programs per week. The variables were designed to simply indicate whether or not participants simply watched television at all and watched crime drama programs at all. These variables were again coded dichotomously ("1" being watched at all and "0" being not at all watched). With N being 87, a total of 85 respondents reported watching television on a weekly basis and a total of 56 respondents reported watching crime drama programs on a weekly basis.

A second set of correlations was performed generalizing television consumption and crime drama program consumption to a simple "yes or no" format. A correlation between simply watched television and correct answers on the survey's exam of 0.2358 was found. A correlation between simply watched crime drama programs and correct answers on the surveys exam of 0.15206 was found. These correlations differ greatly from the correlations that accounted for hours and suggest that too much television can impact knowledge of the criminal justice system negatively. These correlations do support the second hypothesis that time spent watching crime drama programs can negatively impact knowledge of the criminal justice system. However the support, again, does not meet the strength threshold set out by this research (greater than 0.3 or less than -0.3).

The third hypothesis suggested that criminal justice students who do not watch crime drama programs would have more knowledge than non-criminal justice students who do not watch crime drama programs. Again, major was coded in a dichotomous way where "1" indicated criminal justice major while "0" indicated all other majors. A correlation of .152 was found between major and correct

answers on the survey's exam. This alone suggests that criminal justice majors have higher knowledge about the criminal justice system than non-criminal justice majors. The correlation, however, is considered to be weak. There were correlations that were both stronger and weaker than the correlation between major and correct test answers. For example, the correlation between criminal justice employment and correct test answers (0.142) was weaker than between major and correct test answers. However, there are two correlations that have been calculated in this study to be stronger than the correlation between major and correct answers on the survey's exam. Those two correlations are class rank (0.186) and age (0.371). Summarily, this study shows that while being a criminal justice major improves knowledge of the criminal justice system, there are other factors that may improve knowledge of the criminal justice system on a higher level.

To further analyze data for hypothesis three, people who do not watch crime drama programs were separated and analyzed. Class rank and major were both correlated with correct answers on the survey's exam among participants who do not watch crime drama programs. A total of 32 participants reported watching no crime drama programs. Among participants who do not watch crime drama programs, a correlation of -0.036 was found between correct answers on the exam and class rank. This correlation is considered weak. Among participants who do not watch crime drama programs, a correlation of 0.243 was found between correct answers on the exam and major. This correlation is also weak. Therefore, there is little support for the third hypothesis in this study. Correlations pertaining to participants who do not watch crime drama programs can be found in *Table 4*.

This study also analyzed demographic factors that were slightly unrelated to the original three hypotheses to determine if other demographics had stronger correlations than class major or hours of television consumed weekly. A complete list of all the correlations performed in this study can be found in *Table 3*, *Table 4*, and *Table 5*.

## **Summary**

In summation, all results from the 87 usable surveys were tabulated and several statistical analyses were performed on them. Several correlations were yielded from the results of the survey. The correlations, while showing some interesting results, are mostly found to be weak at best. *Table 1, Table 2, Table 3, and Table 4* provide summary information about all the results that this study found. In the next chapter, conclusions about the results will be drawn. Potential follow up research to this study as well as the limitations that this study faced will be discussed.

## Chapter V: Conclusions

### Results and Conclusions

One of the more interesting results of this study was the impact that television has on knowledge of the criminal justice system. When accounting for simply whether or not participants watched television (both generally or crime drama programs), there was a positive correlation with television consumption and knowledge of the criminal justice system. This, however, changed when accounting for total hours consumed of both television programming in general and crime drama programs in particular. The correlation between hours of crime drama programs consumed and results on the survey's exam was weaker when accounting for hours rather than testing simply for whether or not the participant viewed such programs at all. In short, it seems that the results from this study suggests that while viewing television in general or crime drama programs in particular may support knowledge of the criminal justice system, there is a certain point in which the support becomes hindered or potentially becomes impairment.

The correlation was positive between hours of crime drama programs consumed and correct answers on the survey's exam. The change was almost the same when correlating hours of television watched in general and correct answers on the survey's exam. The big difference is that when accounting for hours of television watched per week, the correlation between hours of television watched per week and correct answers on the survey's exam went from positive to negative.

While there is a positive correlation between being a criminal justice major and correctly answering questions on the survey's exam, there were two other correlations that were higher: class rank and correct answers as well as age and correct answers. While this study did not necessarily cross reference class rank and major with correct answers on the survey's exam simultaneously, this result

suggests that people become more aware of the criminal justice system with age and/or with education regardless of major.

There were also several results yielded that were not foreseen by the original hypotheses and were only narrowly outside the scope of this study. First, the results showed that the greatest predictor of criminal justice knowledge is age. Age and correct test answers had the highest correlation in this study (0.371). This result suggests that as people get older, they become more informed about criminal justice. This can also coincide with the correlation between age and television watched per week (-0.123). This result suggests that college students watch less television the older they get. However, the correlation between age and crime drama programs viewed per week is positive (as people get older, they view more crime drama programs), but the correlation is quite weak (0.011).

Criminal justice employees also had a negative correlation when it came to watching television in general (-0.171) and when it came to crime drama programs specifically (-0.13). This result suggests that criminal justice employees may be too busy to watch television and may also suggest that they are not entertained with fictional depictions of their chosen career path or employment. Furthermore, the correlation between criminal justice employment and correct answers on the survey's exam (while it is positive) is not as strong as the correlation between correct answers and major, rank, or age. However, this study was unable to survey criminal justice practitioners specifically. It was through coincidence that criminal justice practitioners were represented at all. Since the representation of criminal justice practitioners in this study was small (a total of eight people), the correlation may be quite different if criminal justice practitioners were represented more largely.

The correlation between age and correct answers on the survey's test being the strongest correlation in this study (0.371) along with the correlation between age and television consumed per week (-0.005) provides some support for the first hypothesis. In this study, participants watched less

general television programs as they got older and scored better on the survey's exam as they got older. Once again, a list of all correlations performed in this study can be found in *Table 3*, *Table 4* and *Table 5*.

Overall, any support or non-support for the three original hypotheses was found to be weak at best. While keeping that in mind, the correlations performed did not support hypothesis one (people who do not watch crime drama programs know more about than people who do). The correlations did, however, find support for hypothesis two (as hours of crime drama programming consumption increases; knowledge of the criminal justice system decreases). There was support for hypothesis three (criminal justice students who do not watch crime drama programs will know more about criminal justice than any other type of student surveyed) but being a criminal justice student did not have the strongest correlation with regards to correct answers on the survey's exam. Both age and class rank had higher correlations with correct answers on the survey's exam than major.

### **Limitations**

Many of the scenes were easy to transcribe to a simple true or false question. Some of the scenes included in the survey, however, were very complex and involved many factors. It was the ultimate goal of the researchers to minimize the length of each question and use a "true or false" format in order to prevent the subjects from being overwhelmed and to minimize the amount of time required to perform the survey (as this survey was administered during scheduled class time). As a result, complex scenes involving multiple factors were stripped to bare essentials with phrases such as "no imminent threat" which could have lost the ultimate meaning from the scene.

The second limitation involves the sample. While the sample was (for the most part) randomly selected, the number of students and classes offered over the summer semester at the surveyed university are drastically lower than the number of students and classes offered over the fall and spring semesters. With a larger population and more classes, the sample itself could have been more random

and more representative of the entire student body of the surveyed university. Furthermore, the time frame of the summer semester itself may have provided yet another limitation. In a standard fifteen week semester at the surveyed university (such as the fall or spring), a three credit hour class simply meets for three hours a week (spread out over three one hour sessions or one three hour session). During the summer however, the program is accelerated as classes are only six weeks and not fifteen; which requires classes to be held 2-3 times a week for 2-3 hours at a time. This could have created reluctance to sacrifice class time on the part of the professors who did not respond to the initial emails requesting class time to perform the survey.

The survey in general yielded one large limitation: most of the survey questions only focused on one aspect of the criminal justice system. Police procedure portrayal seems to be the largest theme among crime drama television programs. This makes sense as the police investigation seems to be the easiest aspect of the criminal justice system to dramatize. The investigation can often be filled with ambiguity which needs to be investigated and has the potential for action. While some programs do feature the court or corrections aspects of the criminal justice system, many of these programs still focus on the investigation process that is performed by law enforcement agents. In total, there was only one question in this study's survey that did not deal with police procedure (question seven which asked about the electric chair).

This study was unable to determine causality. While a relationship between variables through correlation analyses, there was no analysis performed to determine if some of the demographic variables actually caused the relationship. Furthermore, this study was unable to determine if there is a cumulative effect of criminal justice knowledge (through age, major, or viewing criminal justice programs). This research is unable to determine what criminal justice knowledge was in the participants prior to college.



## Recommendations

If this research were to be reproduced, adjustments to the survey would be made. Along with the previously mentioned limitation being addressed (finding more television shows and scenes that depict different aspects of the criminal justice system other than police investigation), some of the questions would also be adjusted. The questions would contain enough of the variables depicted in the various scenes to help the participants fully understand the scenes and questions. Furthermore, the survey would ideally use a wider array of crime drama programs. As stated, the Nielson ratings were used to determine some of the more popular crime drama programs and survey questions were crafted from various programs that consisted ranked in on the Nielson top ten broadcast programs. There are, however, several other crime drama programs that are still making new episodes with more programs set to debut in the coming weeks. This survey also restricted itself to the most recent season of each program that had scenes depicted in the survey. This does not take into account syndication rights of each program. It could be possible that participants are more familiar with older episodes of crime drama programs due to syndication. It is common for the USA Network alone to air marathons of different crime drama programs including *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* and *Criminal Intent* as well as *NCIS*. In this study (as previously mentioned), the most recent season of selected crime drama programs were only used for simplicity purposes.

This research may have also yielded different results if held during a regular semester (fall or spring) at the surveyed university as opposed to the summer. As stated before, the summer semester at the surveyed university sees less teachers, students, and classes, therefore limiting the variance of participants in both numbers and potentially demographics. The six week term in the summer as opposed to the fifteen week term in the fall or spring can instill teachers with certain hurriedness and therefore limit the number of teachers willing to participate as well.

## **Summary**

In summary, several results from this study have been found. While watching general television and crime drama programs may increase knowledge of the criminal justice system. It also seems that while majoring in criminal justice obviously can improve knowledge of the criminal justice system and procedure, knowledge can also come from age and general education. However, we do not know the subjects prior knowledge of the criminal justice system before attending college. While this study does have certain limitations and caveats, the results warrant further study.

## Tables

Table 1: breakdown of demographics of participants.

N = 87

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>
<b>TV Hours*</b>	1069	12.3	0	80	10	12.2207
<b>CJ TV Hours*</b>	249	2.86	0	30	1	4.58
<b>Age</b>	N/A	27	18	59	24	8.6
<b>CJ Job**</b>	8	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Major***</b>	19	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Class Rank</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Underclassmen</b>	21	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Upperclassmen</b>	66	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

\*Hours were measured per week.

\*\*Indicates people who are or have been employed in the criminal justice system (“1” for yes and “0” for no).

\*\*\*Indicates number of criminal justice majors (“1” for criminal justice and “0” for other).

Table 2: number and percentage of correct answers for each test question.

N = 87

	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Know1</b>	64.3%	56
<b>Know2</b>	89.7%	78
<b>Know3</b>	80.5%	70
<b>Know4</b>	57.5%	50
<b>Know5</b>	91.9%	80
<b>Know6</b>	31.0%	27
<b>Know7</b>	47.1%	41
<b>Know8</b>	89.7%	78
<b>Know9</b>	67.8%	59
<b>Know10</b>	71.3%	62
<b>Average Per Test</b>	69.1%	6.91

The “Know” variables correspond to the questions on the survey’s exam. (Know1 is question 1, Know2 is question 2 and so on). A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 3: correlations between overall correct test answers and demographics of the participants.

N = 87

<b>Simply Watch Television*</b>	0.231
<b>Simply Watch Crime Drama Programs*</b>	0.152
<b>Hours of Television per Week</b>	-0.005
<b>Hours of Crime Drama Programs per Week</b>	0.093
<b>Class Rank**</b>	0.186
<b>Major***</b>	0.152
<b>Age</b>	0.371
<b>Criminal Justice Employment</b>	0.142

\*Coded dichotomously ("1" for watch and "0" for do not watch).

\*\*Class rank was coded dichotomously ("0" for under class and "1" for upper class).

\*\*\*Major was coded dichotomously ("1" for criminal justice and "0" for other).

Table 4: correlations pertaining to participants who do not watch crime drama programs

N = 32

<b>Demographic Variables</b>	<b>Correlated with Correct Answers</b>
Class Rank*	-0.036
Major**	0.243

\*Class rank was coded dichotomously ("1" for upper class and "0" for under class)

\*\*Major was coded dichotomously ("1" for criminal justice and "0" for other)

Table 5: correlations among various items in the analysis.

N = 87

<b>Age/Television Watched per Week</b>	-0.123
<b>Age/Crime Drama Programs per Week</b>	0.011
<b>Major/Television Watched per Week</b>	0.029
<b>Major/Crime Drama Programs per Week</b>	0.095
<b>Criminal Justice Employment/TV per Week</b>	-0.171
<b>Criminal Justice Employment/C.J. Programs</b>	-0.13

## Bibliography

Angotti, J. (1997). National Survey Finds Crime Dominates Local TV News. Press release from University of Miami Office of Media and External Relations, May 6<sup>th</sup>, 1997.

Bellisario, D., McGill, D. (Writers), Whitmore Jr., J. (Director). (14 December 2010). False Witness [Television series episode]. In D. Bellisario (Executive Producer), *NCIS*. Belisarius Productions.

Brennan, S., Kim, C.M. (Writers), Barba, N. (Director). (26 October 2010). Anonymous [Television series episode]. In S. Brennan (Executive Producer), *NCIS: Los Angeles*. Shane Brennan Productions.

Bruckheimer, J. (Executive Producer). (2000). *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* (Television series). Las Vegas: CBS Paramount Network Television.

Chamberlain, J., Miller, M.K., & Gonzalez, C.A. (2010). The "Oprah Effect:" How Celebrity Jurors Influence Jury Decision-Making. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 17(1), 48-77.

Chen, N. (2003). A Study of the Mechanism of Psychological Processing of Celebrity Advertisement Spokesmen of Different Ages. *Psychological Science*, 26, 37-40.

Chircos, T., Padgett, K., & Gertz, M. (2000). Fear, TV News, and the Reality of Crime. *Criminology*, 38(3), 755-786. Retrieved from <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.1745-9125.2000.tb00905.x/pdf>.

Death Penalty Information Center. (2010). Methods of Execution. Retrieved from <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/methods-execution>.

Durnal, E. (2010). Crime Scene Investigation (as Seen on TV). *Forensic Science International*, 199, 1-5. Retrieved from

[http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Durnal\\_E.W.pdf?issn=03790738&issue=v199i1-3&article=1\\_CSIsot](http://journals.ohiolink.edu/ejc/pdf.cgi/Durnal_E.W.pdf?issn=03790738&issue=v199i1-3&article=1_CSIsot).

Eschholz, S., Mallarda, M., Flynn, S. (2004). Images of Prime Time Justice: A Content Analysis of "NYPD Blue" and "Law and Order." *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, 10(3). Retrieved from <http://www.albany.edu/scj/jcipc/vol10is3/eschholz.pdf>.

Hartmus, D.M., Cauthen, J.N.G., & Levine, J.P. (2006). Enriching Student Understanding of Trial Courts Through Service Learning. *Journal of Criminal Justice Education*, 17(1), 23-43.

Klite, P., Bardwell, R.A., Salzman, J. (1997). *Baaad News: Local TV News in America*. Dever, CO: Rocky Mountain Media Watch.

Lambert, E., Clarke, A. (2004). Crime, Capital Punishment, and Knowledge: are Criminal Justice Majors Better Informed than Other Majors About Crime and Capital Punishment? *The Social Science Journal*, 41, 53-66.

Maricopa County (2005). *The CSI Effect and its Real-Life Impact on Justice: A Study by the Maricopa County Attorney's Office* (June 30, 2005). Retrieved on April 6, 2011 from [http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/jc2008/references/CSI/CSI\\_Effect\\_report.pdf](http://www.ce9.uscourts.gov/jc2008/references/CSI/CSI_Effect_report.pdf).

Marlowe, A.W., Hawley, A. (Writers), Terleski, J. (Director). (2 May 2011). To Love and Die in L.A. [Television series episode]. In A.W. Marlowe (Executive Producer), *Castle*. ABC Studios.

Marlowe, A.W., Pyken, M. (Writers), Holahan, P. (Director). (11 April 2011). The Dead Pool [Television series episode]. In A.W. Marlowe (Executive Producer), *Castle*. ABC Studios.

National Institute of Justice. (n.d.). DNA Evidence Backlogs: Forensic Casework. *DNA Initiative*. Retrieved from <http://www.dna.gov/backlog-reduction/forensic-evidence-backlog>.

Podlas, K. (2006). "The CSI Effect": Exposing the Media Myth. *Fordham Intellectual Property, Media and Entertainment Law Journal*, 17, 429-465. Retrieved from <http://iplj.net/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Article-THE-CSI-EFFECT-EXPOSING-THE-MEDIA-MYTH.pdf>.

Roane, K.R., & Morrison, D. (2005, April 17). The CSI Effect on TV, It's all Slam-Dunk Evidence and Quick Convictions, Now Juries Expect the Same Thing--and That's a Big Problem. U.S. News, Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/usnews/culture/articles/050425/25CSI.htm>.

Robbers, M.L. (2008). Blinded by Science; the Social Construction of Reality in Forensic Television Shows and its Effect on Criminal Jury Trials. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 19(1). Retrieved from <http://www.sagepub.com/spohnstudy/articles/4/Robbers.pdf>.

Shelton, D, Kim, Y.S., & Barak, G. (2008). The CSI Effect; Does it Really Exist?. *National Institute of Justice Journal*, 259. Retrieved from <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/journals/259/CSI-effect.htm#search=%22CSI+Effect+defined%22>.

Smith, M., Hazy, J., Frissora, G. (2010). You Saw What on TV? A Critical Analysis of the *America's Most Wanted* Website. *Ohio Council of Criminal Justice Education Praxis Journal*. Retrieved from <http://www.occje.org/pdfs/praxis/spring2010/SmithHazyFrissora2010spring.pdf>.

Vold, G.B., Bernard, T.J., & Snipes, J.B. (2002). *Theoretical Criminology (fifth edition)*. New York City: Oxford University Press.

Winerip, M. (1998). Does Local TV News Have to be so Bad? *The New York Times Magazine*. 11, January: (30-63).

Wolf, D., Greene, J. (Writers), Barba, N. (Director). (5 January 2011). Pop [Television series episode]. In

D. Wolf (Executive Producer), *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. New York City: Wolf Films.

Wolf, D., Greene, J. (Writers), Fagan, B. (Director). (5 January 2011). Possessed [Television series

episode]. In D. Wolf (Executive Producer), *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. New York City:

Wolf Films.

### **Cases Cited**

*Brown v. Mississippi*, 297 U.S. 278 (1936)

*Louisiana v. Aguillard*, 567 So. 2d 674 (1990)

*Mapp v. Ohio*, 367 U.S. 643 (1961)

*Miranda v. Arizona*, 384 U.S. 436 (1966)

*Payton v. New York*, 445 U.S. 573 (1980)

*Tennessee v. Garner*, 471 U.S. 1 (1985)

*Terry v. Ohio*, 392 U.S. 1 (1968)



## Appendix Two: Survey Instrument

### Notice of Informed Consent

We are conducting a study to determine the potential educational effects of fictional crime drama television programs. In this study, you will be asked answer a few questions based on criminal justice scenarios as well as to provide some basic demographic information. Your participation should take approximately ten (10) minutes. Participation in this survey is completely voluntary. There are no benefits to you to participate in this project.

Along with this survey, you will be handed an envelope. Upon completing this survey, fold the survey and place it into the envelope provided. Then, place your envelope in the box that the investigator has identified as the collection box.

By completing this survey, you are agreeing to share any information that you are providing. The personal information that is asked for on this survey is designed to be helpful to the study while keeping your identity anonymous.

This survey is intended to keep your identity anonymous so that the investigators cannot identify you. **Do not provide any personal information other than what is asked for on the survey.** You must be over eighteen (18) years old to participate in this project without parental consent.

Please feel free to contact Ian Michael Chaves or Attorney Patricia Wagner if you have any further questions about this study. Or, for other questions, contact the Director of Grants and Sponsored Programs at YSU.

Thank you very much for your time and your participation.

---

Instructions: Complete this survey as quickly as possible. Indicate whether you think the following scenarios are either true or false. When you are finished, please fold and place this survey into the envelope provided and place it in the collection box. **At no point should you include any personal information that is not asked for in this survey.** Thank you for your participation.

#### Section 1: Scenario Questions

Indicate your answer by circling either “true” or “false.”

1] During an interrogation of a murder suspect, if the suspect says “I have the right to remain silent don’t I?” police can ignore the question and are still allowed to interrogate the suspect.

- A) True
- B) False

2] Police are allowed to use physical force (punching or kicking) to subdue a criminal right after he or she finishes a violent crime but does not pose any immediate threat.

- A) True
- B) False

3] A person is allowed to use deadly force to prevent the rape of a minor even if the alleged rapist poses no immediate threat.

- A) True
- B) False

4] It is common for police detectives to perform both police responsibilities (interrogations, arrests) and forensic science responsibilities (DNA tests, fingerprint identifications).

- A) True
- B) False

5] Detectives are allowed to question alleged criminals after physically subduing them, placing them in handcuffs, and without reading the alleged criminal his or her rights.

- A) True
- B) False

6] Police officers are allowed to use physical coercion on a suspect if that suspect was in possession of an automatic firearm, intended to use it, and has information about an imminent illegal act.

- A) True
- B) False

7] Some jurisdictions still employ the use of the electric chair as the primary method of execution.

- A) True
- B) False

8] Federal agents are allowed to disable the home alarm, pick the lock, and enter the home of a murder victim and his missing wife without a search warrant.

- A) True
- B) False

9] Police officers on the grounds of reasonable suspicion are allowed to perform a cursory “stop and frisk” on people they believe to be carrying a weapon and intend to commit a crime.

- A) True
- B) False

10] In general, evidence that is obtained in violation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment may not be used in any criminal proceeding.

- A) True
- B) False

Section 2: Demographic Information

1] On average, how much television do you watch per week (round up to the nearest hour)? \_\_\_\_\_

2] On average, how many of those hours are crime drama programs (Law and Order, CSI, etc.)? \_\_\_\_\_

3] Are you or have you ever been employed in any part of the criminal justice system (yes or no)? \_\_\_\_\_

4] Please indicate your class rank (freshman, senior, grad student, etc.). \_\_\_\_\_

5] What is your declared major (if you do not have one, write "undeclared")? \_\_\_\_\_

6] What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

This concludes the survey. Please fold these papers and place them in the envelope that has been provided for you. Thank you very much for your valuable time and participation.

Appendix Two: IRB Approval Form

Youngstown  
STATE UNIVERSITY

One University Plaza, Youngstown, Ohio 44555  
School of Graduate Studies and Research  
330.941.3091  
Fax 330.941.1580  
graduateschool@cc.yosu.edu

June 22, 2011

Atty. Patricia Wagner, Principal Investigator  
Mr. Ian Chaves, Co-investigator  
Department of Criminal Justice  
UNIVERSITY

RE: HSRC Protocol Number: 173-2011  
Title: Crime Drama Television Programs: Educational or Not?

Dear Atty. Wagner and Mr. Chaves:

The Institutional Review Board has reviewed the abovementioned protocol and determined that it is exempt from full committee review based on a DHHS Category 2 exemption.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB.

The IRB would like to extend its best wishes to you in the conduct of this study.

Sincerely,

Peter J. Kasvinsky  
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Research Compliance Officer

PJK/cc

c: Atty. Patricia Wagner, Chair  
Department of Criminal Justice

www.yosu.edu 