

Hype and Suspicion: The Effects of Pretrial Publicity, Race, and Suspicion on Jurors' Verdicts

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We exposed some mock jurors to pretrial publicity (PTP) biased against the defendant a few days before they read the trial transcript and rendered individual verdicts. Exposure to the PTP prejudiced the jurors toward voting "guilty," unless they read information within the PTP that indicated that the defendant was African American and that raised suspicion about the racist motives underlying the PTP's reporting. Information designed to raise more generic, nonracist suspicion did not have this effect. In addition, participants were less likely to vote to convict the defendant if he was African American than if his race was unspecified, and non-White participants were less likely to vote to convict the defendant than were White participants. We discuss these issues and results in the context of the O.J. Simpson trial, specifically, and of the psychology and law literatures more generally.

As the O. J. Simpson criminal trial assumes its place in history, three aspects of the trial and its context emerge as particularly salient. The most unique aspect of Simpson's criminal trial was the unprecedented media attention this "trial of the century" received. An important question raised in the weeks leading up to the trial was whether the voluminous pretrial publicity that this case was receiving would prejudice prospective jurors, who were no doubt being exposed to legally relevant and irrelevant information, much of which would be inadmissible in the trial itself. A second salient feature of the Simpson case was the role of race, as countless surveys have revealed the profound split between African Americans and Whites in their attitudes about the case and Simpson's innocence or guilt. Third, and related to the issue of race, was the defense team's use of suspicion. By calling into question

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the motives of the Los Angeles Police Department, the media, and other entities involved, Simpson's defense team tried to offset a mountain of incriminating publicity and evidence. The present research was designed to examine the independent and interactive effects of these factors—pretrial publicity, race, and suspicion—on mock jurors' verdicts in a criminal assault case.

Pretrial Publicity and Other Nonevidentiary Factors

In the weeks and months leading up to the criminal trial, story after story about Simpson and all of the other featured players in the unfolding national drama were presented to a fascinated public. One of the most pressing questions this media onslaught raised was whether all of this pretrial publicity would bias prospective jurors. Particularly given how irresponsible so much of the media were in reporting rumors, innuendo, and other information that would not be admissible as evidence in the trial itself, the pretrial publicity had great potential to prejudice jurors.

Jurors, of course, are instructed to base their verdicts exclusively on the evidence formally admitted in the trial. To help the jurors achieve this goal, Judge Lance Ito ordered that the jurors in the Simpson case be sequestered and denied them exposure to the media coverage of the case. But before the jurors were selected and sequestered, they had been exposed to a great deal of publicity, and there was concern that the jurors might be exposed to some more information even when sequestered.

The critical question is whether such extralegal publicity affects jurors' verdicts. The empirical research on the effects of pretrial publicity suggests clearly that it can (e.g., Greene & Wade, 1988; Kramer, Kerr, & Carroll, 1990; Ogloff & Vidmar, 1994; Otto, Penrod, & Dexter, 1994; Padawer-Singer, Singer, & Singer, 1977; but see Davis, 1986). To make matters worse, research indicates that neither lawyers nor the jurors themselves can reliably detect its prejudicial effect (Dexter, Cutler, & Moran, 1992; Moran & Cutler, 1991; Sue, Smith, & Pedroza, 1975).

Factors Contributing to Bias. The relative power and frequency of biases resulting from jurors' exposure to inadmissible information, and the ineffectiveness of safeguards against these biases, may seem more understandable and almost inevitable when examined in the context of the broader psychological literature involving both legal and nonlegal settings. A number of factors contribute to the prejudicial effects of nonevidentiary information and to their relative insensitivity to safeguards such as judicial instructions. These include (a) jurors' lack of understanding of or agreement with the rationale for ignoring the information (Kadish & Kadish, 1971; Thompson, Fong, & Rosenhan, 1981; Wissler & Saks, 1985); (b) the heightened salience of the inadmissible information; (c) psychological reactance caused by admonishments to disregard the information (Wolf & Montgomery, 1977); (d) the difficulty of suppressing a thought, image, or information upon

instruction, particularly when one is busy or distracted (e.g., Wegner, 1994); (e) perceivers' tendency to be influenced in their judgments of others by information that they themselves believe to be irrelevant or nondiagnostic (e.g., Fein & Hilton, 1992; Hilton & Fein, 1989; Kahneman & Tversky, 1973; Lord, Desforges, Fein, Pugh, & Lepper, 1994; Miller, Schmidt, Meyer, & Colella, 1984; Zukier & Jennings, 1984); (f) the belief perseverance effect, in which the impact of newly created beliefs endures even after the evidence on which they were supposedly based is discredited (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975; Schul & Burnstein, 1985); (g) influences of the inadmissible information on jurors' processing of other information that is admissible, through processes such as "change of meaning" (Asch, 1946), priming (e.g., Srull & Wyer, 1979), schema-based processing (e.g., Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Taylor & Fiske, 1978), and related processes; and (h) the correspondence bias, in which individuals fail to discount information sufficiently when making inferences about others, even if they recognize that the information should be discounted (e.g., Jones, 1979; Miller et al.).

Rarely, if ever, has there been as much pretrial publicity surrounding an impending trial as there was for the Simpson case. The gossip splashed on the news about Simpson, Marcia Clark, Kato Kaelin, and others in the Simpson case was probably much more memorable and interesting than the many instructions the jurors received from the court about proper procedure and rules of law. Given the many psychological factors that contribute both to the pretrial publicity's prejudicial impact and to the safeguards' ineffectiveness against this impact, the jurors in this case may have been extremely vulnerable.

In general, pretrial publicity tends to bias jurors toward conviction, particularly because the district attorney's office, police, and others representing the prosecution typically have greater opportunity to release information to the public via the media (e.g., Imrich, Mullin, & Linz, 1995; Moran & Cutler, 1991). In high-profile cases like Simpson's, in which the defendant can afford to hire expensive, prominent counsel, the defense can play the media game as well, planting stories in the media to try to bias prospective jurors toward acquittal. It also is clear that in the Simpson case, a great volume of actual and bogus evidence favoring the prosecution was reported widely.

Suspicion

To counter the prosecution's arguments, both in the media and in the trial itself, Simpson's defense team tried to raise suspicion about the motives of the police, coroner, and others representing or supporting the prosecution's case. Intuition, statements the jurors made, survey results, and other analyses of the Simpson criminal trial do suggest that this tactic was quite successful. (In contrast, Simpson's lawyers were much less successful in using suspicion in the civil case, due in part to the judge's rulings about what lines of argument were permissible.) But a more

general empirical question to be addressed is whether suspicion of ulterior motives, in general, and suspicion about racist motives, in particular, can be more successful than other approaches in offsetting the numerous factors that contribute to incriminating pretrial publicity's prejudicial impact on jurors' verdicts.

Fein, McCloskey, and Tomlinson (1997) suggest that suspicion of ulterior motives underlying the introduction of inadmissible information such as pretrial publicity can be particularly successful in mitigating the information's effects. Fein, Hilton, and Miller (1990) defined suspicion in the context of their research as a state in which perceivers actively entertain multiple, plausibly rival hypotheses about the motives underlying a person's behavior and consider the notion that the person is attempting to hide something that has the potential to discredit the behavior's apparent meaning. Fein, McCloskey, and Tomlinson examined the effects of suspicion on mock jurors' verdicts after exposure to pretrial publicity or inadmissible testimony. Fein, McCloskey, and Tomlinson found that whereas simply instructing jurors to disregard the information did not eliminate its prejudicial effects, exposing the jurors to information designed to make them suspicious of the motives underlying the media's reporting the incriminating pretrial information, or of the motives of a witness offering the inadmissible testimony, did eliminate these prejudicial effects on their verdicts.

Why can suspicion attenuate such a robust bias? Research conducted by Fein and his colleagues in nonlegal settings has demonstrated a number of effects of suspicion that seem well suited to counter many of the psychological factors that contribute to the robust biases caused by nonevidentiary information (Fein, 1996; Fein & Hilton, 1994; Fein, McCloskey, and Tomlinson; Hilton, Fein, & Miller, 1993; Hilton, Miller, Fein, & Darley, 1990). Perceivers frequently, and without explicit prompting, experience suspicion, and the thoughts associated with it can be much more compelling and less likely to elicit psychological reactance than judicial instructions or rules of law. By causing perceivers to resist taking behavior and other information at face value and to engage in more careful, sophisticated attributional thinking (Fein), suspicion can counter the effects of inadmissible information without requiring jurors to try to suppress or disregard thoughts of the inadmissible information. As long as the reason to be suspicious is memorable and can cast doubt on the inadmissible information's validity, suspicion can eviscerate the information even if that information remains in working memory. Finally, suspicion may be particularly qualified to dilute the prejudicial effects of information such as pretrial publicity, because it not only provides compelling reasons to discredit the information completely (Kassin & Sommers, 1997) but also triggers attributional thinking that facilitates effective discounting (Fein).

Thus suspicion may be unusually effective in buffering jurors against incriminating extralegal information's prejudicial effects. The Simpson defense team's strategies may have not only called into question the incriminating pretrial publicity's accuracy but also raised suspicions among many prospective jurors about the

motives of the people who collected and reported the evidence, facilitating the jurors' ability to discount the mountain of incriminating publicity that had accumulated.

But the suspicion Simpson's team raised was not *any* kind of suspicion—a critical part of their argument was that the police and others may have had *racist* ulterior motives. An important question the present research addressed, therefore, concerned the role of suspicion about racist ulterior motives in mitigating the prejudicial effects of exposure to incriminating pretrial publicity.

Race

“The race card”: Did Simpson's lawyers, most notably Johnnie Cochran, play it? Should they have? Did it have an effect? The issue of race has dominated the post-verdict discussions of the Simpson criminal and civil trials like no other. Results of numerous surveys measuring Black and White Americans' attitudes suggest that the issue of race was critically important in the case. The empirical research that has addressed the more general issue of race and stereotypes in jury decision making suggests that race can matter, although these effects' magnitude and reliability would lead few to predict the magnitude of the effect they seemed to have in the Simpson case.

Some research has found that a jury's racial composition, as well as that of the defendant and other people relevant to the case, can have a significant effect on the verdict that jury reaches. Bernard (1979), for example, found that Black jurors were more likely to acquit a defendant, regardless of the defendant's race, than were White jurors. White jurors were more likely than Blacks to convict in general, but this was true particularly when the defendant was Black, a result Foley and Chamblin (1982) replicated. The defendant's race can affect how jurors process stereotype-relevant information; jurors may use racial and ethnic stereotypes to help them process information when faced with a complex task (Bodenhause & Lichtenstein, 1987).

The issue of prejudice in the legal system cannot be fully separated from the issue of prejudice in society as a whole. As Dovidio and Gaertner (1991) have noted, overt expression of racist beliefs has greatly subsided in recent years, giving way to new, more covert expressions. Individuals who have both proegalitarian principles and anti-Black sentiments may not reveal their prejudices in situations in which such manifestations would be apparent to themselves or to others, but they may be prone to prejudiced judgments and behaviors in more subtle, ambiguous situations.

Consistent with this perspective are results by Pfeifer and Ogloff (1991), who replicated previous research that found mock jurors more likely to convict a Black defendant. When judicial instruction reminded participants in this study of the importance of their being completely impartial, however, the differences in verdicts as a function of the defendant's race disappeared. Making potential prejudice

salient in the jurors' minds served to attenuate race-based judgments, although some research has failed to replicate this finding (Bagby, Parker, Rector, & Kalembe, 1994).

Also consistent with this perspective and relevant to the present paper's focus on pretrial publicity are the findings of Johnson, Whitestone, Jackson, and Gatto (1995). Johnson et al. found that mock jurors were more willing to use evidence that was ruled inadmissible if the defendant was Black rather than White, although the jurors in the former situation rated themselves as *less* affected by the inadmissible evidence than did the jurors in the latter situation.

In sum, the race of the jurors and the defendant can play a significant role in jurors' verdicts (see also Newman, Duff, Schnopp-Wyatt, Brock & Hoffman, this issue; Skolnick & Shaw, this issue), perhaps especially when this influence can be subtle and ambiguous. Previous research has not extensively addressed, however, the question of whether raising suspicion about the prosecution's racist motives can have a significant effect as well.

The Present Research

The present research examined incriminating pretrial publicity's effects on mock jurors' verdicts as well as the role of suspicion about ulterior motives in general, and about racist ulterior motives in particular, in mitigating these effects. Mock jurors read a trial transcript concerning a defendant accused of criminal assault. Some mock jurors read incriminating pretrial publicity a few days before reading the trial transcript. Among these jurors, some read information in the pretrial publicity that raised suspicion about the motives underlying the incriminating information's release in the media.

The present study also concerned the issue of race and racist motives. The trial transcript did not specify anyone's race. For half of the mock jurors who received pretrial publicity, however, the defendant's race was specified as African American within the publicity, whereas the other mock jurors who received pretrial publicity read nothing in the publicity about his race. We therefore tested not only whether incriminating pretrial publicity influenced jurors' verdicts, but whether pretrial information about the defendant's race would influence verdicts as well.

By introducing the defendant's race, we could also introduce suspicion about racist motives. Among the mock jurors who learned in the pretrial publicity that the defendant was African American, some read subsequent pretrial information from the defense team that suggested that the incriminating publicity may have been reported as part of a racist smear campaign against the defendant, whereas others did not read any information designed to arouse suspicion. Among the mock jurors who read nothing about the defendant's race, some read pretrial information from the defense team suggesting that the incriminating pretrial publicity may have been

part of a smear campaign against the defendant, and no mention of racist motives was made, whereas others read no information designed to arouse suspicion.

Method

Participants

Participants were 86 undergraduate students at Williams College who volunteered via an electronic-mail solicitation of students from several classes to participate as mock jurors in this experiment. These participants were from a larger sample of 123 students who volunteered to participate, but the other students did not complete all of the materials in the appropriate amount of time and were dropped from the study. Of these participants, 55% were women and 45% were men. Seventy-nine percent of the participants identified themselves as White. Because of a coding error, we cannot at this time determine the racial breakdown of the 21% who indicated a race other than White, although we can estimate that approximately one-half were African American.

Procedure

Participants were assigned randomly into one of five conditions (*Ns* ranged from 11 to 20) and were instructed to work independently. Participants in the four pretrial publicity (PTP) conditions received a packet of articles in their campus mailboxes with a cover letter that asked them to read the articles over the next few days, after which they would receive further instructions. Participants in the control condition did not receive any pretrial information. Three days later, all participants received a trial transcript and questionnaire in their mailboxes. This second mailing had a cover letter that emphasized the importance of taking their roles as jurors seriously. The instructions to the mock jurors were included at the beginning of the trial transcript. Participants read the trial transcript and then completed the dependent measures.

Manipulation of Pretrial Publicity

Participants in the four PTP conditions received a packet with either five or six articles that looked as if they had been clipped from a newspaper. The first article reported the beating of a man in his neighbor's house but revealed no information concerning the identity of a suspect. This article was identical in all four PTP conditions. The second article reported the arrest of a man named Lloyd Harris for this beating. Participants in the no race conditions read that, "Mr. Harris, a custodial worker, had been a suspect since early on in the investigation." Participants in the race conditions read the same account, except that the word "black" was inserted

before “custodial.” Otherwise, this article was the same for all four groups. The third article reported that the police had located the weapon used in the attack. As with the second article, the third article differed across conditions in that the word “black” was inserted before “custodial worker” for the participants in the race conditions.

The fourth article was an editorial column, and it had a picture of the “columnist,” a White man, above the byline. The columnist was convinced that Mr. Harris had committed the assault, and he mentioned some previous incidents that reflected poorly on Mr. Harris’s character. For the third time, the participants in the *race* conditions read that Mr. Harris was a “black” custodial worker rather than just a custodial worker. In addition, participants in the no-race conditions read the following in the column: “Over and over again, we see horrific crimes like Lloyd Harris’ taking place in neighborhoods across our city.” In the race conditions, the word “black” was inserted before “neighborhoods.” Otherwise, the column was identical across the four conditions.

Participants in the no-suspicion conditions did not receive the fifth article. Participants in the suspicion conditions received a fifth article that reported the objections of Lloyd Harris’s attorney to the media’s representation of his client’s case. Among these participants in the suspicion conditions, those in the no-race condition read the attorney’s objections to “smear tactics” and complaints that the newspapers were “ignoring any facts which would point towards a defendant’s innocence,” whereas those in the race condition read about “racially motivated smear tactics,” and how the newspapers were “ignoring any facts which would point towards a defendant’s innocence simply because of the color of that man’s skin.” Otherwise, the article was identical across the conditions and attempted to cast aspersions on the newspaper articles’ impartiality.

The final article reported innocuous information about when the trial proceedings were scheduled to begin. All four PTP conditions included the identical final article.

Trial Transcript

All participants received the same trial transcript, *State of New York v. Lloyd Harris*. The transcript was modified from a version used by Fein, et al. (1997). The transcript contained instructions to the jury, opening arguments, witness testimony and cross-examination, closing statements, and more instructions to the jury. The trial was relatively balanced in content, and pretesting obtained a conviction rate of 50%. The instructions to the jury included standard judicial instructions directing jurors to ignore any information they may have known about the case prior or external to the trial itself and directing them not to be influenced by “prejudice or passion.” The instructions emphasized that jurors must make all judgments “from evidence received in the trial and not from any other source.”

Dependent Measures

After reading the transcript, participants first were asked for demographic information including their gender and race. Participants were then asked to render a verdict in the case (guilty or not guilty). In addition to answering a number of questions used as filler (e.g., ratings of the judge's competence), participants in the PTP condition's were asked to rate on nine-point scales (1 = *not at all*, 9 = *very*) the fairness of media coverage of the trial and the extent to which the articles they received had influenced them.

Results

Verdicts

A chi-square analysis revealed that the manipulation had a significant effect on the mock jurors' verdicts, $\chi^2(4, N = 86) = 11.82, p < .02$. As Figure 1 shows, a slight majority (56.2%) of the participants in the control condition voted to acquit the defendant. In contrast, a strong majority in all but one of the PTP conditions voted to convict the defendant (78%), indicating that the incriminating PTP did significantly influence participants' verdicts, $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 6.73, p < .01$. More specifically, the strong majority of the participants in the no-race/no-suspicion, the no-race/suspicion, and the race/no-suspicion conditions voted to convict the defendant. This was not the case for the participants in the race/suspicion condition who were given reason to suspect racist motives underlying the media's reports. Only 45% of these participants voted for conviction, significantly fewer than those in the other PTP conditions, $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 7.22, p < .008$, and did not differ from the control condition, $\chi^2 < 1$. The differences among the three remaining PTP conditions were not significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 50) = 2.13, ns$. Suspicion that did not concern racist motives had no mitigating effect on the pretrial publicity's prejudicial impact; only suspicion concerning racist motives led to verdicts that reflected no PTP bias.

A few other results are worthy of note. First, in contrast to the literature cited in the introduction, our participants were less likely to vote for conviction if the defendant's race was specified as African American (56.41%) than if his race was left unspecified (83.87%), $\chi^2(1, N = 70) = 6.04, p < .02$. Moreover, participants who identified themselves as something other than White were less likely to vote to convict (38.89%) than were those who indicated they were White (70.59%), $\chi^2(1, N = 86) = 6.20, p < .02$. Manipulating the defendant's race had similar effects on both White and non-White participants. Indeed, other than the main effect, the pattern of means did not differ across any conditions as a function of the participants' race. In addition, women tended to be less likely than men to vote to convict (55.32% vs. 74.36%), $\chi^2(1, N = 86) = 3.35, p < .07$, but the participant's gender did not interact reliably with any of the manipulations.

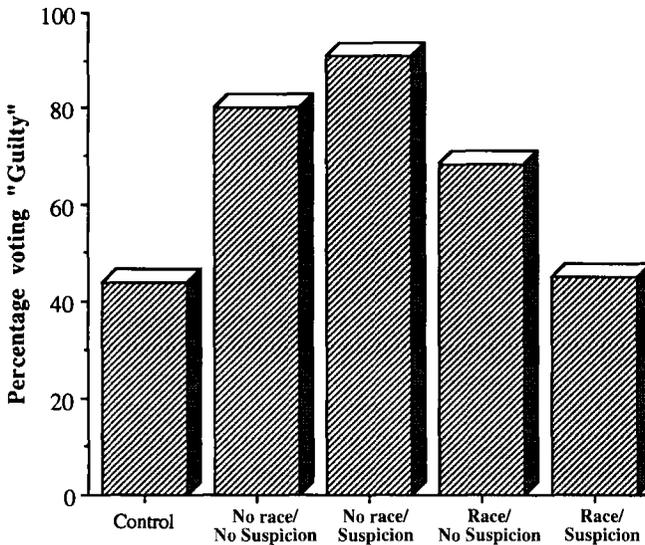


Fig. 1. Percentage of participants in each condition who voted to convict the defendant.

Fairness of the Media Coverage

Participants who received PTP rated how fair they thought the media coverage was. The only reliable effect that emerged concerning this measure was a significant main effect for the manipulation of whether the race of the defendant was specified, $F(1, 68) = 4.69, p < .04$. Participants rated the media's fairness significantly lower if they had read pretrial publicity indicating that the defendant was African American ($M = 3.15$) than if his race was unspecified ($M = 3.94$).

Relation Between Verdicts and Ratings of Media Fairness

The less fair the participants felt the media coverage was, the less likely they were to vote to convict the defendant, $r(68) = .34, p < .01$. Mediation analyses using path analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986) suggest that participants' ratings of the media's fairness mediated in part the manipulations' effect on their verdicts, but the effect remained significant even when their ratings of the media were partialled out. Participants' ratings of the media's fairness may have more strongly mediated the effect of manipulating the defendant's race on participants' verdicts; the effect of the defendant's race was no longer statistically significant when ratings of the media were partialled out, but the effect remained marginally significant ($p < .07$).

Ratings of the Influence of the Pretrial Publicity

The ratings of the participants in the PTP conditions of how much the newspaper articles had influenced them revealed that participants tended to believe that the articles had little influence on their verdicts ($M = 3.90$), but these ratings differed as a function of the manipulation of the defendant's race, $F(1, 66) = 4.89, p < .04$. Participants exposed to pretrial publicity that specified the defendant's race rated themselves as less influenced by the newspaper articles ($M = 3.41$) than did participants for whom the race was unspecified ($M = 4.52$). Although there was a trend indicating that participants in the suspicion conditions rated themselves as less influenced by the articles than did other participants ($M_s = 3.54$ vs. 4.18), this difference did not approach significance, $F < 1$. No other effects emerged for this measure.

The more the participants felt that the articles influenced them, the more likely they were to vote guilty, $r(68) = .29, p < .05$. Their ratings of this influence did not correlate significantly with their ratings of the media's fairness, $r(68) = .18, ns$, and it played no mediating role in the effect of the manipulations on participants' verdicts.

Discussion

Exposure to pretrial publicity that reported incriminating information about the defendant made our mock jurors more likely to reach guilty verdicts than the mock jurors in the control condition. Despite the clear judicial instructions to disregard all information not formally admitted as evidence in the trial, and despite the fact that the amount of pretrial publicity to which the mock jurors were exposed was quite small relative to the amount of information presented in the trial, a large majority of the mock jurors in three of the pretrial publicity conditions voted to convict the defendant, whereas a small majority of the mock jurors who received no pretrial publicity voted to acquit him.

The notable exception concerns mock jurors who received the incriminating pretrial publicity along with other publicity designed to make them suspect that the incriminating information may have been released to the public because of racist motives. Their verdicts did not differ from those in the control condition. Suspicion about the media's and prosecution's plausibly racist motives undermined the incriminating publicity's otherwise strong prejudicial effects.

But information designed to raise any kind of suspicion about the motives underlying the incriminating publicity did not necessarily eliminate the prejudicial effect. Whereas the defense team's diatribe in the press about a smear campaign against the defendant was successful when it said the motives behind the campaign were racist, a similar diatribe making no reference to racism—i.e., alleging a smear campaign based on wanting to win the case, but not due to racist motives—did not succeed in minimizing the incriminating pretrial publicity's impact.

Another notable finding was that, independent of the manipulation of the defendant's race, White participants were much more likely to vote to convict the defendant than were the participants of color. Although this racial difference was not surprising given the relevant literature, it was surprising that participants, independent of their own race, were much less likely to convict the defendant if his race was specified in the pretrial publicity as Black than if it was left unspecified.

In sum, the results supported the principal hypotheses that pretrial publicity can prejudice verdicts, that suspicion can counter its effects, and that race can play an important role in verdicts. But two principal questions emerge from these findings. One question is why suspicion about racist motives was so successful in eradicating the biasing effects of incriminating pretrial publicity but more general suspicion was not. A second question is why participants were more likely to acquit the defendant if the pretrial publicity indicated that he was African American than if his race was left unspecified. Although a number of possibilities can be proposed, the answers to these two questions may be related.

Race and Suspicion

Several explanations for the leniency toward the Black defendant can be offered. First, the participants consisted of students at a college with a relatively liberal, politically correct student body. Compounding this, today's social climate is one of a heightened sensitivity toward racial issues, especially in legal matters. In the wake of the O. J. Simpson, Rodney King, and Reginald Denny affairs, Americans have become more conscious of the role race plays in the criminal justice system. Such recent experience might have led participants in our sample to make a conscious effort to level the playing field by giving the minority defendant the benefit of the doubt.

An additional but related explanation lies in the pretrial publicity itself. Many participants mentioned to us that they found the pretrial publicity, and specifically the editorial column, to be unfair and inflammatory. The perspective the "columnist" presented was conservative with a religious slant to it, a point of view not especially popular among members of the student body who comprised the subject pool. This reaction against the column was especially great in the conditions in which the defendant's race was specified, as when the column contained the line about the recurrence of horrific crimes in "black neighborhoods." In these conditions, it seems likely that the column's racial slant made participants suspicious of the media's fairness—an explanation supported by the finding that participants in these conditions rated the media's coverage significantly less fair than did participants for whom race was never mentioned. In addition, the participants in the conditions in which the defendant's race was specified as African American reported themselves as being less influenced by the pretrial information than did participants in the no-race conditions.

In this sense, the lower conviction rate for the Black defendant can be seen as consistent with current perspectives on racism such as Dovidio and Gaertner's (1991) concept of aversive racism. Aversive racists are typically unaware that they are being racist and want to think of themselves as fair and egalitarian. The pretrial publicity in the race conditions of the present study quite likely made the defendant's race very salient to the participants, and they may have been motivated to eliminate, and perhaps overcompensate for, any prejudicial feelings they had upon learning that the defendant was Black. If the pretrial publicity containing the racial information had been more subtle or in a different context, participants might have been less concerned about race and, paradoxically, more likely to perceive the defendant stereotypically.

Race-based suspicion may have been much more effective in combating the incriminating pretrial publicity than more general suspicion for the same reasons. The general suspicion may have seemed too generic and nonspecific for the participants to take it very seriously; after all, couldn't a defense attorney complain about a smear campaign in any case? Raising suspicion about racism, in contrast, may have made participants take notice and seriously consider the possibility that the prosecution and media were prejudiced against the defendant. This suspicion could then facilitate their discounting of the incriminating pretrial publicity.

Thus, the newspaper articles that persisted in calling the defendant a "black" custodial worker and that discussed the crime rate in his "black" neighborhood may have made the participants somewhat suspicious and concerned about prejudice against the defendant. The addition of the defense attorney's explicit arguments about the media's racism made this suspicion particularly compelling. Only when the suspicion about racism was made that explicit were the participants reliably successful in eliminating the effects of the exposure to the incriminating information about the defendant reported in the newspaper articles.

In an actual trial, of course, jurors would see the defendant and therefore be exposed more to stereotype-relevant cues such as the defendant's race, physical appearance, and similar characteristics. Seeing these cues, rather than simply reading about them, might cause jurors to be more likely to process information stereotypically. Moreover, the extent to which the defendant seems to fit the jurors' prototypic images of a stereotyped group might relate to the extent to which their verdicts reflect their stereotypes (e.g., Lord et al., 1994). And if jurors are faced with a complex, demanding task, they may be more likely to rely on their stereotypes to process the vast amount of information presented to them (Bodenhause & Lichtenstein, 1987).

It is clear from the present study, however, that exposing individuals to information that they are supposed to disregard can have significant effects on their subsequent judgments, and that giving participants compelling reason to be suspicious of the intent behind the information can be effective in eradicating these effects. Consistent with people's observations about the O. J. Simpson case, suspicion about

racist motives can be an especially powerful antidote, casting a shadow of doubt large enough to shroud even a tremendous amount of incriminating information in ambiguity.

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