

IS KNOWLEDGE POWER? AN INVESTIGATION OF MOCK JURORS' PERCEPTIONS
OF CSA VICTIM CREDIBILITY

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by
ALISSA Z. ANDERSON

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ALISSA Z. ANDERSON
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APPROVED BY:

Twila Wingrove
Chairperson, Thesis Committee

Paul A. Fox
Member, Thesis Committee

Amy T. Galloway
Member, Thesis Committee

James C. Denniston
Chairperson, Department of Psychology

Edelma D. Huntley
Dean, Cratis Williams Graduate School

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Abstract

IS KNOWLEDGE POWER? AN INVESTIGATION OF MOCK JURORS' PERCEPTIONS OF CSA VICTIM CREDIBILITY

Alissa Z. Anderson
B.S., Appalachian State University
M.A., Appalachian State University

Chairperson: Twila Wingrove

In the present study, I investigated the effects of child complainant's age (5 years, 15 years, a "minor"), the child's level of sexual knowledge (low, high), and the presence of jury instructions on mock jurors' perceptions of the child's credibility and legal decisions regarding a child sexual abuse (CSA) case. Participants read one of 12 trial transcriptions describing an ambiguous CSA case involving a summer camp doctor and female camper. Perceptions of the child complainant and frequency of convictions were also analyzed in relation to mock jurors' knowledge concerning CSA victims, as measured by the Child Sexual Abuse Misconceptions Questionnaire (Goodman-Delahunty, Cossins, & O'Brien, 2010). Results indicated significant effects for child age, the presence of jury instructions, mock juror gender, and CSA misconception endorsement on mock jurors' credibility ratings for the child complainant. Conviction decisions were also influenced by child age, the presence of jury instructions, and mock jurors' endorsements of CSA misconceptions. Additionally, perceptions of the child's credibility were found to significantly predict mock

jurors' decisions to convict the defendant. Implications for legal professionals and future directions are discussed in terms of these research findings.

Keywords: CSA Misconceptions, Mock Jurors' Perceptions, Child Sexual Abuse, Child Credibility

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Renee and Greg Anderson, and to my sister, Madelyn, for their relentless support of my education and academic goals; to my partner, Blake Call, for his love and understanding over the past two years and most importantly, the constant support he provided at all hours of the day (and night!); and finally, to any child who has ever been sexually victimized.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iv
Acknowledgements	vi
Dedication	vii
Foreword	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction and Literature Review	1
Chapter 2: Method	9
Chapter 3: Results	17
Chapter 4: Discussion	29
References	44
Appendix A: Notice of IRB Approval	50
Appendix B: Informed Consent	52
Appendix C: Trial Transcript	54
Appendix D: The CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire	66
Appendix E: The Child Sexual Abuse Belief Scale	70
Appendix F: Manipulation and Comprehension Checks Survey	73
Appendix G: Case-Related Survey	74
Appendix H: Demographic Information Survey	76
Vita	78

Foreword

This thesis is written in accordance with the style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th Edition)* as required by the Department of Psychology at Appalachian State University.

Is Knowledge Power? Investigating Mock Jurors' Perceptions of CSA Victim Credibility

Each year in the United States, approximately 3.3 million cases of child sexual abuse (CSA) are reported, involving approximately 6 million child victims (i.e., CSA cases reported may involve more than one child victim), yet only about one third of these cases proceed to trial (Bottoms, Golding, Stevenson, Wiley, & Yozwiak, 2007). Additionally, only 19% of CSA cases are substantiated (Snyder, 2000). In a meta-analysis of studies concerned with the prosecution and processing of child abuse cases, Cross, Walsh, Simone, and Jones (2003) reported that out of 100 child abuse referrals, 52 would be carried forward to be prosecuted, nine of the cases carried forward would go to trial, and only six of these cases would result in a conviction of the defendant. Research on jurors' perceptions of CSA victims may influence prosecutors' decisions on whether to take legal action, and posit explanations for the discrepancy between the amount of CSA claims referred and the number of CSA cases actually tried in court. Since CSA cases are rarely brought to trial, it is important for prosecutors to become more aware of possible extralegal factors that may influence or even bias jurors' legal decision making. CSA cases frequently lack extra witnesses (i.e., other than the child complainant and defendant) to provide testimony on whether or not the accusation did occur. Moreover, these offenses rarely involve any additional physical evidence corroborating the CSA allegation. Due to the secretive nature of CSA combined with the lack of hard legal evidence supporting the accusation, research on

jurors' perceptions and the extralegal factors that influence juror bias is imperative for understanding how that information may impact case outcomes.

Many CSA cases are brought to trial with little or any legal evidence (e.g., physical evidence) to corroborate the allegation, thus the conviction of the defendant depends strongly on the jurors' perceptions of the child's testimony (Bottoms et al., 2007). This brings into question which specific factors affect jurors' perceptions and whether these factors impact jurors' case-related decisions. Research findings have shown that extralegal factors such as victim age (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Goodman, Batterman-Faunce, Schaaf, & Kenney, 2002; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1989) and victim demeanor and behavior (Golding, Fryman, Marsil, & Yozwiak, 2003; Myers, Redlich, Goodman, Prizmich, & Imwinkelried, 1999; Regan & Baker, 1998) influence juror decision making for CSA trials. In one study, Golding et al. (2003) manipulated the child complainant's demeanor while testifying and found that mock jurors attributed more credibility to a CSA complainant's testimony when she was described as being teary-eyed on the stand compared to when she cried excessively or did not cry at all.

Despite low conviction rates for CSA trials, research has shown that extralegal factors such as juror gender and education level are positively associated with higher conviction rates; females (Crowley, O'Callaghan, & Ball, 1994; Gabora, Spanos, & Joab, 1993) and highly educated participants (Quas, Thompson, & Clarke-Stewart, 2005) are more likely to convict the defendant. On the other hand, jurors' judgments are negatively affected by extralegal factors such as juror gender; male jurors were found to report higher endorsement of CSA misconceptions than females (Gabora et al., 1993) and to rate child complainants as less believable, credible, and competent than adult victims (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994;

Crowley et al., 1994; Quas, Bottoms, Haegerich, & Nysse-Carris, 2002; Quas et al., 2005); and juror age; older jurors report less favorable attitudes toward victims of child sexual abuse (Goodman et al., 1998).

The focus of the present research was to investigate the influence of specific extralegal factors on mock juror's decision making in an alleged CSA case trial. Current literature proposes a developmental scope to explain credibility perceptions of CSA victims by focusing on the effects of the child's age (Bottoms, Davis, & Epstein, 2004; Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Duggan, Aubrey, Doherty, Isquith, Levine, & Scheiner, 1989) and sexual naiveté (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994) on mock jurors' perceptions of the child complainant's credibility. I also intended on replicating the findings in the literature where jurors' perceptions of the child complainant's credibility were enhanced through dissemination of specialized CSA knowledge in the form of jury instructions (Goodman-Delahunty, Cossins, & O'Brien, 2010). Replication of these findings would illuminate and fortify the benefits of jury instructions for CSA trials for correcting jurors' misconceptions and educating the jury about CSA victims, offenders, and characteristics of the offense.

Child Complainant Age and Sexual Knowledge

Researchers have reported contradictory findings for the influence of child complainant age on jurors' perceptions of the victim's credibility and legal decisions regarding the case. In an experiment on beliefs about children's memory, Leippe and Romanczyk (1989) found a positive correlation for child witness age and participants' estimates of child witness free-recall responses to questions about a staged homicidal incident. These researchers also observed that participants' concerns pertaining to the child's memory negatively influenced perceived witness credibility. Goodman, Aman, and

Hirschman (1987) found child victim age to influence perceptions of victim credibility where the older child held an apparent advantage over the younger child victim in a non-CSA, criminal case. They attributed these results to the presumption that older, compared to younger, children have superior cognitive abilities and a more accurate memory.

On the other hand, children who allegedly fall victim to CSA are perceived differently than child witnesses for non-CSA offenses. Researchers have found that the younger the child, the more likely mock jurors are to perceive the complainant's testimony as credible in a CSA trial (Goodman, Bottoms, Herscovici, & Shaver, 1989; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1989; Nightingale, 1993). The general consensus appears to be that younger children (i.e., approximately age eleven and younger) lack sexual knowledge (i.e., information about sexual intercourse, masturbation, etc.) and are presumed to be sexually naive. In other words, at their young age, they should not have the same conceptions about sex as an adult or even an older child or adolescent (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Duggan et al., 1989; Nightingale, 1993). Therefore, a young child who displays an unusual level of sexual knowledge *must* have been sexually abused, increasing jurors' credibility perceptions. However, the opposite might also be true. It could be that jurors will perceive a young child with high sexual knowledge as *less credible*, because they will perceive that child as more capable of fabricating the allegation.

The connection between credibility judgments and ability to fabricate has been demonstrated in jury research involving older children (i.e., age twelve and older), who were more likely perceived to have the cognitive abilities and relevant knowledge to confabulate a sexual abuse allegation, negatively influencing jurors' perceptions of the older child's credibility (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Duggan et al., 1989; Nightingale, 1993). Jurors may

assume that due to an overall increase in the amount of life experiences, older children may have more opportunities to become educated about sexual intercourse and reproduction through conversations with their parents and peers, school sex education programs, and through media influences such as television and online social networking sites, leading to a more comprehensive and mature conceptualization about sexuality.

In short, researchers have consistently proposed that the reason for the negative correlation between age and credibility in CSA cases is driven by jurors' ideas about sexual naiveté; however, this interrelationship does not seem to have been experimentally tested; no researcher has separately manipulated child age and sexual knowledge level within the parameters of one experimental study. Moreover, if sexual naiveté is the underlying explanation for this negative correlation then we should expect to see an interaction effect between the two constructs on jurors' perceptions of credibility. Consistent with the prior literature, younger children with low sexual knowledge should be perceived as *more* credible than both younger and older children who possess a high level of sexual knowledge. In contrast, younger children with high sexual knowledge should be seen as *less* credible than older children with a low level of sexual knowledge.

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) Misconceptions

In CSA trials jurors may have pre-existing attitudes about the characteristics of CSA offenses (e.g., CSA typically being a violent physical crime), children's reactions to CSA (e.g., delayed disclosure is rare), and children's reliability in CSA cases (e.g., susceptibility to suggestion and having knowledge to fabricate allegations) (Cossins, 2008). Numerous studies show that mock jurors endorse a number of CSA misconceptions identified in the past decade of research on jurors' perceptions of CSA. For instance, Kovera and Borgida (1997),

Morison and Greene (1992), and Quas et al. (2005) all found that over 50% of laypeople and jurors endorsed the common CSA misconception that “children are easily manipulated into giving false reports of sexual abuse” (as cited in Cossins, 2008, p. 156). This misconception may be supported by additional fallacies jurors bring with them to trial, for instance “children who retract their reports have fabricated their allegations” (Morison & Greene, 1992; Quas et al., 2005), “children cannot remember events of an incident well enough for their testimony to be reliable in court” (Quas et al., 2005), and that “a physical examination by a doctor will reveal evidence of sexual abuse” (Morison & Greene, 1992; Quas et al., 2005; as cited in Cossins, 2008, p. 156).

In reality, researchers have found results suggesting that children’s memories of CSA may be more reliable than what many laypeople tend to believe. Gobbo, Mega, and Pipe (2002) found that actual participation in an event (i.e., a child being sexually abused) versus witnessing an event increased the child’s ability to recall accurate information of the event and decreased the child’s susceptibility to false suggestions during interviewing. Additionally, Goodman, Rudy, Bottoms, and Aman (1990) found that by the age of four, most children are able to resist suggestions of sexual abuse under reasonable interviewing conditions.

Jurors who strongly endorse CSA misconceptions may have a pre-existing mental representation or stereotype of a CSA victim that may or may not be susceptible to change. Several researchers have shown a trend in jurors’ endorsements of misconceptions negatively influencing perceptions of the complainant’s credibility, which in turn has been correlated with low conviction rates (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; Taylor, 2007; Vidmar, 1997). The combination of pre-existing attitudes about CSA victims, CSA misconception

endorsement, and lack of physical evidence could prove detrimental to CSA conviction rates. For instance, if a child complainant does not conform to the juror's pre-existing mental representation of a CSA victim, the juror may completely disregard the complainant's testimony (Cossins, Goodman-Delahunty, & O'Brien, 2009; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; Myers, 1998).

In light of recent research on the influences of CSA misconceptions on jurors' perceptions of CSA complainant's credibility, researchers have readjusted their focus investigating the efficacy of trial interventions (i.e., jury instructions and expert witness testimony) for reducing CSA misconceptions endorsement, enhancing jurors' ratings of the child complainant's credibility, and increasing conviction rates (Gabora et al., 1993; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010).

Trial Interventions for CSA Cases

Studies using the mock juror experimental paradigm, utilizing both university student and community member samples, have reported a reduction in mock jurors' endorsements of CSA misconceptions, enhanced ratings of the child complainant's credibility, higher quantitative ratings of defendant guilt, and increased frequency in conviction rates as a result of trial interventions (Crowley et al., 1994; Gabora et al., 1993; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). These trial interventions aim to educate jurors by providing specialized knowledge about CSA cases during a CSA trial. One potential avenue for disseminating this information is through expert witness testimony, which has been considerably accepted and utilized by courtrooms throughout the United States to counter jurors' misconceptions about a variety of criminal offenses, including CSA (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010).

In contrast to expert witness testimony, jury instructions are another form of trial intervention found to be significantly effective in reducing CSA misconceptions and increasing child complainant credibility (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; Kovera, Levy, Borgida, & Penrod, 1994). Researchers have examined the efficacy of jury instructions presented either before the child complainant has testified, during the summation of the trial, or prior to jury deliberation. Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010) observed that jury instructions had a stronger effect on countering mock jurors' endorsements of CSA misconceptions when provided prior to the child complainant's testimony. In this condition, mock jurors perceived the child's testimony as most credible and were least likely to believe the child had fabricated the CSA allegation (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). Finally, one crucial advantage that jury instructions have in comparison to expert witness testimony is that jury instructions are cost effective and typically scripted, requiring less preparation and unruly clerical work for courtroom players.

The Present Study

A substantial amount of information on extralegal factors influencing jurors' and mock jurors' perceptions of child complainant credibility and legal decision making in CSA trials has been published, but none to date have directly investigated the effects of child complainant's sexual knowledge on mock jurors' perceptions of the child complainant's credibility and case outcomes. In the present study, I manipulated the child complainant's level of prior sexual knowledge (i.e., high or low) and the child's age (i.e., a 5-year-old or a 15-year-old), and included a control condition for age such that knowledge of the child complainant's age was withheld from mock jurors and instead she was described as a "minor." In order to better assess jurors' perceptions of minor victims with low or high levels

of sexual knowledge, I included a control condition for the child's age. Furthermore, I examined whether the presence of a trial intervention, specifically jury instructions provided at the beginning of the trial, would influence ratings of the child's credibility as well as increase the frequency of prescribed guilty verdicts. Finally, this study also examined the effects of mock jurors' endorsements of CSA misconceptions and beliefs that children can fabricate CSA allegations on child credibility ratings and legal decisions.

In consideration of the literature, I postulated the following research hypotheses: 1) a main effect for age where mock jurors would rate the younger child complainant as more credible than the older child complainant (Nightingale, 1993); 2) an interaction effect for age and level of sexual knowledge where the younger child complainant with low sexual knowledge would be perceived as most credible; 3) the presence of jury instructions would enhance victim credibility ratings (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010); 4) participants who reported weaker endorsements in CSA misconceptions would be more likely to report higher credibility ratings for the child complainant; and 5) participants who believed the child to be credible would be more likely to convict the defendant.

Method

Design

The study was a 3 (child complainant's age: 5 years, 15 years, a minor) x 2 (jury instructions: provided, absent) x 2 (child complainant's sexual knowledge: low, high) factorial design. Effects of the experimental conditions were observed between-subjects and CSA knowledge was also tested between-subjects. Participants' scores on the CSA Misconception Questionnaire and the Child Sexual Beliefs Scale were not manipulated by the experimenter but were used as variables during data analysis.

Participants

Participants were 361 jury-eligible individuals residing in the United States. These individuals were recruited through Amazon Mechanical Turk (Mturk) and received \$0.25 initially for completing the study, and an additional bonus of \$0.25 for perfect performance on manipulation/comprehension checks. The Institutional Review Board at Appalachian State University approved all procedures for this study on September 16, 2013 (see Appendix A, p. 50). Sixty percent of participants were women (217 women and 114 men) and the majority of participants identified themselves as “Caucasian” (69%, $N = 248$) compared to “African American” (7%, $N = 25$), followed by “Hispanic, Latino, Spanish” (4%, $N = 15$), “Asian” (17%, $N = 62$), or “Other” (3%, $N = 10$). Participants ranged in age from 18 to 74 years ($M = 36.19$, $SD = 12.93$). Additional demographic analyses indicated that 48% of participants recruited had a college degree ($N = 172$) and the majority of participants reported having never served on a jury (85%, $N = 306$). Eighty-eight percent ($N = 319$) of the sample identified themselves as “Straight” as opposed to “Bisexual” (6%, $N = 22$), or “Gay” (4%, $N = 15$). Furthermore, on a scale ranging from 1 (*conservative*) to 7 (*liberal*) participants reported predominantly neutral political ideologies ($M = 4.68$, $SD = 1.70$) and, on average, engaged in religious practices “once a month” ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 2.34$) as identified on a 7-point scale (1 = *everyday*, 7 = *not religious*).

Procedure

Participants were recruited by an advertisement posted on Amazon Mturk. A statistical power analysis using G*Power (Faul, Erdfelder, Buchner, & Lang, 2009) indicated that a sample of at least 400 participants would be required to achieve the appropriate power observed in previous research, ($F = .25$, $\alpha = .05$, $\beta = .05$). Based on the pilot sample (see

Results, p. 17), I expected that approximately 20% of the recruited sample would fail comprehension and manipulation checks and that these data would be excluded from further analyses; therefore, the total recruitment goal for this study was 480.

Recruited individuals were provided a web link to the online survey hosted by Qualtrics. Once the survey was accessed and informed consent was obtained (see Appendix B, p. 52), participants were read one of twelve randomly assigned trial transcripts describing an alleged CSA case involving a female camper and the camp doctor. They were asked to answer three manipulation checks and three comprehension checks, and then to respond to questions on the Case-Related Survey regarding legal decisions for the case, factual guilt and perceptions of the child's credibility. Participants also completed a demographic survey and concluded the online study by completing two attitudinal scales measuring perceptions of child sexual abuse. The entire survey process lasted no longer than 30 minutes to complete. Participants were paid within approximately one week of having completed the study.

Materials and Measures

Trial transcript. The proposed study used a shortened version of a trial transcript (see Appendix C, p. 54), which was inspired by a review of CSA case summaries found using LexisNexis Academic, an online legal case database. This transcript opened either with or without the presentation of jury instructions, depending on the participant's random assignment. Next, participants read the testimony and cross-examination of the child complainant's father, the person who the victim first notified about the alleged abuse. Following the father's testimony and cross-examination, a statement about the child's interview was provided by the clinical psychologist assigned to the case. Finally, the participant read the female child complainant's testimony and cross-examination.

In the transcript, the alleged child sexual abuse was described as a single incident including the following common elements: (a) the alleged perpetrator was an acquaintance of the complainant (i.e., a community doctor practicing at the complainant's summer camp), (b) the complainant delayed reporting the abuse for seven days, (c) the child's examinations showed no use of physical force, and (d) there was one retraction of the allegation by the child complainant. These elements were chosen because they are fairly typical of the child sexual abuse cases that proceed to court, but they also have been shown to be consistent misconceptions among jurors. For example, many jurors believe that delayed reporting is uncommon and, therefore, are suspicious when a child's report of abuse is delayed, rather than immediate (Golding, Sanchez, & Segó, 1999; Golding, Segó, Sanchez, & Hassemann, 1995).

The variables manipulated in each version of the trial transcript included the child complainant's age, the child complainant's level of sexual knowledge, and the presence/absence of jury instructions. The child complainant's age was defined as a 5-year-old, a 15-year-old, or a minor without reference to a specific age (i.e., the control condition). The child complainant's level of sexual knowledge was explained by an expert witness, a clinical psychologist, and manipulated into two levels: low and high. For the low condition, information was provided to the mock juror explaining that the child complainant had knowledge of male and female genital differences as well as knowledge of "where babies come from." In the high condition, information regarding the child complainant's sexual knowledge was identical to that of the low condition with additional information that the child had some knowledge of masturbation, oral sex, and sexual intercourse. This information was presented by the clinical psychologist rather than the female child

complainant because child victims are not asked to discern their level of sexual knowledge while on the stand. Thus, an expert witness testimony on the child's level of sexual knowledge provided by a clinical psychologist was more externally valid to a real CSA case. Finally, specialized CSA knowledge was disseminated to mock jurors in the form of jury instructions via the presiding judge (see Appendix C, p. 54). The trial intervention variable had two condition levels: a) the judge provided jury instructions at the beginning of the trial, and b) the control condition that had no mention of jury instructions.

CSA knowledge and misconception endorsement. Participant's CSA knowledge and misconception endorsement was assessed using the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; originally developed by Cossins et al., 2009; see Appendix D, p. 66) and the Child Sexual Abuse Belief Scale (Gabora et al., 1993; see Appendix E, p. 70). The 26-item CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire was originally developed by Cossins et al. (2009) to assess mock jurors' endorsements of CSA misconception statements in three broad domains: a) children's reactions to sexual abuse; b) characteristics about the child sexual abuse offense or offender; and c) children's susceptibility to suggestion and ability to provide reliable testimony. Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010) included a seven rather than six point scale to allow for an uncertainty option and also added six items relevant to their specific study. These additional six items were not pertinent to the current research, and thus were excluded leaving a total of 20-items. Participants' scores on the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire were calculated by summing across all 20-item ratings.

Regarding the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire, mock jurors were instructed to rate their agreement to each statement on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 =

strongly agree). Some examples of statements found on the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire include: “the perpetrator of child sexual abuse is normally a stranger to that child”; “a physical examination by a doctor will almost always show whether or not a child has been sexually abused”; “children sometimes make false claims of sexual abuse to get back at an adult.” Total potential scores range from 20 to 120 where higher scores are interpreted as an indicator of stronger endorsement of CSA misconceptions. The CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire had adequate internal consistency (Cronbach $\alpha = .73$), comparable to past research (Cronbach $\alpha = .76$; Cossins et al., 2009).

In addition to the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire, participants were given the Child Sexual Abuse Belief Scale (Gabora et al., 1993). The 17-item Child Sexual Abuse Belief Scale was developed to assess mock jurors' perceptions of children's ability to fabricate CSA allegations. Each item is a statement (e.g., “it is uncommon for children to fabricate false accusations of sexual abuse”; “children are more prone to lying about sexual abuse than adults”) about which mock jurors were instructed to report the extent that they agree or disagree on an 11-point scale ($-5 = disagree$, $+5 = agree$). Higher scores indicated a greater acceptance of a child sexual abuse victim's ability to confabulate allegations. The Child Sexual Abuse Belief Scale also had adequate internal reliability in my sample (Cronbach $\alpha = .77$).

Because I was worried that high collinearity among these two scales might affect some of the results, I ran a correlation to see how strongly scores on one scale related to scores on the other. As anticipated, scores were quite highly correlated, ($r = .736$, $p < .01$). Given the high correlation and the fact that the internal reliability was higher for the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire, I decided to only use scores on the CSA Misconceptions

Questionnaire for the purposes of hypothesis-testing. Mock jurors' scores on the Child Sexual Abuse Beliefs Scale were not further analyzed, thus this scale will no longer be referenced.

Dependent measures. Immediately after reading the trial transcription, participants were asked to respond to a total of six questions regarding the case (see Appendix F, p. 73). The first three questions referred to the experimental manipulations (i.e., manipulation checks) and asked participants to enter the age of the child from the story (i.e., "How old was Cindy in the story?"), to rate the child's level of sexual knowledge (i.e., "How much knowledge did Cindy have about sexual reproduction and intercourse?") on a 7-point scale (1 = *very little*, 7 = *very much*), and to report whether jury instructions were presented (i.e., "Did the judge speak to the jury in the story?") answering either yes or no. Three additional multiple choice questions were used to assess whether participants understood the material contained within the trial transcription (i.e., comprehension checks), including: a) "Who allegedly sexually abused Cindy in the story?" b) "Where did the alleged sexual encounter occur?" and c) "Who did Cindy first tell about the alleged sexual abuse?"

As stated previously, these questions were used to identify and exclude participants who did not understand or pay close attention to the details of the trial transcript. Only the data from participants who correctly answered the two objective manipulation checks (i.e., child age and presence of jury instructions) in addition to the three multiple choice comprehension checks was used to investigate my research hypotheses.

In order to investigate mock jurors' decisions about the case, the researcher included a modified Case-Related Survey (see Appendix G, p. 74) developed by Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010). The Case-Related Survey asked mock jurors whether they would vote to

convict the defendant (yes or no), and to rate their confidence in making a verdict decision (1 = *very little*, 7 = *very much*). The Case-Related Survey also asked participants to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with three statements regarding factual guilt (i.e., “The defendant sexually abused the child”; “the victim fabricated the allegation”; and “the victim had the knowledge to fabricate the allegation”) using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 7 = *strongly agree*). For the purpose of this thesis, only the conviction item was analyzed. The remaining questions were not the subject of specific hypotheses and will be analyzed later for manuscript preparation.

The remaining questions on the Case-Related Survey asked participants to rate the female child complainant using a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *very little/strongly disagree*, 7 = *very much/strongly agree*) on statements and questions regarding their perceptions of the child complainant’s mental abilities (i.e., “The child complainant had the ability to distinguish fact from fantasy”, “How consistent was the child complainant?”, and “How competent did the child complainant appear?”), reliability (i.e., “How reliable was the child complainant?”), believability (i.e., “How believable was the child complainant?”), trustworthiness (i.e., “How trustworthy was the child complainant?”), and credibility (i.e., “How credible was the child complainant?”). For this thesis, I only made specific predictions about *child credibility*, therefore the remaining six items are not analyzed herein.

Participant demographics. Finally, participants were asked to complete a demographic information survey (see Appendix H, p. 76) referring to various characteristics of the individual. The demographic information survey contained eight questions in a variety of question formats (i.e., Likert-scales, multiple choice questions, and open-ended questions). Questions on the demographic information survey asked participants to report personal

information about their sex (male, female), age, race (Caucasian; African American; Hispanic, Latino, Spanish; Asian; American Indian; or Other), college major, sexual orientation (Straight, Bisexual, Gay), political ideology (1 = *conservative*, 7 = *liberal*), frequency of religious practice (1 = *everyday*, 7 = *not religious*), and whether the individual has ever participated as a jury member (yes, no). Demographics were reported in the Participants section (see p. 10). Aside from participant gender, they were not analyzed further.

Results

Manipulations Checks

Pilot study. A preliminary pilot study was conducted in order to investigate the success of the experimental manipulations. Participants for this pilot study included 66 undergraduate psychology students enrolled in the Psychology Department SONA Participant Pool. Pilot participants were randomly assigned to one condition and then responded only to the six manipulation and comprehension checks.

To investigate the effects of the manipulations for the two quantitative checks—victim age and level of sexual knowledge—I ran ANOVAs. Significant differences between the victim age manipulations were found, $F(2, 53) = 54.35, p < .001$, indicating that the participants accurately perceived Cindy to be a 5-year-old ($M = 5.50, SD = 2.00$), a 15-year-old ($M = 15.64, SD = 3.25$), or a minor ($M = 11.22, SD = 3.28$). Participants' views of Cindy's sexual knowledge also differed significantly between the low ($M = 3.14, SD = 1.57$), and high ($M = 4.17, SD = 1.37$) levels of sexual knowledge conditions, $F(1, 64) = 7.88, p = .007$. These results showed that participants were accurately differentiated between the levels

of both the child age and level of sexual knowledge conditions as described in the trial transcript.

To measure the success of the jury instructions manipulation, I conducted a chi-square comparing actual condition assignment to participant-reported condition assignment. When jury instructions were presented in the trial transcript, 46% of participants ($N = 13$) answered correctly while 54% of participants ($N = 15$) failed the manipulation check, indicating that the judge did not speak when he did in fact speak at the beginning of the transcript, $\chi^2(1, N = 66) = 18.50; p < .001$. When the jury instructions were absent, only one participant out of 37 (3%) said that the directions were present. Therefore, overall, 16 out of 66 (24%) participants failed the third manipulation check.

To indicate whether participants were generally paying attention to the transcript, participants were also asked to answer three multiple choice comprehension checks. I ran frequencies for each of these checks to observe the rate at which participants were responding accurately. One hundred percent of participants ($N = 66$) accurately reported that Cindy was allegedly sexually abused by the "summer camp doctor." When asked where the alleged sexual encounter occurred, all but one participant ($N = 65, 98\%$) accurately responded with "at summer camp." Finally, when asked who Cindy first told about the alleged abuse, four participants answered incorrectly (1%). Overall, only five participants (8%) failed at one or more of the comprehension checks.

As a result of these analyses, I felt satisfied that participants would be able to identify key details regarding experimental manipulations embedded in the trial transcript. Despite my decision to move forward with the experimental data collection using a nationwide sample, I chose to continue to include these manipulation and comprehension checks to

continue to gauge participants' understanding, especially given that this sample was expected to be much more demographically diverse.

Present study. To enhance the external validity and generalizability of my research findings, I decided to recruit a national sample of jury-eligible individuals rather than undergraduate student participants. A total of 629 individuals signed up to participate in the present study. Despite having signed up to participate, 138 (22%) did not actually follow through and complete the online survey and were removed from the data. Thirty-seven (1%) participants were excluded because they did not score 100% correct on comprehension checks, 13 (less than 1%) participants were excluded for failing the child age manipulation check, and finally, 80 (13%) participants were excluded from data analysis because they failed the jury instructions manipulation check. Analysis of the child sexual knowledge condition revealed that this manipulation was successful in that participants recognized a significant difference, $F(1,359) = 29.79, p < .001$, between low ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.37$), and high levels ($M = 4.31, SD = 1.26$). Although this manipulation was successful, accuracy on the sexual knowledge manipulation check was not used as exclusion criteria because it was assessed using a 7-point scale (1 = *very little*, 7 = *very much*). In conclusion, approximately 57% ($N = 268$) of data collected from the total number of recruited participants ($N = 629$) were excluded, leaving a sample of 361 which was used for data analysis.

Analyses of Research Hypotheses

Effects of age and sexual knowledge on credibility perceptions. To specifically test the effects of child age and level of sexual knowledge on mock jurors' credibility perceptions, I conducted a 3 (child age) X 2 (level of sexual knowledge) ANOVA using the scaled child credibility item as the dependent variable. My first hypothesis for the current

study was that mock jurors would attribute more credibility to the 5-year-old complainant compared to the 15-year-old and minor complainants. Additionally, I predicted that the 5-year-old child who appeared to have low sexual knowledge would be perceived as most credible in comparison to the other three child age and sexual knowledge interactions.

As predicted, I found a significant main effect for child age on mock jurors' credibility ratings regarding the child complainant, $F(2,358) = 3.13, p = .045, \eta^2 = .017$. As expected, LSD Post Hoc analysis revealed that participants perceived the 5-year-old victim ($M = 5.69, SD = 1.20$) to be significantly more credible than the 15-year-old victim ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.50$), $p = .02, 95\% CI = [.06, .72]$). When the child was identified as a "minor," mock jurors' perceptions of child credibility did not significantly differ from the 5-year-old or 15-year-old, ($p = .653, 95\% CI = [-.65, .02]$; and $p = .653, 95\% CI = [-.02, .65]$, respectively); however, I noticed higher credibility ratings for the minor ($M = 5.61, SD = 1.18$) compared to the 15-year-old ($M = 5.30, SD = 1.50$). Contrary to my second research hypothesis that the most credibility would be attributed to the 5-year-old child with low sexual knowledge, the interaction between child age and level of sexual knowledge was not significant, $F(2, 355) = 0.51, p = .599, \eta^2 = .003$. Additionally, these results were not indicative of a significant main effect for level of sexual knowledge on mock jurors' credibility perceptions, $F(2, 355) = 1.16, p = .283, \eta^2 = .003$. However, the credibility means for both low and high conditions did appear to fall in the expected direction (refer to Table 1, p. 23).

Finally, I noticed that on average mock jurors perceived Cindy—the child complainant—as fairly credible ($M = 5.55, SD = 1.30$). As you can see in Figure 1 (see p. 22), a majority of participants perceived Cindy and her testimony as being credible, reporting

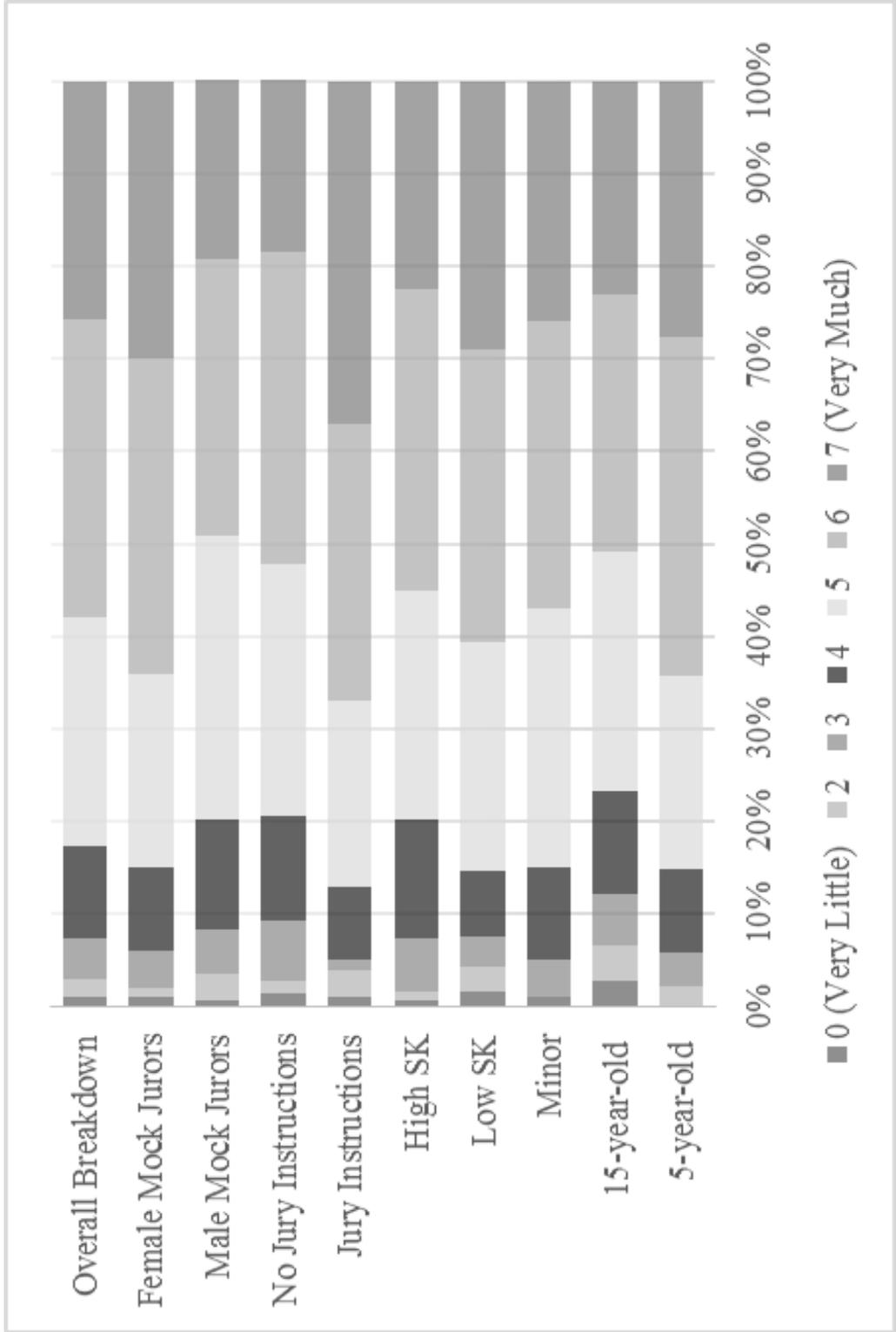


Figure 1. Perceived child complainant credibility between experimental manipulations and mock juror gender.

higher (5 = 25%, $n = 89$; 6 = 32%, $n = 116$; and 7 = 26%, $n = 93$) rather than lower (1 = 1%, $n = 4$; 2 = 2%, $n = 7$; and 3 = 4%, $n = 16$) credibility ratings.

Effects of jury instructions on credibility perceptions. To test the effects of jury instructions on mock jurors' credibility perceptions, I ran a separate ANOVA having entered the jury instruction manipulation (i.e., present or absent) as the independent variable and

Table 1

Univariate Effects of Experimental Manipulations and Mock Juror Gender on Perceived Child Credibility.

	Means (SDs)	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	η^2
Child Age ^a		3.24	.040	.019
5 years	5.69 (1.20)			
15 years	5.30 (1.50)			
Minor	5.61 (1.18)			
Child Sexual Knowledge Level ^a		.90	.343	.003
Low	5.61 (1.35)			
High	5.48 (1.25)			
Jury Instructions ^b		9.73	.002	.028
Present	5.82 (1.27)			
Not Present	5.37 (1.29)			
Mock Juror Gender ^c		5.39	.021	.016
Males (40%, $N = 144$)	5.36 (1.28)			
Females (60%, $N = 217$)	5.67 (1.30)			

Note. ^a = ANOVA Model 1. ^b = ANOVA Model 2. ^c = ANOVA Model 3

child credibility as the dependent variable. As expected, my prediction was supported such that the presence ($M = 5.82, SD = 1.27$) of jury instructions resulted in significantly higher child credibility judgments, $F(1, 359) = 10.24, p = .001, \eta^2 = .028$, compared to when jury instructions were absent ($M = 5.37, SD = 1.29$) (see Table 1).

Effects of CSA misconceptions on credibility perceptions. Average scores for the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire ($M = 60.99, SD = 12.08$, ranging from 37 to 110)

Table 2

Correlations and Descriptive Statistics between Manipulations, Child Credibility Ratings, Conviction Rates, Scale Scores and Mock Juror Gender.

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1. Child age	-								
2. Level of sexual knowledge	.10	-							
3. Presence of jury instructions	.03	.03	-						
4. Child credibility ratings	-.03	-.05	-.17**	-				5.55	1.30
5. Frequency of convictions	-.03	-.01	.14**	.57**	-			Yes $n = 290$ (80%)	No $n = 71$ (20%)
6. CSAMQ score	.01	.07	-.13*	-.35**	-	-		60.99	12.08
7. CSABS score	.04	.02	-.07	-.27**	.14**	.74**	-	54.78	19.72
8. Mock juror gender	.01	.00	.06	-.12*	-.01	.34**	.32**	Male $N = 144$ (40%)	Female $N = 217$ (60%)

Note. * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

indicated participants in this sample moderately endorsed common CSA misconceptions, comparable to those of past samples ($M = 81.90$, $SD = 11.64$, ranging from 52 to 110 in Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010).

As shown in Table 2, I observed a significant negative relationship between mock jurors' perceptions of child credibility and CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores ($r = -.35$, $p < .01$). This negative correlation provided initial support for my fourth research hypothesis, that mock jurors who highly endorse CSA misconceptions would be less likely to view the child complainant as credible. To investigate this relationship further, I conducted a regression analysis having entered participants' CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores as the predictor variable and child victim credibility as the outcome variable. Results indicated that the model significantly predicted mock jurors' credibility ratings of the child victim, $R^2 = .126$, $F(1, 359) = 51.56$, $p < .001$, where endorsement in CSA misconceptions accounted for approximately 13% of the variance in mock jurors' perceptions of child credibility. Specifically, higher scores on the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire significantly predicted lower credibility ratings, $\beta = -.04$, $t(359) = -7.18$, $p < .001$, 95% CI = [-.05, -.03].

Effects of credibility perceptions on conviction rates. My final prediction for the present study was that mock jurors who perceived the child as credible would be more likely to convict the defendant of CSA. In order to investigate whether participants' views of child complainant credibility influenced case decisions I conducted a binary logistic regression, entering child credibility as the predictor variable and case decision (i.e., convict or do not convict) as the outcome variable. On average, 80% of participants ($N = 290$) voted to convict the defendant and as expected, child credibility judgments significantly predicted mock jurors' decisions to convict the defendant, $-2LL = 238.96$, $\chi^2(1) = 118.98$; $p < .001$. In

support of my original hypothesis, higher child credibility ratings significantly predicted convictions, $B = 1.33$, $SE = 0.16$, $z^2(1) = 66.92$, $p < .001$, $\exp(B) = 3.79$, 95% CI [2.75, 5.21]. Additionally, the value of the odds ratio was greater than one indicating mock jurors' credibility perceptions significantly predicted the likelihood of convicting the defendant. Specifically, mock jurors who judged the child as a credible complainant were 3.79 times more likely to convict the defendant compared to those who discredited the child.

Supplemental Data Analyses

Effects of experimental manipulations on conviction rates. While there were no specific hypotheses made predicting direct relationships between the manipulations and conviction rates, I wanted to explore whether associations between these variables existed.

Figure 2 displays legal decisions rendered by mock jurors indicating that the majority

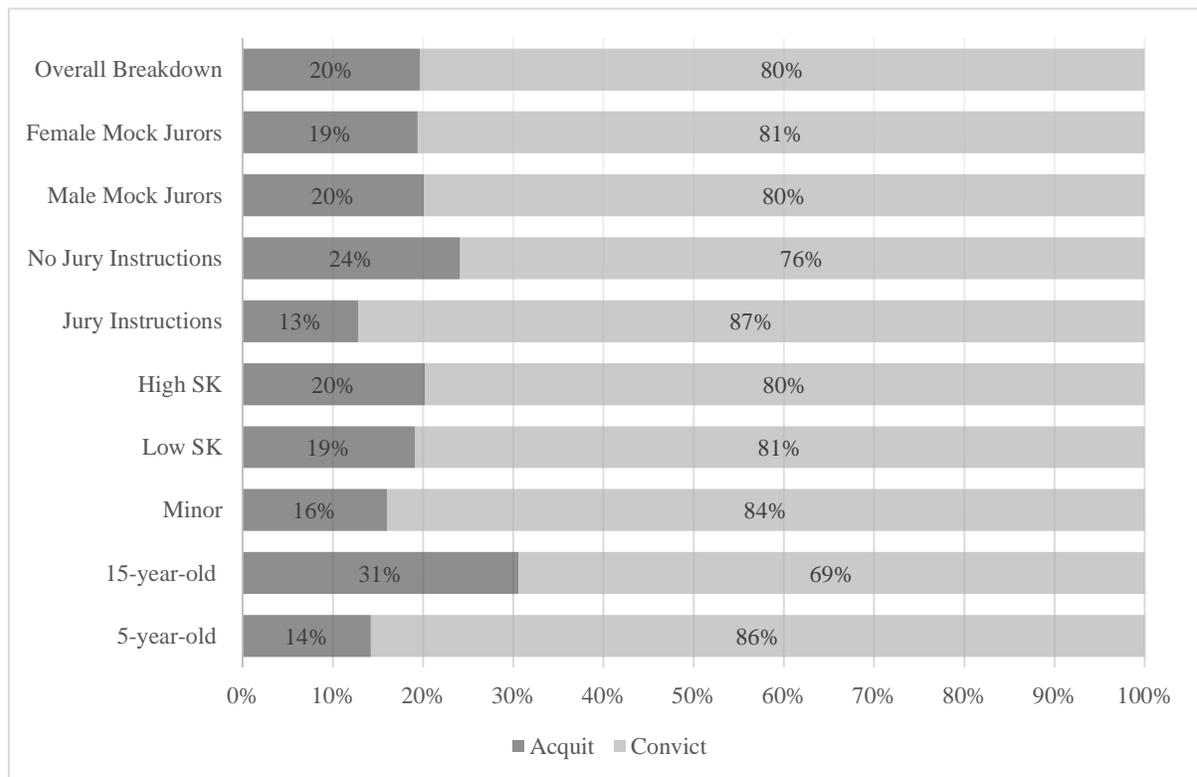


Figure 2. Participants' case decisions on whether to convict the defendant between experimental manipulations and mock juror gender.

decision was to convict (80%, $n = 290$) the defendant rather than to find him “not guilty” (20%, $n = 71$). Table 3 presents the frequency for conviction decisions and chi-square results for child age, level of sexual knowledge, the presence of jury instructions, and mock juror gender.

Table 3

Chi-Square Results for Legal Decisions by Experimental Manipulations and Mock Juror Gender.

	Convict Defendant		χ^2	p	V
	<u>Yes</u> $n = 290$	<u>No</u> $n = 71$			
Child Age			11.69	.003	.180
5 years	40% ($n = 115$)	27% ($n = 19$)			
15 years	26% ($n = 75$)	47% ($n = 33$)			
Minor	34% ($n = 100$)	27% ($n = 19$)			
Child Sexual Knowledge Level			.07	.793	.014
Low	51% ($n = 148$)	49% ($n = 35$)			
High	49% ($n = 142$)	51% ($n = 36$)			
Jury Instructions			6.98	.008	.139
Present	42% ($n = 123$)	25% ($n = 18$)			
Not Present	58% ($n = 167$)	75% ($n = 53$)			
Mock Juror Gender			.03	.854	.010
Males (40%, $N = 144$)	40% ($n = 115$)	41% ($n = 29$)			
Females (60%, $N = 217$)	60% ($n = 175$)	59% ($n = 42$)			

A series of three Pearson's chi-square tests were used to investigate the effects of child complainant age, level of sexual knowledge, and jury instructions on the frequency of conviction decisions. A significant association was detected between child complainant age and frequency of convictions, $\chi^2(2, N = 361) = 11.69; p < .003, V = .180$. As predicted, the majority of total conviction decisions were rendered for the case involving the 5-year-old (40%, $n = 115$), compared to the cases involving the minor (34%, $n = 100$) and the 15-year-old complainant (26%, $n = 75$). Similarly, decisions to acquit the defendant were most common for the 15-year-old child (47%, $n = 33$), compared to the minor (27%, $n = 19$) and the 5-year-old (27%, $n = 19$) age conditions.

Results from an additional chi-square analysis indicated a significant association between conviction rates and the presence of jury instructions, $\chi^2(1, N = 361) = 6.98; p = .008, V = .139$, although in opposition of the predicted direction. Interestingly, mock jurors convicted the defendant more often in the absence of jury instructions (58%, $n = 167$) compared to when jury instructions were presented at the beginning of the trial transcript (42%, $n = 123$).

A final chi-square test indicated that the level of sexual knowledge condition was not significantly related to conviction decisions, $\chi^2(1, N = 361) = .07; p < .793, V = .014$.

Effects of CSA misconception endorsement on conviction rates. Additionally, participants' endorsements in CSA misconceptions were found to influence case outcomes. Using a binary logistic regression, participants' CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores were entered as the predictor variable and the case decision was entered as the criterion variable. As expected, CSA misconception endorsement significantly predicted convictions for the case described in the trial transcript, $-2LL = 351.42, \chi^2(1) = 6.52; p = .011$.

Specifically, lower scores predicted convictions, $B = -.027$, $SE = 0.011$, $z^2(1) = 6.56$, $p = .010$; however, the value of the odds ratio was less than one, indicating that CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores did not strongly predict the likelihood of convicting the defendant, $\exp(B) = .97$, 95% CI = [.95, .99].

Effects of jury instructions on CSA misconception endorsement. In addition, I chose to run a subsequent ANOVA to investigate the effects of jury instructions on endorsement in common CSA misconceptions. Results from this analysis revealed a significant difference in mock jurors' beliefs in CSA misconceptions depending on the presence or absence of jury instructions prior to reading the trial transcription, $F(1, 359) = 6.38$, $p = .012$, $\eta^2 = .017$. Mock jurors who were presented with instructions containing general educative information regarding CSA victims and child witnesses reported lower scores ($M = 59.00$, $SD = 12.53$) on the CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire compared to mock jurors who were not presented with said instructions ($M = 62.27$, $SD = 11.64$).

Effects of mock juror gender. To investigate the influence of mock juror gender on perceptions of child complainant credibility, I ran additional exploratory analyses using an ANOVA, entering child credibility ratings as the dependent variable and mock juror gender as the independent variable. Unsurprisingly, results indicated that females ($M = 5.67$, $SD = 1.30$) perceived the child to be significantly more credible than male participants ($M = 5.36$, $SD = 1.28$), $F(1, 359) = 4.89$, $p = .028$, $\eta^2 = .013$.

Additionally, I explored the effects of mock juror gender on CSA misconception endorsement by conducting a one-way ANOVA with gender entered as the independent variable and CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores as the dependent variable. CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire scores significantly differed between female and male mock

jurors, $F(1,359) = 47.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .116$. Overall, males ($M = 66.04, SD = 12.80$) were found to endorse common CSA misconceptions more than female mock jurors ($M = 57.64, SD = 10.33$).

Based on these effects observed for mock juror gender on child credibility ratings and beliefs in CSA misconceptions, I also expected to find significant gender differences for convictions decisions; however, this was not the case. As specified in Table 3 (see p. 27), chi-square results did not indicate a significant difference in case decisions between mock juror gender, $\chi^2(2, N = 361) = .034; p = .854, V = .010$. Figure 2 (see p. 26) shows that case decisions on whether or not to convict the defendant were practically identical for both male and female mock jurors.

Discussion

Summary of Major and Auxiliary Findings

The present study revealed influences for child age, jury instruction presentation, and mock jurors' mistaken beliefs about child sexual abuse (CSA) on perceptions of child complainant credibility, all of which supported my initial first, third, and fourth research hypotheses. Specifically, credibility ratings were greater when the child was five years old, when jury instructions were presented, and when mock jurors held weaker endorsements in CSA misconceptions. Contrary to my initial predictions, neither child sexual knowledge level nor the interaction between sexual knowledge and child age proved to generate differences in mock jurors' perceptions of the alleged CSA victim.

In support of my final hypothesis, I also observed an increased number of conviction decisions when mock jurors' attributions of credibility to the child were high. It is important to note that conviction decisions and guilty verdicts are assumed to be ideologically

synonymous in the current study. Decisions to convict the defendant of CSA were also dependent on child age and mock jurors' endorsements in CSA misconceptions, such that they most often occurred for cases involving the 5-year-old complainant and when mock jurors supported fewer mistaken beliefs about CSA victims. As anticipated, jury instructions impacted mock jurors' legal decisions for the case: however, the direction of this relationship was opposite to what was expected; more conviction decisions were made in the absence of this specific trial intervention.

Finally, male and female mock jurors' decisions differed in regards to child credibility perceptions and endorsements in common CSA misconceptions, but not for the frequency of convictions. Overall, males attributed less credibility to the child complainant and supported a greater number of CSA misconceptions than female mock jurors. In the following sections, these primary and supplemental findings will be discussed in tandem to provide a more comprehensive and informative interpretation of the present research study.

The Ascendency of Child Complainant Age on Mock Juror Decision Making

Results from this study suggest that both jurors' perceptions of the child's credibility ($\eta^2 = .019$) and their decisions to convict the defendant ($V = .180$), are moderately influenced by child complainant age. Credibility perceptions and conviction decisions were highest for the 5-year-old compared to the 15-year-old and the minor complainant. These findings are in support of and consistent with a number of studies that have also observed this reversed child age bias on mock jurors' perceptions of child credibility (Goodman et al., 1989; Leippe & Romanczyk, 1989; Nightingale, 1993), and frequency of convictions for CSA cases (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Golding, Sanchez, & Seago, 1999; Golding et al., 2003; Nightingale, 1993).

Additionally, perceptions of the child's credibility mainly affected mock jurors' decisions to convict the defendant of having sexually abused the 15-year-old complainant. Specifically, the 15-year-old was rated as least credible, and in turn, mock jurors voted to acquit the defendant more often than when the case involved either the 5-year-old or the minor complainant.

Interestingly, mock jurors generally treated the minor complainant somewhere between the 5- and 15-year-old. Specifically, credibility perceptions and conviction rates observed for the minor fell between those observed for the 5- and 15-year-old child age conditions. Leippe and Romanczyk (1989) suggested that jurors' decisions may depend on their preexisting stereotypes of CSA victims and the degree to which the child complainant appears similar or contradictory to their stereotypes. Here, mock jurors may not have been able to discern the extent to which the minor complainant agreed or disagreed with their preexisting views about CSA victims, therefore neutralizing the veracity of the observed negative age bias. Consequently, this study suggests that jurors may actually require knowledge of the child complainant's age in order to compare the child with their stereotypes about CSA victims. On the other hand, the mock jurors in this study may have simply assumed a "minor" to be younger than 15 years old and therefore adhered to the negative age/credibility bias in that they perceived the minor as *more* credible than the 15-year-old, yet *less* credible than the 5-year-old complainant.

Since child age has been well established as an important factor influencing jurors' perceptions and legal decisions for CSA cases, future researchers should adjust their investigative focus to the influences of other individual characteristics (e.g., child complainant gender). It may also be valuable to further investigate the influence of child age

on differences in jurors' perceptions of the underlying constructs regarding credibility (e.g., honesty, believability, consistency) and how these variables relate to impact CSA case outcomes.

The Role of Child Sexual Knowledge in Judging CSA Trials

Researchers have posited sexual naiveté as the driving force behind the inverse child age/credibility relationship, consistently arguing the importance of sexual naiveté (i.e., lack in sexual knowledge) on shaping jurors' credibility perceptions of CSA victims. For example, Duggan et al. (1989) found that jurors' attributed higher credibility to a 5- and 9-year-old child claiming to have been sexually molested in comparison to a 13-year-old providing an identical claim of CSA. Furthermore, analysis of jurors' deliberation comments revealed jurors' beliefs of sexual naiveté were recognized most for these younger child complainants.

Nightingale (1993) theorized that younger children's sexual naiveté may be due to fewer life experiences and opportunities to learn about sexuality. In other words, as the child ages the likelihood of being exposed to information about sexual reproduction and intercourse by parents, peers, and the media also increases. This motivated my interests and prompted the exploration of jurors' perceptions of the child complainant's level of sexual knowledge, and more importantly, identifying the relationship between child age and sexual knowledge. I proposed that a young child complainant with a comprehensive understanding of sexual acts (i.e., high sexual knowledge) may be perceived by jurors as having the ability to fabricate an allegation of CSA, thereby decreasing her perceived credibility.

In correspondence to this theory, I expected mock jurors to rate the younger child having a lower level of sexual knowledge as most credible out of all six crossed-condition

interactions; however, this was not observed in the present study. Furthermore, the child's level of sexual knowledge had no direct effect on child credibility ratings and was not associated with the occurrence of convictions. One possible explanation for these nonsignificant results is that although the level of sexual knowledge manipulation was successful it may not have been salient to participants and, therefore, was unable to elicit a reaction. In other words, the description provided by the clinical psychologist may not have adequately illustrated the child's level of sexual knowledge for mock jurors.

Furthermore, the means by which the child's testimony was presented may have interfered with mock jurors' abilities to make credibility judgments because the child was not directly visible when she testified. Researchers have found evidence of jurors' views about the child's confidence and consistency to influence credibility perceptions, especially regarding ambiguous cases (Leippe, Manion, & Romancyzk, 1992). Simulated trial videos have also been widely accepted and utilized by researchers in order to investigate the influences of demeanor on jurors' perceptions of child witness and case outcomes (Duggan et al., 1989; Kovera, Gresham, Borgida, Gray, & Regan, 1997; Ross, Hopkins, Hanson, Lindsay, Hazen, & Eslinger, 1994; Schmidt & Brigham, 1996). For the present study, a video of the child's testimony may have proved more successful for observing the effects of sexual knowledge level by allowing mock jurors to hear and see the child's explanation of sexual victimization, therefore, potentially permitting a more thorough assessment of the child's credibility (Goodman et al., 1998). However, a video trial simulation may also present unintentional opportunities where extralegal factors, not currently scrutinized through careful observation, bias jurors' perceptions and legal decisions.

Visual representation of the child's testimony may have eliminated the need for an expert witness (i.e., the clinical psychologist) to testify on behalf of the child's level of sexual knowledge, allowing: a) mock jurors to discern the child's sexual knowledge level for themselves, and b) decide whether the child's degree of sexual knowledge appropriately matches their preconceptions of developing children, specifically, a child's ability and capacity to fabricate claims of sexual victimization and abuse.

Another explanation is that—based on their own experiences—mock jurors may strongly associate sexual knowledge level with stages in child development, and therefore these variables were not able to be separately investigated in regards to credibility perceptions, as this study tried to do. For example, researchers have found mock jurors who reported having more personal experience with children attributed less responsibility to the CSA victim compared to individuals having less experience (Duggan et al., 1989). Similarly, Leippe, Manion, & Romanczyk (1993) found that parenting experience enhanced mock jurors' abilities to detect accurate from inaccurate CSA reports told by 5- and 6-year-olds.

When making legal decisions about this particular CSA case, mock jurors may have relied on their own experiences with children to fortify their understanding of what constitutes an appropriate level of sexual knowledge according to child age and stage of development, potentially blinding jurors to the child sexual knowledge manipulation used in this study. Future research is warranted to assess whether jurors actually consider the child complainant's level of sexual knowledge an important piece of "extralegal evidence" when judging ambiguous CSA cases.

Consequences of CSA Misconception Endorsements and Jury Instruction

Dissemination

In terms of CSA cases, jurors who are well versed and knowledgeable about child witnesses may be more likely to judge the child as credible and, in turn, decide to convict the defendant. For example, Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010) found that common misconceptions regarding defendants and complainants involved in a CSA trial impacted child credibility ratings and conviction rates. This pattern was supported by the present study where mock jurors who strongly endorsed CSA misconceptions voted to convict the defendant less frequently than those who did not highly endorse these misconceptions.

Researchers have shown that when presented to the jury, instructions on how to evaluate a child's testimony effectively reduces jurors' endorsements of erroneous beliefs about CSA victims, enhances perceptions of child credibility and increases the frequency of guilty verdicts (Crowley et al., 1994; Gabora et al., 1993; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010). In the present study, I also found evidence that jury instructions were an effective method for reducing juror bias and enhancing perceptions of child credibility. Furthermore, jury instruction presentation was most influential for mock jurors' perceptions of the child's credibility and was the second most predictive factor for conviction decisions, extending the knowledge of how powerful the influence of jury instructions are on jurors' legal decisions for CSA cases. Consistent with previous literature, the presence of jury instructions was also found to be associated with weaker endorsement of CSA misconceptions (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; Kovera, Levy, Borgida, & Penrod, 1994).

Researchers have consistently found evidence of an association between higher credibility ratings and the likelihood of conviction decisions (Kennedy & Haygood, 1992;

Nightingale, 1993), which led me to believe that there would also be a direct effect of jury instructions on convictions in this study; however, my prediction was not supported.

Interestingly, a greater number of conviction decisions were made in the *absence* of jury instructions rather than in their presence; however, these instructions did appear to reduce the occurrence of decisions to acquit the defendant of the alleged CSA charges. Two possible explanations for these effects are that: a) mock jurors may have forgotten the information detailed in the instructions by the time they were asked to make decisions regarding the case; or b) even though jury instructions were shown to enhance credibility ratings, “generic prejudice” may have masked the potentially positive effect of jury instructions on case outcomes. The generic prejudice theory suggests that jurors often bring especially strong pre-existing attitudes about specific types of cases to the courtroom. CSA is one type of case where generic prejudice may exist, thus predisposing people to make legal decisions in favor of CSA victims (Bornstein, 1999; Burt, 1980; Vidmar, 1997). In other words, jurors may be biased to determine the defendant is probably guilty after having only been told he was charged with CSA.

Future research should be conducted in order to develop trial interventions that could be used to reduce commonly endorsed CSA misconceptions resulting in a potentially less biased and more knowledgeable jury panel. Researchers should also consider using repeated measures designs to investigate the efficacy of specialized knowledge in reducing commonly believed CSA misconceptions. If found to be effective, this specialized CSA information could be directly and easily disseminated to the jury in the form of instructions. In addition to developing courtroom interventions for educating jurors, the efficacy of existing methods should be empirically evaluated. Furthermore, it would be beneficial to research how juror

endorsement of CSA misconceptions mediates the frequency of conviction decisions for these specific cases.

Perceptions of Child Credibility as an Indicator of Conviction Decisions

I observed that mock jurors who perceived the child complainant to be credible were more likely to vote to convict the defendant, supporting my final hypothesis. This finding is also consistent throughout the literature (Gabora et al., 1993; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010), implying child credibility is an essential and important extralegal factor jurors consider when making legal decisions for CSA cases. In CSA cases where the child complainant's credibility is likely to be perceived negatively by the jury, it may be beneficial to research the efficacy of the various methods (e.g., courtroom tours and educational programs) used to inform and prepare children to testify in court, which researchers have recently proposed as a tool to enhance jurors' degrees of child complainant credibility.

The Function of Mock Juror Gender for CSA Trials

Out of many factors that may impact mock jurors' perceptions (e.g., victim and defendant genders, defendant criminal history, victim demeanor, and victim age) the effect of juror gender is most consistently cited throughout the literature (Golding et al., 2003). Results from various empirical studies regarding CSA cases show strong effects for juror gender on case outcomes where females are more likely to advocate for the victim and convict the defendant compared to males (Golding et al., 2003; Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010; Ross et al., 1994). Compared to females, males are more likely to endorse common CSA misconceptions, and less likely to find the child complainant's testimony believable (Goodman-Delahunty et al., 2010).

Consistent with this literature, female mock jurors in my study perceived the child complainant as being more credible compared to male mock jurors. Additionally, males were more likely to endorse common CSA misconceptions compared to females. Despite differences in credibility ratings and views about CSA, I found no evidence for gender effects on case outcomes, where the majority of both male and female jurors voted to convict (80%) the defendant rather than render a verdict of “not guilty” (20%). These findings are, again, in support of the “generic bias” theory, suggesting that a decision to convict an alleged perpetrator of child sexual abuse is not swayed by individual differences in CSA misconceptions endorsement or juror gender. If this is the case, prosecutors should seize the opportunity to bring a CSA allegation to trial due to the high probability that jurors’ will assume the defendant is guilty and rule in favor of a conviction, regardless of the preconceptions and biases they may bring with them into the courtroom.

General Implications of Research Findings

Theoretical and research implications. Despite the nonsignificant findings for child age and level of sexual knowledge in the present study, numerous studies have found evidence for sexual naiveté mediating the inverse relationship between child age and credibility perceptions. For instance, in cases involving CSA, greater acuities of credibility are reported for younger compared to older children (Bottoms & Goodman, 1994; Duggan et al., 1989; Gabora et al., 1993; Goodman et al., 1998; Nightingale, 1993), where jurors have the tendency to construct credibility perceptions in terms of sexual naiveté, honesty, and ability to fabricate CSA allegations; however, in trials where credibility perceptions hinge on jurors’ evaluations of the child’s cognitive capacities and resilience to suggestion (Goodman, Golding, & Haith, 1984; Goodman et al., 1987; Nightingale, 1993), more so than level of

sexual knowledge, older children are attributed higher credibility compared to younger children.

My prediction that the child complainant's age and level of sexual knowledge would interact to influence mock jurors' perceptions of credibility was not observed. Mock jurors may not have been able to separate these two variables from one another because of beliefs in sexual knowledge increasing as a function of childhood development, where incongruence between these variables is virtually implausible. These preconceptions may actually blind jurors to the actual amount of sexual knowledge the child complainant possesses.

Alternatively, this lack of substantiation may suggest that sexual naiveté does not explain the negative correlation between age and credibility observed in CSA cases. Future researchers should consider additional experimental designs to better facilitate an investigation of the child's sexual knowledge level on jurors' perceptions and case decisions.

The effects I found for jury instructions may have been confounded by the time at which they were presented to mock jurors. For instance, by the time at which they are asked to make case-related decisions, mock jurors may have already forgotten important information about CSA victims previously presented by jury instructions, thus, potentially compromising their ability to evaluate the child's testimony. Goodman-Delahunty et al. (2010) found a significant decrease in mock jurors' CSA misconceptions endorsements when jury instructions were either presented prior to the time at which the child testified or during the judicial summation compared to when jury instructions were not provided at all; however this study was conducted in a laboratory setting which may not have been representative of the impact jury instructions have in the courtroom. Future researchers might examine

whether the time at which these specific instructions are presented to actual jurors influences perceptions of the child complainant and/or verdict decisions.

Finally, my study suggests that individual differences in jurors' perceptions of the child and CSA misconception endorsements may be neutralized by presence of jury instructions; however, generic bias may still overrule these effects for case outcomes. Therefore, future research is warranted in order to identify individuals' attitudes (e.g., rape empathy), beliefs (e.g., rape myth acceptance), and experiences (e.g., personal victimization) that may construct this generic juror bias for CSA cases. Future research is also needed regarding the development of trial interventions that may minimize the impact of this prejudice on jurors' perceptions and legal decisions making.

Practical implications. Jurors' tendency to convict alleged perpetrators of CSA involving young children implies that claims of CSA disclosed by younger children should be investigated extensively before proceeding to trial in order to eliminate the possibility of a wrongful conviction. Conversely, in CSA cases involving older children and adolescents, prosecutors should investigate strategies to enhance jurors' perceptions of the complainant's credibility before the trial to increase the likelihood of a conviction decision if the defendant is found guilty.

This research also supports the implementation of trial interventions used to disseminate specialized CSA knowledge and instruct jurors on how to evaluate the testimony of an alleged CSA victim. Mock jurors who read jury instructions attributed more credibility to the child complainant and were observed to have endorsed common CSA misconceptions less than participants who did not receive these specialized instructions. Furthermore, in relation to CSA cases, the use of "juror rehabilitation" may be an effective method to

temporarily neutralize jurors' attitudes, thus allowing jurors to think more rationally when making legal decisions.

Finally, jurors' decisions to convict the defendant did not differ between male and female mock jurors despite their diverse perceptions of the child complainant and beliefs in CSA misconceptions. The extent to which male and female jurors differ may only be observed through their divergent perceptions of the child complainant and the magnitude for which they endorse CSA misconceptions and may not actually impact CSA case outcomes. More broadly, individual biases may not influence trial outcomes, because for CSA cases specifically, a conviction is most likely if the case is brought to court. Jury consultants hired to assess bias amongst potential jurors and develop strategies for reducing jurors' personal bias, may not be successful or even necessary for CSA case trials. Instead, these professionals should reserve their abilities and skill for cases where juror bias is more likely to impact jury decision making.

General Limitations of the Present Study

Undoubtedly, there were a few limitations to the present study regarding the design of the experiment, external validity and generalizability, analyses and statistical power, and measurement concerns. First, the way in which I decided to manipulate the child complainant's level of sexual knowledge may not have been sufficiently salient to influence mock jurors' perceptions of the child's credibility because the clinical psychologist's testimony did not properly convey whether Cindy had the knowledge and/or ability to have fabricated the sexual abuse allegation.

Secondly, this study investigated individual mock jurors' decisions instead of case decisions rendered after jury deliberation, therefore these results cannot necessarily

generalize to actual CSA case trials. In regards to the American jury, the sequence of events and evidence presented at trial are evaluated and oftentimes debated by a jury panel ranging from six to twelve demographically diverse individuals, representative of the attitudes and beliefs shared by a community. This suggests that jurors' perceptions of the child complainant and case outcomes may have been different if participants were required to deliberate as a mock jury panel until a unanimous verdict is rendered. However, it is important to note that by recruiting a national sample instead of relying on undergraduate participants, the results of my study are more representative of the perceptions and prejudice held by jury-eligible individuals, and may be more typical of actual jurors' legal and case decisions.

Another limitation to the current research study is that I excluded data from 57% ($N = 268$) of my total recruited sample resulting in a drastically reduced sample size as well as mildly unequal cell size for the child age (i.e., $n = 134$ for the 5-year-old, $n = 108$ for the 15-year-old, and $n = 119$ for the minor) and jury instructions (i.e., $n = 220$ for the absence of, and $n = 141$ for the presence of jury instructions). Admittedly, I may have been too strict when developing my criteria for excluding participants based upon their responses to manipulation *and* comprehension checks. In hindsight, excluding participants based on comprehension checks alone may have been satisfactory, especially since the results of my pilot study indicated the success of my manipulations.

Finally, mock jurors' perceptions of child credibility may not have been adequately measured by assessing their responses to a single 7-point Likert scale question (1 = *very little*, 7 = *very much*). Furthermore, mock jurors may have considered the child's cognitive

ability, honesty, and susceptibility to suggestion to be more important for judging the credibility of the child complainant, instead of the child's level of sexual knowledge.

Future Directions and Conclusions

If given the opportunity, I would like to expand on the present study in four directions. First, I would like to investigate the threshold for sexual naiveté, specifically the age when a child is believed to possess the knowledge and ability to confabulate a CSA allegation. I suspect that credibility requirements may vary according to the age of the child complainant in association with the evidence presented at trial. I think it would be interesting to investigate the variables that specifically contribute to jurors' views of younger versus older child complainants of CSA. Another possible direction to take this research would be to compare these results to subsequent studies involving a male child complainant and then incorporating fully crossed defendant-child complainant gender conditions. Finally, I would like to investigate the importance of credibility perceptions compared to sexual experience history and maturity of the child complainant.

In conclusion, it would be naive to assume that one particular defendant or victim characteristic, or piece of evidence influences jury decision making for CSA cases. Past literature supports this notion that there are many variables that jurors take into consideration when deciding on a verdict for the case (Bottoms et al., 2007). It would be wise for researchers to continue investigating the ways in which these extralegal variables *interact* instead of merely their discrete influences on jurors' decision making for CSA cases.

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Appendix A

Notice of IRB Approval

To: Alissa Anderson

EMAIL

From: Dr. Stan Aeschleman, Institutional Review Board Chairperson

Date: 9/16/2013

RE: Notice of IRB Approval by Expedited Review (under 45 CFR 46.110)

Study #: 14-0035

Study Title: Legal Decisions and Perceptions of Victims

Submission Type: Initial

Expedited Category: (7) Research on Group Characteristics or Behavior, or Surveys, Interviews, etc.

Approval Date: 9/16/2013

Expiration Date of Approval: 9/15/2014

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved this study for the period indicated above. The IRB found that the research procedures meet the expedited category cited above. IRB approval is limited to the activities described in the IRB approval materials, and extends to the performance of the described activities in the sites identified in the IRB application. In accordance with this approval, IRB findings and approval conditions for the conduct of this research are listed below.

Regulatory and other findings:

The IRB waived the requirement to obtain a signed consent form for some or all subjects because the research presents no more than minimal risk of harm to subjects and involves no procedures for which written consent is normally required outside of the research context.

Approval Conditions:

Appalachian State University Policies: All individuals engaged in research with human participants are responsible for compliance with the University policies and procedures, and IRB determinations.

Principal Investigator Responsibilities: The PI should review the IRB's list of PI responsibilities. The Principal Investigator (PI), or Faculty Advisor if the PI is a student, is

ultimately responsible for ensuring the protection of research participants; conducting sound ethical research that complies with federal regulations, University policy and procedures; and maintaining study records.

Modifications and Addendums: IRB approval must be sought and obtained for any proposed modification or addendum (e.g., a change in procedure, personnel, study location, study instruments) to the IRB approved protocol, and informed consent form before changes may be implemented, unless changes are necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants. Changes to eliminate apparent immediate hazards must be reported promptly to the IRB.

Approval Expiration and Continuing Review: The PI is responsible for requesting continuing review in a timely manner and receiving continuing approval for the duration of the research with human participants. Lapses in approval should be avoided to protect the welfare of enrolled participants. If approval expires, all research activities with human participants must cease.

Prompt Reporting of Events: Unanticipated Problems involving risks to participants or others; serious or continuing noncompliance with IRB requirements and determinations; and suspension or termination of IRB approval by an external entity, must be promptly reported to the IRB.

Closing a study: When research procedures with human subjects are completed, please complete the Request for Closure of IRB review form and send it to irb@appstate.edu.

Websites:

1. PI responsibilities:

<http://researchprotections.appstate.edu/sites/researchprotections.appstate.edu/files/PI%20Responsibilities.pdf>

2. IRB forms: <http://researchprotections.appstate.edu/human-subjects/irb-forms>

CC:

Twila Wingrove, Psychology

Appendix B

Informed Consent

PRE-SURVEY/ENTRY SCREEN MESSAGE:

Title of Project: Legal Decisions and Perceptions of Victims (IRB #14-0035)

Investigators: Alissa Anderson, Dr. Twila Wingrove

Purpose

The purpose of this survey is to explore perceptions of victims allegedly involved in a vague sexual encounter that occurs in a summer camp setting, involving a female camper and the camp doctor. Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time for any reason with no penalty, or you may choose not to answer any of the survey questions. All responses will be kept confidential, meaning that your responses will not be linked back to you in any way, other than to pay you for your participation. The researcher does acknowledge a risk of breach of confidentiality.

Procedure

Your participation in completing this survey is voluntary and you may decide to stop at any time for any reason with no penalty, or you may choose not to answer any of the survey questions. All responses will be kept confidential meaning that the instructor will not know whether you participated in the study, but only that you were paid. You will be asked to complete 12 questions regarding a shortened version of a trial transcript and four brief surveys; this process should not take more than 30 minutes. You should not volunteer for this study if you are under 18 years of age.

Other Information

There may be no other personal benefit from your participation but knowing that you provided information today that may help others in the future and that you are advancing the science of psychology. You will be paid \$.25 (if you HIT is accepted) for your initial participation and completing all study materials. An additional \$.25 will be awarded for taking the present study seriously and paying close attention to the trial transcript. To the best of our knowledge, the risk of harm for participating in this research study is no more than you would experience in everyday life.

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature of this research or the survey please contact:

Alissa Anderson, B.S.; Principal Investigator; andersonaz@appstate.edu; or

Dr. Twila Wingrove; Faculty Advisor; wingroveta@appstate.edu; or

irb@appstate.edu.

By continuing to the survey, I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years old, have read the above information, and provide my consent to participate under the terms above.

By typing your 'Amazon Mturk Worker ID' in the blank below you are indicating your agreement (all results are still confidential, your 'Amazon Mturk Worker ID' will not be associated with your answers):

[Text box]

POST-SURVEY/EXIT SCREEN MESSAGE:

Thank you for your participation in this research study.

If you have any questions or comments please contact:

Alissa Anderson, B.S.; Principal Investigator; andersonaz@appstate.edu; or

Dr. Twila Wingrove; Faculty Advisor; wingroveta@appstate.edu; or

irb@appstate.edu.

Again, there may be no other personal benefit from your participation but knowing that you provided information today that may help others in the future and that you are advancing the science of psychology. You will be paid \$.25 (if your HIT is accepted) for your initial participation and completing all study materials. An additional \$.25 will be awarded for taking the present study seriously and paying close attention to the trial transcript. To the best of our knowledge, the risk of harm for participating in this research study is no more than you would experience in everyday life.

Please enter this 'Completion Code' in the text box below and in the text box on the Mturk HIT page:

CSAS4866

Appendix C

Trial Transcript
UNITED STATES V. PATRICK
09-5006-cr
Unofficial Oral Argument Transcript

The following is an abbreviated, unofficial transcript from a sexual assault trial involving a minor, Cindy Maine, and Dr. Landon Patrick. The alleged assault occurred on private property owned by the Sunny Hills Summer Day Camp on the afternoon of July 17, 2010.

[Jury Instructions conditions (present/ not present)]

**DIRECTIONS CONCERNING CHILDREN'S ABILITIES AS WITNESSES &
DIRECTIONS CONCERNING CHILDREN'S RESPONSES TO SEXUAL ABUSE
(Cossins, 2008)**

Judge Barnes then spoke to the jury.

Judge Barnes: Even very young children can accurately remember and report things that have happened to them in the past, but, because of developmental differences, children may not report their memories in the same manner or to the same extent as an adult would. This does not mean that a child witness is any more or less reliable than an adult witness. Sometimes children give incomplete or inconsistent accounts of events that have happened to them but there is no research to show that inconsistencies and incompleteness mean a child is fabricating. Research has shown that children over the age of 5 years are highly resistant to abuse suggestions and it is difficult to make children give false reports of abuse. And when deciding how much weight to give to a child's evidence, it is important for you to consider the way in which he or she was questioned and to distinguish between open-ended questions aimed at obtaining information from leading questions that might put words into their mouths.

Furthermore, there is no one set of symptoms or behaviors that all sexually abuse children display; depending upon the individual child and their circumstances, some children may exhibit a number of symptoms where some children may exhibit none at all. Only infrequently does sexual abuse result in physical symptoms and physical evidence that can be detected by a medical examination. Very often victims of sexual abuse do not cry out for help, resist or escape from the offender. Some children may exhibit particular behaviors as a result of being sexually abused that are counterintuitive and may not appear to make sense to the adult lay person. The behaviors that have been reported in the scientific literature include: delay in complaint for months or years; disturbed sleep patterns and/or nightmares; bedwetting; disturbed behavior patterns; learning difficulties, fearfulness and general emotional upset; retraction of the complaint; sexualized behavior; and ongoing contact and/or affection for the alleged offender. Finally, it is important to remember that, on their own, none of these behaviors is diagnostic of sexual abuse having occurred.

Witness 1: The first witness was John Maine, the father of the complainant. Mr. Maine was the first person to be made aware of the alleged sexual assault by his daughter Cindy Maine.

Prosecuting Attorney: Mr. Maine can you recall for the court exactly what happened on the night of July 24, 2010?

John Maine: Yes, that was the night that my daughter, Cindy, told to me that that Dr. Patrick sexually assaulted her when she saw him at the summer camp which she attends while her mother and I are working during the summer season.

CHILD COMPLAINANT AGE CONDITION: FIVE/FIFTEEN

Prosecuting Attorney: And how old is your daughter Mr. Maine?

John Maine: She is *[five/fifteen]* years old.

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you Mr. Maine, please continue.

CHILD COMPLAINANT AGE CONDITION: MINOR

Prosecuting Attorney: And how old is your daughter Mr. Maine?

John Maine: She is *[a minor]*.

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you Mr. Maine, please continue.

John Maine: Okay, she told me after dinner, I was having coffee and reading in the den around 9PM on July 24. It was just me and Cindy, and we talked for about an hour. I asked about what she did at summer camp was last week. She told me that she went swimming with her friends, made some crafts on Tuesday for me and her mom, and she told me about when she was not feeling well at camp one day last week. She said she felt really bad so she asked a camp counselor to take her to the doctor's office on the summer camp grounds. The camp counselor walked her to the office and walked her back to her camp group but waited for her outside the office while Cindy was seeing the doctor.

Cindy said that while in the doctor's office, the Dr. Patrick performed the routine check-up on her, said that she was fine and that she should try to eat something small, drink plenty of water, and take it easy for the rest of the day. She said that she thought the visit was over and stood up, but the doctor asked her to sit down and said that a backrub was needed to make her feel better. She sat down but said she felt uncomfortable and did not think it was part of a doctor's job to give her a backrub. She told me after a couple of minutes she stood up off of the examination table and told Dr. Patrick she needed to leave and get back with her camp group. She said that as she turned around she saw that his penis was exposed and he asked her if she wanted to touch it...

Prosecuting Attorney: Please continue Mr. Maine. What did Cindy tell you happened next?

John Maine: Well, she told me she did not touch Dr. Patrick and that when he saw how uncomfortable she was he covered himself, told her it was alright, asked her to keep what happened between them, and finally said that she “could not tell anyone about what happened because she may get them both into trouble”. And then he told her that if she was feeling bad again she could come by his doctor’s office at any time. He walked her out to the area where the camp counselor was waiting for Cindy. After Dr. Patrick spoke with the camp counselor for a few moments, she and the camp counselor left and walked back to her camp group.

Prosecuting Attorney: On what date did the alleged event occur Mr. Maine?

John Maine: Cindy said that it happened the day she went horse-back riding at camp. That day was July 17 and the day she told me was July 24.

Prosecuting Attorney: And what did you do with this information that Cindy gave you?

John Maine: Well, Cindy was very upset by the end of our talk. She seemed scared to tell me exactly what happened, like she was afraid that I would become angry with her, which is crazy! I told her that I loved her no matter what and that she did a really good thing by telling me the truth. I comforted her and when she calmed down I tucked her into bed. When Cindy fell asleep, I found my wife in the kitchen and told her exactly what Cindy told me, which is exactly what I just told you and the jury. She and I decided to wait until the morning to call the police and file a report.

Prosecuting Attorney: One more question Mr. Maine, what details do you know about the defendant, Dr. Landon Patrick?

John Maine: Well, I know that he is a well-regarded doctor who works for the camp that my daughter attends during summers. We met him once during an open house for the summer camp and he seemed very polite and professional. I also know that he owns and oversees a local medical practice downtown. It was a total surprise for me to hear the story that Cindy told me. I will never bring my daughter around Dr. Patrick ever again!

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you Mr. Maine.

CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Defense Attorney: Mr. Maine, did you ask Cindy why she waited an entire seven days to tell someone about what allegedly happened to her on July 17?

John Maine: I did ask Cindy why she waited so long and she told me that she was afraid of how I would react and she did not want me to think badly of her and she did not want to get her and Dr. Patrick into trouble.

Defense Attorney: Is it true that Cindy recanted her story during a conversation with Pastor Canyon who came to visit her a few weeks after the alleged incident?

John Maine: Yes, my wife and I took Cindy to visit Pastor Canyon a few weeks later. After the visit, Pastor Canyon asked to speak to both me and my wife, and told us that when he asked Cindy about what happened; she told him that she “made up the entire story.” My wife and I immediately contacted the prosecutor and we scheduled a group conversation with both my wife and I, Cindy, the prosecutor, and Pastor Canyon. When we confronted her, Cindy began to cry and said she did not want to tell Pastor Canyon the truth because she didn’t want him to be mad at her. She also said that she thought if she did not talk about it anymore that everything would be “okay”. That was the only time that Cindy has recanted her story.

Defense Attorney: Has your daughter ever told a lie Mr. Maine?

John Maine: Yes, she has, but they are usually white lies about things her mother and I ask her to do around the house, like clean up her room.

Defense Attorney: Thank you Mr. Maine, you may step down from the stand and return to your seat.

Witness 2: The second witness is Dr. Norma Brass, the clinical psychologist that was appointed to Cindy Maine by the State to conduct a psychological interview and provide treatment to the complainant.

WITNESS TESTIMONY BY DR. NORMA BRASS [LOW SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE]

Prosecuting Attorney: Dr. Brass, can you please tell the court about how you first came in contact with the child complainant, Cindy Maine?

Dr. Norma Brass: Yes, I am a clinical psychologist. I met the Maine family when I was appointed to Cindy Maine’s case. My job involves interviewing the child complainant and providing the court with an objective, professional report. My associate, Dr. Pamela Yorke, is a pediatrician who conducted Cindy’s routine medical examination. She found no signs of physical or sexual abuse. Once the medical exams were completed I interviewed Cindy in an investigation room located in the police precinct. The interview was taped and was observed by Dr. Yorke and a police officer.

Prosecuting Attorney: Can you tell the court about Cindy acted during the interview?

Dr. Norma Brass: During the interview, Cindy was very nice and polite. She was more open with me about the details of the alleged sexual assault than Dr. Yorke. Cindy described the event in the appropriate language of a [five year old, 15 year old, minor]. For example, she said the defendant gave her a “[backrub/massage/backrub],” he showed her his “[private parts/penis/penis],” and asked for her to “[pet it/rub it/touch it].”

Prosecuting Attorney: In your professional opinion, how much does Cindy know about sexual reproduction and intercourse?

Dr. Norma Brass: Cindy can identify genitalia difference between males and females; she also has some knowledge of “where babies come from.”

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you Dr. Brass you may step down from the stand and take your seat.

WITNESS TESTIMONY BY DR. NORMA BRASS [HIGH SEXUAL KNOWLEDGE]

Prosecuting Attorney: Dr. Brass, can you please tell the court about how you first came in contact with the child complainant, Cindy Maine?

Dr. Norma Brass: Yes, I am a clinical psychologist. I met the Maine family when I was appointed to Cindy Maine’s case. My job involves interviewing the child complainant and providing the court with an objective, professional report. My associate, Dr. Pamela Yorke, is a pediatrician who conducted Cindy’s routine medical examination. She found no signs of physical or sexual abuse. Once the medical exams were completed I interviewed Cindy in an investigation room located in the police precinct. The interview was taped and was observed by Dr. Yorke and a police officer.

Prosecuting Attorney: Can you tell the court about Cindy acted during the interview?

Dr. Norma Brass: During the interview, Cindy was very nice and polite. She was more open with me about the details of the alleged sexual assault than Dr. Yorke. Cindy described the event in the appropriate language of a *[five year old, 15 year old, minor]*. For example, she said the defendant gave her a “*[backrub/massage/backrub]*,” he showed her his “*[private parts/penis/penis]*,” and asked for her to “*[pet it/rub it/touch it]*.”

Prosecuting Attorney: In your professional opinion, how much does Cindy know about sexual reproduction and intercourse??

Dr. Norma Brass: Cindy can identify genitalia difference between males and females; she also has some knowledge of how to make a baby and the birthing process. Cindy also knows some information about sexual intercourse, oral sex, and masturbation.

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you Dr. Brass you may step down from the stand and take your seat.

(Witness 2, Dr. Norma Brass, steps down from the witness stand.)

Witness 3a [5 year old]: The third witness is Cindy Maine, the female child complainant.

WITNESS TESTIMONY: CINDY MAINE – 5 YEAR OLD

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, can you please tell the court why you went to Dr. Patrick's office on July 17 while at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I felt sick and needed to go see the doctor.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened when you went to see the doctor?

Cindy Maine: I told Dr. Patrick what was wrong. He did a check up on me and told me I would be okay. He said I just needed to drink some juice, eat some crackers, and relax.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened next, Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I stood up, but he told me I wasn't done and I should sit back down. Then, he gave me a backrub.

Prosecuting Attorney: Do you know why Dr. Patrick gave you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: He said because it would make me feel better.

Prosecuting Attorney: Was your back hurting?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to give you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to give you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, did anything else happen when you went to see Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: Yes, he showed me his private parts and asked me to pet it.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to show you his private parts?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to show you his private parts?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: What did you do Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I told him that I had to go back to my camp group.

Prosecuting Attorney: Then what happened?

Cindy Maine: He put his clothes back on, and told me everything was okay. But I couldn't tell anyone about it or I would get in trouble and he would get in trouble.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, is this usually what happens when you go to the doctor's office?

Cindy Maine: No, that never happens when I go to the doctor. Only the first part, the checkup. But not the last part, the other thing...

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, one more thing, can you please point out the person who was in the doctor's office with you that day at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, his name is Dr. Patrick and he is sitting right over there (*points to Dr. Patrick, sitting on other side of the courtroom*).

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you, Cindy.

CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Defense Attorney: Cindy, how long did it take you to tell someone about what happened with Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: I told my Daddy the next week.

Defense Attorney: Why did you wait so long to tell someone?

Cindy Maine: I was scared to tell and I didn't want to get in trouble or get Dr. Patrick in trouble.

Defense Attorney: Did you change your story at any time?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I told Pastor Canyon that I made it all up when me and Mommy and Daddy went to see him at the church.

Defense Attorney: Why did you tell Pastor Canyon that you made up the whole story?

Cindy Maine: Because I didn't want him to think I was bad and I thought he would be mad at me. I just wanted everything to be ok again. I thought if I said I made it all up, everything *would* be ok again.

Defense Attorney: What made you change your mind?

Cindy Maine: We all had a meeting, me, Mommy, Daddy, the lawyer, and Pastor Canyon. They all told me I wouldn't get in trouble if I told the truth. So I told the truth to all of them.

Defense Attorney: Thank you Cindy, you can go back to your seat now.

(Witness 3a [5 year old] leaves the witness stand).

Witness 3b [15 year old]: The third witness is Cindy Maine, the female child complainant.

WITNESS TESTIMONY: CINDY MAINE – 15 YEAR OLD

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, can you please tell the court why you went to Dr. Patrick's doctor's office on July 17 while at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I felt sick and needed to go see the doctor.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened when you went to see the doctor?

Cindy Maine: I told Dr. Patrick what was wrong, he did a check up on me and told me I would be okay. He said I just needed to drink some juice, eat some crackers, and relax.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened next, Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I stood up, but he told me I wasn't done and I should sit back down. Then, he gave me a massage.

Prosecuting Attorney: Do you know why Dr. Patrick gave you a massage?

Cindy Maine: He said because it would make me feel better.

Prosecuting Attorney: Was your back hurting?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to give you a massage?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to give you a massage?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, did anything else happen when you went to see Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: Yes, he showed me his penis and asked me to rub it.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to show you his penis?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to show you his penis?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: What did you do Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I told him that I had to go back to my camp group.

Prosecuting Attorney: Then what happened?

Cindy Maine: He put his clothes back on, and told me everything was okay. But I couldn't tell anyone about it or I would get in trouble and he would get in trouble.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, is this usually what happens when you go to the doctor's office?

Cindy Maine: No, that never happens when I go to the doctor. Only the first part, the checkup. But not the last part, the other thing...

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, one more thing, can you please point out the person who was in the doctor's office with you that day at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, his name is Dr. Patrick and he is sitting right over there (*points to Dr. Patrick, sitting on other side of the courtroom*).

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you, Cindy.

CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Defense Attorney: Cindy, how long did it take you to tell someone about what happened with Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: I told my Daddy the next week.

Defense Attorney: Why did you wait so long to tell someone?

Cindy Maine: I was scared to tell and I didn't want to get in trouble or get Dr. Patrick in trouble.

Defense Attorney: Did you change your story at any time?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I told Pastor Canyon that I made it all up when me, my Mommy and my Daddy went to see him at the church.

Defense Attorney: Why did you tell Pastor Canyon that you made up the whole story?

Cindy Maine: Because I didn't want him to think I was bad and I thought he would be mad at me. I just wanted everything to be ok again. I thought if I said I made it all up, everything *would* be ok again.

Defense Attorney: What made you change your mind?

Cindy Maine: We all had a meeting with me, Mommy, Daddy, the lawyer, and Pastor Canyon. They all told me I wouldn't get in trouble if I told the truth. So I told the truth to all of them.

Defense Attorney: Thank you Cindy, you can go back to your seat now.

(Witness 3b [15 year old] leaves the witness stand).

Witness 3c [control – minor]: The third witness is Cindy Maine, the female child complainant.

WITNESS TESTIMONY: CINDY MAINE – CONTROL – MINOR

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, can you please tell the court why you went to Dr. Patrick's office on July 17 while at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I felt sick and needed to go see the doctor.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened when you went to see the doctor?

Cindy Maine: I told Dr. Patrick what was wrong. He did a check up on me and told me I would be okay. He said I just needed to drink some juice, eat some crackers, and relax.

Prosecuting Attorney: What happened next, Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I stood up, but he told me I wasn't done and I should sit back down. Then, he gave me a backrub.

Prosecuting Attorney: Do you know why Dr. Patrick gave you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: He said because it would make me feel better.

Prosecuting Attorney: Was your back hurting?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to give you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to give you a backrub?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, did anything else happen when you went to see Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: Yes, he showed me his penis and asked me to touch it.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you ask Dr. Patrick to show you his penis?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: Did you tell Dr. Patrick it was okay to show you his penis?

Cindy Maine: No.

Prosecuting Attorney: What did you do Cindy?

Cindy Maine: I told him that I had to go back to my camp group.

Prosecuting Attorney: Then what happened?

Cindy Maine: He put his clothes back on, and told me everything was okay. But I couldn't tell anyone about it or I would get in trouble and he would get in trouble.

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, is this usually what happens when you go to the doctor's office?

Cindy Maine: No, that never happens when I go to the doctor. Only the first part, the checkup. But not the last part, the other thing...

Prosecuting Attorney: Cindy, one more thing, can you please point out the person who was in the doctor's office with you that day at camp?

Cindy Maine: Yes, his name is Dr. Patrick and he is sitting right over there (*points to Dr. Patrick, sitting on other side of the courtroom*).

Prosecuting Attorney: Thank you, Cindy.

CROSS EXAMINATION BY DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Defense Attorney: Cindy, how long did it take you to tell someone about what happened with Dr. Patrick?

Cindy Maine: I told my Daddy the next week.

Defense Attorney: Why did you wait so long to tell someone?

Cindy Maine: I was scared to tell and I didn't want to get in trouble or get Dr. Patrick in trouble.

Defense Attorney: Did you change your story at any time?

Cindy Maine: Yes, I told Pastor Canyon that I made it all up when me, Mommy, and Daddy went to see him at the church.

Defense Attorney: Why did you tell Pastor Canyon that you made up the whole story?

Cindy Maine: Because I didn't want him to think I was bad and I thought he would be mad at me. I just wanted everything to be ok again. I thought if I said I made it all up, everything *would* be ok again.

Defense Attorney: What made you change your mind?

Cindy Maine: We all had a meeting with me, Mommy, Daddy, the lawyer, and Pastor Canyon. They all told me I wouldn't get in trouble if I told the truth. So I told the truth to all of them.

Defense Attorney: Thank you Cindy, you can go back to your seat now.

(Witness 3c [control – minor] leaves the witness stand).

Appendix D

The CSA Misconceptions Questionnaire (Goodman-Delahunty, Cossins, & O'Brien, 2010)

Please indicate (by circling the number) the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. An abused child will typically cry for help and try to escape.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

2. The perpetrator of child sexual abuse is normally a stranger to that child.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

3. Step-fathers are more likely to abuse children than natural fathers.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

4. Repeatedly asking children questions such as: "Did he touch your private parts?" leads them to make false claims of sexual abuse.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

5. A physical examination by a doctor will almost always show whether or not a child has been sexually abused.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

6. When a child delays in reporting sexual abuse, this is evidence of lying.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

7. All victims of sexual assault respond in the same way to sexual abuse.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

8. Children sometimes make false claims of sexual abuse to get back at an adult.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

9. Affectionate young children initiate sexual contact.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

10. A victim of sexual abuse will avoid the abuser.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

11. Children who retract their reports of sexual abuse were probably lying in the first place.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

12. A child who shows no signs of distress has not been abused.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

13. Repeatedly asking children questions such as: "What happened? What else happened?" leads them to make false claims.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

14. Inconsistencies in a child's report of sexual abuse indicate that the report is false.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

15. A child who returns to, or spends time with the alleged offender, is unlikely to have been abused.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

16. Few child sex abuse cases are based on physical evidence.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

17. Children are easily coached to make false accusations of sexual abuse.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

18. Children who are abused display strong emotional reactions.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

19. Children sometimes make up stories about being sexually abused when they actually have not.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

20. Children are sometimes led by an adult to report they have been sexually abused when they have not.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

21. Children aged 7 to 8 years are no more influenced by leading questions than adults.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

22. It would be wrong to convict someone of a crime if the only eye-witness was a 7-year old.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

23. Children aged 7 to 8 years are no more or less able than adults to distinguish imagined from experienced events.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

24. Children aged 7 to 8 years can be easily manipulated to give false reports of sexual abuse.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

25. The memories of children aged 7 or 8 years for emotionally traumatic events are not as accurate as adults.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

26. There is no one set of symptoms or behaviors that indicate whether a child has been sexually abused.

Strongly Disagree				Neither Agree nor Disagree			Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	

Appendix F

Manipulation and Comprehension Checks Survey

Manipulation Checks

1. How old was Cindy in the story? (open ended)

2. How much knowledge did Cindy have about sexual reproduction and intercourse?
(please choose a number)

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	7

3. Did the judge speak to the jury in the story?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

Comprehension Checks

4. Who allegedly sexually abused Cindy in the story?
 - a. The summer camp doctor
 - b. Her father
 - c. Her church's pastor
 - d. Her teacher

5. Where did the alleged sexual encounter occur?
 - a. At school
 - b. At home
 - c. At summer camp
 - d. At church

6. Who did Cindy first tell about the alleged sexual abuse?
 - a. A police officer
 - b. Her teacher
 - c. Her mother
 - d. Her father

Appendix G

Case-Related Survey

Legal Decisions

1. Would you convict the defendant based on the trial transcript you read?

Yes

No

2. Please indicate how confident are you with your verdict decision?

Very Little

1

2

3

4

5

6

Very Much

7

Factual Guilt

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

3. The defendant sexually abused the child.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

Neither Agree nor Disagree

4

5

6

Strongly Agree

7

4. The victim fabricated the allegation.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

Neither Agree nor Disagree

4

5

6

Strongly Agree

7

5. The victim had the knowledge to fabricate the allegation.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

Neither Agree nor Disagree

4

5

6

Strongly Agree

7

Perceptions of Child Complainant

Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statement.

6. The child complainant had the ability to distinguish fact from fantasy.

Strongly Disagree

1

2

3

Neither Agree nor Disagree

4

5

6

Strongly Agree

7

Please answer the following questions by choosing the number that best represents your opinions.

7. How consistent was the child complainant?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

8. How reliable was the child complainant?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

9. How believable was the child complainant?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

10. How credible was the child complainant?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

11. How trustworthy was the child complainant?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

12. How competent did the child complainant appear?

Very Little							Very Much
1	2	3	4	5	6		7

Appendix H

Demographic Information Survey

Please answer the following questions:

1. Age: (open ended)

2. Sex: Male or Female

3. Race: (optional) (please choose one)
 - Caucasian
 - African American
 - Hispanic, Latino, Spanish
 - Asian
 - American Indian
 - Other: _____

4. Highest achieved education level: (please choose one)
 - High School
 - No College
 - Some College
 - College Degree
 - Advanced Degree

5. Sexual Orientation: (optional) (please choose one)
 - Straight
 - Bisexual
 - Gay

6. Political Ideology: (please choose a number)

Conservative

Liberal

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Have you ever served on a jury? (optional) (please choose one)

Yes

No

8. How often do you practice your religion? (optional) (please choose one)

Everyday

More than once a week

Once a week

Once a month

Once a year

Never

Not religious

Vita

Alissa Zoe Anderson was born on July 4, 1989, in Columbus, Ohio to Greg and Renee Anderson. In June 2007, she graduated from Middle Creek High School in Cary, North Carolina. The following autumn, Alissa attended Appalachian State University and attained a Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice in August 2011. In August 2012, Alissa began study toward a Master of Arts in General Experimental Psychology, and was awarded this degree in May 2014. In the spring of 2014, Alissa accepted an offer to attend the University of Toledo where she is currently working toward earning her doctorate in Experimental Psychology. Alissa has presented her individual research projects at three national conferences and will continue researching various topics regarding the field of forensic psychology.