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The University of Southern Mississippi

Honors College Thesis: Perceptions of Campus Community Members Regarding
Wrongful Convictions in Mississippi

by

Tera Wilson

A Thesis
Submitted to the Honors College of
The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Bachelor of Science
in the School of Criminal Justice

December 2016

Approved by

R. Alan Thompson, Ph.D., Thesis Adviser
Associate Professor of Criminal Justice
School of Criminal Justice

Lisa Nored, J.D, Ph.D., Chair
School of Criminal Justice

Ellen Weinauer, Ph.D., Dean
Honors College

Abstract

The American criminal justice system is a series of checks and balances meant to protect the American people. However, on occasion, the system fails, and innocent people are convicted of crimes, leaving the truly guilty perpetrator free to potentially commit other crimes. This study aimed to determine the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of university community members regarding the issue of wrongful conviction in Mississippi. This was executed by hosting a public forum including the Director of the Mississippi Innocence Project on the campus of Southern Mississippi. During this forum, participants were provided with the opportunity to complete two surveys in the form of a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design. Once Survey #1 was completed, the participants viewed a documentary entitled “Mississippi Innocence.” Following the screening of the documentary, participants were then asked to complete Survey #2. Results of the analysis indicated that the more information that is made available to the public about the issue of wrongful conviction, the more the public agrees that exonerates are unfairly compensated. The ultimate goal of this project is to raise awareness of unfair compensation statutes in place throughout the United States.

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Perception of Campus Community Members Regarding Wrongful Convictions in
Mississippi

Introduction

The American criminal justice system aims to protect the innocent and prosecute those guilty of committing crimes. The judicial system is required to prove a person's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt, giving every defendant the presumption of innocence. However, the innocent are not always safe, and some defendants may find themselves having to instead prove their innocence. This circumstance is known as wrongful conviction.

The term wrongful conviction refers to an instance in which a person is convicted of a crime he or she did not commit and is then forced to serve a sentence for said crime. The major issue with wrongful conviction seems obvious: An innocent person has his or her freedom stripped away and is forced to serve time in prison. During this process, people often miss many opportunities to experience life (for example, valuable time with their families, etc.). Unfortunately, those who are wrongfully convicted are not the only ones to suffer. The families of those wrongfully convicted suffer as they are separated from their loved ones. Perhaps an even bigger issue with the problem of wrongful conviction is the fact that an innocent person is receiving punishment for a crime committed, while a truly guilty perpetrator is allowed to roam free to potentially commit other crimes.

Review of the Literature

Due to the efforts of organizations such as The Innocence Project, more than 344 wrongfully convicted individuals have regained their freedom after being imprisoned for crimes they did not commit (The Innocence Project, 2016). The Innocence Project is a nonprofit organization that works with a team of full-time attorneys and law students with the goal of exonerating those who are wrongfully convicted. The Innocence Project also works to improve the criminal justice system in order to prevent future wrongful convictions (The Innocence Project, 2016).

Wrongful convictions have likely occurred for as long as criminal trials have existed. The travesty of wrongful convictions was first brought to the attention of the American public in 1913 when Edwin Brochure published his article “European Systems of State Indemnity for Errors of Criminal Justice” that addressed the efforts of Europe to pay restitution to the victims of wrongful conviction for their mistakes (Gould & Leo, 2010). Prior to this, American wrongful convictions were largely ignored. Since the notion of wrongful convictions was first introduced to the American public, many scholars have sought to better understand the nature and extent of the problem.

According to The Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project (“Causes of Wrongful Conviction,” 2016), the main causes of wrongful convictions are eyewitness misidentification, invalid or improper forensic procedures, false or improperly obtained confessions or admissions, false or perjured testimony, government misconduct, and inadequate defense. Of the various contributing factors, eyewitness misidentification is the leading cause of wrongful conviction in the United States (Michigan Law, “Causes of

Wrongful Convictions,” 2016). According to James Wolford, author of “Commentary: Eyewitness Misidentification” (2009), this factor alone has contributed to more than 75% of the wrongful convictions that have been exonerated through DNA testing. Because eyewitness testimony cannot be verified by hard factual evidence, and due to the fleeting, unstable memory of the human mind, eyewitness testimony has been argued as insufficient proof for years. However, despite this lack of reliability, juries continue to rely heavily on eyewitness testimony (Wolford, 2009).

One reason it is difficult to estimate a rate of wrongful convictions is because they can only be studied once a person has been proven innocent and released (Jones, 2012). However, according to the National Registry of Exoneration (2016), 1,755 people have been exonerated in the United States since 1989. Out of this number, 347 of those exonerations were accomplished with DNA testing (Innocence Project, “DNA Exoneration in the United States,” 2016). In the 1990s, the science of DNA testing made significant advances that allowed for more detailed comparisons and reliable conclusions (Gould & Leo, 2010). Before these advances, DNA testing was limited to much less reliable serology and hair comparison analyses (Gould & Leo, 2010). This breakthrough in DNA testing has allowed forensic scientists to prove the innocence of many criminal defendants.

The Innocence project has aided in the exonerations of 12 wrongfully convicted prisoners in Mississippi. Collectively, the exonorees identified in Table One below have served over 202.5 years in prison for crimes that they did not commit (Innocence Project, “Exonorees/Cases,” 2016).

Table 1. Mississippi Exonorees.

Exonoree	Charge	Time Served
Phillip Bivens	Rape, Murder	30 years
Kennedy Brewer	Capital Murder	13 years
Levon Brooks	Capital Murder	18 years
Bobby Ray Dixon	Capital Murder	30 years
Arthur Johnson	Rape	16 years
Willie Manning	Capital Murder	20 years
Matthew Norwood	Armed Carjacking	15 years
Larry Ruffin	Rape, Murder	30 years
Leigh Stubbs	Aggravated Assault, Possession	12 years
Tammi Vance	Aggravated Assault, Possession	12 years
Cedric Willis	Capital Murder, Armed Robbery	12 years

As previously noted, false eyewitness identification is the most common cause for wrongful convictions. However, there is sometimes more than one cause for wrongful conviction. The following profiles of Mississippi exonorees and the details of their cases illustrate the variety of reasons why people are sometimes wrongfully convicted.

Mississippi exonoree Arthur Johnson was convicted of sexual assault and burglary/unlawful entry in 1993 due to eyewitness misidentification. However, he was later excluded as the source of biological evidence found at the crime scene with the use of DNA testing and was exonerated in 2008 (Possley, “Arthur Johnson,” 2012). Cedric Willis was convicted of murder and robbery in 1997 due to mistaken eyewitness identification and official misconduct. Police arrested Willis for a series of robberies, one of which involved murder, despite the fact that he was 60 pounds heavier and several

inches shorter than descriptions provided by multiple victims. With the use of DNA evidence, Willis was exonerated in 2006 after serving 12 years in prison (Possley, “Cedric Willis,” 2012). Matthew Norwood was also convicted as a result of eyewitness misidentification. In 1997, 15-year-old Norwood was charged with robbery after a victim identified him and Harold Hackett as the two men who had carjacked her. However, the victim later recanted her identification of Hackett but stood firm in her identification of Norwood. After serving his entire 15-year sentence, evidence was presented that the stolen car had a manual transmission and that Norwood did not know how to drive a stick shift. After receiving immunity, Hackett admitted to committing the crime without the involvement of Norwood (Denzel, 2015).

Phillip Bivens, Larry Ruffin, and Bobby Ray Dixon were each charged with the rape and murder of a Forrest County resident in 1979. All three men served 30 years despite the fact that the sole witness to the crime repeatedly testified to seeing only a single perpetrator. Under threat of the death penalty, all three men confessed to the crime and were convicted and sentenced to life in prison. DNA evidence later excluded all three men and implicated another man who by then was serving a prison sentence for raping another woman two years later. Phillip Bivens and Bobby Ray Dixon were exonerated in 2010, and Larry Ruffin was exonerated in 2011 (The National Registry of Exonerations, “Phillip Bivens,” 2015; The National Registry of Exonerations, “Larry Donnell Ruffin,” 2015; The National Registry of Exonerations, “Bobby Ray Dixon,” 2015).

Four other Mississippi exonorees were wrongfully convicted as a result of expert testimony by Forensic Odontologist Dr. Michael West. In 2000 Leigh Stubbs and Tammi

Vance were charged with aggravated assault and possession of illegal substances after Dr. West claimed that the bite marks on the victims matched the bite marks of Stubbs and Vance. Dr. West was called as an expert witness in the case despite the fact that he had been previously suspended from the American Board of Forensic Odontology in 1994. After serving 12 years in prison, Vance and Stubbs were released in 2012 (Balko, 2011; Innocence Project, 2016).

Levon Brooks and Kennedy Brewer were each convicted of murders in Noxubee county in the early 1990s. Levon Brooks was arrested in 1990 for the murder of his ex-girlfriend's 3-year-old daughter Courtney Smith. Courtney's 5-year-old sister, Ashley, testified to having seen Brooks remove Courtney from her bed that night. Although the room was dark, Ashley claimed that she could see Brooks by the light of the television coming from the next room. Ashley later picked Brooks out of a photo line-up and again identified him as the man that abducted her sister on the night of September 15 (Gross, 2012).

In 1992, Kennedy Brewer was arrested as a suspect for the murder of Christine Jackson, his girlfriend's 3-year-old daughter. On May 3, 1992, Christine was abducted from her home, raped, and murdered. Her body was found two days later. Upon investigation, police found no sign of forced entry into the home. However, a broken window near where Christine slept may have served as easy entry. Despite this finding, police suspected Brewer of the murder because he had been responsible for babysitting her along with her two younger siblings on the night of the abduction (The National Registry of Exonerations, "Kennedy Brewer," 2015).

In Brooks' and Brewer's cases, expert witnesses claimed to identify bite marks on the victims' bodies. Dr. Michael West, a self-proclaimed "bite mark specialist" testified that the bite marks found on Christine Jackson's body belonged to Kennedy Brewer, and that the bite marks found on Courtney Smith's body belonged to Levon Brooks. Kennedy Brewer was sentenced to death, and Levon Brooks was sentenced to life without parole. Both men were later released and exonerated when Justin Albert Johnson was tied to the murder of Christine Jackson with the use of DNA testing. Johnson also confessed to the murder of Courtney Smith. (Gross, 2012; The National Registry of Exonerations, "Kennedy Brewer," 2015). In order to bring awareness to this type of injustice, the Mississippi Innocence Project created a documentary highlighting the cases of Levon Brooks and Kennedy Brewer entitled "Mississippi Innocence."

The purpose of this research project is to assess the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of university community members regarding the issue of wrongful convictions in Mississippi. More specifically, the study intends to focus on: 1) Assessing the extent to which university community members feel that wrongful convictions are a problem in Mississippi, 2) Examine the perceived adequacy of Mississippi's wrongful conviction compensation statutes, 3) Measuring the attitudes of community members regarding whether or not an exonoree should be allowed to sue certain legal officials involved in their cases, 4) Perceived suitability of exonorees for specific social roles, and 5) Measuring the comfort with exonorees using a social distance scale. Perhaps bringing attention to these dimensions will lead to increased public support for the improvement of these laws, not only in Mississippi, but throughout the country.

According to the Innocence Project (2015), there are 20 states that still do not provide compensation to the wrongfully convicted. The state of Mississippi offers \$50,000 in restitution for each year that the exonoree served in prison with a maximum of \$500,000 (MS. Legis. Assemb. S.B. NO. 3024. 2009). In the event that the exonoree chooses to pursue a claim under this act, they are barred from bringing a legal claim against the state and state officials (MS. Code §11-44-7). Comparatively, Louisiana's compensation statute grants \$15,000 per year of incarceration up to a maximum amount of \$100,000 (LA, RS. 15:572.8. 2006). However, Louisiana law allows the court to review and order payment for any requests that the court finds reasonable for the purpose of funding job-skills training, medically necessary treatments that cannot already be provided by the state, and tuition and fees for any community college or public university within the state (LA, RS. 15:572.8.2006). This type of life improvement compensation is not offered by the state of Mississippi.

Methodology

Methods:

In order to study the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of university community members regarding the issue of wrongful convictions in Mississippi, a public forum that included the Director of the Mississippi Innocence Project was hosted at the University of Southern Mississippi. During this forum, those in attendance were asked to complete two surveys in the form of a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test design. The participants were asked to complete a survey before the forum began. Once completed, the participants then watched the documentary "Mississippi Innocence" which details the

cases of exonorees Kennedy Brewer and Levon Brooks. After the documentary concluded, participants then completed a second survey. Both surveys contained identical questions in order to assess changes in opinion as a result of viewing the documentary.

Participants:

In order to recruit participants, professors of varying subjects from different academic departments were emailed a notice about the event along with the request that they forward the email to students. As incentive, participants were given the opportunity to enter their names for the chance to win a gift card. Some professors also offered bonus points to their students for attending the forum.

Instrumentation:

Content of the surveys included a series of questions based upon the Likert scale ranging from “Agree Entirely” to “Disagree Entirely.” The questions were designed to 1) Assess the extent to which university community members feel that wrongful convictions are a problem in the United States and Mississippi, 2) Determine the perceived adequacy of Mississippi’s wrongful conviction compensation statutes, and 3) Measure the attitudes of community members regarding whether or not an exonoree should be allowed to sue legal officials involved in their cases. A second series of items were based upon a Likert type scale ranging from “Entirely Suitable” to “Entirely Unsuitable.” The purpose of this scale was to determine the perceived suitability of exonorees for certain social roles. The last series of questions was based upon a Likert type scale ranging from “Entirely Comfortable” to “Entirely Uncomfortable.” This scale was used to measure acceptance of exonorees using a social distance scale.

Results

There were a total of 170 participants involved in the original study. However, due to the not uncommon problem of missing data, only 157 complete surveys were used as a basis for the results that follow.

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Participants.

Age:	Range: 18-81 Mean: 36.03 Median: 33 Mode: 21/22
Race/Ethnicity:	American Indian: 1.3% (2) Asian American: 0.6% (1) Hispanic: 2.5% (4) African American: 42.0% (66) White: 49.7% (78) Other: 3.2% (5)
Gender:	Male: 29.9% (47) Female: 69.4% (109) Other: 0.6% (1)
Political Ideology:	Democrat: 41.4% (65) Republican: 25.5% (40) Independent: 17.8% (28) Other: 13.4 (21)
Years lived in Mississippi:	Range: 0-46 Mean: 17.85 Median: 22 Mode: 25

Participants included 157 undergraduate and graduate students, university faculty and staff members, and various members of the local community. Age of participants ranged from 18 - 81, 47 of whom identified as male, 109 identified as female, and one participant identified as “Other.” When asked to identify their race, 66 of the participants identified as African American, 78 identified as White, two identified as American Indian, one as Asian, 4 as Hispanic, and 5 as “Other.” When asked to identify their

political affiliation, 65 of the participants identified as Democrats, 40 participants identified as Republicans, 28 identified as Independent, and 21 as “Other.”

Results of Survey #1:

Table 3. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding the Perceived Problem of Wrongful Convictions in the United States and Mississippi - Survey #1.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the American criminal justice system	52.9% (83)	22.9% (36)	18.5 (29)	4.5% (7)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the state of Mississippi	30.6% (48)	28.7% (45)	20.4% (32)	18.5% (29)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)

Table Three indicates that 94.3% (148) of the participants collectively agreed that wrongful convictions are a problem in the American criminal justice system. Nearly eight out of ten participants (79.6%, 125) collectively agreed that wrongful conviction is a problem within the state of Mississippi.

Table 4. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding Perceived Adequacy of Mississippi's Statutory Restitution for Wrongful Conviction - Survey #1.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted	5.7% (9)	12.1% (19)	24.2% (38)	18.5% (29)	17.2% (27)	12.1% (19)	10.2% (16)
Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial	51.6% (81)	17.8% (28)	19.7% (31)	7.0% (11)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)	1.9% (3)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/ job training	39.5% (62)	23.6% (37)	19.7% (31)	13.4% (21)	2.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of significantly discounted junior college or university tuition	32.5% (51)	19.7% (31)	20.4% (32)	16.6% (26)	5.7% (9)	1.9% (3)	3.2% (5)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free junior college or university tuition	26.1% (41)	15.9% (25)	17.2% (27)	24.2% (38)	8.3% (13)	3.8% (6)	4.5% (7)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free psychological counseling	56.7% (89)	19.7% (31)	17.8% (28)	3.2% (5)	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free medical treatment	33.1% (52)	19.1% (30)	24.8% (39)	14.0% (22)	5.1% (8)	1.9% (3)	1.9% (3)
Victims of wrongful conviction should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future	17.2% (27)	4.5% (7)	7.6% (12)	21.0% (33)	17.8% (28)	12.1% (19)	19.7% (31)

Table Four reflects the extent to which participants agree or disagree with various statements regarding Mississippi's compensation statutes for wrongful conviction. Forty-two percent (66) of participants collectively agreed that Mississippi provides adequate compensation for those who have been wrongfully convicted. Another 18.5% (29) expressed a neutral opinion. A majority of participants (89.1%, 140) collectively agreed that exonorees should be compensated for time spent awaiting trial. Participants also manifested strong collective agreement that victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/job training (82.8%, 130), significantly discounted junior college or university tuition (72.6%, 114), free junior college or university tuition (59.2%, 93), free psychological counseling (94.2%, 148), or free medical treatment (77.0%, 121). However, 49.7% (78) collectively disagreed with the proposition that exonorees should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future.

Table 5. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding an Exonoree’s Right to Sue Certain Officials Involved in their Cases - Survey #1.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue law enforcement officers and departments involved in their wrongful conviction	33.8% (53)	16.6% (26)	19.1% (30)	10.8% (17)	10.2% (16)	5.1% (8)	4.5% (7)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue prosecutors involved in their wrongful conviction	24.8% (39)	13.4% (21)	29.3% (46)	12.1% (19)	10.8% (17)	4.5% (7)	5.1% (8)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue defense attorneys involved in their wrongful conviction	17.8% (28)	7.0% (11)	21.7% (34)	23.6% (37)	14.6% (23)	7.6% (12)	7.6% (12)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue judges involved in their wrongful conviction	17.8% (28)	10.2% (16)	19.7% (31)	19.1% (30)	14.6% (23)	7.6% (12)	10.8% (17)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue jurors involved in their wrongful conviction	9.6% (15)	3.8% (6)	12.7% (20)	16.6% (26)	15.9% (25)	11.5% (18)	29.9% (47)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	16.6% (26)	10.8% (17)	22.9% (36)	18.5% (29)	15.3% (24)	5.7% (9)	10.2% (16)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue expert witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	17.2% (27)	16.6% (26)	28.0% (44)	11.5% (18)	12.1% (19)	4.5% (7)	9.6% (15)

Table Five reflects the pattern of responses to survey items regarding an exonoree’s right to sue certain officials involved in their cases. The majority of participants collectively agreed that exonorees should be allowed to sue the following individuals: police officers (69.5%, 109), prosecutors (67.5%, 106), and expert witnesses (61.8%, 97). However, over fifty percent of the participants felt neutral toward or disagreed with the proposition that exonorees should be allowed to sue defense attorneys

(53.5%, 84), judges (52.1%, 82), and jurors (73.9%, 116). One-half (50.3%, 79) of participants collectively agreed that exonorees should be allowed to sue witnesses.

Table 6. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding Perceived Suitability of Exonorees for Various Social Roles - Survey #1.

Wording of Survey Item: Please indicate how suitable or unsuitable you believe an exonoree would be for each of the following occupations / roles:	Entirely Suitable Valid % (n)	Mostly Suitable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Suitable Valid % (n)	Neither Suitable nor Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Mostly Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Entirely Unsuitable Valid % (n)
Babysitter	14.0% (22)	10.2% (16)	23.6% (37)	28.0% (44)	13.4% (21)	5.1% (8)	5.7% (9)
Lawyer	22.9% (36)	17.8% (28)	20.4% (32)	24.8% (39)	5.1% (8)	3.8% (6)	5.1% (8)
Security Guard	22.3% (35)	21.7% (34)	24.8% (39)	22.9% (36)	6.4% (10)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
School Teacher	17.2% (27)	19.1% (30)	24.2% (38)	25.5% (40)	8.9% (14)	3.8% (6)	1.3% (2)
Accountant	22.3% (35)	19.1% (30)	21.7% (34)	29.9% (47)	2.5% (4)	2.5% (4)	1.9% (3)
Nurse	22.3% (35)	22.9% (36)	21.0% (33)	24.2% (38)	5.1% (8)	1.9% (3)	2.5% (4)
Soldier	38.2% (60)	26.1% (41)	13.4% (21)	16.6% (26)	3.8% (6)	0.0% (0)	1.9% (3)
Bank Teller	19.7% (31)	17.8% (28)	22.9% (36)	29.3% (46)	5.7% (9)	2.5% (4)	1.9% (3)
Business Owner	36.3% (57)	22.9% (36)	18.5% (29)	19.7% (31)	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)
Letter Carrier	33.1% (52)	22.9% (36)	17.2% (27)	21.0% (33)	4.5% (7)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)
House Sitter	23.6% (37)	12.7% (20)	22.3% (35)	29.9% (47)	5.1% (8)	3.2% (5)	3.2% (5)
Youth Group Leader	37.6% (59)	16.6% (26)	17.8% (28)	19.1% (30)	1.9% (3)	5.1% (8)	1.9% (3)

Participants were also asked to indicate how suitable they believed an exonoree would be for certain social roles along a continuum from “Entirely Suitable” to “Entirely Unsuitable.” The majority of participants collectively agreed that exonorees are suitable for the following social roles: lawyer (61.6%, 96), security guard (68.8%, 108), school teacher (60.5%, 95), accountant (63.1%, 99), nurse (66.2%, 104), soldier (77.7%, 122), bank teller (60.4%, 95), business owner (77.7%, 122), letter carrier (73.2%, 115), house sitter (58.6%, 92), and youth group leader (72.0%, 113). However, only 47.8% (75)

collectively agreed that exonorees are suitable for a job as a babysitter. Twenty-eight percent (44) felt neutral about the position of babysitter. The remaining 24.2% (38) collectively disagreed that an exonoree would be suitable as a babysitter.

Table 7. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding the Acceptance of Various Levels of Social Distance Involving Exonorees - Survey #1.

Wording of Survey Item: Item: Please indicate how comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel if an exonoree	Entirely Comfortable Valid % (n)	Mostly Comfortable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Comfortable Valid % (n)	Neither Comfortable Nor Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Mostly Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Entirely Uncomfortable Valid % (n)
Lived in your state	57.3% (90)	19.1% (30)	12.1% (19)	8.9% (14)	1.9% (3)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)
Lived in your county	59.9% (94)	16.6% (26)	12.7% (20)	8.3% (13)	0.6% (1)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
Lived in your city	55.4% (87)	20.4% (32)	10.8% (17)	10.8% (17)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)
Lived in your neighborhood	46.5% (73)	24.8% (39)	9.6% (15)	10.8% (17)	5.1% (8)	1.3% (2)	1.9% (3)
Lived on your street	42.0% (66)	24.8% (39)	12.7% (20)	11.5% (18)	5.1% (8)	1.3% (2)	2.5% (4)
Lived next door or in your building	38.2% (60)	22.3% (35)	14.6% (23)	12.1% (19)	7.0% (11)	2.5% (4)	3.2% (5)
Worked for the same employer	42.7% (67)	22.3% (35)	14.0% (22)	13.4% (21)	4.5% (7)	1.9% (3)	1.3% (2)
Belonged to the same social club/group	40.8% (64)	22.9% (36)	14.6% (23)	15.3% (24)	5.1% (8)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)
Was a close personal friend	49.0% (77)	18.5% (29)	13.4% (21)	12.7% (20)	3.8% (6)	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)
Was a relative	51.0% (80)	21.0% (33)	12.1% (19)	11.5% (18)	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)	1.9% (3)
Was an intimate partner	33.8% (53)	17.8% (28)	12.7% (20)	16.6% (26)	9.6% (15)	4.5% (7)	5.1% (8)

The final section of Survey #1 was designed to assess how comfortable participants would be with a series of situations involving exonorees. Most participants were comfortable with the idea of an exonoree living in the same state (88.5%, 130),

county (89.2%, 140), city (86.6%, 136), neighborhood (80.9%, 127), and street (79.6%, 125), or next door/in the same building (75.2%, 118). A majority of participants were also comfortable working with (79.0%, 124), belonging to the same social group as (78.3%, 123), being close friends with (80.9%, 127), roommates with (68.2%, 107), related to (84.1%, 132), or an intimate partner (64.3%, 101) with an exonoree. Overall, this indicates that a majority of participants would be generally comfortable with an exonoree.

Results of Survey #2:

The tables and information that follows represents the results of the post-test Survey #2 which was completed by the same group of participants after viewing the documentary “Mississippi Innocence.”

Table 8. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding the Perceived Problem of Wrongful Convictions in the United States and Mississippi - Survey #2.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the American criminal justice system	70.7% (111)	16.6% (26)	10.2% (16)	1.9% (3)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the state of Mississippi	64.3% (101)	17.2% (27)	14.0% (22)	3.2% (5)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)

Table Eight indicates that 97.5% (153) of the participants collectively agreed that wrongful convictions are a problem in the American criminal justice system. A combined 95.5% (150) of participants collectively agreed that wrongful convictions are a problem in the state of Mississippi.

Table 9. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding Perceived Adequacy of Mississippi’s Statutory Restitution for Wrongful Conviction - Survey #2.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted	12.7% (20)	23.6% (37)	19.1% (30)	6.4% (10)	10.8% (17)	7.6% (12)	19.7% (31)
Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial	59.2% (93)	20.4% (32)	9.6% (15)	5.7% (9)	1.9% (3)	1.3% (2)	1.9% (3)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/ job training	58.6% (92)	14.6% (23)	15.3% (24)	10.8% (17)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of significantly discounted junior college or university tuition	49.0% (77)	15.9% (25)	15.3% (24)	12.1% (19)	4.5 (7)	1.9% (3)	1.3% (2)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free junior college or university tuition	45.2% (71)	11.5% (18)	15.3% (24)	14.6% (23)	5.7% (9)	4.5 (7)	3.2% (5)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free psychological counseling	73.2% (115)	14.6% (23)	10.2% (16)	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free medical treatment	53.5% (84)	11.5% (18)	15.3% (24)	12.7% (20)	4.5 (7)	1.31.3% (2)%	1.3% (2)
Victims of wrongful conviction should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future	32.5% (51)	3.8% (6)	10.2% (16)	19.7% (31)	12.1% (19)	7% (11)	14.6% (23)

Table Nine indicates that 55.4% (87) of participants collectively agreed that Mississippi provides adequate compensation for those that have been wrongfully convicted. Slightly less than 9 out of 10 participants (89.2%, 140) collectively agree that exonorees should receive compensation for their time spent awaiting trial. Most of the participants collectively agreed that victims of wrongful conviction should receive

compensation in the form of free skills development/job training (88.5%, 139), significantly discounted junior college or university tuition (80.3%, 126), free junior college or university tuition (72.0%, 113), free psychological counseling (98.1%, 154), or free medical treatment (80.3%, 126). However, 33.8% (53) of participants collectively disagreed with the proposition that exonorees should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future. Another 46.5% (73) collectively agreed with this statement, while the remaining 19.7% (31) answered neutral.

Table 10. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding an Exonoree’s Right to Sue Certain Officials Involved in their Cases - Survey #2.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue law enforcement officers and departments involved in their wrongful conviction	32.5% (51)	18.5% (29)	19.7% (31)	13.4% (21)	7.6% (12)	4.5% (7)	3.8% (6)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue prosecutors involved in their wrongful conviction	36.9% (58)	21.0% (33)	17.8% (28)	10.8% (17)	8.3% (13)	1.9% (3)	3.2% (5)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue defense attorneys involved in their wrongful conviction	26.8% (42)	11.5% (18)	22.9% (36)	15.3% (24)	11.5% (18)	5.7% (9)	6.4% (10)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue judges involved in their wrongful conviction	23.6% (37)	13.4% (21)	17.2% (27)	24.2% (38)	11.5% (18)	3.8% (6)	6.4% (10)

Table 10 Continued.

Wording of Survey Item:	Agree Entirely Valid % (n)	Mostly Agree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Agree Valid % (n)	Neither Agree nor Disagree Valid % (n)	Somewhat Disagree Valid % (n)	Mostly Disagree Valid % (n)	Disagree Entirely Valid % (n)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue jurors involved in their wrongful conviction	15.3% (24)	10.8% (17)	8.3% (13)	25.5% (40)	14.6% (23)	12.1 (19)%	13.4% (21)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	25.5% (40)	15.9% (25)	16.6% (26)	21.7% (34)	8.9% (14)	4.5 (7)	7.0% (11)
Exonorees should be allowed to sue expert witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	46.5% (73)	18.5% (29)	15.9% (25)	12.1% (19)	5.7% (9)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)

As reflected in Table 10, a majority of participants collectively agreed that exonorees should be allowed to sue the following individuals involved in their cases: police officers (70.7%, 111), prosecutors (75.8%, 119), defense attorneys (61.1%, 96), judges (54.1%, 85), witnesses (58.0%, 91), and expert witnesses (80.9%, 127). However, only 34.4% (54) collectively agreed that exonorees should be allowed to sue jurors.

Table 11. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding Perceived Suitability of Exonorees for Various Social Roles - Survey #2.

Wording of Survey Item: Please indicate how suitable or unsuitable you believe an exonoree would be for each of the following occupations / roles:	Entirely Suitable Valid % (n)	Mostly Suitable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Suitable Valid % (n)	Neither Suitable nor Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Mostly Unsuitable Valid % (n)	Entirely Unsuitable Valid % (n)
Babysitter	31.8% (50)	14.6% (23)	20.4% (32)	22.9% (36)	5.7% (9)	0.0% (0)	4.5 (7)
Lawyer	40.8% (64)	15.9% (25)	17.2% (27)	17.8% (28)	3.2% (5)	3.2% (5)	1.9% (3)
Security Guard	42.0% (66)	24.2% (38)	17.2% (27)	12.7% (20)	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.9% (3)
School Teacher	33.1% (52)	23.6% (37)	19.1% (30)	17.8% (28)	3.8% (6)	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)
Accountant	41.4% (65)	14.6% (23)	21.0% (33)	19.7% (31)	1.3% (2)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
Nurse	38.2% (60)	22.9% (36)	18.5% (29)	17.2% (27)	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)
Soldier	54.1% (85)	20.4% (32)	10.2% (16)	13.4% (21)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)
Bank Teller	42.7% (67)	17.8% (28)	16.6% (26)	18.5% (29)	3.2% (5)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)
Business Owner	53.5% (84)	19.1% (30)	14.0% (22)	12.1% (19)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)
Letter Carrier	47.1% (74)	21.7% (34)	13.4% (21)	15.3% (24)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)
House Sitter	36.3% (57)	21.7% (34)	17.2% (27)	19.1% (30)	4.5 (7)	0.0% (0)	1.3% (2)
Youth Group Leader	47.1% (74)	21.0% (33)	12.7% (20)	15.3% (24)	0.6% (1)	1.9% (3)	1.3% (2)

Table 11 indicates that a majority of participants collectively agreed that exonorees are suitable for the following social roles: babysitter (66.8%, 105) lawyer (73.9%, 116), security guard (83.4%, 131), school teacher (75.8%, 119), accountant (77.0%, 121), nurse (79.6%, 125), soldier (84.7%, 133), bank teller (77.1%, 121), business owner (86.6%, 136), letter carrier (82.2%, 129), house sitter (75.2%, 118), and youth group leader (80.8%, 127).

Table 12. Pattern of Responses to Survey Items Regarding the Acceptance of Various Levels of Social Distance Involving Exonorees - Survey #2.

Wording of Survey Item: Please indicate how comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel if an exonoree	Entirely Comfortable Valid % (n)	Mostly Comfortable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Comfortable Valid % (n)	Neither Comfortable Nor Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Somewhat Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Mostly Uncomfortable Valid % (n)	Entirely Uncomfortable Valid % (n)
Lived in your state	70.1% (110)	16.6% (26)	4.5 (7)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Lived in your county	67.5% (106)	19.1% (30)	4.5 (7)	7.6% (12)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Lived in your city	66.2% (104)	20.4% (32)	3.2% (5)	8.9% (14)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Lived in your neighborhood	60.5% (95)	22.9% (36)	5.1% (8)	8.9% (14)	1.9% (3)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)
Lived on your street	57.3% (90)	22.9% (36)	5.7% (9)	10.2% (16)	2.5% (4)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)
Lived next door or in your building	54.8% (86)	19.7% (31)	10.2% (16)	10.2% (16)	3.8% (6)	0.6% (1)	0.6% (1)
Worked for the same employer	60.5% (95)	19.7% (31)	5.7% (9)	12.1% (19)	1.9% (3)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Belonged to the same social club/group	55.4% (87)	22.3% (35)	9.6% (15)	12.1% (19)	0.6% (1)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Was a close personal friend	61.1% (96)	16.6% (26)	10.8% (17)	8.9% (14)	2.5% (4)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)
Was a roommate	49.7% (78)	22.9% (36)	9.6% (15)	11.5% (4)	4.5 (7)	1.3% (2)	0.6% (1)
Was a relative	63.7% (100)	18.5% (29)	7.0% (11)	8.9% (14)	1.3% (2)	0.0% (0)	0.6% (1)
Was an intimate partner	49.7% (78)	15.3% (24)	12.7% (20)	15.3% (24)	3.8% (6)	1.3% (2)	1.9% (3)

The final section of Survey #2 was designed to assess how comfortable participants would be with a series of situations involving exonorees. Most participants were collectively comfortable with the idea of an exonoree living in the same state (91.2%,143), county (91.1%, 143), city (89.8%, 141), neighborhood (88.5%, 139), and

street (85.9%, 135) as them, or next door/in the same building (84.7%,126). A majority of participants were also comfortable with working with (85.9%, 135), belonging to the same social group as (87.3%, 137), being close friends with (88.5%, 139), roommates with (82.2%, 129), related to (89.2%, 140), or intimate partners (77.7%, 122) with exonorees. Overall, this indicates that a majority of participants would be generally comfortable with an exonoree.

T-Test Results:

A t-test for repeated/related measures was used to test the general null hypothesis of no statistically significant differences in mean scores for each survey item between administrations as a pre- and post-test and that any observed differences are instead due to chance or sampling error.

Table 13. T-test Results Comparing Differences in Means Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Regarding the Perceived Problem of Wrongful Convictions in the United States and Mississippi.

Wording of Survey Item:	Mean T ₁	Mean T ₂	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the American criminal justice system	1.79	1.45	0.388	5.105	156	0.000
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the state of Mississippi	2.33	1.60	0.732	8.824	156	0.000

Table 13 indicates that there exists a statistically significant difference in the pre- and post-test means for both survey items regarding the perceived problem of wrongful convictions in the United States and Mississippi.

Table 14. T-test Results Comparing Difference in Means Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Regarding the Perceived Adequacy of Mississippi’s Statutory Compensation for Wrongful Conviction.

Wording of Survey Item:	Mean T ₁	Mean T ₂	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.
Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted	4.06	3.81	0.255	1.586	156	0.115
Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial	1.98	1.82	0.159	1.451	156	0.149
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/ job training	2.21	1.80	0.408	4.654	156	0.000
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of significantly discounted junior college or university tuition	2.62	2.18	0.439	4.651	156	0.000
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free medical treatment	2.52	2.12	0.401	4.276	156	0.000
Victims of wrongful conviction should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future	4.33	3.55	0.783	5.881	156	0.000
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free junior college or university tuition	3.02	2.50	0.516	4.764	156	0.000

The results of this series of t-tests indicate that all observed mean differences are statistically significant with the exception of two items. Specifically, there was no significant difference in means between the pre- and post-test for the items that read: 1) “Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted” and 2) “Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial.”

Table 15. T-test Results Comparing Differences in Means Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 For Items Regarding an Exonoree’s Right to Sue Certain Officials Involved in Their Cases.

Wording of Survey Item:	Mean T ₁	Mean T ₂	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.
Exonorees should be allowed to sue law enforcement officers and departments involved in their wrongful conviction	2.80	2.74	0.064	0.486	156	0.628
Exonorees should be allowed to sue prosecutors involved in their wrongful conviction	3.04	2.51	0.535	4.717	156	0.000
Exonorees should be allowed to sue defense attorneys involved in their wrongful conviction	3.64	3.16	0.478	3.902	156	0.000
Exonorees should be allowed to sue judges involved in their wrongful conviction	3.69	3.24	0.452	3.626	156	0.000
Exonorees should be allowed to sue jurors involved in their wrongful conviction	4.80	4.03	0.764	6.428	156	0.000
Exonorees should be allowed to sue witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	3.63	3.14	0.490	3.911	156	0.000
Exonorees should be allowed to sue expert witnesses involved in their wrongful conviction	3.37	2.18	1.186	8.602	156	0.000

All results reflected in Table 15 above indicate that there were statistically significant differences in means between the pre- and post-tests with one exception. Specifically, there was no statistically significant difference in the means of Survey #1

and Survey #2 for the item which read: “Exonorees should be allowed to sue law enforcement officers and departments involved in their wrongful conviction.”

Table 16. T-test Results Comparing Difference in Means Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Regarding the Perceived Suitability of Exonorees for Specific Social Roles.

Wording of Survey Item: Please indicate how suitable or unsuitable you believe an exonoree would be for each of the following occupations / roles:	Mean T ₁	Mean T ₂	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.
Babysitter	3.55	2.74	0.809	7.482	156	0.000
Lawyer	3.03	2.44	0.592	5.622	156	0.000
Security Guard	2.76	2.16	0.599	5.770	156	0.000
School Teacher	3.06	2.45	0.618	5.767	156	0.000
Accountant	2.87	2.31	0.554	5.520	156	0.000
Nurse	2.83	2.27	0.561	5.751	156	0.000
Soldier	2.29	1.90	0.395	4.290	156	0.000
Bank Teller	2.99	2.26	0.726	6.801	156	0.000
Business Owner	2.31	1.90	0.408	5.142	156	0.000
Letter Carrier	2.45	2.06	0.389	3.947	156	0.000
House Sitter	3.03	2.39	0.637	5.468	156	0.000
Youth Group Leader	2.54	2.12	0.420	4.413	156	0.000

The results depicted in Table 16 indicate that there was a statistically significant difference in means between Survey #1 and Survey #2 regarding the perceived suitability of exonorees for various social roles. Specifically, for all 12 social roles listed, participant attitudes significantly shifted in the more “positive” direction after viewing the documentary.

Table 17. T-test Results Comparing Differences in Means Between Survey #1 and Survey #2 Regarding the Acceptance of Various Levels of Social Distance Involving Exonorees.

Wording of Survey Item: Please indicate how comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel if an exonoree	Mean T ₁	Mean T ₂	Mean Diff.	t	df	Sig.
Lived in your state	1.81	1.54	0.274	4.439	156	0.000
Lived in your county	1.80	1.56	0.236	3.512	156	0.001
Lived in your city	1.87	1.59	0.287	3.903	156	0.000
Lived in your neighborhood	2.15	1.71	0.439	5.328	156	0.000
Lived on your street	2.27	1.82	0.446	5.339	156	0.000
Lived next door or in your building	2.48	1.93	0.548	5.546	156	0.000
Worked for the same employer	2.25	1.75	0.503	5.636	156	0.000
Belonged to the same social club/group	2.26	1.80	0.459	5.588	156	0.000
Was a close personal friend	2.13	1.75	0.376	3.922	156	0.000
Was a roommate	2.76	2.04	0.720	6.242	156	0.000
Was a relative	2.03	1.68	0.344	3.831	156	0.000
Was an intimate partner	2.84	2.20	0.643	5.021	156	0.000

Table 17 indicates that there was a significant difference in means between Survey #1 and Survey #2 regarding the acceptance of various levels of social distance involving exonorees. Specifically, for all 12 examples of social distance listed, participant attitudes significantly shifted in the more “positive” direction after viewing the documentary.

Discussion/Conclusion

Wrongful Conviction is an instance in which a person is convicted of a crime that they did not commit. In this event, innocent people have their freedom taken away from them while they are made to serve time in prison. During this time, victims of wrongful conviction often miss out on important moments in life such as family gatherings, birthdays, etc. However, most importantly, while an innocent person is serving time for a crime that they did not commit, the actual perpetrator of the crime is left free to commit another crime (The National Registry of Exoneration, 2016).

It is difficult to estimate a rate of wrongful convictions because they can only be determined once a person has been proven innocent and released (Jones, 2012). However, 1,755 people have been exonerated in the United States since 1989. The Innocence Project has helped in the exoneration of more than 344 wrongful conviction cases (The Innocence Project, 2016). Some of the main causes of wrongful conviction are eyewitness misidentification, invalid or improper forensic procedure, false or improperly obtained confessions or admissions, false or perjured testimony, government misconduct, and inadequate defense (The Mid-Atlantic Innocence Project, 2016). One of the largest contributing factors to exonerating the wrongfully convicted is the development of DNA testing. According to the Innocence Project, 347 exonerations in the United States have been accomplished due to DNA test results (2016). In the state of Mississippi, The Innocence Project has aided in the exonerations of 12 wrongfully convicted prisoners. Together, these exonorees served more than 202.5 years in prison for crimes that they did not commit (Innocence Project, "Exonorees/Cases," 2016).

This study was conducted in order to assess the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of university community members regarding the issue of wrongful conviction in Mississippi. As restitution for exonorees, the state of Mississippi offers \$50,000 for every year spent in prison until a maximum of \$500,000 is reached (MS. Legis. Assemb. S.B. NO. 3024. 2009). However, financial compensation is the only form of restitution that Mississippi pays toward exonorees. Other states such as Louisiana grant a smaller amount of financial compensation, but also allow funding for job-skills training, medically necessary treatments, and tuition and fees for any community college or public university within the state (LA, RS. 15:572.8.2006).

In order to study the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of university community members regarding the issue of wrongful conviction in Mississippi, a public forum that included the director of the Mississippi Innocence Project was hosted at the University of Southern Mississippi. During this forum, participants were asked to complete two surveys in the form of a pre-test/post-test design. Survey #1 was completed before the forum began. Once completed, the participants watched a documentary entitled “Mississippi Innocence” which detailed the cases of Mississippi exonorees, Kennedy Brewer and Levon Brooks. Following the documentary, participants were then asked to complete Survey #2.

Each survey contained 5 sections, each based upon the Likert scale. Sections One, Two, and Three ranged from “Agree Entirely” to “Disagree Entirely.” These sections were designed to 1) Assess the extent to which university community members feel that wrongful conviction is a problem in the United States and Mississippi, 2) Determine the

perceived adequacy of Mississippi's wrongful conviction compensation statutes, and 3) Measure the attitudes of community members regarding whether or not an exonoree should be allowed to sue legal officials involved in their cases. Section Four ranged from "Entirely Suitable" to "Entirely Unsuitable." The purpose of this scale was to determine the perceived suitability of exonorees for certain social roles. The final section ranged from "Entirely Comfortable" to "Entirely Uncomfortable." This scale was used to measure the acceptance of various levels of social distance involving exonorees.

Upon reviewing the data, Survey #2 displayed generally more positive results than Survey #1. In Section Two of the surveys, participants were asked if they believed that exonorees should be exempt from having to pay state income taxes in the future. Though there was a significant difference in change regarding this question in Survey #1 and Survey #2, less than 50% of participants collectively agreed with this statement in both surveys. This is possibly due to the fact that all Mississippi residents are required to pay state income taxes. Therefore, participants may feel that exonorees are not above this requirement. It is also important to note that in Section Four of the surveys, the results of Survey #1 indicated that less than one-half of the participants collectively agreed that an exonoree would be a suitable babysitter. However, after watching the documentary, the results of Survey #2 reflect that more than half of the participants collectively agreed that an exonoree would make a suitable babysitter. This change in opinion along with the general increase in positive responses indicates that participants developed a more sensitive and trusting perception of exonorees as a result of watching the documentary.

As a result of this research, it seems reasonable to suggest that the more information that is made available to the public about the issue of wrongful conviction, the more likely it is that the public will agree that exonorees are unfairly compensated. Nearly every survey question compared in the t-tests manifested statistically significant mean differences from Survey #1 and Survey #2. The t-tests indicated that the following survey questions did not produce a significant difference in mean scores from Survey #1 and Survey #2:

- “Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted”
- “Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial”
- “Exonorees should be allowed to sue law enforcement officers and departments involved in their wrongful conviction”

The results for Survey #1 indicate that the majority of participants collectively agree to each statement listed above. Again in Survey #2, the participants collectively agreed with each of the previous questions. Perhaps there was not a significant change here because their opinions of these matters were not changed by the information presented in the documentary. It is likely that a majority of participants had a negative outlook on the fairness of Mississippi’s compensation statutes before attending the forum. Therefore, the documentary did not significantly impact this opinion. This same theory may be applied to the idea that exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial. However, it is likely that a majority of participants did not experience a significant change in opinion about whether or not exonorees should be allowed to sue

law enforcement officers involved in their cases because the documentary did not highlight the role of police officers in wrongful conviction cases. Therefore, there was not much information presented in the documentary that might have had an impact on this opinion. These results, however, do not negate the effects that the documentary seems to have had on the other results. From this research, it can be determined that the documentary served as an effective intervention.

The success of the documentary “Mississippi Innocence” indicates that the Mississippi Innocence Project could influence public support through wide distribution of the documentary. This may aid the organization in the form of financial support, public outreach, employment interests, etc. Though the documentary is currently accessible through their online database, it requires a password to access. By making the documentary publicly accessible and widely distributed, it is possible that more people will develop a better understanding of the issue of wrongful conviction.

As with any research project, some limitations are to be expected. In this case, the study was limited most significantly by a lack of time to prepare for the forum. Initially, I intended to invite 2-3 Mississippi exonorees to speak at the forum along with the director of the Mississippi Innocence Project. However, due to a limited window of time, some unavoidable scheduling conflicts interfered with this goal. Along with a lack of time, limited space only allowed for 170 people to attend the forum. Though this is a large number that I feel provided an adequate amount of data, I believe that there would have been a larger number of participants had the room not been filled to capacity. Though the study received generous funding from various university programs, larger funding

opportunities may have relieved the issue of limited space. However, because of the limited funds, we were not able to rent out a larger auditorium to host the forum in.

In order to improve upon this study, perhaps a larger, more diverse population may be surveyed. Future studies may replicate this project in other states in order to study the beliefs and perceptions that community members have regarding the compensation of exonorees elsewhere. Comparative research may be conducted with a different targeted audience to determine if the location of participants affects their beliefs and perceptions of wrongful conviction. Results may also be compared to the demographics of participants in order to determine if race, gender or political affiliation may impact the beliefs and perceptions of wrongful conviction. Future studies may also examine why the specified group of questions did not produce a significant difference in results from Survey #1 and Survey #2.

Through this study, I learned that Mississippi's compensation statutes are not widely known throughout the state. In order to make changes to an unfair system, people must be made aware of the issue. However, after being made aware of the hardships that exonorees face, participants began to express a more understanding and sympathetic view of exonorees. Ultimately, this study may be used to raise awareness of unfair compensation statutes that are in place throughout the United States. Perhaps bringing attention to the compensation statutes provided by the state of Mississippi will lead to improvement on these laws, not only in Mississippi, but throughout the United States.

Appendices

Appendix I Institutional Review Board Approval



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

118 College Drive #5147 | Hattiesburg, MS 39406-0001

Phone: 601.266.5997 | Fax: 601.266.4377 | www.usm.edu/research/institutional.review.board

NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the “Adverse Effect Report Form”.
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 16090205

PROJECT TITLE: Exploring Community Beliefs, Perceptions and Attitudes Regarding Wrongful Convictions

PROJECT TYPE: New Project

RESEARCHER(S): Tera Wilson

COLLEGE/DIVISION: College of Science and Technology

DEPARTMENT: Criminal Justice

FUNDING AGENCY/SPONSOR: Eagle SPUR

IRB COMMITTEE ACTION: Expedited Review
Approval PERIOD OF APPROVAL: 09/12/2016 to
09/11/2017

Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.
Institutional Review Board

Appendix II
Financial Compensation Statutes Offered by Each State

State:	Financial Statute:	State:	Financial Statute:
Alabama	Maximum \$50,000/year of incarceration	Alaska	No financial compensation
California	Maximum \$100/day of wrongful incarceration	Arizona	No financial compensation
Colorado	\$70,000/year of incarceration, plus: \$50,000/ year of incarceration that the individual was sentenced to execution; \$25,000/year served on parole, on probation, or as a registered sex offender	Arkansas	No financial compensation
Connecticut	Based on claims	Delaware	No financial compensation
District of Columbia	The court decides	Georgia	No financial compensation
Florida	\$50,000 annually with a maximum of \$2 million	Hawaii	No financial compensation
Illinois	\$85,350 for up to 5 years served. \$170,000 for 5-14 years. \$199,150 for 14+ years served.	Idaho	No financial compensation
Iowa	\$50/ day on incarceration plus lost wages up to \$25,000/year	Indiana	No financial compensation
Louisiana	\$15,000/year with a maximum of \$150,000	Kansas	No financial compensation
Maine	Maximum of \$300,000	Kentucky	No financial compensation
Maryland	Decided by the Board of Public Works	Michigan	No financial compensation
Massachusetts	Maximum of \$500,000	Minnesota	No financial compensation
Mississippi	\$50,000/year served with a maximum of \$500,000	Montana	No financial compensation

State:	Financial Statute:	State:	Financial Statute:
Missouri	\$50/day of post-conviction confinement	Nevada	No financial compensation
Nebraska	\$25,000/year served with a maximum of \$500,000	New Mexico	No financial compensation
New Hampshire	Maximum of \$20,000 for the entirety of the wrongful incarceration	North Dakota	No financial compensation
New Jersey	Twice the amount of the exonoree's income in the year prior to incarceration or \$20,000/year served	Oregon	No financial compensation
New York	Determined by the Court of Claims	Pennsylvania	No financial compensation
North Carolina	\$50,000/year served with a maximum of \$750,000	Rhode Island	No financial compensation
Ohio	\$40,330/year (or amount determined by state auditor)	South Carolina	No financial compensation
Oklahoma	\$175,000 for the entirety of the wrongful incarceration	South Dakota	No financial compensation
Tennessee	Maximum of \$1,000,000 for the entirety of the wrongful incarceration	Wyoming	No financial compensation
Texas	\$80,000/year served, plus \$25,000 per year spent on parole or as a registered sex offender		
Utah	The monetary equivalent of the average annual nonagricultural payroll wage in Utah for up to 15 years		

State:	Financial Statute:	State:	Financial Statute:
Vermont	Between \$30,000 and \$60,000/year served		
Virginia	90% of the Virginia per capita personal income for up to 20 years		
Washington	\$50,000/year, plus \$50,000/year spent on death row and \$25,000 for each year spent on parole, community custody, or on a sex offender registry		
West Virginia	No maximum amount in specified		
Wisconsin	\$5,000/year served with a maximum of \$25,000		

Appendix III

Survey Instruments- Survey #1

Description of Research Project, Procedures and Protections:

As part of this forum, we are asking those of you who are 18 years of age and older to complete a survey that will consume approximately 10 minutes of your time. Your participation is completely voluntary and there is no penalty for refusal or withdrawal. You do not have to provide your name and there is no way for us to link responses back to you. All information provided will be kept confidential and known only to the researchers. Your consent to these terms will be assumed upon submission of a completed survey at the end of the forum.

There is a very slight risk that the information you will hear during the presentation may cause some psychological anxiety due to unfortunate realities and flaws in the criminal justice system. If you have questions, please raise your hand or approach the researcher at any time for further assistance or assurance.

To encourage participation, a number of gift cards will be randomly awarded to those who properly complete the survey as instructed. In order to be eligible for this drawing, you must provide your name and either an email address or telephone number. As assured above, your contact information or individual responses will not be shared with or known by anyone other than the researchers.

This project has been reviewed by the Institutional Review Board, which ensures that research projects involving human subjects follow federal regulations.

Any questions or concerns about rights as a research participant should be directed to the Chair of the IRB at (601) 266-5997. Participation in this project is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw from this study at any time without penalty, prejudice, or loss of benefits.

Any questions about the research should be directed to the principal investigators:

Alan Thompson – alan.thompson@usm.edu

Tera Wilson – tera.wilson@usm.edu

Instructions :

Without referring to any on-line / external sources of information using your smartphone or other device, and without talking to others around you, please complete this survey and place it back into the original large envelope.

Demographics
Please provide your age: _____
Please choose a race/ethnicity that you most closely identify with: <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American <input type="checkbox"/> Black or African American <input type="checkbox"/> Hispanic/Latino <input type="checkbox"/> White/Caucasian <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Please provide your gender: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
How would you describe your personal political ideology? <input type="checkbox"/> Democrat <input type="checkbox"/> Republican <input type="checkbox"/> Independent <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
How many years have you lived in Mississippi? _____

Definitions:

For purposes of this survey, please use the following definitions for each of the terms listed below:

Wrongful conviction / wrongfully convicted: These terms refer to instances in which a person is found guilty of a crime they did not commit.

Exonerated: This term refers to instances in which a person is legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility, especially after being convicted of a crime they did not commit.

Exonoree: This term refers to a person who has been legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility for a crime they did not commit.

Exonorees: This term is the plural for “exonoree” and refers to individuals who have been legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility for a crime they did not commit.

Begin Survey Questions:

1. To the best of your ability, please provide an estimate regarding the number of people who have been exonerated nationwide since the year 2000: _____

2. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Section I								
	Agree Entirely	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Disagree Entirely	
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the American criminal justice system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the state of Mississippi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

At present, Mississippi provides the following compensation to individuals (referred to as “exonorees”) who are found to have been wrongfully imprisoned for crimes they did not commit:

- *Financial compensation in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for each year of incarceration without regard to the number of felonies for which the person was convicted (Compensation is not paid for time served while awaiting trial).*
- *Recipients are granted Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) per year until the maximum amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) is reached.*
- *Reasonable attorney’s fees associated with filing a claim for compensation due to wrongful conviction.*
- *Once compensated, exonorees must release the state of Mississippi and other political subdivisions from all future claims of liability.*

3. Given the information presented on the foregoing page above, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements that appear on the next page:

Section II							
	Agree Entirely	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Disagree Entirely
Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>law enforcement officers and departments</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>prosecutors</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>defense attorneys</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>judges</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>jurors</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>witnesses</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

****Section II Continued****

	<i>Agree Entirely</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Entirely</i>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <i>expert witnesses</i> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/ job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of <i>significantly discounted</i> junior college or university tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of <i>free</i> junior college or university tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free psychological counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free medical treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

4. Please indicate how suitable or unsuitable you believe an exonoree would be for each of the following occupations / roles:

Section III							
	<i>Entirely Suitable</i>	<i>Mostly Suitable</i>	<i>Somewhat Suitable</i>	<i>Neither Suitable Nor Unsuitable</i>	<i>Somewhat Unsuitable</i>	<i>Mostly Unsuitable</i>	<i>Entirely Unsuitable</i>
Babysitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
security Guard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soldier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank Teller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Owner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter Carrier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
House Sitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Group Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Please indicate how comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel if an exonoree

Section IV							
	<i>Entirely Comfortable</i>	<i>Mostly Comfortable</i>	<i>Somewhat Comfortable</i>	<i>Neither Comfortable Nor Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Somewhat Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Mostly Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Entirely Uncomfortable</i>
Lived in your state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived in your county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived in your city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived in your neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived on your street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lived next door or in your building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Worked for the same employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Belonged to the same social club/group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was a close personal friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was a roommate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was a relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Was an intimate partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. Would you be willing to make a one-time monetary donation to organizations like the Mississippi Innocence Project?

Yes

No

If yes, how much?

Instructions:

- Thank you for completing this survey.
- Please place this survey in the large envelope with all other materials.
- Do not remove any other materials from the large envelope until instructed to do so.

Appendix IV
Survey Items- Survey #2
Instructions:

1. Before completing this survey, make sure that you have completed Survey #1 and returned it to the large envelope.
2. Without referring to any on-line / external sources of information using your smartphone or other device, and without talking to others around you, please complete this survey and place it back into the original large envelope.

Definitions:

For purposes of this survey, please use the following definitions for each of the terms listed below:

Wrongful conviction / wrongfully convicted: These terms refer to instances in which a person is found guilty of a crime they did not commit.

Exonerated: This term refers to instances in which a person is legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility, especially after being convicted of a crime they did not commit.

Exonoree: This term refers to a person who has been legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility for a crime they did not commit.

Exonorees: This term is the plural for “exonoree” and refers to individuals who have been legally absolved of any guilt or responsibility for a crime they did not commit.

Begin Survey Questions:

1. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Section I							
	Agree Entirely	Mostly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Disagree Entirely
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the American criminal justice system	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wrongful convictions are a significant problem within the state of Mississippi	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

At present, Mississippi provides the following compensation to individuals (referred to as “exonerees”) who are found to have been wrongfully imprisoned for crimes they did not commit:

- *Financial compensation in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for each year of incarceration without regard to the number of felonies for which the person was convicted (Compensation is not paid for time served while awaiting trial).*
- *Recipients are granted Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) per year until the maximum amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$500,000) is reached.*
- *Reasonable attorney’s fees associated with filing a claim for compensation due to wrongful conviction.*
- *Once compensated, exonerees must release the state of Mississippi and other political subdivisions from all future claims of liability.*

2. Given the information above, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:

Section II							
	<i>Agree Entirely</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Entirely</i>
Mississippi provides adequate compensation for people that have been wrongfully convicted	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be compensated for time served awaiting trial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>law enforcement officers and departments</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>prosecutors</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

****Section II Continued****

	<i>Agree Entirely</i>	<i>Mostly Agree</i>	<i>Somewhat Agree</i>	<i>Neither Agree Nor Disagree</i>	<i>Somewhat Disagree</i>	<i>Mostly Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree Entirely</i>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>defense attorneys</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>judges</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>jurors</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>witnesses</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Exonorees should be allowed to sue <u>expert witnesses</u> involved in their wrongful conviction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free skills development/ job training	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of <u>significantly discounted</u> junior college or university tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of <u>free</u> junior college or university tuition	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free psychological counseling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should receive compensation in the form of free medical treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Victims of wrongful conviction should not be required to ever pay state income taxes in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

3. Please indicate how suitable or unsuitable you believe an exonoree would be for each of the following occupations / roles:

Section III							
	<i>Entirely Suitable</i>	<i>Mostly Suitable</i>	<i>Somewhat Suitable</i>	<i>Neither Suitable Nor Unsuitable</i>	<i>Somewhat Unsuitable</i>	<i>Mostly Unsuitable</i>	<i>Entirely Unsuitable</i>
Babysitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Lawyer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Security Guard	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountant	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nurse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Soldier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bank Teller	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Owner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Letter Carrier	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
House Sitter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Youth Group Leader	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Please indicate how comfortable or uncomfortable you would feel if an exoneree

Section IV								
	<i>Entirely Comfortable</i>	<i>Mostly Comfortable</i>	<i>Somewhat Comfortable</i>	<i>Neither Comfortable Nor Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Somewhat Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Mostly Uncomfortable</i>	<i>Entirely Uncomfortable</i>	
Lived in your state	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived in your county	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived in your city	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived in your neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived on your street	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Lived next door or in your building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Worked for the same employer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Belonged to the same social club/group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was a close personal friend	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was a roommate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was a relative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Was an intimate partner	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

5. Would you be willing to make a one-time monetary donation to organizations like the Mississippi Innocence Project?

Yes

No

If yes, how much?

Instructions:

- Thank you very much for participating in this research project.
- Please place this survey in the large envelope with all other materials.
- Seal the envelope.
- Turn the envelope in as you leave the building.

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