

- **Purpose:** Investigates the impact of defendant age (25 vs 72) and victim age (26 vs 70) on juror decision-making, specifically involving Black male defendants and victims.
- Prior studies have predominantly focused on older White defendants; this study addresses the gap by focusing on age in Black defendants and victims. (Ruva et al. 2023; Sheahan et al., 2021).
- According to the stereotype content model, older adults are perceived as warm but incompetent, leading to juror leniency toward older defendants (Fiske et al., 2002).
- Just world theory suggests that people may devalue older victims to maintain a sense of justice, given the diminished societal status of older adults (Lerner, 1980).
- Research shows that crimes against older victims are perceived as less compared to crimes against younger victims (Callan et al., 2012; Goodwin & Landy, 2014).

**Hypotheses:**  
**H1:** Younger defendants (25) will receive more guilty verdicts, higher guilt ratings, and lower credibility ratings than older defendants (72).

**H2:** Younger victims (26) will lead to more guilty verdicts, higher guilt ratings, and lower defendant credibility ratings compared to older victims (70).

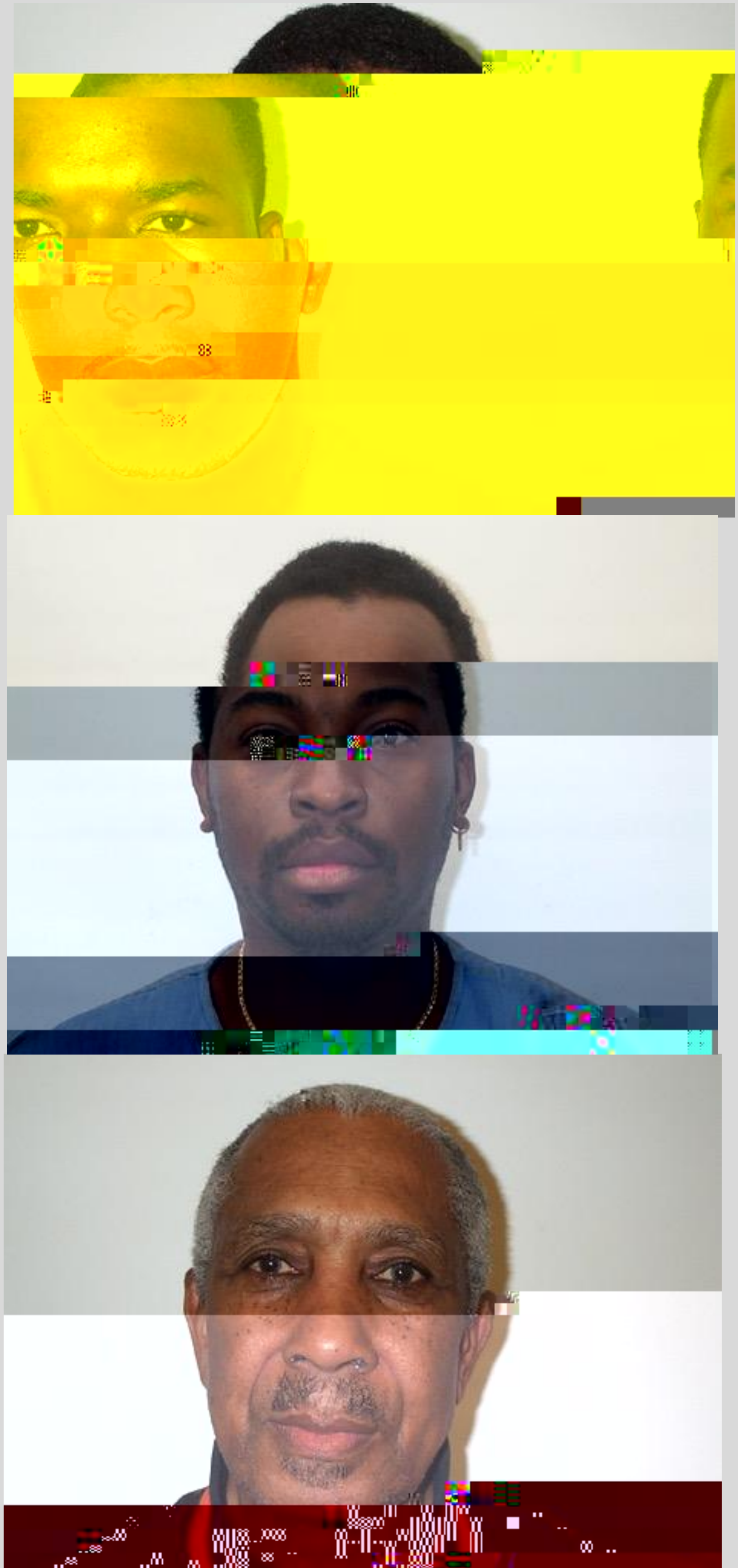
**H3:** Defendant credibility will mediate the relationship between defendant age and guilt ratings/verdicts. Older defendants will receive higher credibility, resulting in fewer guilty verdicts.

**Methods:**  
**Participants:** Jury eligible participants (N=370) age 18-70 were recruited from Prolific Academic.  
**Quotas:**

**Procedure:**  
During **Phase 1**, participants were asked demographic questions, including political orientation and age and completed the BJW scale.  
  
Five days later, participants read a transcript (**Phase 2**) involving a Black male defendant accused of murder and carjacking a Black male victim, with photos.

**Trial Transcript:** Murder trial adapted from a past study (Leippe et al. 2022). Defendant and victim age manipulated in photos and written descriptions within the transcript.

- Measures:**
- Belief in a Just World (BJW)
  - Verdict
  - Defendant Credibility
  - Victim Blaming/Derogation:
  - Stereotype Content
  - Attention Checks



**Limitations**

- As this is an online study, results may be difficult to generalize to a real-world circumstance.
- Only explored age bias in a criminal case involving a Black defendant and victim.

**Implications**

- Study investigates how extra-legal variables (such as race and age) may impact juror decision-making in a court of law.
- Study could aid in the creation of future training and guidance for prospective jurors.
- Increases understanding about age bias in the judicial system.

**Results**

- This study is still in progress, with results forthcoming.

[Link to References](#)