**Sample Debriefing Form**

*NOTE: Feel free to use any of the following language in your consent form, replacing language in each section to fit your study.*

*NOTE2: In blue, you will find alternative language or helpful notes.*

Debriefing

Juror Decision Making in an Armed Robbery Case (title of your study)

Thank you for your participation in this study. This debriefing is given as an opportunity for you to learn more about this research project, how your participation plays a part in this research, and why this research may be important to society. Please do not discuss this study with anyone else who might also participate in the future. Knowledge about the study may influence their responses and, essentially, invalidate the information obtained from them. (For this same reason, it is important that you tell the experimenter if you knew details about this study before participating.)

As you may have read in the paper or seen on the news, expert testimony is often an important part of many trials. Some people argue that expert testimony is very influential to the jury in deciding on a verdict. One of the many things people have been concerned about expert testimony is how reliable it is. If a jury is going to be influenced by an expert, then the expert should be reliable. If an expert is not reliable and a jury is very influenced by his or her testimony, then this could bias their verdict. This would be especially bad if it biased a verdict toward finding an innocent defendant guilty.

This study is designed to examine if jurors can tell if expert testimony is reliable, and if the appearance of the expert makes a difference. Mock jurors like you watched a criminal trial including expert testimony. To see if jurors can tell if the expert’s testimony is reliable, the quality of the science used by the expert was varied. We manipulated whether or not the research described in the testimony used random assignment and included a control group – two of many research methods that should be used in good research. Each of these factors determines whether or not psychological research is considered to be reliable by the courts when admitting the testimony. Because it could be more difficult to assess reliability if the expert’s testimony is very complex, we also varied how complex the expert’s language and explanation is. The expert either spoke in very technical jargon or in every day language and provided complicated or less complicated answers. We also varied some of the expert’s characteristics including his or her attractiveness and his or her gender. The trial that you watched had some combination of these manipulations. Everyone answered the same questions at the end, asking you to render a verdict and asking you about the expert’s reliability.

We hypothesized that jurors would be more sensitive to reliability when the testimony is simple, because it should be easier to tell if the expert used good science when he or she describes their research in an understandable way. We also hypothesized that when the testimony is complex, jurors would rely on information other than reliability when evaluating the expert, such as attractiveness and gender. We think that attractive experts will be judged as more credible, and that male experts will be judged as more credible than female experts. We think this difference in gender will happen because people tend to have more positive views of males in professional situations, even if they are equally qualified. This research is important in the fields of psychology and law because it may provide information about how juries make decisions in trials. In general, this research may offer insight into how jurors evaluate expert testimony. In particular, this research will help us understand how good jurors are at identifying scientific reliability and may tell us if the characteristics of the expert make a difference. Improving jury decision-making is very important to the legal system.

It is likely that the results of this research will be presented at academic conferences and/or published as an article in a journal. (match this language to the language in your consent form) Again, your individual responses will be kept anonymous during this process. If you are interested in the results of this study or if you have any additional questions or comments, please contact Jennifer Groscup by phone at (909) 607-0913 or by mail at Scripps College, 1030 Columbia Ave., Box 4088, Claremont, CA 91711. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Scripps College Institutional Review Board at irb@scrippscollege.edu.

Thank you again for your participation!