



# Behavioral Decision Making Group Colloquium Series

*is pleased to present*



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## ***Jurors' Presumption of Innocence***

ABSTRACT

The American formulation of the presumption of innocence explicitly forbids jurors from using official suspicion or indictment as evidence of guilt in a criminal trial. A behavioral experiment tested whether mock jurors follow this prescription by measuring their belief about an individual's guilt at different points prior to trial. Compared to when an individual had been merely named, jurors thought the individual was significantly more likely to be guilty after a detective referred the case to the district attorney, and when the individual was formally charged and thus a criminal defendant. A judicial instruction to presume innocence reduced jurors' beliefs about the defendant's guilt. Regression analyses indicate that jurors' prior beliefs predicted their posterior beliefs and further that their prior beliefs were predictive of verdicts even after accounting for their posterior beliefs. The findings suggest that jurors make different assumptions about the guilt of a criminal defendant prior to the introduction of evidence, and that these assumptions influence the overall evaluation of the case as well as the verdict.

**FRIDAY, APRIL 21, 2017 | 12:15-1:30pm | CORNELL HALL - D310**

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