This study examines juror decision making in civil suits against police officers alleged to have engaged in illegal searches, using simulated case materials and mock jurors drawn both from adults called for jury service and a student subject pool. The experiment assesses the impact of a cognitive process (the hindsight bias) and of individual attitudes on awards and finds that both are related to juror decisions. We test a theoretical model that specifies that both attitudes and outcome knowledge exercise their influence upon the damage award decision by means of their impact on interpretation of testimony. Causal models of the decision-making process appear to support the role played by interpretation of evidence as a mediator between individual attributes and juror decisions.

Decisions by jurors are the product of a complex set of factors, including the attributes they bring with them to the trial, the evidence presented, and legal rules that are supposed to shape the ways in which evidence is interpreted, weighted, and applied to make their decision. Research on jurors has provided a variety of important insights into each of these sets of influences. A substantial body of work has examined the role of individual-level attributes that may affect how jurors decide cases, for example, race, gender, socioeconomic status (SES), and atti-
tudes (Dane & Wrightsman, 1982). Attention has also been paid to the role that legal rules may play in juror decision making, with a common finding being that such rules do not always influence decisions in the fashion that they are supposed to (Sue, Smith, & Caldwell, 1973). Finally, some work has attempted to assess the role that evidence plays in decision making (Visher, 1987). Some studies look at a single factor (e.g., does strength of evidence affect conviction rates?), and others contrast the role of a variety of factors (e.g., Visher's recent work examining demographic, attitudinal, and evidentiary influences in a multiple-regression model).

Work on jury decision making has frequently been characterized by more complex models of decision making. As compared with jurors, juries are typically conceived of as making decisions in stages. The first involves individual decisions reached prior to deliberation, presumably the product of the same types of factors that are analyzed in juror research. To some extent these individual decisions are simply translated into jury decisions by voting rules. But there is evidence that the deliberation process itself may influence individual choices, suggesting that the ultimate decision is best viewed as a multistage process.

More complex conceptions seem appropriate at the individual juror level as well. Ellsworth and her collaborators, for example, propose that juror attitudes toward the death penalty may affect conviction rates by means of their effect on recall of evidence or upon the interpretation of the legal standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt" (Fitzgerald & Ellsworth, 1984; Thompson, Cowan, Ellsworth, & Harrington, 1984). Although their data analysis and interpretation focus on the main effects of attitudes, evidence recall, and a measure of fear of error, their conceptual model of juror decision making involves multiple stages in which one set of attributes affects juror verdicts by means of its impact on another.

In the work described here, we build upon this prior work, developing a similar model of individual decision making. We present and test a model based upon information processing at the individual level, in which juror attributes affect verdict choices in part as a result of their effects on how evidence is interpreted. We focus in particular upon two factors at the individual level: a cognitive process called the hindsight bias and juror attitudes toward the issue domain at stake in the case. The cases examined are civil damage suits against police officers in which the officer is alleged to have engaged in an illegal search. The setting thus involves a civil case with verdicts about money damage awards, but also implicates values (e.g., crime control vs. due process) and legal standards (e.g., probable cause) often at issue in criminal cases. The data were obtained from both student subjects and adult jurors called for jury service. Subjects viewed videotaped portions of trials, made awards, and subsequently filled out a questionnaire.

The Hindsight Bias

Jurors are often called upon to ignore available information when applying legal rules. Perhaps the most studied example involves instructions to disregard testimony (Caretta & Moreland, 1983; Sue, Smith, & Caldwell, 1973; Wolf & Montgomery, 1977), but there is a wider class of such situations. Many involve