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## **PATTERN CRIMINAL JURY INSTRUCTIONS**

### **Report of the Federal Judicial Center Committee to Study Criminal Jury Instructions**

Hon. Prentice H. Marshall  
Hon. Thomas A. Flannery  
Hon. Patrick E. Higginbotham

NCJRS

APR 6 1988

ACQUISITIONS

Federal Judicial Center  
June 1982

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*Cite as Federal Judicial Center Committee to Study Criminal Jury Instructions, Pattern Criminal Jury Instructions (Federal Judicial Center 1982).*

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## INTRODUCTION

The criminal jury instructions contained in this book were prepared under the auspices of the Federal Judicial Center's Committee to Study Criminal Jury Instructions, consisting of Judge Thomas A. Flannery of the District Court for the District of Columbia, Judge Patrick E. Higginbotham of the District Court for the Northern District of Texas, and the undersigned. The instructions were prepared in the context of uncertainty about the fate of the proposed revision of the Criminal Code, and therefore are limited to matters unlikely to be changed by the enactment of a new code. Thus, the instructions do not include the definitions or elements of commonly prosecuted crimes and touch only briefly on frequently encountered defenses. For those subjects we refer the bench and bar to their present practice or the efforts of others.

The distinguishing feature of these instructions, we believe, is their comprehensibility to laymen. How much attention jurors give to even the most lucid instructions is a question that may never be answered. But surely we judges have an obligation to communicate as well as we know how.

The importance of communicating well with lay jurors is widely acknowledged by drafters of pattern instructions. It is nevertheless clear that most pattern instructions do not do it very well. It is all too easy for the lawyers and judges who engage in the drafting process to forget how much of their vocabulary and language style was acquired in law school. The principal barrier to effective communication is probably not the inherent complexity of the subject matter, but our inability to put ourselves in the position of those not legally trained.

Our committee has tried to overcome this obstacle by including in our deliberations a distinguished journalist who is not legally trained and by following some drafting rules derived from research on juror understanding of instructions. We believe that comparison of these pattern instructions with others in common use will reveal that a substantial simplification of vocabulary and syntax has been achieved. That impression is borne out by standard tests for measuring the difficulty of written material, as is illustrated in appendix B.

## *Introduction*

The drafting rules we have tried to follow are set forth in appendix A, and we commend them to our fellow judges for guidance in fashioning instructions for situations that are not adequately covered here.

Another possible problem of communication is worthy of comment. It is that an opportunity for confusion may be created when different judges give different instructions on the same subject to jurors drawn from the same pool. Our instruction on reasonable doubt, for example, takes note of the fact that some of the jurors may have previously served in civil cases, and points out that the standard of proof in criminal cases is more exacting. It does not take note of the possibility that some of the jurors were previously exposed to a different definition of "reasonable doubt," and explain how the jurors are to deal with the apparent conflict. This kind of problem may deserve more attention than it has traditionally received. Perhaps there are some instructions on which an entire district court should agree to take a common approach.

Following an idea developed in the pattern instructions of the Fifth Circuit District Judges Association, the instructions in this book are presented in a sequence that approximates the likely sequence in which they would be delivered. Some variation from case to case must of course be anticipated, but this organization will generally enable the judge to scan the table of contents, select the instructions relevant to the particular case, and then use them without the necessity of flipping back and forth. We have not adopted the further innovation of the Fifth Circuit instructions, that of having forms that can be assembled with little or no retyping into a complete set of instructions suitable for sending to the jury. It is our view that instructions should often contain references to the subject matter of the evidence and the names of the parties and witnesses, and we have made no effort to produce instructions that can be used without being tailored to fit the particular case.

The view that instructions should be tailored also explains our decision to use the masculine singular pronoun and singular verbs in the pattern instructions. We contemplate that, when the instructions are delivered to the jury, each pronoun will be masculine or feminine, and each pronoun and verb singular or plural, as the circumstances of the particular case demand. We did not think it necessary to set forth all the possible variants each time a pronoun or verb is used.

The principal burden of draftsmanship has been borne by our reporter, Professor Paul Marcus, Professor of Law, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Our journalist adviser was Professor Thomas B. Littlewood, Head of the Department of Journalism at

the same institution. Allan Lind and Anthony Partridge of the Federal Judicial Center provided guidance derived from the psycholinguistic research, reviewed and criticized the several drafts, and participated in all of the committee's meetings. Each of these four people has made an important contribution to the final product, and we are grateful to them for it.

The instructions were reviewed in draft by an experienced trial judge from each circuit with a view to ensuring that conflict with circuit law had successfully been avoided. While we assume that district judges who use the instructions will exercise their own judgment, we believe that the instructions should be acceptable in all circuits except as noted in the commentary accompanying particular instructions. For this review of the draft instructions, we are indebted to Judges John J. McNaught (D. Mass.), Jacob Mishler (E.D.N.Y.), Frederick B. Lacey (D.N.J.), Walter E. Hoffman (E.D. Va.), William K. Thomas (N.D. Ohio), Hubert L. Will (N.D. Ill.), Warren K. Urbom (D. Neb.), Donald S. Voorhees (W.D. Wash.), Wesley E. Brown (D. Kan.), and Wm. Terrell Hodges (M.D. Fla.). This group offered many helpful suggestions. They are, of course, not to be held responsible for any deficiencies that remain.

Finally, I must acknowledge that we have freely taken ideas from existing pattern instructions used in federal district courts. Naturally, we hope we have improved on them. But we are fully cognizant of the extent to which our work has depended on the work of others. Our debt to the authors of the following instructions is a substantial one:

Devitt & Blackmar, *Federal Jury Practice and Instructions* (3d ed. 1977).

Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions, Fifth Circuit District Judges Association, *Pattern Jury Instructions (Criminal Cases)* (1978).

Seventh Circuit Judicial Conference Committee on Jury Instructions, *Manual on Jury Instructions in Federal Criminal Cases*, 33 F.R.D. 523-614 (1963).

Committee on Federal Criminal Jury Instructions of the Seventh Circuit, *Federal Criminal Jury Instructions* (1980).

Criminal Jury Instructions Committee, Young Lawyers Section, D.C. Bar Association, *Criminal Jury Instructions, District of Columbia* (3d ed. 1978).

We hope that our colleagues on the district bench and the practicing bar will find these instructions helpful.

Prentice H. Marshall, Chairman  
Judge, United States District Court  
for the Northern District of Illinois

## 1. Standard Preliminary Instruction before Trial

Members of the Jury:

Before we begin the trial, I would like to tell you about what will be happening. I want to describe how the trial will be conducted and explain what we will be doing—you, the lawyers for both sides, and I. At the end of the trial I will give you more detailed guidance on how you are to go about reaching your decision. But now I simply want to explain how the trial will proceed.

This criminal case has been brought by the United States government. I will sometimes refer to the government as the prosecution. The government is represented at this trial by an assistant United States attorney, \_\_\_\_\_. The defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, is represented by his lawyer, \_\_\_\_\_. (*Alternative: The defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, has decided to represent himself and not use the services of a lawyer. He has a perfect right to do this. His decision has no bearing on whether he is guilty or not guilty, and it should have no effect on your consideration of the case.*)

The defendant has been charged by the government with violation of a federal law. He is charged with [e.g.: having intentionally sold heroin]. The charge against the defendant is contained in the indictment. The indictment is simply the description of the charge made by the government against the defendant; it is not evidence of anything. The defendant pleaded not guilty to the charge and denies committing the offense. He is presumed innocent and may not be found guilty by you unless all twelve of you unanimously find that the government has proved his guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. (*Addition for multidefendant cases: The defendants are being tried together because the government has charged that they worked together to commit the crime of \_\_\_\_\_.* But you will have to give separate consideration to the case against each defend-

ant. Each is entitled to your separate consideration. Do not think of them as a group.)

The first step in the trial will be the opening statements. The government in its opening statement will tell you about the evidence which it intends to put before you, so that you will have an idea of what the government's case is going to be.

Just as the indictment is not evidence, neither is the opening statement evidence. Its purpose is only to help you understand what the evidence will be and what the government will try to prove.

<sup>1</sup>After the government's opening statement, the defendant's attorney will make an opening statement. At this point in the trial, no evidence has been offered by either side.

Next the government will offer evidence that it says will support the charges against the defendant. The government's evidence in this case will consist of the testimony of witnesses as well as documents and exhibits. Some of you have probably heard the terms "circumstantial evidence" and "direct evidence." Do not be concerned with these terms. You are to consider all the evidence given in this trial.

After the government's evidence, the defendant's lawyer may (make an opening statement and) present evidence in the defendant's behalf, but he is not required to do so. I remind you that the defendant is presumed innocent and the government must prove the guilt of the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt. The defendant does not have to prove his innocence.

[Insert Instruction 2 here if material on questioning by jurors is desired.]

After you have heard all the evidence on both sides, the government and the defense will each be given time for their final arguments. I just told you that the opening statements by the lawyers

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1. This paragraph should be omitted if the defense reserves its statement until later. The trial judge should resolve this matter with counsel prior to the giving of the instruction.

are not evidence. The same applies to the closing arguments. They are not evidence either. In their closing arguments the lawyers for the government and the defendant will be attempting to summarize their cases and help you understand the evidence that was presented.

The final part of the trial occurs when I instruct you about the rules of law which you are to use in reaching your verdict. After hearing my instructions, you will leave the courtroom together to make your decision. Your deliberations will be secret. You will never have to explain your verdict to anyone.

[Insert Instruction 3 here if material on note-taking by jurors is desired.]

Now that I have described the trial itself, let me explain the jobs that you and I are to perform during the trial. I will decide which rules of law apply to this case. I will decide this in response to questions raised by the attorneys as we go along and also in the final instructions given to you after the evidence and arguments are completed. You will decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant has committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. You must base that decision only on the evidence in the case and my instructions about the law.<sup>2</sup>

[Insert discussion of the elements of the offense here if they are to be set out for the jury in the preliminary instruction.]

[Insert Instruction 4 here if a statement that the jury should not consider punishment is desired.]

During the course of the trial, you should not talk with any witness, or with the defendant, or with any of the lawyers in the case. Please don't talk with them about any subject at all. In addition, during the course of the trial you should not talk about the trial with anyone else—not your family, not your friends, not the people you work with. Also, you should not discuss this case among your-

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2. If the judge wishes to discuss considerations in evaluating witnesses' testimony in the preliminary instruction as well as in the closing charge, this would be an appropriate place to do so. Instruction 23 can be adapted for this purpose.

selves until I have instructed you on the law and you have gone to the jury room to make your decision at the end of the trial. It is important that you wait until all the evidence is received and you have heard my instructions on rules of law before you deliberate among yourselves. Let me add that during the course of the trial you will receive all the evidence you properly may consider to decide the case. Because of this, you should not attempt to gather any information on your own which you think might be helpful. Do not engage in any outside reading on this case, do not attempt to visit any places mentioned in the case, and do not in any other way try to learn about the case outside the courtroom.

Now that the trial has begun you must not read about it in the newspapers or watch or listen to television or radio reports of what is happening here.

The reason for these rules, as I am certain you will understand, is that your decision in this case must be made solely on the evidence presented at the trial.

At times during the trial, a lawyer may make an objection to a question asked by another lawyer, or to an answer by a witness. This simply means that the lawyer is requesting that I make a decision on a particular rule of law. Do not draw any conclusion from such objections or from my rulings on the objections. These only relate to the legal questions that I must determine and should not influence your thinking. If I sustain an objection to a question, the witness may not answer it. Do not attempt to guess what answer might have been given had I allowed the question to be answered. Similarly, if I tell you not to consider a particular statement, you should put that statement out of your mind, and you may not refer to that statement in your later deliberations.

During the course of the trial I may ask a question of a witness. If I do, that does not indicate I have any opinion about the facts in the case.

Finally, let me clarify something you may wonder about later. During the course of the trial I may have to interrupt the proceed-

ings to confer with the attorneys about the rules of law which should apply here. Sometimes we will talk here, at the bench. But some of these conferences may take time. So, as a convenience to you, I will excuse you from the courtroom. I will try to avoid such interruptions as much as possible, but please be patient even if the trial seems to be moving slowly because conferences often save time for all of us.

Thank you for your attention.

### Commentary

Unlike most of the other instructions, this one is lengthy, containing a number of different concepts. While the length of it subjects it to some question, the committee was persuaded by Judge Prettyman's argument that such an instruction is necessary at the commencement of the trial. Prettyman, *Jury Instructions—First or Last?*, 46 A.B.A.J. 1066 (1960).

Some portions of this instruction can appropriately be included in instructions given to the entire voir dire panel. In that event, the judge should consider whether repetition in this preliminary instruction is necessary.

Throughout this instruction, the presumption of innocence element is stressed. The committee believes that it is important to plant the presumption in the jurors' minds so that there will be no confusion during the course of the trial.

Unlike some pattern instructions, this instruction does not suggest that the statute or indictment in the case actually be read to the jury. The committee believes that such a standard practice is often confusing to the jury and the purpose for it can be achieved if the judge gives a succinct description of the crime charged.

The committee believes that the fullest possible disclosure of the elements of the offense and any defenses will assist the jury in understanding the evidence. The committee recognizes, however, that detailing the elements is not always practicable before trial. It is important that counsel be consulted before the specific elements are discussed with the jury.

Finally, the instruction does not refer to the possibility that sequestration of the jury will be necessary (whether during the course of the trial or the deliberations). In cases in which sequestration is likely, the committee believes that reference to this problem should be made to the entire jury panel when other standard matters (length of the trial, courtroom hours, and so on) are discussed.

## **2. Questioning of Witnesses by Jurors**

**(Optional Addition to Preliminary Instruction)**

### **Alternative A**

The only persons who may ask questions of witnesses are the lawyers and myself. You are not permitted to ask questions of witnesses.

### **Alternative B**

Generally only the lawyers and I ask questions of witnesses. If you feel that an important question has not been asked, you may put the question in writing and have it handed to me. I will then decide if the question is a proper one. If it is, I will ask the question of the witness.

### **Commentary**

A judge can take one of three alternatives regarding questions by jurors: say nothing about questions, give an instruction forbidding such questions, or give an instruction allowing them.

Alternative B, which permits only written questions by jurors, is intended to reduce the risk of an objectionable question being communicated to other members of the jury and to enable trial judges to deal with objectionable questions out of the presence of the jury.

### **3. Note-Taking by Jurors**

**(Optional Addition to Preliminary Instruction)**

#### **Alternative A**

You may not take notes during the course of the trial. There are several reasons for this. It is difficult to take notes and, at the same time, pay attention to what a witness is saying. Furthermore, in a group the size of yours certain persons will take better notes than others and there is the risk that the jurors who do not take good notes will depend upon the jurors who do take good notes. The jury system depends upon all twelve jurors paying close attention and arriving at a unanimous decision. I believe that the jury system works better when the jurors do not take notes.

You will notice that we do have an official court reporter making a record of the trial. However, we will not have typewritten transcripts of this record available for use in reaching your decision in this case.

#### **Alternative B**

If you want to take notes during the course of the trial you may do so. However, it is difficult to take detailed notes and pay attention to what the witnesses are saying at the same time. If you do take notes, be sure that your taking of notes does not interfere with your listening to and considering all the evidence. Also, if you take notes, do not discuss them with anyone before you begin your deliberations. Do not take the notes with you at the end of the day. Be sure to leave them in the jury room.

If you choose not to take notes, remember it is your own individual responsibility to listen carefully to the evidence. You cannot give this responsibility to someone who is taking notes. We depend on the judgment of all members of the jury; you must all remem-

ber the evidence in this case.

You will notice that we do have an official court reporter making a record of the trial. However, we will not have typewritten transcripts of this record available for use in reaching your decision in this case.

### **Commentary**

The taking of notes by jurors appears to be a discretionary practice with the trial judge. Thus, two alternatives are offered.

The instruction permitting note-taking is drafted on the assumption that the jurors will be permitted to take their notes into the jury room and rely on them during deliberations. The committee believes that it is not desirable to allow note-taking and then not allow jurors to use the notes during deliberations. If the note-taking jurors will not be permitted to take their notes into the jury room, however, that should be made clear at the outset.

#### **4. Jury Not to Consider Punishment**

**(Optional Addition to Preliminary Instruction)**

If you find the defendant guilty, it will then be my job to decide what punishment should be imposed. In considering the evidence and arguments that will be given during the trial, you should not guess about the punishment. It should not enter into your consideration or discussions at any time.

##### **Commentary**

In cases in which a punishment instruction will be given, it would normally be given at the end of the trial. Because of the possibility that in some serious cases the trial judge might wish to give the instruction twice, particularly in those jurisdictions in which jurors in state cases actually do consider punishment, the punishment instruction is included here with the preliminary instruction.

## 5. Cautionary Instruction, First Recess

We are about to take our first break during the trial and I want to remind you of a few things that are especially important. Until the trial is completed, you are not to discuss this case with anyone, whether members of your family, people involved in the trial, or anyone else; that includes your fellow jurors. If anyone approaches you and tries to discuss the trial with you, please let me know about it immediately. Also, you must not read or listen to any news reports of the trial. Finally, remember that you must not talk about anything with any person who is involved in the trial—even something that has nothing to do with the trial.

If you need to speak with me about anything, simply give a note to the marshal to give to me.

I may not repeat these things to you before every break that we take, but keep them in mind throughout the trial.

## **6. Discharge of Defense Counsel during Trial**

Even though \_\_\_\_\_ was at first represented by a lawyer, he has decided to continue this trial representing himself and not use the services of a lawyer. He has a perfect right to do that. His decision has no bearing on whether he is guilty or not guilty, and it should have no effect on your consideration of the case.

## 7. Judicial Notice

Even though no evidence has been introduced about it, I have decided to accept as proved the fact that [e.g.: the city of San Francisco is north of the city of Los Angeles]. I believe that this fact is of such common knowledge [or alternative justification per rule 201(b)(2) of the Federal Rules of Evidence] that it would be a waste of our time to hear evidence about it. Thus, you may treat it as proved, even though no evidence was brought out on the point. Of course, with this fact, as with any fact, you will have to make the final decision and you are not required to agree with me.

### Commentary

The committee recommends that the instruction regarding judicial notice be given at the time notice is taken.

Rule 201(g) of the Federal Rules of Evidence creates a difficult dilemma for trial judges. At the threshold, the trial judge must determine that a fact is sufficiently undisputed to be judicially noticed. Yet, the judge must then advise the jurors that they can disagree with his or her conclusion.

## 8. Summaries of Records as Evidence

### Commentary

The committee recommends that no instruction be given because it is now clear that under rule 1006 of the Federal Rules of Evidence the summary itself is evidence. *See United States v. Smyth*, 556 F.2d 1179, 1184 (5th Cir. 1977).

## 9. Standard Introduction to the Charge

Members of the Jury:

You will soon leave the courtroom and begin discussing this case in the jury room.

As I told you earlier, the government has accused the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, of committing the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. But this is only a charge. The defendant is presumed to be innocent. Therefore, you may find him guilty only if you are convinced, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he committed this crime as charged. If you are not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that he committed this crime as charged, you must find him not guilty.

During the course of the trial you received all the evidence you may properly consider to decide the case. Your decision in this case must be made solely on the evidence presented at the trial. Do not be concerned about whether evidence is "direct evidence" or "circumstantial evidence." You should consider all the evidence that was presented to you.

At times during the trial you saw lawyers make objections to questions asked by other lawyers, and to answers by witnesses. This simply meant that the lawyers were requesting that I make a decision on a particular rule of law. Do not draw any conclusion from such objections or from my rulings on the objections. These only related to the legal questions that I had to determine and should not influence your thinking. When I sustained an objection to a question, the witness was not allowed to answer it. Do not attempt to guess what answer might have been given had I allowed the question to be answered. Similarly, when I told you not to consider a particular statement, you were told to put that statement out of your mind, and you may not refer to that statement in your deliberations.

Sometimes in the trial I have asked questions of witnesses. When I asked questions, that did not indicate I had any opinion about the facts in the case.

It is my job to decide what rules of law apply to the case. I have explained some of these rules to you in the course of the trial, and I will explain others of them to you before you go to the jury room. This is my job; it is not the job of the lawyers. So, while the lawyers may have commented during the trial on some of these rules, you are to be guided only by what I say about them. You must follow all of the rules as I explain them to you. You may not follow some and ignore others. Even if you disagree or don't understand the reasons for some of the rules, you are bound to follow them.

If you decide that the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that \_\_\_\_\_ is guilty of the crime as charged, it will also be my job to decide what the punishment will be. You should not try to guess what the punishment might be. It should not enter into your consideration or discussions at any time.

The decision you reach in the jury room, whether guilty or not guilty, must be unanimous. You must all agree. Your deliberations will be secret. You will never have to explain your verdict to anyone.

## 10. Jury's Duty to Deliberate

It is your duty, as jurors, to talk with one another and to deliberate in the jury room. You should try to reach an agreement if you can. Each of you must decide the case for yourself, but only after consideration of the evidence with the other members of the jury. While this is going on, do not hesitate to reexamine your own opinions and change your mind if you are convinced that you are wrong. But do not give up your honest beliefs solely because the others think differently, or merely to get the case over with. In a very real way you are judges, judges of the facts. Your only interest is to determine whether the government has proved the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.

### Commentary

In the discretion of the trial judge, this instruction can be given either as part of the charge or in response to a report of deadlock by a jury.

The old charge based on *Allen v. United States*, 164 U.S. 492, 501 (1896), has been under increasing attack within recent times. See Marcus, *The Allen Instruction in Criminal Cases: Is the Dynamite Charge About to be Permanently Defused?*, 43 Mo. L. Rev. 613 (1978). The committee's language is a modification of the language suggested in the commentary to Standard 15-4.4(a) of the American Bar Association's Standards for Criminal Justice (Trial by Jury) (2d ed. 1978).

Judges in the Seventh Circuit are cautioned that the above instruction may not be given to a deadlocked jury in that circuit. The only permissible instruction to a deadlocked jury is the instruction set forth in *United States v. Silvern*, 484 F.2d 879 (7th Cir. 1973), as modified in 1980 by the Committee on Federal Jury Instructions of the Seventh Circuit. Moreover, that instruction may be given to a deadlocked jury only if it was included verbatim in the original charge. *United States v. Brown*, 634 F.2d 1069 (7th Cir. 1980).

## 11. Stipulations of Testimony

While we were hearing evidence you were told that the government and the defendant agreed, or stipulated, that [e.g.: if John Smith were called as a witness he would testify that he sold Mrs. Jones a dress on the morning of June 9, 1979]. That would be \_\_\_\_\_ 's testimony if he were called as a witness. You will consider that to be the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ as if he were in court and testifying here.

## 12. Stipulations of Fact

While we were hearing evidence you were told that the government and the defendant agreed, or stipulated, that [e.g.: the name of the Cincinnati hotel was "The Plaza"]. This means simply that they both accept the fact that [that was the name of the hotel]. There is no disagreement over that, so there was no need for evidence by either side on that point. You must accept that as fact, even though nothing more was said about it one way or the other.

### **13. Wiretaps, Consensual Recordings: Propriety of Evidence**

During this trial, you have heard recordings of conversations [e.g.: that the defendant had with Larry Loop, a government agent]. These conversations were legally recorded by the government; they are a proper form of evidence for this trial and may be considered by you, just as any other evidence.

#### **Commentary**

The committee thinks it is important to have an instruction allaying the suspicions of jurors with regard to wiretaps and consensual recordings. The instruction should not define the material terms under the United States Code; it should simply inform the jury that the evidence is legitimate.

## **14. Defendant's Previous Trial: Jury Not to Consider**

During the course of this trial, you have heard that the defendant was on trial before. That is true. The defendant and the government are entitled, however, to have you decide this case entirely on the evidence that has come before you in this trial. You should not consider the fact of a previous trial in any way when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime.

### **Commentary**

The committee recommends that this instruction not be given unless specifically requested by the defense.

## **15. Defendant's Photographs, "Mug Shots": No Inference to Be Drawn from Police Possession**

You will recall that one of the witnesses in this trial, \_\_\_\_\_, testified that [e.g.: he viewed a photograph of the defendant which was shown to him by the police]. The police collect pictures of many people from many different sources and for many different purposes. The fact that the police had the defendant's picture does not mean that he committed this or any other crime.

### **Commentary**

The committee recommends that this instruction not be given unless specifically requested by the defense.

## 16. Dismissal of Some of Charges against Defendant: Jury Not to Consider Certain Evidence

At the beginning of the trial I told you that the defendant had been accused of \_\_\_\_\_ different crimes: [Brief descriptions]. In the meantime, I disposed of one of these charges, the one having to do with \_\_\_\_\_. The charge of \_\_\_\_\_ is no longer of concern to you. Therefore, the only crime that the defendant is charged with is \_\_\_\_\_.

The following evidence is no longer in this case: [Describe evidence]. You should not consider any of this evidence when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Commentary

The committee recommends that the jury be advised, to the extent practicable, specifically which evidence it should not consider.

## 17. Disposition of Charges against Codefendant: Jury Not to Consider Certain Evidence

At the beginning of the trial you were told that both defendants, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, were accused of committing the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. The charge against one of the defendants, \_\_\_\_\_, has been disposed of, and he will no longer be part of this trial. The fact that he is no longer part of the trial should not enter your thinking when you are called upon to decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, committed the crime.

The following evidence is no longer in this case: [Describe evidence]. You should not consider any of this evidence when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, has committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Commentary

The committee recommends that the jury be advised, to the extent practicable, specifically which evidence it should not consider.

No reference should be made in this situation to a plea of guilty by the codefendant (if that is the basis for disposition of the charge, as opposed to a dismissal for lack of evidence). If the jury should become aware of the plea it should be strongly instructed that it is not to consider or discuss the plea in deciding the case of the remaining defendant or defendants.

## **18. Evidence Admitted for a Limited Purpose: Jury to Limit Its Consideration**

Several times during the trial I told you that certain evidence was allowed into this trial for a particular and limited purpose. [Describe evidence.] When you consider that evidence, you must limit your consideration to that purpose.

### **Commentary**

This instruction contemplates that the court gave limiting instructions when the evidence was received. The committee recommends that the jury be informed specifically which evidence was so admitted and what limitations were imposed. See Instruction 19 for an example dealing with one type of limited evidence.

## 19. Evidence Applicable to Only One Defendant: Jury to Limit Its Consideration

As you know, there are \_\_\_\_\_ defendants on trial here: [Give names]. They are being tried together because the government has charged that they worked together to commit the crime of [e.g.: importing heroin]. Nevertheless, each defendant is entitled to have his case decided just on the evidence which applies to him. Some of the evidence in this case was limited to one of the defendants and cannot be considered in the cases of the others. That was a legal decision made by me. The testimony you heard that [brief description] should be considered only in the case of the defendant \_\_\_\_\_ and not in the cases of the others. What that means is that you may consider this testimony in the case of \_\_\_\_\_, but you may not consider it in any way when you are deciding whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the other defendants, [give names], committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_.

### Commentary

In even the most straightforward cases involving only two defendants, the problem which this instruction addresses can create great difficulties for both the court and the jury. The judge should make an effort to give this type of instruction each time limited evidence is admitted. Moreover, in such a case, the judge might consider marshaling evidence at the end of the trial, thereby identifying the limited evidence available against the defendants. *Cf.* United States v. Kelly, 349 F.2d 720, 757 (2d Cir. 1965); United States v. Kahaner, 317 F.2d 459, 479 n.12 (2d Cir. 1963).

## **20. Jury to Consider Only This Defendant, Not Whether Others Have Committed Crimes**

As I explained to you earlier, the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, is on trial here because the government has charged that he [brief description of the crime]. The only question you must answer is whether the government proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he committed this crime. It is not up to you to decide whether any other person is guilty of any crime. The question of the possible guilt of others should not enter your thinking when you decide whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the crime.

### **Commentary**

This instruction should not be given in cases in which the allegation is one of vicarious liability, such as conspiracy or aiding and abetting. In those cases the jury may be required to decide (at least as a preliminary matter) whether other persons are guilty of a crime. The instruction may require some modification in cases in which an alibi or a mistake in identification is raised.

## 21. Definition of Reasonable Doubt

As I have said many times, the government has the burden of proving the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Some of you may have served as jurors in civil cases, where you were told that it is only necessary to prove that a fact is more likely true than not true. In criminal cases, the government's proof must be more powerful than that. It must be beyond a reasonable doubt.

Proof beyond a reasonable doubt is proof that leaves you firmly convinced of the defendant's guilt. There are very few things in this world that we know with absolute certainty, and in criminal cases the law does not require proof that overcomes every possible doubt. If, based on your consideration of the evidence, you are firmly convinced that the defendant is guilty of the crime charged, you must find him guilty. If, on the other hand, you think there is a real possibility that he is not guilty, you must give him the benefit of the doubt and find him not guilty.

### Commentary

The circuit courts are divided on the question whether a reasonable doubt instruction should be given. Because of the important, yet somewhat vague, underlying principles involved in this concept, some courts think no instruction could convey the broad sense of the term. *See United States v. Larson*, 581 F.2d 664, 669 (7th Cir. 1978). In other courts, however, because of the central importance of the phrase, it could well be reversible error to fail to give an instruction, particularly if requested by counsel. *See Friedman v. United States*, 381 F.2d 155, 160 (8th Cir. 1967).

The committee has attempted to give a relatively short instruction highlighting the importance of the concept. *See Tsoumas v. New Hampshire*, 611 F.2d 412 (1st Cir. 1980); *Reeves v. Reed*, 596 F.2d 628 (4th Cir. 1979).

The committee recognizes that many appellate opinions lend strong support to the standard formulation that a reasonable doubt is a doubt that would cause a person to hesitate to act in the most important of one's own affairs. *E.g.*, *United States v. Morris*, 647 F.2d 568, 571-72 (5th Cir. 1981); *United States v. Fallen*, 498 F.2d 172, 177 (8th Cir. 1974); *United States v. Stubin*, 446 F.2d 457, 465 (3d Cir. 1971). Judges are cautioned that the committee's instruc-

tion may not be acceptable in some circuits. Nevertheless, the committee has rejected the standard formulation because the analogy it uses seems misplaced. In the decisions people make in the most important of their own affairs, resolution of conflicts about past events does not usually play a major role. Indeed, decisions we make in the most important affairs of our lives—choosing a spouse, a job, a place to live, and the like—generally involve a very heavy element of uncertainty and risk-taking. They are wholly unlike the decisions jurors ought to make in criminal cases.

## **22. Defendant's Election Not to Testify (or Offer Evidence): Jury Not to Consider**

Remember that a defendant has an absolute right not to testify (offer evidence). The fact that \_\_\_\_\_ did not testify (offer any evidence) should not be considered by you in any way or even discussed in your deliberations. I remind you that it is up to the government to prove the defendant guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. It is not up to the defendant to prove that he is not guilty.

### **Commentary**

While it may be permissible to give this instruction over the defendant's objection, the committee recommends that the instruction not be given unless requested by the defendant. If there is more than one nontestifying defendant and the instruction is requested by some but not all such defendants, it should be given in general terms without the use of the defendants' names.

## 23. General Considerations in Evaluating Witnesses' Testimony

As I have just reminded you, it is your job to decide if the government has proved the guilt of the defendant beyond a reasonable doubt. An important part of that job will be making judgments about the testimony of the several (many) witnesses (—including the defendant—) who testified in this case. You should decide whether you believe what each person had to say, and how important that testimony was. In making that decision I suggest that you ask yourself a few questions: Did the person impress you as honest? Did he or she have any particular reason not to tell the truth? Did he or she have a personal interest in the outcome of the case? Did the witness seem to have a good memory? Did the witness have the opportunity and ability to observe accurately the things he or she testified about? Did he or she appear to understand the questions clearly and answer them directly? Did the witness's testimony differ from the testimony of other witnesses? These are a few of the considerations that will help you determine the accuracy of what each witness said.

In making up your mind and reaching a verdict, do not make any decisions simply because there were more witnesses on one side than on the other. Do not reach a conclusion on a particular point just because there were more witnesses testifying for one side on that point. Your job is to think about the testimony of each witness you heard and decide how much you believe of what he or she had to say.

## 24. Testimony of Accomplice or Other Witness Testifying in Exchange for Immunity or Reduced Criminal Liability: Cautionary Instruction

You have heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_. He is providing evidence for the government in exchange for a promise from the government that [e.g.: he will not be prosecuted for the things he is testifying about; the prosecution will recommend lenient treatment in his own case]. He told the government what he would testify to in exchange for this promise.

The government may present the testimony of someone who has been promised favorable treatment in his own case in exchange for his testimony. Some people in this position are entirely truthful when testifying. Still, you should consider the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ with more caution than the testimony of other witnesses. He may have had reason to make up stories or exaggerate what others did because he wanted to strike a good bargain with the government about his own case. In deciding whether you believe \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony, you should keep these comments in mind.

### Commentary

The committee believes that it is important to draw attention to the testimony of witnesses who are testifying in exchange for immunity or other benefits, and that some explanation should be given to the jury of the reason that statements by such witnesses are subject to suspicion.

There is no separate instruction for accomplice witnesses. In light of the prevalence of plea bargaining and immunity, they are generally testifying after having struck a deal with the government and are adequately covered by this instruction.

The instruction does not use the terms "accomplice" or "immunity." It was considered preferable to avoid the use of these legal terms. If the lawyers have used the terms, however, it may be desirable to define them when this instruction is given. The end of the first paragraph of the instruction would be an appropriate place.

## 25. Testimony of Paid Informer: Cautionary Instruction

You have heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_. He has an arrangement with the government under which he gets paid for providing information about criminal activity. The government may present the testimony of such a person. Some people who get paid for providing information about criminal activity are entirely truthful when testifying. Still, you should consider the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ with more caution than the testimony of other witnesses. Since he may believe that he will continue to be paid only if he produces evidence of criminal conduct, he may have reason to make up stories or to exaggerate what others did. In deciding whether you believe \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony, you should keep these comments in mind.

### Commentary

The committee believes that it is important to draw attention to the testimony of informers, and that some explanation should be given to the jury of the reason that statements by these witnesses are subject to suspicion.

The term "informer" is not used in the instruction. It was considered preferable to avoid it. If the lawyers have used the term, however, it may be desirable to define it when giving this instruction. This could be done by adding the phrase, "who is called an informer," at the end of the third sentence.

## **26. Testimony of a Police Officer or Government Agent**

### **Commentary**

The committee believes that Instruction 23, General Considerations in Evaluating Witnesses' Testimony, adequately covers cases in which the credibility of an agent witness is called into question based upon his position, and the committee recommends that no special instruction be given.

## 27. Testimony of Expert Witness

During the trial you heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_, who was described to us as an expert in \_\_\_\_\_. This witness was permitted to testify even though he did not actually witness any of the events involved in this trial.

A person's training and experience may make him or her a true expert in a technical field. The law allows that person to state an opinion here about matters in that particular field. Merely because \_\_\_\_\_ has expressed an opinion does not mean, however, that you must accept this opinion. The same as with any other witness, it is up to you to decide whether you believe his testimony and choose to rely upon it. Part of that decision will depend on your judgment about whether his background of training and experience is sufficient for him to give the expert opinion that you heard. You must also decide whether his opinions were based on sound reasons, judgment, and information.

## 28. Testimony of a Child: Cautionary Instruction

You have heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_, and you may be wondering whether his young age should make any difference. What you must determine, as with any witness, is whether that testimony is believable. Did he understand the questions? Does he have a good memory? Is he telling the truth?

Because young children may not fully understand what is happening here, it is up to you to decide whether \_\_\_\_\_ understood the seriousness of his appearance as a witness at this criminal trial. In addition, young children may be influenced by the way that questions are asked. It is up to you to decide whether \_\_\_\_\_ understood the questions asked of him. Keep this in mind when you consider \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony.

### Commentary

This instruction is somewhat shorter than the standard child's testimony instruction. The committee believes that it is sufficient to call to the jury's attention the basic difficulties with the testimony of a child, specifically stressing the kinds of issues which may arise in connection with such testimony.

## 29. Impeachment by Prior Perjury

It has been shown that \_\_\_\_\_, one of the witnesses for the (government) (defense), lied under oath on an earlier occasion. (*Add if necessary*: A person who lies when he was sworn to tell the truth is guilty of perjury.)

Whether \_\_\_\_\_ is telling the truth in this trial is for you to decide. But the fact that he lied under oath on an earlier occasion should make you cautious about believing him now.

### Commentary

This instruction will rarely be used, for it will be appropriate only when there is proof, through either a perjury conviction or an admission by the witness, that the witness intentionally lied under oath. *See* Fed. R. Evid. 608(b), 609.

### **30. Impeachment by Prior Conviction (Witness Other Than Defendant)**

You have been told that the witness \_\_\_\_\_ was convicted in 19\_\_ of [e.g.: armed robbery]. This conviction has been brought to your attention only because you may wish to consider it when you decide, as with any witness, whether you believe his testimony.

#### **Commentary**

Some instructions combine in a single charge the question of prior felony convictions for defendants and witnesses. The committee thought it would be clearer for the jury if these instructions were separated. The instruction about defendants' prior convictions is No. 41.

### 31. Impeachment by Evidence of Untruthful Character

You have heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_, who was a witness in the (government's) (defense) case. You also heard testimony from others concerning (their opinion about whether he is a truthful person) (his reputation, in the community where he lives, for telling the truth.) It is up to you to decide from what you heard here whether \_\_\_\_\_ was telling the truth in this trial. In deciding this, you should bear in mind the testimony concerning his (reputation for) truthfulness.

#### Commentary

The committee believes that this instruction will seldom be needed; argument by counsel should adequately cover the point.

Under rule 608(a) of the Federal Rules of Evidence, a witness may give his opinion of the character of the other witness for truthfulness, and not only state the reputation.

### 32. Impeachment by Prior Inconsistent Statements, Not under Oath

You will recall that \_\_\_\_\_ testified during the trial [description, if needed]. You will also recall that it was brought out that before this trial he made statements about this matter. These earlier statements were brought to your attention to help you decide if you believe \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony. You cannot use these earlier statements as evidence in this case. However, if \_\_\_\_\_ said something different about this matter earlier, and the two stories were conflicting, then there may be reason for you to doubt \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony here. That's up to you to decide.

#### Commentary

The instruction deals with the situation in which there is no dispute about whether the witness made the earlier statement. If he denies making it, the jury must be instructed to decide if he made the statement.

The instruction does not deal with the situation in which the witness is impeached by omission. The committee thinks this matter is better handled through argument of counsel.

This instruction must be given if requested by the party opposing the impeachment.

### 33. Impeachment by Prior Inconsistent Statements, under Oath

You will recall that \_\_\_\_\_ testified in the (government's) (defense) case during the trial. You will also recall that it was brought out that before this trial he made statements concerning the subject matter of this trial. Even though these statements were not made in this courtroom they were made under oath at [e.g.: another trial]. Because of this, you may consider these statements as if they were made at this trial and rely on them as much, or as little, as you think proper.

#### Commentary

The committee does not see the necessity of giving this instruction unless the jury has been instructed about impeachment by prior inconsistent statements that were not under oath (Instruction 32).

This instruction is for use only when the prior statement that is inconsistent with statements made at trial was given under oath at a previous trial, hearing, or other proceeding, or in a deposition. *See Fed. R. Evid. 801(d)(1)(A)*. If these standards are not met, only Instruction 32 should be given.

### 34. Use of Witness's Prior Consistent Statements

\_\_\_\_\_ testified in the (government's) (defense) case during the trial. You will recall that it was brought out that before this trial he made statements which were the same as, or similar to, what he said in the courtroom. These earlier statements were brought to your attention to help you decide whether you believe \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony. If \_\_\_\_\_ said essentially the same thing on more than one occasion it may be reason for you to believe \_\_\_\_\_'s testimony.

#### Commentary

As with prior inconsistent statements under oath, prior consistent statements can be offered as substantive evidence under rule 801(d)(1)(B) of the Federal Rules of Evidence. Unlike prior inconsistent statements, the prior consistent statement need not be made under oath or at a previous trial, hearing, or other proceeding. Any prior consistent statement may be offered as substantive evidence under rule 801(d)(1)(B) provided it is offered to rebut a charge of recent fabrication or improper influence or motive.

Even though these statements come in as substantive evidence, to avoid confusion the committee thought it would be best to instruct the jury in terms of using the prior consistent evidence to bolster the in-court testimony.

The committee recommends that this instruction not be routinely given and that the subject generally be left to argument of counsel.

### 35. Identification Testimony

The government must prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the crime charged in this case was actually committed. But more than that, the government must also prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, committed that crime. Therefore, the identification of    (D)    by    (W)    as [brief description of the details of the identification] is a necessary <sup>1</sup>(important) part of the government's case. As with any other witness, you must first decide whether    (W)    is telling the truth as he understands it. But you must do more than that. You must also decide how accurate the identification was, whether the witness saw what he thought he saw.

You should consider

[the testimony that the witness did not know the defendant before the crime took place].

[whether the witness had a good opportunity to see the person].

[whether the witness seemed as though he was paying careful attention to what was going on].

[whether the description given by the witness was close to the way the defendant actually looked].

[how much time had passed between the crime and the first identification by the witness].

[whether, at the time of the first identification by the witness, the conditions were such that the witness was likely to make a mistake, that is, the witness was not asked to pick out the person he saw from a group of people].

[that (whether), at an earlier time, the witness failed to identify the defendant].

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1. Alternative language for cases in which there is significant corroborative evidence.

[that (whether), at an earlier time, the witness changed his mind regarding the identification].

[whether the witness seemed certain at the time of the first identification and again when he testified here in court].

If you are not convinced beyond a reasonable doubt that it was the defendant who committed the crime, you must find him not guilty.

### **Commentary**

Concern has been expressed about the identification of the defendant by only one witness when there is no independent corroboration. *See* *United States v. Telfaire*, 469 F.2d 552 (D.C. Cir. 1972); *United States v. Smith*, 563 F.2d 1361, 1364-66 (9th Cir. 1977) (concurring opinion). In cases where such an identification will be determinative, a careful detailed instruction should be given to the jury to minimize any chance of misidentification.

## 36. Defendant's Confession

You heard testimony that the defendant made a statement to [e.g.: the FBI] concerning the crime that is charged in this case. When you consider this testimony, you should ask yourselves these questions:

First, did the defendant say the things the witness told you the defendant said? To answer this question you must decide if the witness is honest, has a good memory, and whether he accurately understood the defendant.

Second, if the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, did make the statement, was it correct? Here you must consider all of the circumstances under which the statement was made, including the defendant's personal characteristics, and ask yourselves whether a statement made under these circumstances is one you can rely on.

After you have answered these questions, you may rely on the testimony about the statement as much, or as little, as you think proper.

### Commentary

The committee concluded that it is not necessary to instruct the jury about the factors enumerated in 18 U.S.C. § 3501(b).

The term "confession" is not used in the instruction, for fear that the term itself carries such strong connotations that the rest of the instruction would carry somewhat less force.

### 37. Confession of One Defendant in Multidefendant Trial

(To follow Instruction 36 immediately)

However, you may consider the statement of \_\_\_\_\_ only in the case against him and not in the case against the others. What that means is that you may consider this statement against \_\_\_\_\_, and rely on it as much or as little as you think proper, but you may not consider or discuss it in any way when you are deciding whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the other defendants, [give names], committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. Please remember that.

#### Commentary

The standard codefendant confession instruction is likely not as important as it once was due to the *Bruton* rule. *Bruton v. United States*, 391 U.S. 123 (1968). It is important to have such an instruction for situations in which exceptions to the *Bruton* rule apply, such as with redacted statements.

This instruction should not, of course, be used in connection with coconspirator declarations admitted under rule 801(d)(2)(E) of the Federal Rules of Evidence.

## 38. Falsus In Uno

### Commentary

The committee recommends that no instruction be given.

### 39. Inference from Fact That Witness Not Called

You will remember that \_\_\_\_\_ said that [name of missing witness] was [e.g.: present when the crime is supposed to have been committed]. [Name of missing witness] was also described as being [e.g.: well known to] the government (defendant). This may have caused you to wonder why \_\_\_\_\_ was not called as a witness to answer questions in this trial. If you believe that the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ would have been important, and if you also believe that the government (defendant) could have brought him to court to testify in this trial, then you may consider its (his) failure to do so when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime. In other words, you may conclude that the government (defense) did not call \_\_\_\_\_ as a witness because his testimony would have hurt the government (defense) case.

#### Commentary

The committee recommends that this instruction not be routinely given and that the subject generally be left to argument by counsel. If the district judge uses this instruction, it should not be used against the defendant who offers no evidence in his defense. The jury is consistently instructed that the burden is on the government and the defendant is under no obligation to prove his innocence. The use of the instruction in this situation would severely undercut this view.

The committee deleted the standard language that the witness be "peculiarly" available to one of the parties. It was thought that such language would be confusing to the jury.

#### 40. Defendant's Testimony: Effect of Stake in the Outcome

The defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, testified in his own behalf. You may be wondering if the personal stake that he has in the outcome of this trial should cause you to consider his testimony any differently from that of other witnesses. It is proper for you to consider his personal stake in the outcome of the trial when you decide whether or not you believe his testimony. But remember that the defendant is presumed innocent unless the government proves, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he is guilty. The fact that he has been charged with the crime of \_\_\_\_\_ is no reason by itself for you not to believe what he said.

##### Commentary

In some circuits it is error to give this instruction over the defendant's objection. This accords with the view that "the testimony of the accused should not be 'singled out' in the court's charge." *United States v. Bear Killer*, 534 F.2d 1253, 1260 (8th Cir. 1976). In other circuits, it has been held proper to give the instruction at the request of the prosecution. *E.g.*, *United States v. Hill*, 470 F.2d 361, 363-65 (D.C. Cir. 1972).

#### **41. Defendant's Testimony: Impeachment by Prior Conviction**

You have been told that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, was found guilty in 19\_\_ of [e.g.: bank robbery]. This conviction has been brought to your attention only because you may wish to consider it when you decide, as with any witness, how much you will believe of his testimony in this trial. The fact that the defendant was found guilty of another crime does not mean that he committed this crime, and you must not use his guilt for the crime of \_\_\_\_\_ as proof of the crime charged in this case. You may find him guilty of this crime only if the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he committed it.

#### **Commentary**

For impeachment by prior conviction of a witness other than the defendant, see Instruction 30.

## 42. Defendant's Testimony: Impeachment by Otherwise Inadmissible Statement

*(Harris v. New York)*

You will recall that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, testified during the trial on his own behalf. You will also recall that it was brought out that he was questioned at an earlier time and made certain statements. These earlier statements by \_\_\_\_\_ were brought to your attention only to help you decide if you believe what he has testified to here in court. If he said something different earlier, and the two stories were conflicting, then it will be up to you to decide if what he said here in court was true. You should not, however, consider what was said earlier as proof or evidence of the defendant's guilt. The government must use other evidence to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime.

### Commentary

This instruction deals with the *Harris* rule, which allows an unlawfully obtained statement to be used for impeachment purposes. *Harris v. New York*, 401 U.S. 222 (1971). The trial judge should stress that the government cannot use the prior statement to prove the defendant's guilt; it can only use it to impeach. Of course, the statement can only be used if the defendant takes the stand and testifies contrary to the prior statement.

### 43. Defendant's Incriminating Actions after the Crime

\_\_\_\_\_ testified that, after the crime was supposed to have been committed, the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, [brief description of behavior]. If you believe that the defendant [same brief description], you should keep that in mind when deciding whether the government has proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he committed the crime. On the one hand, you may think that what he did at that time indicated that he knew he was guilty and was attempting to avoid punishment. On the other hand, it is sometimes true that an innocent person will [same brief description] in order to avoid being arrested and charged with a crime.

#### Commentary

This instruction should not be given in most cases. Generally, argument of counsel would sufficiently explain the issues.

#### 44. Defendant's False Exculpatory Statement

You have heard testimony that the defendant [e.g.: after being arrested by the police, denied that he was acquainted with the victim]. You have also heard testimony that his statement to the police was false and misleading. If you believe that what \_\_\_\_\_ said to the police was false and that he knew it was false, you should keep that in mind when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that he committed the crime. Although someone suspected of a crime is not required at any time to answer questions, if he made a statement that he knew was false, that may indicate to you that he was guilty of the crime and was attempting to avoid punishment. It is sometimes true, however, that an innocent person may make a false and misleading statement in order to avoid being arrested and accused of a crime.

##### Commentary

As with the previous instruction, related to incriminating actions of the defendant after the crime, the committee believes this instruction should not be given in most cases, and that the matter should be left to argument of counsel.

## 45. Defendant's Failure to Respond to Accusatory Statements

You recall the testimony of     (W)    , who said [e.g.: that while walking with the defendant after the robbery was supposed to have taken place he asked the defendant "Why did you rob the post office?"].     (W)     testified that after he said this to     (D)    ,     (D)     said nothing in response. If you believe     (W)    's testimony you should keep that in mind when deciding whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime. On the one hand, you may think that the defendant's silence indicated that he knew he was guilty and would not deny the charge. On the other hand, it is sometimes true that an innocent person will not respond to such statements.

### Commentary

As with the previous two instructions, the committee believes that this instruction should not normally be given, and that the matter should be left to argument of counsel.

If the accusation (or question) came from a government officer when the defendant was in custody, the silence cannot be used at trial under *Doyle v. Ohio*, 426 U.S. 610 (1976).

## **46. Separate Consideration of Multiple Counts and/or Multiple Defendants**

### **Alternative A: Multiple Counts, One Defendant**

You will recall that I explained to you earlier that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, has been charged with \_\_\_\_\_ different crimes: [List them]. Each of these is a separate crime, and you should consider each one separately and return a separate verdict for each.

### **Alternative B: Multiple Defendants, One Count**

As you know, \_\_\_\_\_ defendants are on trial here: [Name them]. All [number] have been accused of committing the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. You must give separate consideration to the evidence about each defendant. Each is entitled to your separate consideration. Do not think of them as a group. You must return a separate verdict for each defendant.

### **Alternative C: Multiple Defendants, Multiple Counts**

As you know, \_\_\_\_\_ defendants are on trial here: [Name them]. Because some of the charges in this case have been made against some of the defendants and not against others, I want to tell you once again which individuals were charged with which crimes: [E.g.: Ralph Rich has been charged with conspiracy and possession, Patty Poor has been charged with conspiracy and distribution.] It is important that you give separate consideration to the evidence against and in behalf of each individual defendant. I also remind you that you must consider separately each crime charged against each individual defendant.

#### 47. "On or About": Required Proof

The government has charged that on or about [e.g.: June 5, 1978, William Smith robbed the Main Street Bank]. The government does not have to prove that the crime was committed on that exact date, [repeat date], so long as the government proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed the crime on a date near [repeat date].

##### Commentary

This instruction should not be given: (1) when there is a statute of limitations issue; (2) when the date is an essential element of the offense so that the defendant was misled by the date set out in the indictment; or (3) when the defendant's alibi defense is necessarily linked to the date in the indictment.

## 48. Lesser Included Offenses

We have just talked about what the government has to prove for you to convict \_\_\_\_\_ of [greater crime, *e.g.*: committing a bank robbery in which someone was exposed to risk of death by the use of a dangerous weapon]. Your first task is to decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that \_\_\_\_\_ committed that crime. If your verdict on that is guilty, you are finished. But if your verdict is not guilty, or if you are unable to reach a verdict, you should go on to consider whether he is guilty of [lesser crime, *e.g.*: simple bank robbery]. You should find the defendant guilty of [lesser crime] if the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant did everything we discussed before except that it didn't prove that he [describe missing element, *e.g.*: exposed someone to risk of death by use of a dangerous weapon].

To put it another way, the defendant is guilty of [lesser crime] if the following things are proved beyond a reasonable doubt: [List elements]. He is guilty of [greater crime] if it is proved beyond a reasonable doubt that he did all those things and, in addition [describe missing element]. If your verdict is that the defendant is guilty of [greater crime], you need go no further. But if your verdict on that crime is not guilty, or if you are unable to reach a verdict on it, you should consider whether the defendant has been proved guilty of [lesser crime].

Of course, if the government has not proved beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant committed [lesser crime], your verdict must be not guilty of all of the charges.

## 49. Inconsistent Offenses

The government charged the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, with two separate crimes, [e.g.: theft of the United States mails and receiving stolen property]. If you find that the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime of [theft of the United States mails], you should not reach a verdict concerning [receiving stolen property]. If, however, you find the defendant not guilty of [theft of the United States mails], you should then consider whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime of [receiving stolen property].

## 50. Evidence of Other Crimes, Wrongs, or Acts of Defendant to Show Intent, Knowledge, etc.

As you know, the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, is on trial here for [e.g.: knowingly sending gambling materials in interstate commerce]. In order for you to find the defendant guilty of this crime, the government must prove each of the following elements of the crime beyond a reasonable doubt. [First, the defendant sent gambling materials. Second, the defendant sent those materials in interstate commerce. Third, the defendant knew that these were gambling materials he was sending.]

As I said, one of the things the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt is that the defendant [knew that these were gambling materials]. You have heard testimony indicating that [on prior occasions the defendant sent gambling materials between two states]. That testimony is not evidence that [the defendant sent gambling materials in interstate commerce] on this particular occasion. The government must prove that from *other* evidence beyond a reasonable doubt. But if you conclude on the basis of other evidence that [the defendant did send gambling materials in interstate commerce as charged], you may consider the testimony about prior occasions in deciding whether [he knew that these were gambling materials].

I remind you that the defendant is on trial here only for [description of charge that distinguishes it from the earlier acts]. Do not convict him if the government has failed to prove this charge beyond a reasonable doubt.

### Commentary

The committee concluded that the best way to limit the confusion occasioned by evidence admitted under rule 404(b) of the Federal Rules of Evidence is to outline with clarity the elements of the offense and describe the testimony. The jury would then be told that after it has found the other elements beyond a reasonable

doubt, the jury could look to the evidence to prove the remaining element.

To minimize this problem, some judges will not permit evidence of the other acts of the defendant to be introduced in the government's case in chief, but only in rebuttal if the defendant denies intent, knowledge, etc.

## 51. Evidence of Defendant's Good Character

You have heard the testimony of \_\_\_\_\_ , who said that the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_ , (has a good reputation for [e.g.: honesty] in the community where he lives and works) (in his opinion, is an [honest] person). Along with all the other evidence you have heard, you may take into consideration what you believe about the defendant's [honesty] when you decide whether the government has proved, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the defendant committed the crime. Evidence of the defendant's [honesty] alone may create a reasonable doubt whether the government proved that the defendant committed the crime.

### Commentary

It is not clear that the final sentence is legally required but the committee felt such a reference was appropriate.

Under rule 405 of the Federal Rules of Evidence, a witness may give his opinion about a character trait of the defendant, and not only state the reputation.

## 52. Cross-Examination of Defendant's Character Witness: Jury to Limit Consideration of Information

After \_\_\_\_ (W) testified about [e.g.: the defendant's reputation for honesty; his opinion of the defendant's honesty], \_\_\_\_\_, the government attorney, asked \_\_\_\_ (W) some questions about whether \_\_\_\_ (W) knew that \_\_\_\_ (D) had been [e.g.: convicted of fraud on an earlier occasion]. These questions were asked of \_\_\_\_ (W) only to help you decide if he really knew about the defendant's [e.g.: reputation for honesty; honesty].

The possibility that the defendant may have [e.g.: committed other crimes] is not evidence that he committed the crime of \_\_\_\_\_. I remind you that the government must prove that the defendant committed *this* crime, and must prove it beyond a reasonable doubt.

### 53. Alibi

In the indictment the government has charged that [*e.g.*: on June 5, 1978, William Smith robbed the Main Street Bank in downtown Omaha. Two witnesses, Joe Jones and Sally Smith, testified that on June 5, 1978, they spent the entire day with the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, in Tulsa]. You may or may not believe the evidence that the defendant was [in Tulsa] when the crime was committed. But if you have a reasonable doubt whether the defendant [describe government charge, as above], you must find the defendant not guilty.

## 54. Entrapment

The defendant in this case, \_\_\_\_\_, is on trial for \_\_\_\_\_. You have heard evidence [*e.g.*: that government agents persuaded the defendant to sell the drugs and he had never previously sold drugs]. To consider that evidence, you need to understand a legal term that we call "entrapment." Even though \_\_\_\_\_ may have [sold the drugs], as charged by the government, if it was the result of entrapment then you must find him not guilty. Government agents entrapped \_\_\_\_\_ if three things occurred:

First, the idea for committing the crime came from the government agents and not from \_\_\_\_\_, the person accused of the crime.

Second, the government agents then persuaded or talked \_\_\_\_\_ into committing the crime. Simply giving \_\_\_\_\_ the opportunity to commit the crime is not the same as persuading him to commit the crime.

And third, the defendant was not ready and willing to commit the crime before the government agents spoke with him. Consider all of the facts when you decide whether the defendant would have been ready and willing to commit the crime without the actions of the government agents.

On the issue of entrapment, as on other issues, the government must convince you beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant was not entrapped by government agents.

### Commentary

The term "predisposition" has been avoided here, as it appears to have little meaning for the layperson.

## 55. Insanity

Evidence was introduced to show that at the time the crime was committed, \_\_\_\_\_ was insane. [Describe the insanity evidence.]

Under the law, the defendant is not guilty if he was insane when the crime was committed. He was insane if, as a result of mental disease or defect, he lacked substantial capacity either to appreciate the wrongfulness of his conduct or to conform his conduct to the requirements of the law. When I talk about mental disease or defect I do not refer to any particular medical term. I simply mean that the defendant's mental condition was such that he could not realize that his behavior was wrong or could not make himself behave as the law requires.

Remember that it is not up to \_\_\_\_\_ to prove that he was insane at the time the crime was committed. Rather, the government must prove beyond a reasonable doubt that he was sane at the time the crime was committed. Therefore, if you have a reasonable doubt whether the defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, was sane at the time the crime was (supposed to have been) committed, then you must find him not guilty.

## 56. Duress

The defendant, \_\_\_\_\_, offered evidence to show that at the time the crime was committed, he was [e.g.: ordered by a man with a gun to rob the bank].

Under the law, \_\_\_\_\_ is not guilty of a crime if he participated in the [describe offense] only because he believed, and had good reason to believe, that he would be seriously harmed if he did not participate and had no other way of escaping serious harm. And on this issue, just as on all others, the burden is on the government to prove the defendant's guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. To find \_\_\_\_\_ guilty, therefore, you must conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that when he participated in the [describe offense], he did not have a reasonable belief that such participation was the only way he could save himself from serious harm.

## **57. Availability of Exhibits during Deliberations**

### **Alternative A**

During the trial several items were received into evidence as exhibits. These exhibits will be sent into the jury room with you when you begin to deliberate. Examine the exhibits if you think it would help you in your deliberations.

### **Alternative B**

During the trial several items were received into evidence as exhibits. You will not be taking the exhibits into the jury room with you at the start, because I am not sure you will need them. If, after you have begun your discussions of the case, you think it would be helpful to have any of the exhibits with you in the jury room, have the foreperson send me a note asking for them.

### **Commentary**

If the judge wishes to instruct the jurors that they may ask to have portions of the transcript read back to them, this would be an appropriate place to so inform them.

## 58. Selection of Foreperson; Communication with the Judge; Verdict Forms

When you go to the jury room to begin considering the evidence in this case I suggest that you first select one of the members of the jury to act as your foreperson. This person will help to guide your discussions in the jury room. Once you are there, if you need to communicate with me, the foreperson will send a written message to me. However, don't tell me how you stand as to your verdict—for instance, if you are split 6-6 or 8-4, don't tell me that in your note.

As I have mentioned several times, the decision you reach must be unanimous; you must all agree.

I want to read to you now what is called the verdict form. This is simply the written notice of the decision that you reach in this case. [Read the verdict form.]

When you have reached a decision, have the foreperson sign (each of you should sign) the verdict form, put the date on it, and return it to me. (*Add for multicount or multidefendant trials:* If you are able to reach a unanimous decision on only one or on only some of the (charges) (defendants), fill in those verdict forms only and return them to me.)

## 59. Return to Deliberations after Polling

I have (The clerk has) just called the names of the members of the jury, asking each of you whether the decision read to me was the decision reached by each and every one of you. It is apparent that the decision in this case may not be unanimous, that one or more of you may not have agreed with that decision. Please return to the jury room, talk with one another, and try to deliberate there. Try to reach an agreement if you can. Do not hesitate to reexamine your own opinions and change your mind, but do not give up your honest beliefs just because others disagree with you or just to get the case over with.

## APPENDIX A

### Suggestions for Improving Juror Understanding of Instructions

By Allan Lind and Anthony Partridge

This appendix is based on a paper prepared in 1978 for the Federal Judicial Center's Committee to Study Criminal Jury Instructions. The paper was an effort to set forth some suggestions for drafting jury instructions derived from several empirical studies about juror understanding of instructions. This appendix reflects, in addition, the experience that we have gained in working with the committee.

The principal empirical studies have been conducted by Robert and Veda Charrow<sup>1</sup> and by Amiram Elwork, Bruce Sales, and James Alfini.<sup>2</sup> Both groups of researchers tested lay comprehension of state-court pattern jury instructions and found substantial lack of understanding. Both research projects showed that it is possible to improve the understanding of jury instructions by removing certain linguistic features that make comprehension difficult.

Most of the suggestions below necessarily have a negative cast: They are suggestions that certain constructions be avoided. Implicit in all of the suggestions is the basic rule that instructions should be delivered in easily understood, unambiguous English. It must be emphasized that the suggestions are by no means intended as absolute rules. We do not anticipate that most instructions will be wholly free of the features identified here as undesirable. Many instructions containing some of these features may, indeed, be readily understood. But each of the features identified appears to present some obstacle to effective communication. Where the use of one of these problem features seems necessary or desirable, therefore, it may be worth a special effort to avoid including other prob-

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1. See Charrow & Charrow, *Making Legal Language Understandable: A Psycholinguistic Study of Jury Instructions*, 79 Colum. L. Rev. 1306 (1979).

2. See Elwork, Sales, & Alfini, *Juridic Decisions: In Ignorance of the Law or in Light of It*, 1 Law & Human Behavior 163 (1977).

lem features in the same passage. The obstacles should be regarded as cumulative in their effect: A juror may be able to understand with ease a single instruction, standing alone, that contains one or a few of these features. But it may be much more difficult to understand a passage that contains several of them, and still more difficult to understand a series of instructions in which such features regularly appear.

The examples used below are drawn from the three principal sets of pattern criminal instructions widely used in the federal courts: Devitt and Blackmar, *Federal Jury Practice and Instructions* (3d ed. 1977); Committee on Pattern Jury Instructions, Fifth Circuit District Judges Association, *Pattern Jury Instructions (Criminal Cases)* (1978); and Committee on Federal Criminal Jury Instructions of the Seventh Circuit, *Federal Criminal Jury Instructions* (1980).

## Vocabulary

### Suggestion 1: Avoid using words that are uncommon in everyday speech and writing.

Both intuition and research evidence tell us that the use of uncommon words tends to impede understanding of what is said. The problem is not only that jurors may not know the meaning of the words. Even if the meaning is known, it will generally require more effort to understand a passage containing one or more uncommon words than a passage whose vocabulary is more familiar.

Unfortunately, identifying uncommon words is not as simple as it sounds. On the one hand, the intuition of highly educated, legally trained people is not likely to be a reliable guide to the frequency of word use by the population at large. On the other hand, the frequency of use that is reported in published works based on word counts seems to be heavily dependent on the selection of the material to be studied. One published count is based on recordings of patients' discussions with their psychiatrists; another is based on reading matter assigned to pupils in the third through ninth grades. None of the counts, apparently, includes advertising materials or package labels, although these are surely an important part of our exposure to language.

In spite of the limitations of the publications based on word counts, they can be of considerable help in an effort to minimize the use of uncommon words. After reviewing the available publications of this type, we have concluded that the most helpful is probably E.L. Thorndike and I. Lorge, *The Teacher's Word Book of*

*30,000 Words* (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1944). Although this work is based solely on word counts of samples of written English and is relatively old, it has compensating advantages when compared with more recent efforts. Also, it is still in print.

We suggest that an effort be made to use high-frequency words where they can be substituted for lower frequency words and that words be regarded as particularly suspect if they are reported in Thorndike and Lorge as appearing less frequently than ten times per million words of writing. (About six thousand words were reported as appearing at least this frequently.) But use of the Thorndike and Lorge book should be tempered by recognition of its limitations; even judges who are cautious about relying on their intuition will readily recognize that some words reported as low-frequency are familiar to almost any American.

Some uncommon words that often appear in jury instructions are listed below, together with their reported frequency of use (that is, the number of times the word is used per million words of writing, as reported in Thorndike and Lorge). Parenthetical material shows the frequency of use of closely related words; arguably, the frequencies of the main and related words should be cumulated in considering the likelihood that the main word will be easily understood by jurors.

admonish	5	
applicable	3	
bailiff	2	
corroborate	2	
credibility	<1	(credible, 1)
deliberation	6	
demeanor	6	
discredit	5	
discrepancy	2	
erroneous	4	(erroneously, 1)
immunize	<1	(immune, 1; immunity, 3)
impartial	6	(impartially, 1; impartiality, 1)
impeach	3	(impeachment, 2)
inference	7	(infer, 7)
insofar	<1	
misrecollection	<1	(recollection, 11)
pertain	5	
scrutinize	4	(scrutiny, 3)
thereto	4	
unanimous	6	(unanimously, 4; unanimity, 1)

## Appendix A

veracity	1
vindicate	2 (vindication, 1)

The example below is a jury instruction that makes substantial use of uncommon words. These words, whose frequencies are shown on the above list, have been italicized.

### Example

A witness may be *discredited* or *impeached* by evidence that the general reputation of the witness for truth and *veracity* is bad in the community where the witness now resides, or has recently resided.

If you believe any witness has been *impeached* and thus *discredited*, it is your exclusive province to give the testimony of that witness such *credibility*, if any, as you may think it deserves.

### Suggestion 2: Avoid using words to convey their less common meanings.

The research by Elwork, Sales, and Alfini suggests that difficulties in juror comprehension may be caused by the use of common words to convey relatively uncommon meanings. At worst, the word may be misunderstood; even if the word is understood, the difficulty of resolving the ambiguity may impede understanding of the entire instruction. For example, the use of the word "admit" to refer to a judge's evidentiary ruling may produce confusion with the more common meaning of conceding the truth of a proposition.

Many idioms that are used routinely by lawyers employ words in ways that are not likely to be familiar to laymen. The following idioms, often found in jury instructions, are examples:

- as to
- burden of proof
- competent witness (referring to a quality other than the witness's skill)
- court (to refer to the judge rather than the building or the institution)
- disregard evidence
- find a fact
- immunize from prosecution
- judicial notice
- material matter
- sustain objections

### **Suggestion 3: Avoid using legal terms.**

The problem of legal terminology is logically subsumed under the previous suggestions, but it is worthy of special note. There is little if any harm in using legal terms that have wide common use (for example, "arrest") or when it is reasonable to assume that the juror will have learned the meaning of the term during the trial (for example, "exhibit"). But many legal terms are uncommon terms in normal speech, and many are common terms used to convey uncommon meanings. They should be avoided to the extent possible.

It is important to remember that even the most familiar terms to those trained in the law may be quite foreign to the layman. For example, the word "indictment" is reported by Thorndike and Lorge to occur only six times per million words in normal writing. The word "information" is of course very common, but its common meaning is not as a document filed in court.

Sometimes, there is no practical alternative to using an unfamiliar legal term and defining it for the benefit of the jury. The practice should be confined to those situations in which it is absolutely necessary, however. There is no reason to expect that jurors will be able to assimilate very much new vocabulary in the course of the normal, relatively short trial.

Frequently, legal terms are introduced in situations in which they are not needed to communicate the essence of the instruction. In example 1 below, for instance, the word "accomplice" is defined and used. In example 2, the same guidance is given without introducing the term. In some cases, of course, the legal term will have been introduced by the lawyers, and the court may wish to use the term to relate the charge to what has gone before. But for the most part, juror understanding is more likely to be facilitated by avoiding the legal term altogether.

#### **Example 1**

An accomplice is one who unites with another person in the commission of a crime, voluntarily and with common intent. An accomplice does not become incompetent as a witness because of participation in the crime charged. On the contrary, the testimony of one who asserts by his testimony that he is an accomplice, may be received in evidence and considered by the jury, even though not corroborated by other evidence, and given such weight as the jury feels it should have. The jury, however, should keep in mind that such testimony is always to be received with caution and considered with great care.

**Example 2**

You have heard testimony from \_\_\_\_\_ who stated that he was involved in the commission of the alleged crime charged against the defendant. You may give his testimony such weight as you feel it deserves, keeping in mind that it must be considered with caution and great care.

**Syntax**

**Suggestion 4: Avoid sentences with multiple subordinate clauses, and particularly avoid placing multiple subordinate clauses before or within the main clause.**

The Charrows have observed that sentence length per se is not a major problem for the comprehensibility of instructions. Long sentences are as easily understood as short sentences if they are simple in their grammatical structure. However, many long sentences in pattern instructions are long because they contain many subordinate clauses. Not infrequently, as in the examples below, the subordinate clauses precede the main clause, with the result that the listener must wait for the end of the sentence to learn what it is all about. This structure should be avoided.

**Example 1**

If you should decide that the opinion of an expert witness is not based on sufficient education and experience, or if you should conclude that the reasons given in support of the opinion are not sound, or that the opinion is outweighed by other evidence, then you may disregard the opinion entirely.

**Example 2**

Only if by evidence independent of Exhibit X you conclude that there was a scheme to defraud and you are then trying to make up your mind whether, the defendant A, who agreed to the order, thereafter had a specific intent to defraud somebody, may you take Exhibit X into account at all.

**Example 3**

If, then, the jury should find beyond a reasonable doubt from the evidence in the case that, before anything at all occurred respecting the alleged offense involved in this case, the defendant was ready and willing to commit crimes such as are charged in the indictment, whenever opportunity was afforded, and that government officers or their agents did no more than offer the opportunity, then the jury should find that the defendant is not a victim of entrapment.

**Suggestion 5: Avoid omission of relative pronouns and auxiliary verbs.**

The Charrows found that the omission of relative pronouns and auxiliary verbs increased the difficulty that jurors had in understanding the instructions. This is perhaps the one research finding reported here that does not confirm our intuition. In some cases, adherence to the suggestion produces awkward-sounding sentences. We do not argue that the relative pronoun or auxiliary verb should be included if awkwardness will result. But the research finding seems to be well grounded, and we believe it deserves attention in cases in which it does not produce evident awkwardness.

In the examples below, relative pronouns and auxiliary verbs that did not appear in the original have been added in brackets.

**Example 1**

As stated earlier it is your duty to determine the facts, and in so doing you must consider only the evidence [that] I have admitted in the case.

**Example 2**

The defendant is not on trial for any act or conduct [that was] not alleged in the indictment (information).

**Suggestion 6: Avoid double negations.**

The Charrow research identified double negations as a particularly important source of juror confusion. They can often be avoided by using the word "only." The second of the examples given below is to be preferred over the first on that ground.

**Example 1**

The defendant is not on trial for any act or conduct not alleged in the indictment (information).

**Example 2**

The defendant is charged only with filing an income tax return on behalf of X Corporation which he knew to be false, as set out in the indictment. He is not charged with any other offense.

**Suggestion 7: Use a concrete style rather than an abstract one.**

The research indicates that instructions that are concrete and specific are easier to understand than those that are couched in generalizations and that rely upon the jurors to apply the general-

## *Appendix A*

izations to the particular task that they have to perform. It is better to identify particular witnesses as having certain characteristics than to talk abstractly about witnesses who have those characteristics. It is better to speak to the jury in the second person than to talk abstractly about the decision to be made.

Example 1 below is highly abstract, leaving it to the jury to figure out which witness is being discussed and who is to treat the testimony with caution and care. Example 2 is a very concrete treatment of the same subject. We do not suggest that the average juror would fail to understand example 1 if it were standing alone. We do suggest that the abstract style identified here tends to increase the difficulty of the task of understanding a whole set of instructions.

### **Example 1**

The testimony of an admitted perjurer should always be considered with caution and weighed with great care.

### **Example 2**

\_\_\_\_\_ has admitted lying under oath. You may give his testimony such weight as you feel it deserves, keeping in mind that it must be considered with caution and great care.

## **Other Features**

### **Suggestion 8: Avoid instructing the jury about things they don't need to know.**

A surprising number of the instructions that we have reviewed in the course of our work for the Center's committee include discussion of matters that do not seem appropriate for jury consideration. It is apparently customary, for example, to distinguish carefully between direct evidence and circumstantial evidence before telling the jury that the distinction is irrelevant to their consideration of the evidence. Many instructions include discussion of evidentiary rules that seems more appropriately addressed to the judge than to the jury. While it may not be inherently harmful to inform the jury of an evidentiary rule, instructions of this type frequently introduce other problem features. In the first example below, for instance, the word "incompetent" is used to mean something other than its most common meaning, and the word "corroborate" is a low-frequency word. The instruction in the second example avoids these problems simply by not talking about admissibility. The third example, a pattern jury instruction printed in its

entirety, is offered as an extreme example: It contains no advice to the jury at all.

**Example 1**

An accomplice does not become incompetent as a witness because of participation in the crime charged. On the contrary, the testimony of one who asserts by his testimony that he is an accomplice, may be received in evidence and considered by the jury, even though not corroborated by other evidence, and given such weight as the jury feels it should have.

**Example 2**

The testimony of an informer who provides evidence against a defendant for pay, or for immunity from punishment, or for personal advantage or vindication, must be examined and weighed by the jury with greater care than the testimony of an ordinary witness. The jury must determine whether the informer's testimony has been affected by interest, or by prejudice against defendant.

**Example 3**

Where the true identity of a person is in issue, any proved or admitted fingerprint of this person may be received in evidence to be used as an exemplar or specimen, for comparison with any fingerprint in dispute.

## APPENDIX B

### Comparison of Selected Instructions from this Collection with Similar Instructions from Other Collections

By Allan Lind and Anthony Partridge

This appendix compares four of the Federal Judicial Center committee's instructions with other pattern instructions covering substantially the same subject matter. For each instruction, we show the total number of words, the Flesch "readability" score, and the number of uncommon words used.

The "readability" score is an index designed by Dr. Rudolph Flesch to test written materials for ease of comprehension.<sup>1</sup> It combines into a single score two measures that are associated with ease of comprehension: the average number of syllables per word and the proportion of words that are concrete as contrasted with abstract. The test does not require much subjective judgment by the person doing the scoring and may therefore be said to be relatively objective. As with any test of this nature, however, it provides an indirect and imperfect measure of comprehensibility. We would generally expect improvement in comprehensibility to be accompanied by improvement in Flesch scores, but it should not be assumed that instructions with higher Flesch scores are invariably more understandable than instructions with lower scores.

Words identified as "uncommon" are those reported by Thorndike and Lorge to be used less frequently than ten times per million words of writing.<sup>2</sup> The count of uncommon words is undupli-

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1. Flesch, *Measuring the Level of Abstraction*, 34 J. Applied Psychology 384 (1950).

2. A discussion of the Thorndike and Lorge frequency list and its limitations is included in appendix A. In that list, the observed frequency of regular plurals, comparatives, superlatives, and verb forms is not reported separately; rather, the observed frequency of these forms is included in the reported frequencies of their root words. Also, the frequency of adverbs ending in "ly" is reported separately only if the adverb occurs at least once per million words of writing. In determining whether to classify words as uncommon, we have modified the frequency reported in Thorndike and Lorge by combining separately reported frequencies of "-ly" adverbs and their root words and "-ness" nouns and their root words.

## *Appendix B*

cated: A word is counted only once even if it is used more than once in a particular instruction.

The instructions to be compared were chosen by us to represent a variety of types of instruction, but they are in no sense a statistical cross section. The general instruction about credibility of witnesses is characterized, in all of the collections, by a high level of abstraction; by its nature, it cannot focus on particular witnesses or particular testimony. The instruction on the treatment of evidence of the defendant's good character is a more targeted instruction about the way in which a particular kind of evidence should be considered. The accomplice instruction is an example of a cautionary instruction about a particular witness or witnesses. The instruction about the defendant's prior convictions is an example of an instruction limiting the purpose for which certain evidence can be considered.

Comparison of the pattern instructions required that decisions be made in some cases about optional language. Also, in two instances in which a collection of instructions included a separate instruction to the effect that the weight of the evidence is not necessarily determined by the number of witnesses testifying on one side, that instruction was treated for purposes of the comparisons as part of the general instruction on evaluating witnesses' testimony.

EVALUATION OF TESTIMONY; CREDIBILITY OF WITNESSES

	Devitt & Blackmar	Fifth Circuit	Seventh Circuit	D.C. Bar Ass'n	FJC Committee
Length (words)	322	190	78	481	260
Flesch score	42.4	48.3	47.9	41.0	64.8
	(Difficult)	(Difficult)	(Difficult)	(Difficult)	(Standard)
Uncommon words	15	8	2	24	2
	contradict	believability	bias	animosity	defendant
	credence	candor	credibility	bias	outcome
	credibility	contradict		capability	
	credible	credibility		credence	
	demeanor	credible		credibility	
	discredit	defendant		credible	
	discrepancy	nonexistent		contradict	
	inconsistency	outcome		corroborate	
	juror			defendant	
	misrecollection			demeanor	
	pertain			discredit	
	scrutinize			discrepancy	
	transaction			improbability	
	uncommon			improbable	
	unimportant			inconsistency	
				intentional	
				misrecollection	
				outcome	
				pertain	
				transaction	
				truthful	
				uncommon	
				unimportant	
				unreasonable	

NOTE: The instructions compared are Devitt & Blackmar §§17.01, 17.20; Fifth Circuit No. B6; Seventh Circuit (1980) No. 1.02; D.C. Bar Nos. 2.11, 2.13; FJC Committee No. 23. See p. ix for full citations to the collections.

## Appendix B

### EVIDENCE OF DEFENDANT'S GOOD CHARACTER

	Devitt & Blackmar	Fifth Circuit	Seventh Circuit	D.C. Bar Ass'n	FJC Committee
Length (words)	169	120	54	175	89
Flesch score	40.1 (Difficult)	39.2 (Difficult)	30.4 (Very difficult)	49.6 (Difficult)	64.7 (Standard)
Uncommon words	8 defendant improbable inconsistent inference integrity law-abiding trait veracity	7 defendant improbable inconsistent integrity law-abiding trait veracity	2 defendant trait	3 convincing defendant improbable	1 defendant

NOTE: The instructions compared are Devitt & Blackmar §15.25; Fifth Circuit No. S3; Seventh Circuit (1980) No. 3.15; D.C. Bar No. 2.42; FJC Committee No. 51. See p. ix for full citations to the collections.

### ACCOMPLICE TESTIMONY

	Devitt & Blackmar	Fifth Circuit	Seventh Circuit	D.C. Bar Ass'n	FJC Committee
Length (words)	127	200	49	114	143
Flesch score	40.3 (Difficult)	52.8 (Fairly difficult)	76.3 (Fairly easy)	38.9 (Difficult)	58.4 (Fairly difficult)
Uncommon words	7 accomplice corroborate defendant incompetent participation unsupported voluntary	7 accomplice codefendant dismissal incompetent indictment lesser unsupported	1 defendant	6 accomplice defendant participation scrutinize uncorroborated voluntary	3 lenient prosecution truthful

NOTE: The instructions compared are Devitt & Blackmar §17.06; Fifth Circuit No. S2B; Seventh Circuit (1980) No. 3.22; D.C. Bar No. 2.22; FJC Committee No. 24. See p. ix for full citations to the collections.

**IMPEACHMENT OF DEFENDANT BY PRIOR CONVICTION**

	Devitt & Blackmar	Fifth Circuit	Seventh Circuit	D.C. Bar Ass'n	FJC Committee
Length (words)	49	154	48	75	110*
Flesch score	46.2 (Difficult)	43.0 (Difficult)	60.9 (Standard)	43.1 (Difficult)	85.4 (Easy)
Uncommon words	4 credibility defendant felony insofar	5 credibility defendant dishonesty felony insofar	3 credibility defendant insofar	6 credence credibility defendant evaluate evaluation inference	1 defendant

NOTE: The instructions compared are Devitt & Blackmar §17.13; Fifth Circuit No. B7F; Seventh Circuit (1980) No. 3.16; D.C. Bar No. 1.08; FJC Committee No. 41. See p. ix for full citations to the collections.

\*Actually longer because blanks for offense description were not counted.