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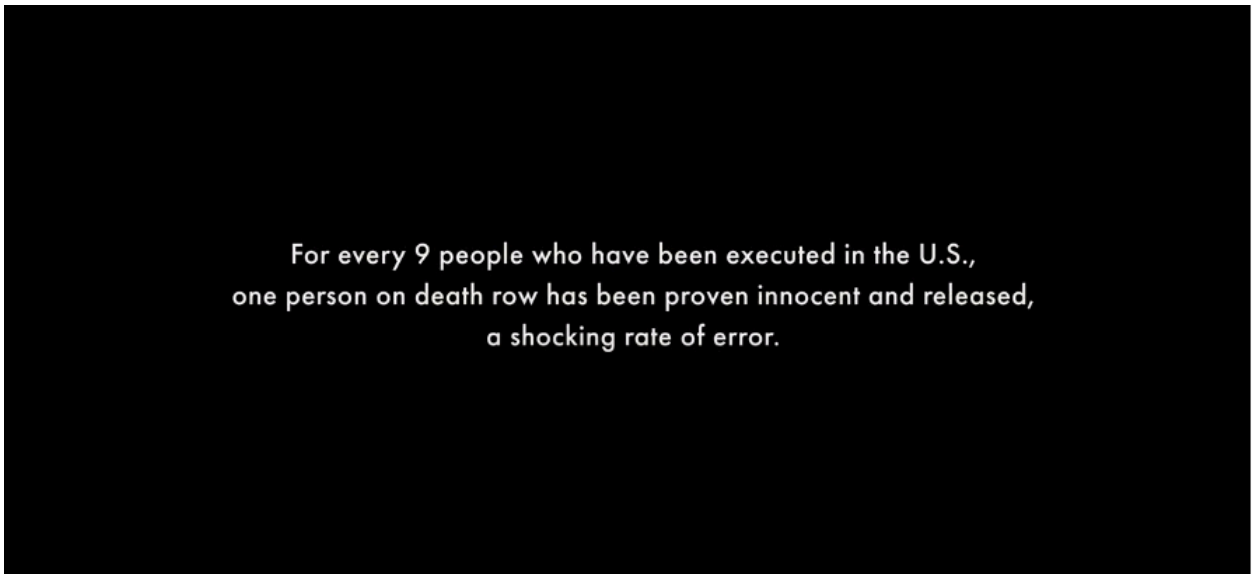
Just Mercy - Final Report

"Just Mercy" is an engaging American biographical, legal drama made in 2019. Destin Cretton directed the film, attempting to visualize the real-life story of Bryan Stevenson's book. The purpose of the movie was to highlight systemic injustices in the American legal system. It features Michael B. Jordan, the role of Stevenson, a Harvard-educated lawyer fighting wrongful convictions based on racial bias. While navigating the movie, viewers see that statistics play a tremendous role. The integration of statistics amplifies the points that Stevenson makes and, overall, increases the impact of Stevenson's fight for justice. Statistics can shed light on the inequalities in the American legal system.

The film introduces the main character, Bryan Stevenson, played by Michael B. Jordan. Stevenson is a Harvard-educated lawyer who later established the Equal Justice Initiative. An initiative addresses the unjust treatment of individuals in the criminal justice system. This initiative was inspired primarily by his most famous trial, where he represented Walter McMillian. The movie's plot unfolds around this specific trial with McMillian and his wrongful conviction. The plot sets the stage for discussions about wrongful convictions, racial disparities, and the death penalty. The statistics in this movie range from slight mentions of bias against minorities to explicitly mentioned/ depicted statistics near the end credits.

Descriptive statistics were not always explicit in the movie but always seemed present. At the end of the movie, the most important and explicitly mentioned statistic was, "For every nine

people who have been executed in the U.S., one person on death row has been proven innocent and released, a shocking rate of error." (Just Mercy) [specific image of statistic can be seen below]



The movie's statistics analysis did not explicitly mention using graphical displays of data, time plot statistics, and summary statistics. However, the movie did mention a clearly defined population, which consisted of minority groups. This clearly defined population helped to illustrate the movie's theme of the legal system's injustice, highlighting the disparities and biases within the system. Overall, the study provided valuable insights into the challenges faced by minority groups within the legal system and the necessity for greater awareness and action to address these issues.

To supplement the movie's statistics, external sources like the ACLU can help provide a better and broader image of how racial bias affects minorities. This website provides more statistics that are not included in the movie but are alluded to. Although not explicitly showing graphs, the website provides many stats that show how the problem has developed over time.

Along with this, it provides more summary statistics compared to the movie. Along with this source, using the information provided by Stevenson's organization, The Equal Justice Initiative, you are provided with even more statistics on the issue of racial bias in the legal system.



(American Civil Liberties Union)

The statistic "The federal prison population has increased by almost 790% since 1980" (American et al.) provides insight into how the population has changed over time. Another statistic, "In the United States, a black person is 3.73 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than a white person is, despite approximately equal rates of use" (American et al.), along with the other statistic, "At least 3,278 people were serving life sentences without parole for drug, property, and other nonviolent crimes in 2012" (American et al.), you can assume that more black people were serving life sentences than white people, despite equal use, for marijuana since being arrested for marijuana falls under drug use.



(Stevenson)

The statistic "27,200+ years exonerated people spent in prison for crimes they did not commit" (Stevenson), along with the statistic that "African Americans are burdened by a presumption of guilt that most defense lawyers are not prepared to overcome. As a result, African Americans make up 47% of exonerations, even though they are only 13% of the population. Innocent Black people are about seven times more likely to be convicted of murder than innocent white people, and Black people who are convicted of murder are about 50% more likely to be innocent than non-Black people convicted of murder" (Stevenson). It also provides examples of summary statistics that further the point that the movie is trying to make.

The movie can effectively inform viewers by humanizing "statistics" through the portrayal of Walter McMillian. The integration of statistics and seamlessness of statistics into the movie allows viewers to easily digest and understand the point that the movie is trying to make. The movie also captures the corrupted reality of the legal system through its dark soundtrack, along with authentic interviews with people involved in the case. The only downside of the movie is its dramatized story, which could compromise its credibility.

"Just Mercy" can be a robust investigation and display of the American justice system's flaws. The film's emotional/dramatic side allows viewers to gravitate to the movie on an emotional level, while its statistics make it even more compelling. While the dramatization can be a drawback, the movie's overall impact and educational value will earn a 4/5. The movie can

effectively reflect on a societal flaw, allowing the audience to gain a heightened understanding of the need for legal reformation.

Sources Cited

American Civil Liberties Union. “American Civil Liberties Union.” *American Civil Liberties Union*, American Civil Liberties Union, 2023, www.aclu.org/.

Just Mercy. Directed by Destin Cretton, Warner Bros. Pictures, 6 Sept. 2019.

Stevenson, Bryan. “Equal Justice Initiative.” Equal Justice Initiative, 2019, eji.org/.