

COOKING METH AND KILLING GIRLFRIENDS



**AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS OF JUSTIFIABLE CRIME IN THE
TELEVISION SERIES *BREAKING BAD***

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BACKGROUND

Reason for research

- ❑ Little is known about how audience perceptions of specific media content, namely crime, may be impacted by demographic variations among the audience.



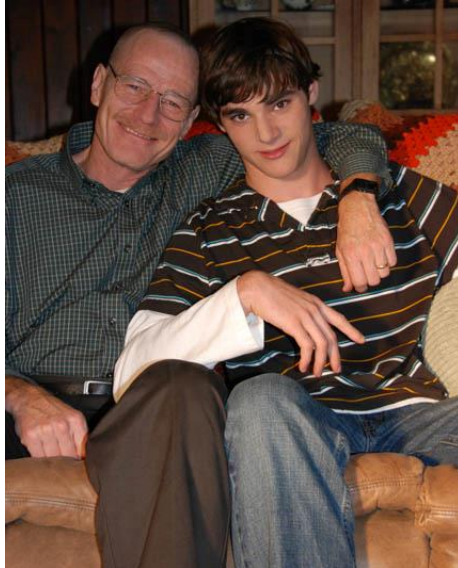
How I arrived at my research question

- ❑ A crime is a historically and culturally specific activity that a society has deemed as illegal or immoral.

Research Questions:

- ❑ When do audience members first see the criminal acts of the main protagonist as unjustified?
- ❑ Are there any demographic variables that can account for any differences in responses?

WHAT IS *BREAKING BAD*?



THEORIES

- ❑ **Burger and Lukmann (1966):**
 - ❑ The Social Construction of Reality

- ❑ **Stuart Hall (1980):**
 - ❑ Encoding/decoding Model of Communication

LITERATURE REVIEW

Crime in the media

- Graber (1980), Shrum (2006)

Views of Crime by Social Factors

Gender

- Hurwitz and Smithey (1998), Kathlene (1995)

Ethnicity

- Menjívar and Bejarano (2004), Cao & Cullen (2001), Doucet, D'Antonio-Del Rio, & Chauvin (2014)

Race

- Mastro & Behm-Morawitz (2005), Welch (2007), Dixon and Azocar (2007), Peffley, Hurwitz, and Sniderman (1997)

Socioeconomic Status

- Piff et. al. (2010, 2012), Gina and Pierce (2009)

Cultural Reception

- Morely (1994), Trepte (2006), Bielby and Harrington (1994)

METHODOLOGY

28 questions

- General background information questions
- Questions regarding the actions of Walter White
- Opinions on relevant social issues
- Disclose any past history of potential illegal activity



FINDINGS OVERVIEW

The data shows that overall there are no significant differences in respondent's perceptions regarding Walter's first unjustified criminal act regardless of sex, prior convictions of criminal activity, or region of residence



FINDINGS – UNJUSTIFIED ACT BY REGION

Table 3
Attitudes on Walter's first unjustified act by region

First Unjustified Act	Region of Residence							
	Midwest	Northeast	Southeast	Southwest	West	U.S. TOTAL	Other Country	TOTAL
<u>LetJaneDie</u>	6 (22%)	9 (32%)	12 (33%)	5 (31%)	8 (24%)	40 (28%)	15 (24%)	55 (28%)
<u>FirstCook</u>	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	5 (14%)	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	12 (9%)	10 (16%)	22 (11%)
<u>PoisonedBrock</u>	3 (11%)	0	5 (14%)	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	11 (8%)	1 (2%)	12 (6%)
<u>DecideCook</u>	1 (4%)	3 (10%)	2 (6%)	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	9 (6%)	2 (3%)	11 (5%)
<u>Schwartz</u>	0	1 (4%)	3 (8%)	1 (6%)	2 (6%)	7 (5%)	1 (2%)	8 (4%)
<u>JesseKillGale</u>	3 (11%)	1 (4%)	0	0	0	4 (3%)	3 (5%)	7 (3%)
<u>BlowUpCar</u>	0	2 (7%)	0	0	3 (9%)	5 (4%)	2 (3%)	7 (3%)
<u>Never</u>	0	1 (4%)	1 (3%)	2 (13%)	0	4 (3%)	2 (3%)	6 (3%)
<u>TucoHQ</u>	1 (4%)	0	1 (3%)	1 (6%)	0	3 (2%)	1 (2%)	4 (2%)
<u>BecomeHeis</u>	1 (4%)	0	0	1 (6%)	0	2 (1%)	1 (2%)	3 (1%)
<u>Other</u>	10 (37%)	9 (32%)	7 (19%)	3 (20%)	15 (43%)	44 (31%)	24 (38%)	68 (34%)
N	27 (100%)	28 (100%)	36 (100%)	16 (100%)	34 (100%)	141 (100%)	62 (100%)	203 (100%)

FINDINGS- JUSTIFIED ACT BY COUNTRY OF RESIDENCE

Table 4 Attitudes on justified acts of Walter's by country of residence			
Justified Act	From U.S.		
	Yes	No	TOTAL
<u>CookMethForFamily</u>	27 (24%)	4 (11%)	31 (21%)
<u>RunOverDealers</u>	16 (14%)	8 (22%)	24 (16%)
<u>KillKrazy</u>	19 (17%)	4 (11%)	23 (16%)
<u>PoisonDealers</u>	14 (13%)	6 (17%)	20 (14%)
<u>KillGus</u>	12 (11%)	3 (8%)	15 (10%)
Kill in Self-Defense	8 (7%)	3 (8%)	11 (7%)
Other	15 (14%)	8 (23%)	23 (16%)
TOTAL	111/147 (76%)	36/147 (24%)	*147 (100%)
*56 Respondents answered that Walter never committed a justified act			

