HelloFriend

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Figure 1: Me with Kirby, the first horse I leased.

Who I am, Where I am, Why I'm There, and Where I want to Go

My name is Rachel Judd and I am a senior at Washington State University Vancouver. I am majoring in Psychology with minors in Mathematics and Criminal Justice & Criminology. I like helping others so I worked as a math tutor (tutoring College Algebra, Statistics in Psychology, and Calculus II) until coronavirus eliminated the position. I enjoy riding horses (English, Western, and bareback), running, reading, creative writing, playing piano, and walking in the woods. As part of my riding lessons, I have helped less experienced riders learn the basics of horse care and safety as well as some basic riding skills. I have also volunteered

with my church in Junior Worship, which is where kids go to learn about God during the sermon. I like a challenge and get bored when things are too easy.

When I started college four and a half years ago, I wanted to be a police officer, and eventually work as a detective investigating child abuse. I chose the major of psychology because I am interested in the way people think and I wanted to gain a better understanding of how they think and process their world (and it sounded WAY more interesting than political science, another recommended degree for law enforcement officers).

I started the math minor because I learned I like math during my first semester of college. As part of my major in psychology, I took classes in statistics, research methods, and test development. Elementary Statistics for Psychology (Psych 311) was algebra-based and taught us descriptive statistics as well as select inferential statistics topics such as t-test, ANOVA, correlation, and regression. I thoroughly enjoyed Psych 311 and eventually was able to tutor people in future sections of the class.

In Experimental Methods in Psychology (Psych 312), we had two research projects during the semester. The first was an observational study looking at the gender differences in preschool age children's aggressive behavior. I used a Chi-square goodness-of-fit test to analyze the data and found that girls were more aggressive than boys. Circumstances were such that my instructor provided hypothetical data for analysis, so I don't know how typical the results of that project are. The second project I worked on in my methods class was determining if increasing the speed at the end of a virtual reality video would have an impact on the perceived exertion of people who watched the video while exercising on a treadmill. We worked in a group of six people, and part of my job was to run the LabChart software (which recorded O2 levels, CO2 levels, tidal volume, breaths per minute, and respiration l/s as the participants walked or jogged on the treadmill). There was not a significant difference in exercise motivation between participants who watched the sped up version of the virtual reality video and those who watched the video with normal speed. While we were running the experiment, a police lieutenant came to check on what was going on in the lab because he could hear a weird noise coming through the wall when he was in his office. Apparently, the lab was right next door to the lieutenant's office, so he could hear the treadmill going while we were working on the experiment. Through Psych 311 and Psych 312, I learned that I like research and working with data, so I started to consider crime analysis as a future career path.

At the beginning of the Spring 2019 semester, I fell off my horse headfirst and got a concussion. It took almost a year for my brain to work at pre-concussion levels again. I am not fond of the idea of getting another concussion and being back in the place where the only math I can do for 3-4 days is counting. Law enforcement has a high potential for concussions and it is hard to predict how well I would recover from a third concussion (the first one was from falling off a rope swing the night before I graduated from high school), so that is one thing I have kept in mind when considering working in law enforcement.

In Spring 2020, I took two classes that were geared more toward engineers and computer science students (Physics 202 and Probability & Statistics [Stats 360]). That semester showed me that I am really not interested in engineering. The statistics class was mostly review of the topics we covered in Psych 311, only calculus based. Most of the examples in the statistics class related to engineering, which was incredibly boring. My brain felt like it was drying up and turning into sawdust, which made me despair about how miserable I would be with the rest of my math minor. I decided I was never taking another statistics class again because it was too boring and I eliminated crime analysis from career consideration. I decided it was probably too solitary a career anyway, and, missing the days where my friends and I crammed around a table and "studied" on campus, I really wanted to do something where I was around people. (Online school was an extrovert's nightmare).

I decided to take Stats 419 because as part of my psychology Capstone class (Psychological Testing and Assessment [Psych 412]), I developed a scale to measure moral disengagement in social activism. This scale was included as part of a large Qualtrics survey that contained all of my classmates' scales as well. We had 98 participants, but only 71 people responded to all of the items on the JSAS (Judd Social Activism Scale). The Cronbach's alpha was .94, which was a little higher than ideal. The JSAS had a significant correlation of 0.27 with the Extremism Scale (ES), showing that the constructs of moral disengagement and extremism are related, but not the same thing. As part of the validation process, I used a factor analysis

to see if the scale items broke into the different moral disengagement mechanisms as intended. There were 13 factors instead of the expected 7 and the items did not load onto the factors according to their moral disengagement mechanism. Factor analysis was not a main topic in Psych 412 (if we chose to use a factor analysis to evaluate our scale, we worked with either the instructor or TA to figure out how to conduct and interpret one using PSPP). I was really excited when I saw that factor analysis was taught in Stats 419. The factor analysis I did for Psych 412 was interesting, so I want to learn more about it and gain much more of an understanding of what I was doing and why. I am still not quite sure what kind of factor analysis I did for the project. Psych 412 showed me that I still like research and working with data, just as long as it is not related to engineering topics.

I am in a spot in my life where I am trying to decide between pursuing a career as a police officer or going to graduate school to gain the education needed to work as a crime analyst. This semester, I have an internship with the crime analysis unit at Vancouver Police Department, which will hopefully help me make that decision. What little I have done in my internship so far has been fascinating. As part of my internship, I will be working on a project regarding human trafficking, from the angle of runaways and at-risk youth. I will be learning how to use MAXQDA to do qualitative analysis of police reports.

I ended up in a crime analysis internship partially because I have a talent of injuring my right knee. Two of those injuries were from swiveling in office chairs and one of them was from falling out of a chair (in the middle of Stats 360 class last January, which was a great way to start out the year...). I have also injured my knee by simply kneeling on my bedroom floor. These knee injuries have not healed and no one can agree on what is wrong with my knee. I don't know how long it will take for it to heal, but as it is now, I cannot train for or complete the physical abilities test required to become a police officer. Crime analysis does not require a properly working knee, so it is looking more and more likely that that will be the route that I will take.

I want to end up in a career where I can help people, especially those impacted by human trafficking or child abuse. I am not sure whether I will pursue law enforcement or crime analysis, but a series of head and knee injuries is making crime analysis more likely. Graduate school has been recommended to me for crime analysis, so I am also trying to figure out what skills I need to gain prior to going to graduate school to ensure I have the proper foundation to complete the program successfully. I am hoping that I will be able to apply what I learn in Stats 419 to my internship and possibly to my future career.