

Some have suggested that the release of NDIS profiles would be unduly burdensome (13), but the relevant fields in the SQL database could be copied in a matter of minutes.

Open access to data is a fundamental tenet of science. The need for openness was reinforced by the recent National Research Council report, which decried the insularity of forensic science and called for greater involvement of the academic community in assessment, validation, and improvement of forensic science methods (1). Law enforcement should honor the norms of science and open the NDIS and other government DNA databases to independent scientific scrutiny. Doing so poses no meaningful risk and can only strengthen the quality of forensic DNA analysis.

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Weighing Reward and Punishment

IN THEIR REPORT "POSITIVE INTERACTIONS promote public cooperation" (4 September, p. 1272), D. G. Rand *et al.* find that targeted reward is at least as effective as targeted punishment in maintaining cooperation. In their experiment, infrequent reward may be sufficient because the group is small and interacts repeatedly. However, in real-world situations, punishment may be the more effective and cost-efficient option.

In many real-world cases, unlike Rand *et al.*'s example, the cost to Player A of giving Player B a material reward is roughly the same as the benefit Player B receives from the

reward. (The benefit of nonpecuniary rewards, such as praise, may exceed their cost considerably. Rand *et al.* suggest this, but their experiment is not set up to provide evidence.) Thus, the cost of cooperation is simply shifted to those who provide the reward. However, the threat of punishment provides a less costly lever to force cooperation, even when the threat must be carried out. The cost of a match and a gallon of gasoline is much less than cost to repair the damage they could cause. Likewise, nasty words can hurt much more than the effort it takes to say them.

In real-world situations, when people are not interacting in a small group and when they are motivated by money, the threat of punishment is effective. Laws are based largely on this insight.

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Response

BARON ARGUES THAT INFREQUENT PUNISHMENTS are more cost efficient than infrequent rewards. But our experiment does not represent a situation of intermittent rewarding. Instead, we have shown that contributions to the public good can be maintained by linking the public goods game to cooperative, wealth-producing pairwise interactions. Low contributors are denied cooperation in pairwise interactions, while high contributors are rewarded. Due to the ubiquity of such opportunities for targeted interaction, there is no need for costly peer punishment to enforce cooperation. Full cooperation in both the public and pairwise interactions leads to the best possible payoff. Thus, adding punishment cannot result in better outcomes.

Baron challenges the real-world applicability of the non-zero-sum rewards in our study. However, the availability of wealth-generating, non-zero-sum interactions is the essence of all social dilemmas—including the Prisoners' Dilemma (1–5), of which our reward interaction is an example, as well as the Public Goods Game (6–9) itself. These games represent the multitude of different

Letters to the Editor

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cooperative interactions in which two or more people working together can achieve more than each person could alone. For example, consider mutually beneficial trade: Both parties pay the cost of abandoning something worth less to them than to the other, in order to gain something they find relatively more valuable. To enforce public cooperation, one can refuse to trade with

those who do not contribute to the public good. Baron's claim that life offers few opportunities to create material benefits for others through cooperation questions the relevance of all work on social dilemmas, including his own (10).

Baron concludes by mentioning the role of punishment in law. However, our paper and most others on costly punishment (4, 5,

7–9) investigate peer punishment, not institutionalized punishment. The latter deserves further empirical and theoretical exploration.

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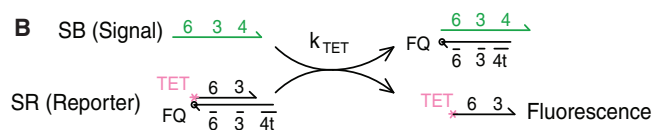
CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

Editors' Choice: "Microbial influences" (4 December, p. 1321). The image accompanying the text should have been credited to Ivanov *et al.*, not Gaboriau-Routhiau *et al.*

Books *et al.*: "Science goes Hollywood" by C. Bohannon *et al.* (4 December, p. 1348). The first sentence of the reviewers' affiliations was inadvertently dropped. The reviewers are members of NeuWrite, a nonfiction writing group at Columbia University (www.neuwrite.org).

Policy Forum: "Bridging the Montreal-Kyoto gap" by J. Cohen *et al.* (13 November, p. 940). The author's e-mail should be jcohen@eosclimate.com. The HTML online version has been corrected.

Reports: "Engineering entropy-driven reactions and networks catalyzed by DNA" by D. Y. Zhang *et al.* (16 November 2007, p. 1121). In Fig. 4B, domain 4a should have been domain 4t, with a length of 7 nucleotides. The corrected figure appears below. The following text should also be added to the Fig. 4B caption: "Domain 4t has identity 5'-TTGAATG-3' and is a subsequence of domain 4a."



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