The Injustice in Justice

An examination of the quality of legal representation young Māori men receive in the criminal justice system

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Participants

8 Young Māori men

3 Experienced Lawyers
Know Me, Before You Judge Me

I had **no income**, my sister had no income, my family had no income.... that was my tradition, to steal the food first **to feed the family**, then rob the house for the drugs (Nathan).

The personal is **political**.
“the hardest thing was, the duty solicitors were zipping all over the place [so] it was hard to stop one. They’d be like, ‘Oh nah, I’m busy’” (Adrian).

“the real issue is, you’ve got 60 people listed for 9 o’clock, 50 people listed for 10 o’clock, 20 listed for 2.15. ...... there’s too many people to deal with” (PDS Laywer)
Unconscious bias, racism and discrimination

“don’t assume that all Māori are violent cause that’s not true, we are not. I know there is a stereotype going around that especially Māori men are violent. Not everyone is violent. I’m not violent, I’m a good person” (Matt).

“lawyers in the court deal with the same stuff every single day… we don’t know whether they’re a well-oiled machine, or just a frequent flyer… (Maori lawyer)
[She] understood me. She asked the questions that were relevant to my case, to my life, and the offending... and what made me lash out... She was the one who actually said, ‘Have you talked to anyone about what’s going on for you?’ (Syd).

If only I had the money aye... I’ll ask her to do her job properly this time, maybe I'll chip in next time (Jimmy)
"I didn’t really understand ... they always talk numbers, section this, section that ... I don’t know what they are talking about. They’re talking about law stuff I’m guessing”

“Simon”
Māori response to justice

Kaupapa Māori

No hea koe? Ko wai to whānau? ..... Getting to know the clients [is important] so they don’t feel like a nobody, like a nothing ... [It’s] about engagement so they actually feel like they’re a person, by treating them with respect and dignity (Māori lawyer).

They [Hoani Waititi Marae] were just teaching us about who we are personally, like trying to find ourselves.... as a Māori person. Where we come from, who we are, who our whānau is, a little bit about [our] history (Nathan).
1. Removing barriers to justice - court ambassadors, rescheduling of court appearances
2. Quality Legal Representation - reducing case loads, increase fixed fee, complaints process
3. Address systemic bias and discrimination - Kaupapa Maori teams, supervision for police, and lawyers
4. Social workers trained and funded to provide court advocacy
5. Culturally competent lawyers (law school)