

# The Sylvans

## Detailed summary powered by AI

20 October 2025

*Motion: the justice system should rely less on human judgement.*

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## Analysis of the outcome powered by AI

The debate on whether the justice system should rely less on human judgement was a fascinating clash between pragmatic technological optimism and deeply rooted philosophical anxieties about the loss of human empathy. Ultimately, the motion carried. A detailed analysis of the arguments reveals that the proposition secured this victory not by championing a dystopian future of robot judges, but by masterfully defining the parameters of the motion to frame technology as an indispensable tool for mitigating proven human flaws.

The proposition opened the debate with a highly effective strategic manoeuvre: defining "rely less" as a fractional reduction rather than a wholesale replacement. By clarifying that the motion advocated for technological augmentation—such as AI co-pilots for judges and data-driven recommendations—rather than automated sentencing, the proposer immediately disarmed the most extreme fears of the audience. The proposer anchored their argument in the undeniable reality of human fallibility, citing racial profiling and the notorious studies showing that hungry judges make harsher parole decisions. This established a pragmatic baseline that the opposition struggled to overcome.

The opposition's initial response was rhetorically passionate but practically unmoored. The opposer framed the debate around utopian ideals, suggesting that society should focus on eliminating the root causes of crime, such as inequality, rather than tinkering with judicial mechanics. While they eloquently championed human intelligence, emotional depth and compassion, their argument that we must trust human judgement "100%" struck many in the room as illogical, particularly after the opposer conceded that humans are inherently fallible. As the debate opened to the floor, the ebb and flow of audience contributions highlighted a deep intellectual divide. Those leaning towards the opposition mounted several sophisticated counterattacks. A recurring and potent theme was that AI is not an objective alternative to

human judgement but rather a recycled, secondhand distillation of it. Several speakers astutely pointed out that training datasets are inherently ethnocentric and baked with historical prejudices. The spectre of the Post Office Horizon scandal was invoked by both sides but used effectively by the opposition to warn against the societal tendency to blindly trust computers over human nuance. Furthermore, passionate arguments were made regarding the importance of courtroom empathy, the necessity of reading body language and the danger of reducing complex human tragedies to deterministic, automated scripts. One speaker notably argued that "less human judgement" equates directly to "less human decision-making", warning that automated systems—like speeding cameras—often result in a presumption of guilt. Another raised a profound point about the appellate process, questioning how a human could ever successfully appeal a judgement derived from an opaque algorithm.

However, the proposition's foundational argument regarding human bias resonated just as strongly with a significant portion of the audience. Supporters of the motion pointed to the glaring failures of human-centric justice. One speaker likened the integration of AI to the introduction of VAR in football—a necessary, data-driven guardrail. Another speaker took a more radical historical view, tracing the evolution of justice from random medieval "ordeals by God" to the current system, which they argued is still fundamentally unfit for purpose given mass miscarriages of justice. The inherent biases of juries, activist judges and the influence of the ruling elite were repeatedly highlighted to prove that human emotion and subjectivity are often the enemies of true justice, rather than its saviours.

What ultimately drove the result and ensured the motion carried was the proposition's masterful closing speech. The proposer synthesised the sprawling philosophical debate into a devastatingly simple historical analogy. They asked the audience to imagine a murder trial in 1850, completely reliant on human testimony and jury subjectivity. They then contrasted this with trials a century later that incorporated fingerprints, and modern trials that utilise DNA. By framing these scientific advancements as technologies that actively reduced the reliance on flawed human intuition—thereby freeing innocent people from prison—the proposer brilliantly reframed AI and data analytics. Technology was cast not as a threat to human compassion but as the next logical step in the historical evolution of forensic tools.

In the end, the opposition's theological and emotional appeals, concluding with a lighthearted suggestion that judges simply need a good Italian meal to make better decisions, felt inadequate against the weight of systemic judicial failures. The proposition won because they successfully convinced the room that human emotion is too volatile to be the sole arbiter of justice and that augmenting our inherently biased systems with objective technological tools is both a practical necessity and a moral imperative.

## **Detailed transcript:**

So the justice system should rely less on human judgement. Great. Thank you. So we have our volunteers. So you've got five minutes to start us off.

Okay, thank you, Chair. This isn't, you know people, 11 people voted for this at the beginning. And now we've, you know, what is this motion? What does it mean? Actually, it was one of a fellow member's ideas. So there was one of her original suggestions which came through on Slack. And so we have discussed it, so I have some of her ideas that are coming to mind here. I'll try to share something, but I also generally do believe that there are some strong reasons to support this motion.

The justice system has many different features, ranging all the way from the Supreme Court, High Court, lower courts, family courts and all different kinds of courts. There's that whole element of the court system. You also have civil cases, criminal cases and all kinds of different cases. Then, I suppose, you can also include the police and all kinds of other elements of the justice system. So there's a very broad set of circumstances here. I want to focus on a couple of those different areas. I will focus on the courts. I will also focus, to an extent, on policing, because I think there are some really relevant arguments there as well.

What this is not about, let's look at the motion: "rely less on human judgement." It doesn't say take away human judgement. Very, very clearly. So if there's a reason to rely fractionally less on human judgement and fractionally more on something else, which I will define in a minute, that would be enough to satisfy this motion, right? It doesn't have to be replacing human judgement, certainly not wholesale. That would be madness for many, many reasons today.

I want to talk about a couple of failings of the justice system. There are big, big problems that we have today. First of all, it's all run by humans. We're all human. We're all fallible, we're all highly fallible and we're all biased. We have a debating chamber here. We all get up here and we share our biases. We have enough people to get up and share different perspectives and different biases that hopefully, by some collision of the minds at the end of the debate, we take a vote, and we can all shed some of those and vote the right way on these motions. Right? We all have biases. We all make mistakes and we all make biased decisions.

It goes back to racial profiling by police, all kinds of things. With racial profiling in a face-to-face context, there can also be the question of what is the focus of an investigation? Should we investigate this guy with a Nigerian-sounding name, or should we investigate this guy with a traditional English surname? Those kinds of decisions can be completely biased.

Let's look at the higher end of the justice system, the courts. Judges make decisions about sentencing. Judges are biased. Their job is to be rational. There are all kinds of studies that show that judges just before lunch make bad decisions, make worse decisions. They're hungry, they're angry. They don't make good decisions. At the end of the day, they're making bad decisions. Parole boards make biased decisions. They're biased against racial minorities. They're biased against other characteristics.

I didn't realise how much time had elapsed. Let me talk about some solutions that we can put in place. I'm just going to suggest a few. There are many, many different things we could have. I'm not advocating any one particular solution. If any one of these solutions resonates with you, then there's a potential to vote for this motion.

There are deterministic computer systems that analyse data and recommend parole decisions. There have been a lot of studies that showed that they are better at making parole decisions. It's not AI; it's deterministic computer systems with a lot of data recommending whether someone coming out of prison should be paroled or not.

Judges could have AI co-pilots that say, "Let's analyse all this." It wouldn't even say, "This is what you should do." It could say, "Have you considered these factors? What weightings are you putting on your decisions?" The AI could say, "Actually, these are the most important points. Consider putting weight on these factors in your decision." The judge could even dictate to the AI. The AI could play it back to them and try to create a little debate with the judge. "What about this? What about that? Why are you recommending that?" It will spur further thoughts for the judge. The judge is making the decision, but an AI co-pilot could be really, really beneficial. In policing, watching CCTV footage. Why wouldn't we have AI alongside a police officer looking at CCTV footage? Because the AI can pick out things the police officer will miss and can make recommendations. Don't touch jury trials. Those are sacred and there's a reason, because you've got multiple brains. But when you have one person making decisions, they're fallible, they're biased and they will make mistakes. Adding a bit of technology will help the justice system.

Thank you, the proposer, and I'll move over to the opposer.

Thank you, the proposer. I think it's probably the best speech you've ever made in the Sylvans. Chair, fellow Sylvans, where do I start? A very good place to start. Are you going to carry on with "Over the Rainbow"? Where do we start on this? I think we probably start on human behaviour and what is our attitude to justice in our society? Truly, fundamentally, we should try and create a society where there is no crime. What is the cause of crime? I suspect it's probably inequality, injustice and the discrepancy between the very wealthy and the poor in whatever society we are talking about. Although primarily we obviously are talking about the UK, there seems to be injustice all over the world, that the haves have got more and the many have got less and so that in itself creates crime for survival.

People commit crime for survival. So if we change the operation of society, if we get more built-in justice and equality, all this concern about locking people up or fair trials will be diminished. But I suspect that is an idealistic, utopian view, a note that has been heard here before and put more eloquently by others than myself.

Let me try and build on the alliance that we've got here against this almost authoritarian motion, the idea that we need to be helped to make the correct decisions about our police policy, our crime policy, our justice policy and that we need these tools. Anybody with any skill in mechanics, not that I'm very capable of stripping out an engine or stripping anything else, actually knows it is a question of using the right tools, the appropriate tools for the task at hand. And I'm not convinced with all this. I've said before, it seems to me a contradiction in terms to talk about artificial intelligence. I thought intelligence was actually the preserve of human activity. So I'm up against this double graduate, speaking to people who have great knowledge about computers and everything else, and I can just about remember the password on my ATM cash card. So I'm just wondering, where is the human representation? Or are we going to be controlled increasingly by an elite who have got the wherewithal to actually manipulate human values? I think that is, again, like the last debate, a slippery road. I think we have to trust in human judgement 100% when somebody's life is at risk. We need to use our full human capacity of intelligence and emotional intelligence and compassion as well as intellectual intelligence to actually make these decisions. And of course, there have been failures, because, as the proposer pointedly said, humans are fallible. But if we create these other systems, they are created by human beings, so they must also be fallible. Thank you very much.

Thank you. That opens the floor. Speaker, do you want to start?

Okay, a couple of things before making my point. The first one is that I really tried to raise my hand as quickly as possible. I wanted to switch sides clearly, and I wanted to look a little bit less critical by doing it sooner rather than later. I think there were some arguments brought up by the proposer that won me over quite soon. Part of me didn't understand the motion in the first place. So I am going to speak in your favour.

The second point I want to make is that I'm going to do that sadly, because I'm usually in the opposer's corner. Being a pastor, he always argues so emotionally about his points. He brings up empathy about everything and I usually enjoy being on your side, the opposer. So I'm going to do that sadly now.

Emotions aside, the big point here is bias. And I was biased in the beginning when I voted against the motion, and I am biased usually when I root for you, the opposer. The point of it all is what the proposer said before: less doesn't mean without. So if the argument is, let's add one more thing, we can call it a guardrail, we can call it an opinion, we can call it a point or we can call it data, to the decision, then I'm in favour now.

We can run countless examples. The most basic one is, frankly, football. The decision of whether the ball was in or out is now supported by data trying to see what science tells us. There's something that you said, the proposer, that I disagree with, but maybe that point could possibly be tweaked. You argued in favour of making the machine more present in deciding, and you argued that decisions are biased. You mentioned the timing of decisions. You mentioned human, affective decisions. Now, I am very much not in favour of having machines deciding for us. What I'm very much in favour of is having machines help us build an argument. I think as long as humans retain the decision power, there is effectively the biggest mechanism of checks and balances, despite the imperfections of the rule of law or the non-empathy of machines. But if we allow machines to help the judicial system by making better arguments, then why not?

Thank you very much.

Hi. I was just wondering if these two people have read Sapolsky's book "Determined: A Science of Life Without Free Will." Anyway, he cited a lot of studies regarding judges on the parole board, like how when the judge is hungry, the person who is up for parole will not get it. This is a study that has been done many, many times and proven. So I totally agree that judges are biased on the parole board.

But think about judging the system to determine whether a person is guilty or not. That is done through a jury, twelve jurors. So how are we going to improve that with AI? I don't know how that is going to work. Or to determine whether police can stop someone to search them. What does the police officer have to use to help him determine whether at that moment he needs to stop that person or not, especially when chasing a criminal? So I'm not quite sure how a computer system as a co-decider is going to help us in a lot of situations. That's one question. If the proposition can help me understand that, and also address the belief system aspect, I probably will be convinced.

Now, as far as the opposition side goes, the opposition already conceded that we are all fallible and can make a lot of mistakes. So I cannot see the logic in the conclusion that the opposer came up with, that we need to rely on human beings 100% to make our own decisions. To me, it doesn't really sound logical.

Would you like to come up from the back? Sorry, I don't have your name. Thank you.

Hi. I'm the speaker. I think my main point is regarding the question of AI. I don't think that using AI in the court system is actually reducing the amount of human judgement. I think the way AI currently works is that it's built on datasets that use examples of previous human judgements. And those datasets have been built by humans, so it will actually be a reflection of human judgement. So I'm not necessarily arguing for more or less human judgement, I just think that using AI actually isn't a reduction of human judgement. I think if anything, it's an increasing of human judgement. And the same goes for computer models that use a dataset of previous cases; once again, that is human judgement.

I think justice as a concept is inherently human. It's not something that animals have. It's not something that mechanics or nature has. I don't think there is a way to avoid this question of human judgement. I don't think we can reduce it. It's an inherently human thing.

I think the biggest issue relates to human judgement. I agree entirely with the point that using more AI doesn't necessarily equal less human judgement, and I think that's the issue at hand: whether or not we should have less human judgement and if we have less human judgement, what do we replace it with? My biggest concern is that whatever that is currently doesn't exist. There's a very old adage that talks about the importance of the jury being able to see a defendant or a witness, and a judge being able to see a defendant and a witness, and just being able to sort of understand by the look in their eye, their facial expressions, their body movements, if they're lying. And they might not actually always be right. I think we can fully accept that. But the question is, will whatever the new technology is that's going to replace it and mean there's less human judgement, result in better outcomes? And currently, I just don't think the technology is there in any regard to replace human judgement.

Chair, ladies and gentlemen, I have strong views on this topic as well. To rectify my lack of the Romans in our last debate, let's go back to the Romans. They required a cadre of magistrates, well educated in both law and everything else, and it was assumed in the Roman system that a trained intellect could determine whether someone was guilty or not. Now, when the Roman Empire of the West collapsed around 400 to 500 AD, the barbarians who took over Italy considered that the problem of actually intellectually deciding whether someone was guilty was well beyond them. And you had to rely, therefore, on a sign from God.

All throughout that time, our courts relied on a sign from God. Until the Tudor period, as late as Elizabeth I, a set of ordeals was instituted. So a judge would give his judgement of what ordeal would be applied to prove whether the man or woman was innocent or not. You got ordeal by water, ordeal by fire or ordeal by a morsel of bread. I won't go into each one of them. The ordeal by water was by far the trial, obviously painful to be thrown in water. It was believed water would not suffer the guilty to sink into it. Therefore, you were thrown into water to see if you floated or not.

Now, in Elizabeth's time, you were given the choice of whether you were tried by God or tried by your country. That was when the jury began to come in. What I want to say is that this episode of 900 cases in the criminal court brought by the Post Office shows that we are not capable of working out whether someone is innocent or guilty. It's intellectually beyond us for 900 cases to go wrong. Even if we take each one as a half probability, it would be one half to the power of 900, which is microscopic. Those cases prove that that court is not fit for purpose and should be shut down. Shut it down for the moment. Don't bother to try people if you can't work it out; let them off until you can get a system that may work. We haven't got one yet. Thank you.

Who would like to go next? Would you like to come up? Sorry, I'm just going by whose hand I see first. That's my method.

So my contribution is going to be on the more emotional side and not as analytical as most of the contributions we've heard. Dostoyevsky said that when everything is reduced to calculation, justice will have fled the earth, or something like that. And he was absolutely right. He understood it very well. He understood that justice can only ever arise from human judgement. It can't arise from the operation of a series of deterministic rules with no give and take and no discretion.

I think we understand that intuitively as well. We have all had the experience of needing something, picking up the phone and having to deal with an interminable maze of computerised voices giving us lists of options that really don't seem to apply to the situation we're in. You can't get your own voice in. You can't pick an option that's not in the list. You are patronised and belittled and squashed down into a little box to fit into a pre-existing script that is determined by a system. We hate that. At the end of that, we want to come through and hear a human voice, because a human voice will listen to our voice, take into account what we have to say and respond to our needs in a way that no automatic system ever actually can.

We've all heard the excuse, "Well, I don't make the rules, gov," and we've all felt the terrible chill, the finality that that excuse produces. When somebody says that to you, there is no argument, there is no appeal. That is a perfect excuse: "I didn't make the rules. I'm just enacting the script. I'm enacting the system and it's not my problem anymore."

We are told that a way around this is to use AI. An earlier speaker very rightly pointed out that AI is nothing but recycled human judgement. It's secondhand human judgement. It is second-rate human judgement. And why is it second-rate? Because it cannot really see the individual circumstances of the person in front of it. All it can do is infer from a dataset of what has gone before and try to apply that to you. But it cannot see you as an individual and consider your situation in the way a human can.

To conclude, if you want the justice system to produce justice, you have to rely on human judgement and nothing else. There is no other source of justice than human judgement, unless you believe in divine revelation. The only choice is whether you bring the judgement out into the light where you can see it and know it's a human judgement, or whether you hide it behind a machine or a system of rules which has no accountability and no way of changing.

Gentlemen, we're not dealing here with jury trials, of course. We're dealing with a trial where you have one judge who's making a judgement based on the evidence presented. And we're not dealing either with sort of Judge Judy or Judge Robert Rinder, because those are television programmes where it's all televised for entertainment.

The problem that we have with one judge making a judgement is where you have activist judges who interpret the law as they think it ought to mean, rather than what it actually says. And there are quite a lot of activist judges who belong to various left-wing organisations or, for that matter, Freemasons. I don't know if they're judges, actually, but a lot of judges may indeed belong to the Freemasons. Where judges are influenced by particular views, the problem is that they will interpret the law as they think it ought to be interpreted, rather than what it actually says. That is the nub of the problem.

If you can at least gather together a lot of information pertaining to the case, and if there is information going back some distance in time, you can use AI. AI, incidentally, isn't intelligent. It

might be artificial, but it's not intelligent. It simply collects an enormous amount of data together and presents it in a readable form. And if you have the data in a condensed and readable form that you can actually see, then it can certainly help a judge to reach a reasonable and proper judgement, rather than be swayed by his own feelings. So I would be inclined to think that AI, as I say, it's not intelligent, it's simply a way of collecting a lot of information and making it readily available, is probably a good thing for a judge to have in front of him in order to be able to reach a decision. So I'm inclined to favour the proposition.

Next hand shot up right on time.

I stand on the opposer's side. I've been trying to get my head around what the motion means. A gentleman earlier mentioned democracy. Isn't democracy all about "of the people, by the people, for the people"? That's the essence of democracy, and we have the right to be judged by a jury of our peers. This is the essence of our democracy. It's been mentioned by the proposition that this isn't about jury duty, but I think the motion does tend towards that. By removing humans out of it, aren't we fundamentally toying with the basics, the mechanics of our democracy? Human beings are the essence of it.

I'm reminded of Fox News. If there's anything we learn from Fox News, it's that you ask the questions to give you the answers you want, right? That came to mind because it demonstrates the fallibility of humans, but also the fallibility of data. We're not even going into AI; data really can always be questioned by so-called generalisability or inter-rater variability. Data is really a function of our own thinking and our own norms and values, and that actually does extend, as has just been said, into AI.

Some recent research has said that AI, because it uses mostly Western data as its source, is very ethnocentric. So the norms and values that we are used to will give different answers elsewhere around the globe. We're talking about a very localised data assessment, and the technology isn't there to do what the proposition is suggesting.

I'm also thinking we are giving up our personal sovereignty, in a sense, by following the motion's suggestion. I was on jury duty last year, and I was actually quite surprised and proud of how objectively and thoughtfully the jury behaved. Everyone was aware of their own biases and they tried to balance things out. And I think they made a very, very good decision. I think we're underrating our own capacity as human beings. This is what our society is about. We're making it very ethnocentric and we're relying too much on the magic of data, because it really isn't ready for what's being suggested. So I am on the side of the opposition.

I wanted to go back to the motion, which is "the justice system should rely less on human judgement." We've spoken a lot about the ways that data, technology and AI can help us make decisions. I don't think having data or technology helping someone make a decision is, in effect, relying less on human judgement. If you have an AI system like Co-pilot compiling lots of information for you, or compiling all the key facts going to a judge, or doing legal research, there are loads of ways that technology can be super helpful in the justice system, including helping judges write their judgements.

But I think if you're going to be relying less on human judgement, for me, that means there's going to be an element of judgement, decision-making about the result of a case, which is not going to be done by a human. I think that is where it gets really risky. Because it's not just that the computer or the AI is pulling together all the possible factors that the judge can think about. It's that the computer is then making a decision about which factor is more important and what

weight to ascribe to different factors in the case. My question then is, what is it, if we're not relying on human judgement? Is it going to be the computer? I'm not sure what else we're relying on, but assuming it's computers, as people seem to assume, I think there are some real issues with computer decision-making or automated decision-making.

The first issue, as someone's already said, is that discrimination is in our society. Judges are biased; judges can be biased. In my job, it's a complete roll of the dice which judge you have. You have a particular judge and you know you're going to be doomed on the case. It doesn't matter how well you prepare it; that's just the way it goes. But where is this computer getting its decision-making from? It's from the dataset we already have, so that discrimination and those biases are so often baked in. It's very difficult to take discrimination or biases out of computer systems.

The second is a massive issue of computer trust. Take the Post Office Horizon case. One of the reasons all these people were wrongly convicted was because no one questioned the computer. No one questioned Horizon. That is the issue. We may have a computer judgement, and then another human looks at it, but we trust computers because they are so powerful. Our phones seem to be able to do everything. We think the computer is always right in our society.

The third and really important point is that the law is so nuanced. Courts are making decisions about where a child should live, which family they should go to, how long someone should stay in prison for, if they should go to prison at all, if they should get a second chance, if someone should be evicted or not. I've sat in a courtroom before with a client who clearly had mental health conditions. On paper, it was nothing, but he sat in that courtroom and he was shaking. The judge saw that person and he saw that individual's mental health conditions right in front of him. That meant that he was still awarded possession, but at a much lower rate, in a way that the individual could deal with. And if we had a computer, that individual's individuality, that nuance and that empathy that actually led to a just result wouldn't have happened. And that's what scares me.

Speaker, would you like to come up?

I don't know if I'm actually going to add anything for or against, but I'm going to talk a little bit about my experiences with AI. Gemini is my I'm going to say my friend. Anyway, I actually asked it a question the other day. I said, "Can you lip-read if I was to upload a video?" It gave me a half-page answer. So I just went back and said I wanted a simple yes or no. Why on earth did I need to go through all the reasons why it couldn't lip-read? But it was to do with facial recognition. I was watching a show and I wanted to work out what the person was saying. Again, regarding judgements, sometimes I put things into the AI, and when it comes back, I'm thinking, "You've not actually answered my question," or "You've totally got the wrong end of the stick." And then I have to go back and correct it.

Also, what AI is lacking, sorry to bring up race again, but there's a lot of information that's not about white people that is missing from AI. So when it comes to judgements, much like what an earlier speaker was saying about that person with their mental health, there could be nuances about a Chinese person being a certain way, or a Jamaican person being a certain way and none of that nuance may actually be in the AI. I have to say that philosophy did actually give a very good argument. So whereas I was against you, I might actually vote neutral. I think that's all I've got to say.

Would you like to come up now? Thank you.

So all I'll say is the justice system is generally quite biased. If you look at juries, they're going to be biased based on race, religion, class issues and that sort of thing. You can see this in any courtroom drama or film. A Time to Kill is a very good example of how they used race; the lawyer who was trying to prosecute him was trying to gerrymander the jury to get a conviction. The whole justice system basically serves the interests of the ruling elite. For example, stateside, if you have whistleblowers like Julian Assange or Edward Snowden, if they had to stand trial, they would end up going to West Virginia or Langley. Their jury would be people who are part of that political state establishment people in the FBI, CIA or the State Department who are sympathetic to prosecuting these people. So that wouldn't be a fair trial.

Then consider the judicial system in the UK. Members of the ruling elite have not been convicted. People like Jimmy Savile or Tony Blair regarding the Chilcot inquiry. They haven't actually been convicted despite committing certain crimes. O.J. Simpson only got off because he had a very wealthy lawyer. Then there are people like David Cameron with offshore accounts.

The judicial system is biased, but it's a symptom of a bigger issue, which is the state itself. The state serves the interests of the ruling elite. You can say the same for the police system and the military surveillance system; it's all part of the same thing. I don't actually believe that AI would solve that problem, because it will just transpose the prejudices you currently have into the computer. I think the only way you're actually going to get rid of this bias is to change the actual system, which would be very difficult to do. At the end of the day, the laws being passed through the House of Commons or the House of Lords are created by the ruling elite, for the ruling elite. So it's going to be very difficult to change that system.

Thank you. Would you like to come up?

Thank you very much. Everyone made some really good points, but I wanted to bring up something that I don't think I've heard anyone talk about: the appeal process, which in my opinion is a very crucial part of any judicial system. Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that we did integrate a computer system or AI into the argumentation or analysis and, by extension, the decision-making process. By taking this route, I believe the implicit conclusion is that a decision made with the technology is much more valid.

What does that imply for the appeal process? The appeal process itself is based on the rejection of a lower court's interpretation of the law. We're saying, "Let's move to a higher court and higher up the chain until we get to some sort of truth." I think if there's any movement away from human interpretation, then the defendant's appeal is weaker as that technological influence continues to grow.

I think that is bad for one main reason: the tendency of human interpretation of the law, morals or values to change over time. Historically, this has been most critically seen in issues like civil rights. I was listening to a podcast this morning about the strengths and weaknesses of AI in scientific research, but I think it applies here. The main point was that any AI or computer system is really good at analysing and reporting based on existing knowledge and existing worldviews, but it's not very good at pushing a radically different paradigm. The example used was that if AI existed back then, it would be putting out reports supporting a geocentric view of the universe and it would be very bad at putting out a heliocentric model.

Why that is important is that I think this is where humans come in. We're very good at challenging norms. That's very important for the judicial system as a whole. And just one final

point I'll make is that laws are often written broadly. I think they're written like that because legal scholars are aware that human interpretation changes over time. So if we remove that human interpretation, it hinders the appeal process and the facility for change over time. We want to avoid that in society.

Does anyone else have to come up? Speak? Would you like to come up?

So what I'm still trying to get my head around is why we are running for this motion. Is it because the current system is not efficient? Is it because the current system is biased? What I've heard people coming here and saying was around a lot of bias. I'm not sure if people have heard about AI hallucination. It is whatever data has been put into the database of the AI. Still, AI has the capability to make an assumption and have a biased opinion. So relying 100% on AI is absolutely not a good choice. But again, if the root cause of running this motion is to provide efficiency in decision-making, then yes, using AI can support the decision-making process to be more efficient. So yes, identify the root cause. Why are we debating on this topic? Thank you. Please, if you want to come up, stand on your side.

I think, like a few people, I started by really thinking about what the proposition actually means, and it's that there should be less human judgement in the justice system. I think this is a point an earlier speaker brought up on the proposition, relating to the difference between judgement and decision-making. I'd actually like to argue that there is no difference. A judgement is a thing that's produced by a judge. And a judge is someone who speaks to what justice is. It comes from the Latin "judicare," to speak justice. So it is indistinguishable from a decision.

If you just have AI providing additional information or a computer algorithm, that's not less human judgement in the justice system. Less human judgement is nothing but less human decision-making.

To bring it back down to earth, we can look at examples in the justice system where there is already less human decision-making. We've talked about judges, but let's also talk about speeding tickets and the police. Speeding tickets used to be something in this country that the police would stop you for, and they could use their human judgement to decide whether you should get fined, prosecuted or just let off with a warning. That process is now largely automated. There are cameras. There is zero human decision-making in the process. Now, in theory, there's the option to go to a magistrate and get some human judgement, but in practice, it reverses the burden of proof. You're assumed to be guilty until you can prove that you're innocent in front of a court.

So I would argue, firstly, less human judgement means less human decision-making and less human decision-making means that you're guilty until proven innocent. Finally, what does human decision-making add? Computers can reason through logical steps. Computers can infer through things like AI, which can hallucinate. But what they don't have, and what human judgement adds, what gives you the innocence before the guilt, is emotional decision-making. And that's what I think several people on the opposition have argued very eloquently in favour of: human emotion is at the core of justice.

Anyone else want to come up?

I'll do a very quick one, only because it is emotional. I'd like to just start with a simple question. Can you think of a situation where you were telling the truth, and the person you were telling the truth to did not believe you, no matter what you did? Can you raise your hand if that's the case? Think about why that is, because emotion is really important in that.

I think the core part of this motion, for me, is not the fact that we should take away the human decision, but that we cannot rely on it on its own, because it is actually inherently flawed. It's the biases. It's having people sit in a situation with groupthink where they can sway people through different methods. We are all human. We are drawn to different things, we have different perceptions, we have different perspectives. And all of that is what we are relying on for our justice system that impacts people's lives. We know there are people that are wrongfully in jail. We know there are people who are wrongfully getting situations that are not right for them and there is technology to support us with that.

Yes, there are hallucinations. I'm not saying there aren't, but there are things like sentiment analysis, natural language processing and AI means it can sit in a jury conversation, record it and challenge people's thinking. The thing is that we're relying on a system that is really not helpful. Like the proposer said, judges have been proven to make really bad decisions because they're hungry. But the worst is, we can't really tell when someone's guilty. We can't really tell when someone's lying. We are going on gut instinct, perception and experience; it's all ours. There's a really brilliant saying that we see 1% of a person; the other 99% is internal. So why on earth are we judging people on only 1%?

I think that's the point. Technology can enhance decision-making within justice systems when there are so many flaws with relying on just humans doing it. I think that's the power of technology. It doesn't mean it's solely technology, but it's enhancing the process. Because if we continue as we are, we have a system that is actually not working effectively for people. I will now hand over to the opposer.

It's been a fascinating debate. I've learned a lot, and I can't help thinking that the motion is actually not a legal one or a technological one, but a theological one. I'm a minister of religion, so it's about what kind of ethics, what kind of morality do we want for society? And I will make a biblical reference. It's a pity that a member has gone. Take Genesis: there's evidence of the first computer in Genesis, because Eve gave Adam an Apple.

My fundamental point is, how do we treat each other? Again, if I were to be biblical about it, the Sermon on the Mount: "Blessed are the peacemakers." That's the kind of society we want. And it's not just in terms of the teachings of Jesus, but leading people elsewhere, whether in Buddhism or elsewhere. The source of our behaviour is what we truly want to correct. We don't want these penal things and having courts and prisons. We want to create a society where we can live harmoniously and how do we do that? That is the essence of how we treat each other. That has nothing to do with the tools we use, computers or what have you. It's to do with human relationships. We need to improve that and that requires judgement. Whether you actually believe the establishment, as you know, points out. My answer to judges is they ought to have a decent Italian meal before they start out. They would make the right judgements with cannelloni, ice cream, pizzas and gorgeous stuff like that. So again, feed the people the right ingredients, whether it's morality, ethics or food, especially chocolate. Thank you very much.

Yes, thank you. Thank you, Chair, and thank you to the opposer for trying to bribe everyone with chocolate at the end of a very long meeting. It is a very effective debate technique. I won't go there.

I'm going to try to stay on a number of different levels. It's been a fascinating debate. There are so many things brought up that I wasn't anticipating would come up. We've talked about principle, we've talked about technology, we've talked about emotion and we've talked about

legal mechanisms and structures that are partially deterministic. There are so many different things here and it's fascinating.

I want to come back to the emotion point in a minute. I want to talk about a scenario. I want to put out a straw man for all of you. Let's take a murder case that's going to a jury trial. Let's set that in 1850. Someone's been accused of murder, and we've got eyewitnesses, we have a jury and we have lawyers making a case on whether the accused was guilty or innocent. The jury in 1850 would have to listen to witness statements. They might be able to read one or two documents. They might look at the background of the accused. They probably made judgements about the accused based on all kinds of personal biases. But then they would go through the jury process, which, as we heard from an earlier speaker, is a standardised approach and uses the wisdom of multiple brains to come to a conclusion. A lot of times they were probably right. We know for a fact a lot of times they were wrong.

If you take that same murder trial in 1950, you would have had different technologies brought into that trial. Fingerprints: were there fingerprints on a knife, a gun or whatever the murder weapon was? Fingerprints are a technology. They have nothing to do with AI, not even a machine. That brings me to really interesting points about AI being a distillation of human judgement. It's not a distillation of human judgement; it's simply a fact. It's a biological fact, your fingerprint. In the last 10 or 20 years, DNA evidence, biological evidence, would have been brought into that trial. When DNA evidence came in, so many "murderers" were released from prison because the juries had made a bad decision.

I want to come back to the emotional point: augmenting humans making a decision. It's not black or white, where either the human makes the decision and it's emotional, or the machine makes the decision and it's completely unemotional, with no society left. It's not black and white like that. Humans can actually take information coming from technology to augment their decisions. It doesn't take away humanity. Think about today. We've got police who don't have enough time to review all the evidence. What if we had a system that is not AI that would review evidence for them? Machine learning. It's not generative AI, but it can help them make more decisions. That's more decisions and some of them are not human. That's a better justice system.

I remind you of the motion, and apologies, I'm going over my time a little bit. A little bit of additional technology doesn't have to be AI at all. Is that a good thing for the justice system? That is the question at hand. I urge you to support the motion.

Next time I'm going to get a selfie stick and attach things to it. Thank you very much. That was a really interesting debate. So I'm now going to ask you to vote. Can everyone who votes in favour of the motion raise their hands, please? Keep your hands up. Okay, 11 for. All opposed? Eight against. Any abstentions? So it was eight against and 11 for, so the motion carried.