

Circumstantial (Indirect) and Direct Evidence / Dogmatism vs Skepticism

Post by "Cassius" of March 6, 2026 at 7:56 AM

I agree with Martin but would add as to this that we must be clear about what "conclusive" means:

Quote



[Quote from Martin](#)

We should not wait until the evidence for this is conclusive because it will never be conclusive.

In the law we convict people and put them to death on a regular basis by holding to be conclusive the standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt." And we do so even though we do not "see" them commit crimes directly. We accept that circumstantial evidence is amply sufficient to reach reasonable conclusions, just as we conclude that "atoms" (indivisible particles) exist without seeing or touching them directly.

It would not be reasonable or proper to require "omniscience" as some people seem to want to equate to "conclusive." "Conclusive" should be read to mean that we have sufficient evidence - clear direct and/or circumstantial evidence which is not contradicted by other clear direct or circumstantial evidence - to reach a conclusion beyond a reasonable doubt. Otherwise we create ambiguity and doubt where none should exist.

In those cases where the direct and circumstantial evidence is insufficient to support support a clear conclusion, we "wait." In cases where clear evidence supports multiple possibilities, we do not arbitrarily choose among them but hold them all to be possible.

But we never 'wait' on the grounds that we are not omniscient or based purely on speculation that "anything is possible" or "some other undiscovered evidence *may* exist." We wait only when we have clear reason to do so, and pure speculation or insistence on "omniscience" is not a clear reason to suspend judgment.