

# Court Review

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## EDITOR'S NOTE

This special issue on eyewitness identification includes some of the world's premier researchers and commentators, along with some of their best students. The six articles provide judges with easy-to-understand, state-of-the-art information on various social-science perspectives relevant to eyewitness identification tailored to a judicial readership.

In his introductory article, James Doyle provides judges with an argument for why you should care about what social scientists have documented in their research. It is followed by an article by Laura Smalarz and Gary Wells that reviews eyewitness research, focusing on mistaken identifications and false certainty by witnesses. Their reviews point out the need for judges to be vigilant in making sure that eyewitness identifications are accurate.

Accurate identifications are the subject of the article by Richard Wise and Martin Safer, who present a method for analyzing the accuracy of eyewitness testimony that can help judges in ensuring correct outcomes for defendants. It is a challenging task for judges.

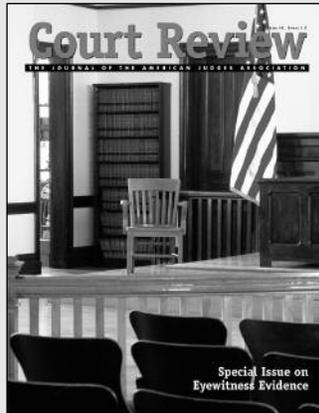
Fiona Gabbert and her colleagues from the United Kingdom and U.S., Daniel Wright, Amina Memon, Elin Skagerberg, and Kat Jamieson, discuss their research, and the research of others, showing that eyewitness memory can be influenced by post-event information, with advice to police and attorneys (and judges) regarding how they can try to protect against faulty identifications by witnesses.

A cross-national team of researchers from New Zealand and the U.S., Jeffrey Foster, Maryanne Garry, and Elizabeth Loftus, provide a brief report on recent research studies they conducted showing that repeated erroneous information can influence witnesses and jurors, once again raising the problems of faulty eyewitness identifications.

Similarly, Brian Bornstein and Joseph Hamm report on several studies they conducted that show how judges can use jury instructions to protect against errors in eyewitness identifications.

The challenge is great for judges, but we owe it to defendants and victims to get it right.

I close by noting that we have reprised the cover photo used in a 1999 issue of *Court Review* that also looked at the legal and scientific issues involved with eyewitness testimony.—Alan Tomkins



*Court Review*, the quarterly journal of the American Judges Association, invites the submission of unsolicited, original articles, essays, and book reviews. *Court Review* seeks to provide practical, useful information to the working judges of the United States and Canada. In each issue, we hope to provide information that will be of use to judges in their everyday work, whether in highlighting new procedures or methods of trial, court, or case management, providing substantive information regarding an area of law likely to be encountered by many judges, or by providing background information (such as psychology or other social science research) that can be used by judges in their work. Guidelines for the submission of manuscripts for *Court Review* are set forth on page 13 of this issue. *Court Review* reserves the right to edit, condense, or reject material submitted for publication.

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