

Department of Psychology

Distinguished Emeritus Lecture Series



DR. ROD LINDSAY, Queen's University

TALK: How showups and mugshot searches guarantee that many suspects in lineups are innocent

ABSTRACT

Identification from a lineup has long been considered strong evidence of guilt. However, research over the past 40 years has demonstrated that identification errors are easily generated in the research context while DNA exoneration cases demonstrate conclusively that real-world identification errors frequently lead to wrongful convictions. Various identification procedures have been tested in attempts to reduce false identifications and thus make lineup evidence more reliable. An issue that has received too little attention is how someone becomes a suspect in a lineup. Many people appear in lineups because they were identified either from a showup or mugshot first. Discussion of the impact of this pattern will lead to the conclusion that many suspects (possibly most suspects) in lineups are factually innocent. If true, none of the available lineup techniques will deal effectively with the eyewitness misidentification problem.

BIOGRAPHY

Rod Lindsay is a Social Psychology (BSc, Toronto; MSc & PhD, Alberta). Rod was a professor of Psychology at Queen's for 34 years. His research examines eyewitness identification issues, particularly police identification procedures. He has testified as an expert on eyewitness issues in both criminal and civil cases and consulted with individual police identification officers and departments re identification procedures. Dr. Lindsay co-authored the American national guidelines for obtaining and preserving eyewitness evidence. He has had extensive experience interacting with legal professionals: Judges (National Judicial Institute of Canada), police (Ontario Police College), and lawyers (numerous invited addresses). Dr. Lindsay co-edited the Handbook of Eyewitness Psychology (2007), the most comprehensive collection of scientific views on eyewitness issues to date. Among his awards are the 2002 Canadian Psychological Association award for Distinguished Contributions to the Application of Psychology, a Queen's Research Chair, and the 2013 American Psychology-Law Society award for "Outstanding Teaching and Mentoring in the Field of Psychology and Law". Dr. Lindsay has published over 100 papers and made more than 160 conference presentations.

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