

Identification Evidence

Criminal Justice

Why identification is fragile, and which procedures protect it.

What degrades accuracy

- Stress, weapon focus, short exposure
- Cross-race identification is less accurate
- Delay between the event and the procedure
- Suggestive instructions or line-up make-up
- Feedback inflates later confidence

What improves procedure

- Double-blind administration
- Warning that the suspect may be absent
- Fillers matched to the description given
- Confidence recorded at first identification
- Full recording of the whole procedure

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Mistaken identification is the largest single contributing factor across documented DNA exoneration cases.

Educational reference. Confidence at a first, uncontaminated identification carries information; confidence in the courtroom does not.