

ABSTRACT

THESIS: The Impact of Motivation to Judge Veracity on Eyewitnesses' Memory of a Suspect

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During a crime event, witnesses may have to judge the veracity of a suspect. I hypothesized that, because performing this task is cognitively demanding, (a) it would impair subsequent memory for details about the suspect and (b) judging veracity while motivated to do so as accurately as possible would exaggerate this effect. These predictions were supported. Additionally, witnesses who judged veracity reported increased certainty about the accuracy of their description and message and their identification of the suspect compared to control witnesses, and they also said they had a better view of the suspect and paid more attention to him. Motivation further inflated some of these testimony-relevant judgments. Moreover, compared to control witnesses, motivated witnesses who judged veracity reported a greater willingness to testify and a clearer image of the suspect in their memory.