

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Can You See Me Now? Exploring the Maximum Distance of Eyewitness Identifications

STUDENT: Christopher M. Altman

DEGREE: Master of Arts

COLLEGE: Sciences and Humanities

DATE: May, 2014

PAGES: 52

Little research has examined the effects of distance on eyewitnesses' abilities to identify strangers' faces. The purpose of the present study was to identify the maximum distance at which a facial identification is possible. In addition, witnesses' ability to provide descriptive information about a target from various distances was examined. In line with prior findings, lineup identification accuracy decreased as distance increased. Furthermore, witnesses who viewed the target from further distances reported fewer accurate details about the individual. Surprisingly, distance had a small effect on the amount of inaccurate information witnesses reported. Witnesses' performances on other diagnostic measures (e.g., willingness to testify and confidence) are also discussed.