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The Influence of Camera Angle on Perceptions of Confessions

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Oral Presentation O4.3

THE INFLUENCE OF CAMERA ANGLE ON PERCEPTIONS OF CONFESSIONS

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Of the 157 people who have been released off of death row, 28% of them confessed to their crime. There are numerous reasons why people may confess to a crime they did not commit, but often it is up to a jury to determine if the confession is false or authentic. One tool jurors may use to help make this determination is a video tape of the interrogation; however, recent research has found that the camera angle used in the video recording may elicit different judgments of the voluntariness of the confession. Specifically, previous research using simulated interrogations demonstrated that a confession with a suspect-focused video was perceived as more voluntary, while an interrogator-focused video was perceived as more coerced. The current study seeks to expand this idea by using an actual interrogation video (as opposed to a simulated interrogation conducted by actors) that has been edited to show either the suspect and the interrogator at the same time, just the suspect, or just the interrogator. Results will provide insight into whether the angle of the recording can influence jurors' judgments of the validity of a confession.