









## ABSTRACT

Mistaken but highly confident eyewitness testimony has been used to convict innocent people in more than 220 criminal cases in the United States. Research has shown that confirming post-identification feedback (e.g., “Good job, you identified the suspect”) commonly given to eyewitnesses might be partially to blame for these wrongful convictions because it inflates eyewitnesses’ reports of their confidence and other testimony-relevant eyewitness reports (Stebly, Wells, & Douglass, 2014). Indeed, recent work has shown that confirming feedback given to eyewitnesses at the time of the identification ultimately impairs the abilities of evaluators to discern whether an eyewitness made an accurate or a mistaken identification (Smalarz & Wells, 2014). The present research sought to test a novel safeguard for protecting against and correcting for the effects of confirming feedback on evaluations of eyewitness testimony: the pre-feedback eyewitness statements safeguard. Some eyewitnesses, but not others, were asked a series of testimony-relevant questions about the witnessed event and their identification decision prior to receiving confirming feedback or no feedback. These pre-feedback eyewitness statements were videotaped and were later shown to some evaluators, but not others, as the evaluators made judgments about the accuracy of eyewitnesses’ testimonies. The videotaped pre-feedback statements safeguard did not appear to protect against or correct for the effects of feedback on evaluations of eyewitness testimony. Importantly, however, a number of unexpected findings emerged in the current work that have the potential to advance our understanding of how post-identification feedback influences eyewitnesses. Future directions in light of these findings are discussed.





























































































































































































