

**AMERICAN JOURNAL OF FORENSIC PSYCHOLOGY**

**VOLUME 34, ISSUE 2 — 2016**

**SCAMMING ELDERS: THE EFFECT OF WITNESS TESTIMONY  
ON COURTROOM PERCEPTIONS OF ELDER FINANCIAL ABUSE**

**Anne M. Lippert, Ph.D. and Jonathan M. Golding, Ph.D.**

*The present study investigated the influence of witnesses to elder financial abuse (EFA) on jurors' perceptions in the courtroom. Specifically, men and women (N = 138) mock jurors read a fictional trial summary describing an 85-year-old woman being scammed (i.e., money was illegally taken due to deception). Some mock jurors read about the presence of a female witness (aged 35 or 85 years old) or there was no witness. Results indicated that pro-victim judgments (e.g., guilty verdicts, positive victim judgments, and negative defendant judgments) were more likely when an elderly witness testified for the elderly victim, than when either a younger witness testified or there was no witness testimony. Additionally, mediation and network analysis revealed that anger toward the defendant motivated differences in pro-victim judgments when the witness was elderly versus when the witness was young. Results were discussed in terms of implications of witness testimony in EFA court cases.*

**MOCK JUROR PERCEPTIONS OF EYEWITNESSES  
VERSUS EARWITNESSES: DO SAFEGUARDS HELP?**

**Cindy E. Laub, Ph.D., Christopher D. Kimbrough, M.S., M.L.S.,  
Brian H. Bornstein, Ph.D., M.L.S.**

*The current study examined perceptions of identification testimony as a function of modality (eyewitness versus earwitness), witnessing conditions (good versus poor), and trial safeguards (expert testimony, jury instructions, closing arguments, or none). A total of 426 undergraduate mock jurors read one of 17 trial transcripts, rendered a verdict, and rated the credibility and accuracy of each witness and importance of witnessing factors. Eyewitness and earwitness testimony generally predicted verdict outcome equally. Expert testimony and closing arguments, but not jury instructions, made participants more aware of factors that affect the reliability of an identification when rendering a verdict. When deciding guilt, participants relied primarily on the witness's perceived accuracy and confidence in her identification. We conclude by discussing the policy implications of our results.*

**COMMENTARY: QUESTIONABLE BASIS OF AN EXPERT'S OPINION**

**Professor Ralph Slovenko**