History Lessons

- Early perspective = general skepticism
- Looking back from the courtroom to catch errors did not fit psychology’s statistical nature.
- Looking forward at the investigative stages before mistakes are made more suitable.
- But no procedure is a silver bullet: They just improve the odds.
Some Areas to Agree On

The computers are coming.
“False Hits” (Bad ID’s) = free perps with more victims
“False Hits” of suspects = high % wrongful convictions
“False misses”=free perps
Even bad “filler hit” IDs hurt good cases
Exonerations hurt system/department credibility
Some Areas To Agree On

- Lab studies are limited by the lack of real world, operational challenges
- Field studies are limited because we can never know whether “suspect” is “perp”
- Existing practices and field studies show that double-blind sequential can be done, if we want to do it.
Next Steps

- **Strangle** Double-blind Sequential in its crib.
- **Legislate** Double-blind Sequential down people’s throats
- Treat the trade-offs as policy choices.
- Carefully study, with scientific participation, whichever practice we decide to use.
  - Assign randomly
  - Document carefully
  - Avoid “confounds” and similar pitfalls
  - Engage practitioners and scientists together in continuing dialogue.
Field Test Cautions

- The “One Big Test” for everything, might end up testing nothing.
- Field testing “sequential” means testing the hypothesis that “sequential” gives a more reliable test of witness memory.
- But testing “blind” is really a test of police operational practicality.
  - The hypothesis is not that knowing presence helps to get a clean witness memory check.
  - The only claim is that knowing presence doesn’t hurt memory, and might have investigative advantages.
Laptop Round?

- Cooperative American Judicature Society and Center for Modern Forensic Practice effort to get funding for laptop procedure
- Witness controlled
- Fully documented
- Randomly assigned to simultaneous or sequential.