List Of Suspects

Forensic Science
Introduction

• When police have a collection of suspect photos and mug shots, they rely largely on witness identification to collect evidence.

• In court, witnesses may testify as a form of evidence, for they are often confident of what the criminal's physical appearances were.

• However, relying on witness accounts of an event is not always accurate and false information can lead to a wrong conviction.
Line Ups

• Line-ups involve known suspects standing in a line while a witness walks along the line and chooses those who they remember being responsible for the crime, based on memory of height and appearance.

• The witness is not visible to the suspects thanks to a reflective glass, which allows the witness to see through the glass, but only allows those on the other side to see a mirror reflection.
• Line-ups are an effective method of identification if suspects are known, but when they are not known, another approach involving mug shots is taken.
• A witness peruses a series of mug shots of previous offenders to try and pick out a suspect, if one is present.
• The drawbacks to this method is mainly the fact that it's more suited to small communities, where there is a small enough number of offenders for a witness to view every mug shot.
• Also, as the witness is only viewing previously offending criminals, an incorrect choice can lead police to an innocent ex-offender.
Other Ways of Picturing

• If the above approaches are impractical or fail to reveal anything, police create a likely picture of an offender, based on eyewitness accounts.

• Using paint-by-number face composite computer programs, sketches, and photo composites, witnesses are able to choose appropriate facial hair, eye, skin and hair colour and facial build to create a picture that resembles who they witnessed.
Limitations

• All of the methods mentioned contain the same limitation, witness's memory.
• People often over-estimate their ability to recall a person's face and in the case of a violent or threatening attack, witnesses are often more busy focusing on the attacker's weapon than on there face of the attacker.
• In light of this, governments have brought in new legislation to tighten ID procedures and ensure that police concentrate on more solid forensic evidence.
Surveillance Cameras

- Surveillance cameras are one example of measures put in place to enhance what the human memory is not able to do, but it is not always as helpful as police would like it to be.
- The images taken on surveillance cameras are often tarnished and unclear, making the process of trying to match faces with those on screen very difficult.
- To make the matching of faces difficult to challenge in court, a process called photoanthropometry is used. This involves using a program that has the ability to measure the exact distance between features on a suspect's face on the video.
- This can then be used later to compare with facial features on a mug shot.