The Need for Sequential Unmasking

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Biasing information distorts results.
The more ambiguous the signal to be evaluated, the larger the distorting effect.
And the more that information engages emotions and desires, the stronger the distortion will be.
Information contamination is to be avoided by eliminating biasing information.
Sequential Unmasking
Each area of forensic expertise should define what is and is not "domain-relevant" and "domain-irrelevant" information.
Domain-irrelevant information must be filtered out so that the examiner doing the test procedure is “blind” to it.
Domain-relevant information must be made available in the least distorting order.
Sequential Unmasking
1. Masking is insulting.

2. Masking makes the job less interesting.

3. Masking might deprive the examiner of helpful information (Sherlock Holmes didn’t work blind).

4. Masking is unnecessary because we are professional, and there is insufficient research to show a need for masking.

5. Masking is too expensive.
Joshua R. Kline & Aaron Roodman,

*Blind Analysis in Nuclear and Particle Physics*

Not disrespectful to propose a practice widely adopted in modern science, even physics!
Leonard Butt,

*Problems, Perspectives, and Proposed Solutions—Commentary by a Forensic Examiner*

Training in professionalism and good intentions not to be influenced by biasing information don’t help much.
Saul M. Kassin, Itiel E. Dror & Jeff Kukucka,

The Forensic Confirmation Bias: Problems, Perspectives and Proposed Solutions

Cognitive Bias in Forensic Anthropology: Visual Assessment of Skeletal Remains is Susceptible to Confirmation Bias