Email as an attachment to: 2011EPC@gmail.com. Please put the words *Presentation Abstract* in the subject field.

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<td>Name(s) and affiliation(s) of author(s) – please name the presenting author first.</td>
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**KEYWORDS:** Please nominate the keywords that best describe your presentation (5 maximum)

| Cognition | Decision Making | Fingerprints | Expertise |

**ABSTRACT:** Type or paste into the box below (150 words maximum)

Fingerprint identification has been used in criminal courts for over 100 years but, until now, there have been no properly controlled experiments on the identification accuracy of human fingerprint examiners. Examiners have even claimed to be infallible, but the US National Academy of Sciences has condemned these claims as scientifically implausible. Here we show that qualified court-practicing fingerprint experts—from five major state and federal police agencies—are exceedingly accurate compared to novices, but are not infallible. Experts did tend to err on the side of caution, however, by making errors that would free the guilty rather than convict the innocent. Even so, they did make the kind of errors that may lead to false convictions. Interestingly, they were much faster to make a decision when they were right than when they were wrong. Implications for expert testimony are explored as well as the support for nonanalytic processing of fingerprints.