

WHEN LOVERS BECOME LEERY: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUSPICION AND ACCURACY IN DETECTING DECEPTION

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Although researchers of relational deception have recently become interested in the role that suspicion plays in the deception process, a more thorough examination of the relationship between suspicion and accuracy in detecting deception is warranted. Previous researchers have not found a significant relationship between suspicion and accuracy. In the current paper, we argue that the lack of findings in previous research can be attributed to methodological inadequacies, and that moderate levels of situationally-aroused suspicion should substantially enhance accuracy in detecting deception. In addition, a predisposition toward being suspicious (i.e., generalized communicative suspicion, or "GCS") should moderate the relationship between aroused suspicion and accuracy. Three hypotheses were tested in a sample of 107 non-marital romantically-involved couples. Results suggest that both situationally-aroused suspicion and GCS significantly influenced accuracy. Under certain conditions, aroused suspicion substantially improved the accuracy with which individuals could detect the deception of relational partners. Implications of these findings for future research in deception are discussed.

Researchers of relational deception have found that common assumptions about perceptual accuracy within relationships often do not hold true for situations involving deception. For instance, while it is commonly assumed that intimacy and familiarity enhance understanding of a partner's beliefs and behaviors (Sillars, 1985), researchers have repeatedly demonstrated that as intimacy between partners increases, there is a corresponding decrease in accuracy in detecting deception (Buller, 1988; McCornack & Parks, 1986) and accuracy in detecting deception leakage (McCornack & Parks, 1990). These scholars have argued that the decline in accuracy is directly attributable to increases in trust. As intimacy increases, relational partners increasingly believe that lies will not occur; this belief subsequently distorts their perceptions of message veracity. Thus, while trusting a loved one may be an integral part of maintaining intimacy, it also functions to blind us to our partners' lies (McCornack & Parks, 1986).

While researchers have explored trust, they have failed to fully examine the effect that trust's darker cousin, suspicion, has upon the perceptions of individuals in relationships. This is unfortunate, given that suspicion is fundamental to the process of detecting deception (Toris & DePaulo, 1985). Being at least minimally suspicious is a necessary precursor to making a truth/lie judgment (McCornack & Parks, 1986). This is especially true within the context of romantic relationships, where intimacy and trust are likely to lead individuals away from considering the possibility that a relational partner might lie (Miller, Mongeau, & Sleight, 1986).

Because it is commonly assumed that suspicion increases accuracy, many individuals believe that completely trusting someone within a relationship is naive, and that

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being at least somewhat suspicious towards relational partners is functional (Levine & McCornack, 1989). However, suspicion often begets more suspicion, until trust and intimacy within the relationship are damaged (Knapp, 1984; Miller et al., 1986). Thus, while trust may negatively affect perceptual accuracy, a trusting orientation toward a partner's communication may be preferable to a wary orientation (Toris & DePaulo, 1985), unless it can be demonstrated that suspicion produces substantial positive outcomes of its own. A careful assessment of the influence of suspicion upon perceptual accuracy is necessary in order to explore this issue.

The current study provides just such an assessment, by examining the relationship between various types of suspicion and the accuracy with which individuals involved in relationships can detect deception. Our examination begins with a review of previous research.

Previous Research

Two previous studies have examined the effects of suspicion upon perceptions for individuals not involved in relationships. Zuckerman, Spiegel, DePaulo, and Rosenthal (1982) found that increases in suspicion systematically decreased accuracy in decoding affect. Toris and DePaulo (1985) found no significant relationship between suspicion and accuracy in detecting deception. Toris and DePaulo did find that subjects who were primed to be suspicious were more likely to rate their interactional partners as deceptive.

Only one previous study has examined the relationship between accuracy in detecting deception and suspicion for relational partners. Using an interactive design (i.e., one in which subjects interact face to face), Stiff, Kim, and Ramesh (1989) examined the effect that perceived suspicion had upon judgments of veracity for relational partners. Consistent with the results of McCornack and Parks (1986) and Buller (1988), they found that increases in relational development led to increases in a "truth-bias": a bias toward judging all of a partner's messages as truthful. They did not find a significant relationship between suspicion and accuracy. Suspicion influenced truth-bias, such that subjects who received negative information regarding the potential veracity of a partner's message were more likely to abandon their truth-bias than subjects who received no such information. However, none of the variables that they examined significantly influenced judgmental accuracy (see Stiff et al., 1989). Since they developed and tested a path model of the relationship between aroused suspicion, relational involvement, truth-bias, and accuracy, they did not report tests for curvilinear relationships or interactions between the variables.

Defining Suspicion

Levine and McCornack (1989) have recently offered a conceptualization of suspicion that broadens the scope of previous research, and suggests new possibilities for the relationship between suspicion and accuracy in detecting deception. They argue that at least three different constructs related to suspicion can be distinguished. These include a predisposition toward being suspicious about the communication of others (i.e., generalized communicative suspicion, or "GCS"), situationally-aroused suspicion (i.e., "state" suspicion), and a judgmental bias toward processing all of a partner's messages as lies (i.e., "lie-bias"). GCS consists of a structured system of related beliefs about communicative honesty, and as such can be considered a cognitive construct. Because it is a relatively enduring individual trait, it can be

distinguished from both state suspicion and lie-bias. State suspicion is aroused by specific contextual cues, and can be defined as a belief that messages produced in a particular setting by a particular interactant may be deceptive. Lie-bias is a cognitive processing bias toward decoding and storing all incoming messages as deceptive. Lie-bias differs significantly from both GCS and state suspicion, in that both types of suspicion involve beliefs regarding the potential for deception (prior to any messages being presented), while lie-bias involves a judgmental bias toward decoding all messages that have been received as deceptive.

As Levine and McCornack (1989) point out, these constructs are distinct but not orthogonal. For example, an individual within a particular situation can suspect that a partner's messages may be deceptive but still not process them in a lie-biased fashion. However, it is difficult to imagine an individual processing incoming messages in a lie-biased fashion if she/he is not already suspicious. Thus, lie-bias seems to be an outcome of high levels of suspicion, which (in turn) may be the result of contextual cues, GCS, or both. In a series of three studies, Levine and McCornack provide evidence for the existence of each of these constructs and their proposed interrelationship.

Hypotheses

Implicit within the arguments of Levine and McCornack is the assumption that situationally-aroused or "state" suspicion should be considered a continuous variable: a subjective experience that occurs in various gradations. Yet, previous studies that have tested the effects of suspicion have operationalized state suspicion in discrete terms, either priming or not priming subjects to be suspicious (e.g., Toris & DePaulo, 1985; Stiff et al., 1989).

This "all-or-nothing" approach to operationalizing state suspicion may not be adequate for ascertaining its true effects upon judgmental accuracy. Researchers have found that individuals involved in relationships adopt a truth-bias that leads them (often erroneously) to judge their partner's messages as truthful (Buller, 1988; McCornack & Parks, 1986; Stiff et al., 1989). Research also suggests that truth-bias is negatively affected by contextual cues that arouse state suspicion. When made sufficiently state-suspicious, individuals will abandon their truth-bias (Stiff et al., 1989). As Levine and McCornack (1989) have argued, individuals experiencing cues which provoke a high degree of state suspicion (as occurs in most experimental priming of suspicion) will not only abandon their truth-bias, but will replace it with a lie-bias (Levine & McCornack, 1989). Given that this is the case, a comparison between individuals who are not suspicious (and thus have a high truth-bias) with individuals who are suspicious (and thus have a high lie-bias) should find no significant difference between the two groups in terms of accuracy, because *both groups are biased, but in different ways*. Individuals who are not state suspicious are likely to judge all messages as truthful (McCornack & Parks, 1986), while individuals who are highly state suspicious are likely to judge all messages as lies (Levine & McCornack, 1989). Indeed, every study that has been performed using a prime/no prime manipulation of suspicion has found no effect for state suspicion upon accuracy (e.g., Stiff et al., 1989; Toris & DePaulo, 1985).

There is good reason to believe that, despite previous findings, a certain degree of state suspicion should substantially enhance accuracy in detecting deception. If cues within a context generate enough state suspicion so that individuals abandon their

truth-bias, but not so much that a lie-bias is adopted, those individuals should be able to effectively draw upon behavioral baseline information that they possess to successfully detect deception (Miller et al., 1986). The result should be a substantial increase in accuracy. At the point at which cues in the environment increase state suspicion to the point that they become lie-biased, accuracy should decline again. If this line of reasoning is correct, we should find *a significant non-linear main effect for state suspicion on accuracy in detecting deception, such that individuals who are moderately state suspicious will be more accurate than individuals who are either low or high in state suspicion (H1)*.

The work of Levine and McCornack (1989) allows us to posit an additional hypothesis regarding judgmental accuracy in detecting deception. They found that individuals systematically vary in terms of how suspicious they are in general regarding the communication of others (i.e., GCS). High GCS individuals are more likely to be suspicious of all messages that they receive, and are more apt to look for cues related to the possibility of deception than are low GCS individuals (Levine & McCornack, 1989).

Given this finding, we would expect high GCS individuals to react much more dramatically to cues within the context that suggest the possibility of deception than low GCS individuals. High GCS persons should be more likely to abandon their truth-bias immediately upon the presence of cues leading to state suspicion than those low in GCS. While high GCS individuals should be quicker to abandon their truth-biases, they should also be quicker to develop a lie-bias. Because of this, state suspicion should influence the detection accuracy of low and high GCS individuals differently.

When few contextual cues suggesting the possibility of deception are present, both low and high GCS individuals should be fairly inaccurate due to relatively high levels of truth-bias.¹ With the advent of moderate levels of state suspicion, both low and high GCS individuals should show marked increases in detection accuracy, but high GCS individuals (given their propensity to rapidly abandon their truth-bias) should show greater increases in detection accuracy than low GCS individuals. At high levels of state suspicion, the accuracy rates of both low and high GCS individuals should decline, but the decline should be more pronounced for high GCS individuals than for low GCS individuals, due to greater levels of lie-bias. Thus, we should find that although the curvilinear relationship between levels of state suspicion and accuracy in detecting deception (i.e., H1) will be evident for both low and high GCS individuals, the form of the curvilinear relationship will be moderated by GCS, such that *high GCS individuals will not differ from those low in GCS at low levels of state suspicion, high GCS individuals will be more accurate than low GCS individuals at moderate levels of state suspicion, and high GCS individuals will be less accurate than low GCS individuals at high levels of state suspicion (H2)*.

The hypotheses presented thus far have focused on the effects of state suspicion and GCS upon deception detection accuracy. Underlying our predictions is a process model of deception detection, one in which truth-biases and lie-biases are advanced as the explanatory mechanisms. State suspicion and GCS should influence detection accuracy only in so far as they affect truth- and lie-biases, which in turn influence deception detection accuracy. If this model is correct, we should find that *the effects of state suspicion and GCS upon accuracy in detecting deception will be mediated by the number of lie judgments (i.e., truth-bias and lie-bias) (H3)*.

METHOD

Research Participants

Subjects ($N = 107$ couples) were solicited on a voluntary basis from undergraduate speech communication classes at a large mid-western university. Subjects were heterosexual couples who had dated at least once, but who were not cohabitating, formally engaged, or married. Romantically-involved dating couples were chosen as a sample because perceptual biases (such as truth- and lie-biases) are especially prevalent and powerful within such relationships (McCornack & Parks, 1986). Subjects ranged in age from 18 to 36 years ($M = 19.84$, $SD = 2.14$). Members of the average couple had known each other for 22.89 months ($SD = 29.71$) and had been dating for 12.32 months ($SD = 18.30$). The large standard deviations testify to the fact that this sample had a great deal of variation in terms of length of dating relationship.

Design

This experiment formed a 3×2 factorial design with three levels of state suspicion crossed with two levels of GCS. The three levels of state suspicion were obtained through varied instructions, while the levels of GCS were obtained by dichotomizing scores on a self-report measure. Three levels of state suspicion were necessary for testing the nonlinearity hypothesis. Detection accuracy and lie-bias were the dependent variables.

Procedures

Each couple was told that the purpose of the study was to investigate "how partners perceive each other's attitudes." One member was selected to play the role of "subject" (i.e., the person who would judge deceptive attempts) and the other was selected to play the role of "confederate" (i.e., the person who would produce the deceptive messages). Selection of experimental roles was done randomly.

The subject was then taken to a separate room and given a questionnaire. The questionnaire included items measuring the level of love, global uncertainty, the percentage of free time spent with the partner, and the overall frequency of communication with the partner.

While the subject was filling out this questionnaire, his or her partner (i.e., the confederate) was taken to a separate room to create a videotape containing a series of truthful and deceptive statements. Similar to previous studies examining relational deception (see McCornack & Parks, 1986, 1990), the first step was to give the confederate an attitude survey containing 12 randomly selected items from the Machiavellianism scale (Christie & Geis, 1970).² The Mach IV items are especially well suited for studies of this type because as personality items they represent the sort of generalized judgments partners are likely to make about each other (Kelley, 1979), they represent attitudes about the use of power and control in interpersonal relationships, and they go beyond the sort of simple background information that might be assessed easily by acquaintances. Responses to these items were recorded on 10-point scales. Twenty different random orderings of the 12 items were used in an attempt to minimize order effects.

The confederate then was told to report his or her true answer for half of the 12 items. For the remaining items, the confederate was told to report an answer which

was five points (half the scale length) different from his/her true answer. For example, if the confederate had marked a "7" on the original scale, he/she was told to report the answer as a "2". The confederate was then seated at a table and told to state his/her attitude on each item in terms of the true or false scale value and to explain each answer. Confederates were allowed as much time as they wanted to justify each answer. Their responses were videotaped. The camera was placed so that the head, arms, and torso would appear. Camera distance and angle were held constant throughout the study. Confederates were not told at this point that their partners would be subsequently viewing the videotape. Upon completion, the tape was taken to the subject, who then viewed it. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of three state suspicion conditions.

After viewing each of the 12 videotaped segments, all subjects were asked to make a dichotomous "truth/lie" judgment. The distance between the playback monitor and the subject was held constant throughout the experiment.

While the subject was viewing the tape, his/her partner responded to a questionnaire containing items assessing the length of time they had known each other, the length of time they had been dating, and the frequency of their communication.

Finally, subjects and their partners were reunited and debriefed. The debriefing covered the precise purpose of the study, revealed the deception concerning the tape, and addressed participants' questions.

Experimental Conditions

In the low state suspicion condition, subjects were told by the experimenter to view the videotape and answer the questions on the questionnaire that was provided (see below). No information was given to the subjects regarding the potential for deceptiveness on the part of their partner. As the questionnaire specifically requested information regarding truthfulness of their partner's answers, it was assumed that a certain degree of suspicion would be aroused. In order to minimize this, the experimenter referred to all items as items designed to "assess truthfulness" rather than items designed to "assess lies." The truth-lie questions were also embedded within 3 filler items,³ to arouse as little suspicion as possible.

Subjects in the moderate state suspicion condition were told by the experimenter prior to completing the questionnaire that there was the possibility that their partner *may not be completely truthful* in how they answered each item. Again, the experimenters referred to all items as items designed to "assess truthfulness" rather than items designed to "assess lies."

Subjects in the high state suspicion were informed by the experimenter that their partner would definitely *be lying* on several of the items, and that their (i.e., subject's) task was to determine which of their partner's responses were deceptive. To further enhance suspicion, the experimenter referred to all items as items designed to "assess lies" rather than items designed to "assess truthfulness."

Measures

As noted above, subjects viewed a series of 12 statements and explanations made by their partners. The tape was stopped after each of these segments, and the subject was asked to indicate if he/she thought that the partner was "lying" or "completely truthful." Comparison of these answers to the confederate's true responses on the initial questionnaire allowed the experimenter to determine if the subject was

TABLE 1
MEAN DETECTION ACCURACY BY EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

GCS	State Suspicion			Marginal <i>M</i>
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	<i>M</i> = 53.57 <i>SD</i> = 12.96 <i>N</i> = 14	<i>M</i> = 59.58 <i>SD</i> = 10.21 <i>N</i> = 20	<i>M</i> = 54.76 <i>SD</i> = 18.7 <i>N</i> = 14	55.69
High	<i>M</i> = 52.78 _a <i>SD</i> = 9.04 <i>N</i> = 18	<i>M</i> = 69.70 _a <i>SD</i> = 12.51 <i>N</i> = 11	<i>M</i> = 59.72 <i>SD</i> = 12.86 <i>N</i> = 18	60.75
Marginal <i>M</i>	53.18	64.64	57.24	58.35

Note. Means with same subscript differ at $p < .05$ with Scheffe's test.

accurate or inaccurate in each of the 12 cases. Overall judgmental accuracy at differentiating truths from lies was computed as a percentage (0–100% accuracy), based upon the proportion of accurate judgments to total judgments across the 12 cases.

GCS was measured with Levine and McCornack's (1989) 14-item version of the GCS scale. Responses to this scale were made using a 7-point Likert-type format. Levine and McCornack have previously reported results consistent with the scale's reliability, unidimensionality, construct validity, and predictive utility (Levine & McCornack, 1989).

In addition, an 8-item Likert-type state suspicion scale was constructed by the authors to serve as a manipulation check. This scale also used a 7-point response format. Rubin's (1970) 13-item scale measuring caring, attachment, and intimacy was used to assess relational involvement. Responses were recorded on 7-point Likert scales, and summed to yield a total score. Rubin's scale was included for control purposes (see below). Additional items assessing the length of time in the relationship and how long the person had known the other were also included as a test of adequate variation in relational involvement.

Prior to testing the hypotheses, a number of analyses were conducted to test the quality of the measures employed, check the manipulation of state suspicion, and to test for confounds with relational involvement. The dimensionality of the GCS, love, and manipulation check scales were tested with confirmatory factor analysis. This procedure resulted in the exclusion of 4 GCS items, 2 love items, and 1 manipulation check item from subsequent analyses. The retained items were then summed as measures of their respective constructs. The means, standard deviations, and reliabilities (Cronbach's coefficient alpha) of these scales were as follows: manipulation check $M = 27.47$, $sd = 11.42$, $r = .92$; GCS $M = 30.85$, $sd = 8.42$, $r = .75$; love scale $M = 53.76$, $sd = 13.60$, $r = .90$. The distributions of these scales did not deviate substantially from normality. The GCS scale was dichotomized via median split to allow for a test of hypothesis two.

Manipulation Check

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to determine if the state suspicion manipulation check items varied as a function of the experimental condition. The results indicated a significant and substantial effect for the experimental condition upon the manipulation check measure, $F(2, 95) = 10.86$, $p < .0001$, $\eta^2 = .19$, $r = .44$.

Furthermore, the obtained cell means were ordered in the predicted direction (low $M = 22.36$, moderate $M = 25.97$, and high $M = 34.03$). The sums of squares were decomposed and the linear component accounted for 94% of the explained sums of squares. Post hoc analyses with the Tukey-HSD and Scheffe procedures indicated that while the means of the low and moderate conditions did not differ significantly, both differed significantly from the mean in the high condition.

While it would have been desirable for all three means to be significantly different, the low and moderate cells were not collapsed. This decision was based on our desire to test our nonlinear hypotheses, the fact that the means were in the predicted direction, and the finding that the linear contrast provided a good fit to the data, explaining all but 6% of the effect sum of squares. Moreover, the linear contrast provided a better fit to the data than a contrast in which low and moderate levels were treated as equal.

A 3×2 ANOVA (three levels of state suspicion by two levels of GCS) with Rubin's (1970) love scale as the dependent measure was also computed to ensure that the couples did not differ systematically in relational involvement across experimental conditions. As previous researchers have noted, it is extremely important to use actual relational partners (as opposed to strangers) when studying issues such as trust, suspicion, and deception accuracy, and to test for effects due to relational involvement (McCornack & Parks, 1986, 1990). No significant differences were found. A similar 3×2 ANOVA was completed with the length of the relationship as the dependent variable. No significant differences were found, indicating that the length of relationship did not differ across experimental conditions. Finally, both scores on Rubin's love scale and the measure of length of relationship were correlated with scores on the manipulation check measure to determine if either affected how subjects responded to the manipulation. Again, no significant differences were found.

Tests of the Hypotheses

The first two hypotheses were investigated with a 3×2 ANOVA (three levels of state suspicion and two levels of GCS), with detection accuracy as the dependent variable. Hypothesis one predicted a nonlinear, main effect for state suspicion on detection accuracy. The results were consistent with this hypothesis. The main effect for state suspicion was statistically significant and substantial, $F(2, 90) = 5.45, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11, r = .33$. Examination of marginal means indicated considerable nonlinearity (low $M = 53.18$, moderate $M = 64.64$, high $M = 57.24$). Decomposition of this effect with an a priori set of contrast weights ($-1, +2, -1$) indicated that the predicted model accounted for 89% of the explained sum of squares and was statistically significant, $F(1, 89) = 10.40, p < .05, r = .31$.⁴

Hypothesis two predicted a two-way interaction between state suspicion and GCS such that low and high GCS individuals would be equally inaccurate at low levels of state suspicion, but that highs would be more accurate than lows at moderate levels of state suspicion, and less accurate than lows at high levels of state suspicion. This hypothesis received partial support. Hypothesis two was tested with an a priori set of contrast weights (for low GCS, $-1, +1, 0$ for low, moderate, and high state suspicion; for high GCS, $-1, +2, -1$). The predicted interaction was statistically significant, $F(1, 89) = 11.9, p < .05, \eta^2 = .11, r = .33$, but only accounted for 69% of the explained sums of squares. Examination of the cell means, presented in Table 1, suggested that the observed interaction was consistent with the predicted interac-

TABLE 2
MEAN NUMBER OF LIE JUDGMENTS BY EXPERIMENTAL CONDITION

GCS	State Suspicion			Marginal <i>M</i>
	Low	Moderate	High	
Low	<i>M</i> = 2.29 _a <i>SD</i> = 1.68 <i>n</i> = 14	<i>M</i> = 2.90 <i>SD</i> = 1.21 <i>n</i> = 20	<i>M</i> = 4.10 <i>SD</i> = 1.70 <i>n</i> = 14	3.10
High	<i>M</i> = 2.44 _b <i>SD</i> = 1.85 <i>n</i> = 18	<i>M</i> = 3.82 <i>SD</i> = 1.08 <i>n</i> = 11	<i>M</i> = 4.50 _{ab} <i>SD</i> = 1.29 <i>n</i> = 18	3.59
Marginal <i>M</i>	2.36	3.36	4.30	3.34

Note. Means with same subscript differ at $p < .05$ with Scheffe's test.

tion at low and moderate levels of state suspicion. At high levels of state suspicion, however, high GCS individuals were more accurate than low GCS individuals. A post hoc contrast in which the contrast weights at high levels of state suspicion were changed provided a better fit to the data (for low GCS, $-1, +1, -1$ for low, moderate and high state suspicion; for high GCS, $-1, +2, 0$). This contrast was also statistically significant, $F(1, 89) = 15.7, p < .05, \eta^2 = .15, r = .38$, and provided a substantially better fit to the data, accounting for 91.5% of the explained sums of squares. Both the a priori and the post hoc contrasts represent a moderated quadratic effect of state suspicion, a 10.1% difference in detection accuracy between high and low GCS individuals at moderate levels of state suspicion, and no difference between low and high GCS individuals at low levels of state suspicion. The post hoc contrast also depicts a moderate difference between high and low GCS at high levels of state suspicion.

These results suggest that GCS has little impact at low levels of state suspicion, and accuracy is close to chance. When presented with information generating moderate levels of state suspicion, individuals show a marked increase in detection accuracy, with high GCS persons making the largest gains. At high levels of state suspicion, accuracy again declines. As predicted, the decline is more pronounced for high GCS persons than for low GCS persons, although (contrary to our prediction) high GCS persons remain more accurate.

Our final hypothesis predicted that the number of lie judgments would mediate the relationship between state suspicion and GCS upon detection accuracy. This hypothesis received only partial support. The 3×2 ANOVA reported above was reanalyzed with the number of lie judgments as a covariate. If our hypothesis was correct, the significant effects for GCS and state suspicion would drop to within sampling error of zero when controlling for the number of lie judgments. The results of this ANCOVA indicated no significant effect for GCS when controlling for lie judgments, $F(1, 80) = 2.78, p > .05, \eta^2 = .02, r = .17$. The main effect for state suspicion, however, remained statistically significant, $F(2, 79) = 5.55, p < .05$.

This hypothesis was further investigated by examining the effects of state suspicion and GCS on the number of lie judgments, as well as the relationship between lie judgments and accuracy. The former was investigated with a 3×2 ANOVA with the number of lie judgments as the dependent variable. There was a significant and substantial linear effect for state suspicion upon the number of lie judgments, $F(1, 89) = 24.93, p < .05, \eta^2 = .21, r = .46$. The main effect for GCS, $F(1, 89) = 2.38$,

$p = ns$, $\eta^2 = .02$, $r = .14$ and the state suspicion by GCS interaction, $F(2, 89) = 0.44$, $p = ns$, $\eta^2 = .00$, $r = .08$ were not statistically significant. The cell means are reported in Table 2.

As predicted, the lie judgment/accuracy relationship was statistically significant and substantial, $r(85) = .28$, $p < .05$. Contrary to our reasoning, however, the regression of accuracy upon lie judgments was linear, not quadratic. Thus, these data are consistent with our prediction that as truth-bias decreases, accuracy increases but inconsistent with the argument that substantial increases in lie-bias account for the downturn in accuracy at high levels of suspicion.

DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to examine the relationship between different types of suspicion and accuracy in detecting deception for individuals in relationships. Contrary to the findings of previous studies examining suspicion, our results suggest that accuracy in detecting deception can be substantially improved by arousing a moderate degree of suspicion. Individuals in the current study who were moderately state suspicious were able to judge the veracity of their partners' messages with 65% accuracy. In addition, a predisposition toward being suspicious (i.e., GCS) further enhanced accuracy in detecting deception. High GCS individuals who were moderately suspicious were able to judge the veracity of their partners' messages with close to 70% accuracy. This degree of accuracy is substantially better than chance, and serves as testimony against the prevailing belief that accuracy in detecting deception for relational partners tends to be little better than chance (Miller et al., 1986).⁵

Although our results suggest that increases in accuracy are directly attributable to decreases in truth-bias (brought about by various types of suspicion), the causes for the subsequent downturn in accuracy in conditions of high state suspicion remain ambiguous. While it was originally argued that such decreases would be due to the adoption of a lie-bias, no empirical evidence was found to support this. This could be due to the lack of variation/restriction in range in truth-lie judgments that occurred in the current sample. Since only one subject rated over half of their partner's messages as lies, few (if any) subjects were made sufficiently state suspicious to develop an extreme lie-bias.

Another possibility is simply that, contrary to the arguments of Levine and McCornack (1989), individuals do not develop a lie-bias when they become extremely state suspicious, but rather, become so aroused that they simply begin making erroneous judgments. Evidence suggests that extreme suspicion results in a notable decline in the confidence with which individuals make judgments (Toris & DePaulo, 1985). Hence, individuals may begin to second-guess their judgments, the result being a decrease in actual accuracy. Such an explanation would fit the findings of previous research on suspicion (Toris & DePaulo, 1985).

There are several implications of these findings that merit discussion. First, researchers who are interested in studying the effects of suspicion need to exercise caution in how they operationalize state suspicion. The current findings suggest that state suspicion has substantial effects upon accuracy when it is operationalized in gradations as opposed to the traditional all-or-nothing approach. Given our inability to arouse subjects to a level of suspicion that would produce a high lie-bias, it is likely that operationalizing state suspicion by using only three conditions (such as we did)

may still be overly simplistic. Future researchers should move towards operationalizing state suspicion using numerous different levels.

Researchers of relational deception also need to reassess the long-standing belief that accuracy in detecting deception for relational partners is relatively poor (McCornack & Parks, 1986). The current results suggest that under certain conditions, individuals within relationships tend to be fairly accurate at detecting attempts at deception on the part of their relational partners. Especially in situations in which cues within a context lead individuals to suspect the *possibility* of deception, individuals within relationships are more likely to detect deception accurately than to make incorrect judgments.

Finally, although these results suggest that under certain conditions state suspicion and GCS substantially enhance accuracy in detecting deception, we agree with Toris and DePaulo (1985) that individuals in relationships should not adopt an orientation of wariness towards their relational partners, even in contexts of high uncertainty. Although a predisposition toward being suspicious (i.e., GCS) appears to markedly improve accuracy in detecting deception, within actual relational contexts any gains in accuracy that occur from being suspicious are likely to be offset by the serious negative outcomes that being suspicious towards a relational partner brings about. The importance of the relationship between intimacy, relational satisfaction, and trust is well documented, as is the fact that perceptual accuracy within relationships does not always guarantee relational bliss (Sillars, Pike, Jones, & Murphy, 1984).

ENDNOTES

¹Despite their "suspicious natures," high GCS individuals may develop a truth-bias, particularly within romantic relationships. The two most notable differences between low and high GCS individuals are their beliefs about communicative honesty, and the rapidity with which high GCS individuals abandon their truth-biases at the first sign of potential deception (Levine & McCornack, 1989).

²The Mach IV items that were used were:

1. Barnum was wrong when he said that there's a sucker born every minute.
2. It is possible to be good in all respects.
3. It is wise to flatter important people.
4. The biggest difference between most criminals and other people is that the criminals are stupid enough to get caught.
5. Most people are basically good and kind.
6. Generally speaking, people won't work hard unless they're forced to do so.
7. Most men are brave.
8. It is hard to get ahead without cutting corners here and there.
9. Most men forget more easily the death of their father than the loss of their property.
10. Never tell anyone the real reason you did something unless it is useful to do so.
11. The best way to handle people is to tell them what they want to hear.
12. It is safest to assume that all people have a vicious streak and it will come out when they are given a chance.

³The filler items included a measure of subject's confidence in the accuracy of their response, an estimate of their partner's actual attitude (as opposed to the attitude espoused on videotape), and the subject's own attitude towards the particular Mach item the partner discussed on tape.

⁴Examination of cell means suggested that a subsequent post hoc contrast (-1, +1, 0) would provide a better fit to the data. When tested, the post-hoc contrast provided a better fit, accounting for 98.5% of the explained sums of squares, $F = 11.52 (1, 89), p > .05, r = .33$. While this contrast also represented a non-linear, quadratic function, it differed from the a priori contrast in that the accuracy scores for high state suspicious individuals, although lower than moderates, were not as low as for low state suspicious individuals. It should be noted that this finding was not inconsistent with hypothesis one.

⁵One could argue that 70% is not necessarily an exceptional level of accuracy. However, it is high when compared with other studies of detection accuracy. To the best of our knowledge, only two other published studies (deTurck, Harszrak, Bodhorn, & Texter, 1990; deTurck & Miller, 1990) have found overall accuracy scores (i.e., accuracy at detecting both truth and lies) to be this high. The vast majority of research examining detection accuracy has found accuracy to be little better than chance (Zuckerman, DePaulo, & Rosenthal, 1981). No previous study examining detection accuracy for relational partners has found accuracy scores to be this high.

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