to "defense theory [that] related to a central and critical question before the jury" violated defendant's constitutional right to present defense); *State* v. *Cerreta*, 260 Conn. 251, 264, 796 A.2d 1176 (2002) (trial court's erroneous exclusion of evidence amounted to constitutional violation because "[t]he excluded evidence not only was relevant to the primary issue at trial, namely, the identity of the perpetrator, it was central to the defendant's claim of innocence" and "crucial to his defense"); *State* v. *Leniart*, supra, 198 Conn. App. 603 ("[t]he primary consideration in determining whether a trial court's ruling violated a defendant's right to present a defense is the centrality of the excluded evidence to the claim or claims raised by the defendant at trial" (internal quotation marks omitted)). Accordingly, our Supreme Court has recognized that "[t]he defendant's right to present a defense 'would be an empty one if the [s]tate were permitted to exclude competent, reliable evidence . . . when such evidence is central to the defendant's claim of innocence.' " *State* v. *Cerreta*, supra, 264–65, quoting *Crane* v. *Kentucky*, 476 U.S. 683, 690, 106 S. Ct. 2142, 90 L. Ed. 2d 636 (1986); see also *United States* v. *Scheffer*, 523 U.S. 303, 315, 118 S. Ct. 1261, 140 L. Ed. 2d 413 (1998) (observing that "[t]he exclusions of evidence that [the United States Supreme Court] [has] declared unconstitutional . . . significantly undermined fundamental elements of the defendant's defense"); *Pennsylvania* v. *Ritchie*, 480 U.S. 39, 56, 107 S. Ct. 989, 94 L. Ed. 2d 40 (1987) ("at a minimum . . . criminal defendants have . . . the right to put before a jury evidence that might influence the determination of guilt").

In light of these principles, the essential question in the present case of whether the defendant was afforded

a meaningful opportunity to present a complete defense involves a determination of whether the court's exclusion of the uniform arrest report significantly undermined a central aspect of the defendant's defense. See *State* v. *Cerreta*, supra, 260 Conn. 264–65; see also *United States* v. *Scheffer*, supra, 523 U.S. 315. If the evidence was central to the misidentification defense the defendant sought to present and might have influenced the jury's determination of guilt, the court's erroneous exclusion of the evidence amounted to a violation of the defendant's constitutional right to present a defense. See *State* v. *Cerreta*, supra, 264–65; see also *Pennsylvania* v. *Ritchie*, supra, 480 U.S. 56. Conversely, if the excluded evidence was not central to a theory advanced by the defendant or to a critical issue in the case, or if its substance was, or could have been, presented to the jury by other means, the defendant's constitutional right to present a defense was not violated. See *State* v. *Leniart*, supra, 198 Conn. App. 603–604.

Our analysis begins with an examination of the theories presented by the state and the defendant at trial to determine the fundamental components of the defendant's misidentification defense. The state's theory of the case was that the defendant was the perpetrator based on the facts that he identified himself as the person in the still images of the perpetrator from the video that had been shown to him by Merriam and that Sarbieski did the same. In contrast, the defense's theory of the case was that the defendant and Sarbieski incorrectly had identified the defendant as the person in the still images of the perpetrator primarily on the basis that the perpetrator had tattoos and the defendant does not have tattoos, as indicated on the uniform arrest report. The defendant also sought to admit, through the uniform arrest report, evidence pertaining to his height