


# Police interrogation and interviewing

Dr. Igor Areh, Lecturer in Forensic Psychology  
University of Maribor, Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security



University of Maribor  
Faculty of  
Criminal Justice and Security

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## A classification of interrogation techniques

Six interrogation fields (Kelly, Miller, Redlich, & Kleinman (2013):

1. **Rapport and relationship building** (e.g. show kindness and respect).
2. **Context manipulation** (e.g. interrogation in a small room).
3. **Emotion provocation** (e.g. appeal to self-interest).
4. **Confrontation and competition** (e.g. emphasize on authority and expertise over source).
5. **Collaboration** (e.g. making bargains with a source).
6. **Presentation of evidence** (e.g. identifying contradictions with a source story).



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### A classification of interrogation techniques

#### 1. Rapport and relationship building

- Rapport can be considered the basis of any attempt to elicit information from uncooperative source.
- Rapport is a working relationship between interviewer and interviewee based on a mutually shared understanding of each other's goals and needs.
  - Give and take logic.
  - Mutual respect and trust.
  - Empathy.
  - Paying attention.
  - Being open-minded and objective.
- There is not necessary that two persons have affection for one another.



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### A classification of interrogation techniques

#### 1. Rapport and relationship building

##### Examples of techniques:

- Using similar language as the source.
- Show concern for a source.
- Be patient.
- Allow source to play a role of teacher.
- Show common ground or shared experiences.
- Present self as in a role other than being an interrogator.



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### A classification of interrogation techniques

#### 2. Context manipulation

- An emphasis on altering the physical and temporal space where the interrogation takes place to maximize the probability of successful outcome.
- Interpersonal dynamic is neglected.
  - Move a suspect from a formal room to a more neutral setting and the opposite.
  - Isolate the source before interrogation.
  - Consider the time of day.
  - Consider your appearance.
  - Prisoner's dilemma.
  - Manipulate the physical space.



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## A classification of interrogation techniques

### 2. Context manipulation

**Examples of techniques:**

- Room is too cold or too hot.
- Arranging the furniture in the interrogation room in the way that has a specific message to the source. (e.g. removing the desk between the interrogator and source).
- Conducting the interrogation in a small room with no windows.
- Creating an atmosphere where the source feels comfortable and relaxed.



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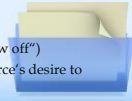
## A classification of interrogation techniques

### 3. Emotion provocation

- Once rapport has been established, the operator will employ techniques to increase cooperation or reduce resistance.
- Techniques are designed to target source's emotions (anger, anxiety, guilt, love, pride, hope and sadness).

**Examples:**

- Appealing to the source's self interest, conscience or religion.
- Exaggerating.
- Fear up & fear down (alleviating or reducing source's fear or stress).
- Ego up & ego down
  - flattering (it is supposed to induce desire to „show off“)
  - insulting the source (supposedly arouses the source's desire to defend his self-esteem).



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## A classification of interrogation techniques

### 4. Confrontation/Competition

- This group of techniques relies on threats or perceived punishment to gain compliance with the source.
- The operator asserts authority and control over the source.
- It is a zero-sum game; operator wins and the source loses.

**Examples:**

- Repeated and rapid-fire questions.
- The expression of authority and expertise.
- Challenging the values of the source.
- Silence – staring and maintaining eye contact until the source breaks eye contact or silence.
- Mutt and Jeff (good cop/bad cop).



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**A classification of interrogation techniques**  
**5. Collaboration**

- The techniques relies on a reward system to gain compliance with the source.
- The techniques are the opposite of those in the Confrontation/Competition filed - authority and control are minimized or eliminated.
- The operator and source are more equal partners in the relationship in which both persons has something to offer.



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**A classification of interrogation techniques**  
**5. Collaboration**

**Examples:**

- Demonstrating genuine concern for the source.
- Appealing to the source's sense of cooperation.
- Rewards (Kelly et al., 2013):
  - Tangible rewards: food, drink, candy, cigarettes, blanket, pillow ...
  - Intangible rewards: promises of better treatment.



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**A classification of interrogation techniques**  
**6. Presentation of evidence**

This group of interrogation techniques focuses on demonstrating to the source what the operator already know or claim to know.

Techniques can be used for (Kelly et al., 2013):

- gaining cooperation,
- compliance,
- testing veracity,
- detecting deception,
- exploring the source's level of knowledgeability.



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## A classification of interrogation techniques

### 6. Presentation of evidence

#### Examples of techniques used:

- Presentation of actual evidence of the source's guilt.
- Presentation of false evidence (not advisable).
- Identifying contradictions in the source's account.
- Using polygraph or other physiological measures and telling the source he/she failed it (not advisable).
- Show source photos or statements from witnesses or others.
- Bluff or bait source about supposed evidence.



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## Coercive interrogation tactics

- In the 60s the period of (physical) coercive police interrogation tactics slowly dissipated.
- Physical violence and torture resulted in large numbers of coerced false confessions.
- (e.g. hitting suspects with a rubber hose, deprivation of sleep, food, forcing a suspect to stand for hours, shining a blade, blinding light on the suspect ...)
- In 70s police interrogation had become entirely psychological in nature but it relied on sustained pressure, manipulation, and deceit.



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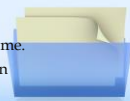
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## Coercive interrogation tactics The Reid technique

Among coercive interrogation techniques, the most influential approach is the Reid technique (developed in the 40s).

- Investigators are advised to isolate the suspect in a small private room. This increases anxiety and incentive to escape.
- A nine-step process is used in which negative and positive stimulations are employed.
- The interrogator confronts the suspect with accusations of guilt, real or fabricated evidence and he refuses to accept denials and alibis.
- The interrogator also offers sympathy and moral justification that minimize the importance of the crime.
- The process leads the suspect to see confession as an escape from intensive psychological pressure.



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### Coercive interrogation tactics The Reid technique

- A special behaviour-provoking questions are used (e.g. „What do you think should happen to the person who committed this crime?“), and than changes in behaviour are observed to establish signs of lying (e.g. frozen posture, nervousness, gaze aversion).
- The research constantly shows that most common-sense behavioural cues are not diagnostic of truth and deception (DePaulo et al., 2003).
  - Laypeople on average are 54% accurate at distinguishing truth and deception. Professionals preform only slightly better, if at all (Vrij, 2008).



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### Coercive interrogation tactics The Reid technique

- The technique is used only with those suspects whose culpability is established on the basis of the initial investigation.
- The purpose of interrogation is not to find the truth, but to elicit incriminating statements or admissions, and maybe a full confession in an effort to secure conviction of the offender (Kassin et al., 2010).
- Reid technique is a guilt-presumptive and confrontational process (Kassin et al., 2010).



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### What are the reasons for the use of coercive interrogation tactics?

Such techniques are seemingly justified because of the pervasive belief that:

- suspects almost never confess spontaneously but virtually always in response to police pressure,
- confessions, especially to serious crimes, are rarely made spontaneously. Rather they are actively elicited, typically after sustained psychological pressure (Leo, 2008).



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### What are the reasons for the use of coercive interrogation tactics?

Holmes (2002), an advocate of coercive techniques:

“When you finish reading this book, I hope you have one predominate thought: You don’t obtain confessions by asking the suspect questions. You have to convince a suspect to confess by the use of persuasive interrogational arguments”.

In the USA interrogative methods have no scientific foundation but rather have been offered (sold) by former investigators who purport that the validity of those techniques is based on their success (Meissner, Russano, & Narchet, 2010).



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### Do we really need to convince a suspect to confess?

The idea that culprits will deny being involved in crime and will not confess has not benefitted from research.

Research involving offenders shows that only a minority enter the police interrogation with their mind set on denial (Des Lauriers-Varin and St-Yves, 2006).



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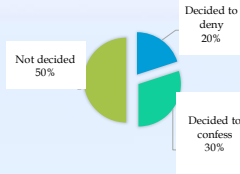
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### Do we really need to convince a suspect to confess?

Kebbell, Hurren, and Mazerolle (2006) found that:

- 50% of the convicted sex offenders said that they had entered the police interview having already decided whether to deny or confess.
  - 20% had planned to deny.
  - 30% had planned to confess.
- The other 50% entered the police interview not yet having decided whether to deny or confess.



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### Do we really need to convince a suspect to confess?

Pearse and Gudjonsson (1996):

- Suspects in their interviews did rarely change from denying to admitting the offence.
- Suspects enter a police interview having already decided whether to admit or deny the allegations against them.
- Police interview techniques have minimal effects on whether an admission occurs.



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### Do we really need to convince a suspect to confess?

Baldwin (1993):

- In only 20 of the 600 interviews examined did suspects change their story in the course of an interview.
- In only 9 cases was the change due to the persuasive skills of the interviewer.
- The great majority of suspects stick to their starting position - whether admission, denial, or somewhere in between - regardless of how the interview is conducted.



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### Do we really need to convince a suspect to confess?

- Suspects interviewed in a dominant, coercive way may be less likely to confess than those interviewed in a humane way (Kebbell, Alison & Hurren, 2008).
- The main reason the confessors to child molestation gave for why they confessed was the respect shown to them by the interviewers (O'Connor & Carson, 2005).
- In the majority of taped interviews the police spent little time (if any) trying to obtain the suspects' accounts of events.
  - Instead they accused the suspects of the offence and asked for their response to such accusations (Moston, Stephenson & Williamson, 1992).



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### The new era - the investigative interview

- Prior to 1992 investigators in UK received no formal training and the main purpose of interviewing suspects was to obtain confession.
- After a few high-profile miscarriages of justice the first national training program for interviewing suspects, victims, and witnesses was published.
- The new approach (PEACE) was developed through collaboration of police officers, psychologists, and lawyers.



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### The investigative interview PEACE

- The use of psychologically manipulative tactics had significantly declined without a drop in the frequency of confessions.
- The purpose of investigative interviewing is to obtain accurate and reliable information (not confession!) in order to discover the truth.
- PEACE is a mnemonic acronym for the sequential phases of the model.



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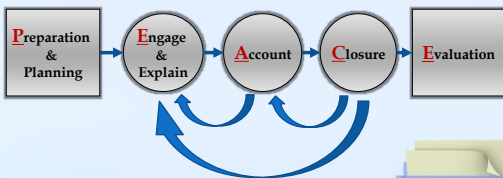
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### The investigative interview PEACE

The five distinct parts of the investigative interview:



(Walsh & Bull, 2010)



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## The investigative interview

### PEACE

- **Preparation and planning** happens before the interview.
- **Engage and explain** phase covers the legal requirements and the opportunity to build rapport between interviewer and suspect.
- **Account** phase where open questions are used to invite an account of the events from suspect. If questioning highlights inconsistencies, further probing is used to resolve queries.
- **Closure** phase is a final stage where a summary of what had been said before is presented to the suspect. He/she is allowed to modify or add to what had been said before
- **Evaluation** phase occurs after the interview. It is meant to allow self and reviewers reflection about effectiveness of the interview and to determine further enquiries.



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## Investigative interview

### What does it look like?

- **Rapport, empathy, communication skill, calmness, confidence**
- **Planning and Preparation**
- **Interview structure**
- **Questioning strategy**
- **Evidence disclosure**



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## Investigative interview

### Rapport

Whereas other techniques can be helpful, rapport can do without these techniques, and techniques without rapport are unlikely to be effective (St.Yves, 2006).

Rapport serves two functions (Borum, 2006):

- it gets the source talking and
- allows the operator to identify and asses potential motivations, interests, and vulnerabilities.



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### Investigative interview

#### Interview structure

Avoid Topic Hopping

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### Investigative interview

#### Questioning strategy - Types of question

Griffiths Question Map (GQM):

**Productive and appropriate questions:**

- 1. Open questions** – they allow a full range of response and encourage longer and accurate answers.
- 2. Probing questions** – more intrusive and they require a more specific answers (who, what, why, where, when, which, how. They are used after an initial account.
- 3. Appropriate closed yes/no questions** – used at the conclusion of a topic where open and probing questions have been exhausted.

Griffiths & Milne (2006)

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### Investigative interview

#### Questioning strategy

**Unproductive and inappropriate questions**

- 4. Inappropriate closed yes/no questions** – they allow to close down the range of responses or to give less detailed answer. (Do you think you can describe a man who robbed you?)
- 5. Leading questions** – they suggest an answer in formal content to an interviewee (Are you often that aggressive in situations like yesterday).
- 6. Multiple questions** - they constitute more sub-questions asked at once (What did they look like? or How did you get out and what happened to your friend?).

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### Investigative interview

#### Questioning strategy

**Unproductive and inappropriate questions**

7. **Forced choice questions** - they offer a limited number of answers (Did you steal the money or the credit card?)

8. **Opinion or statement** (I believe you did assault the woman)



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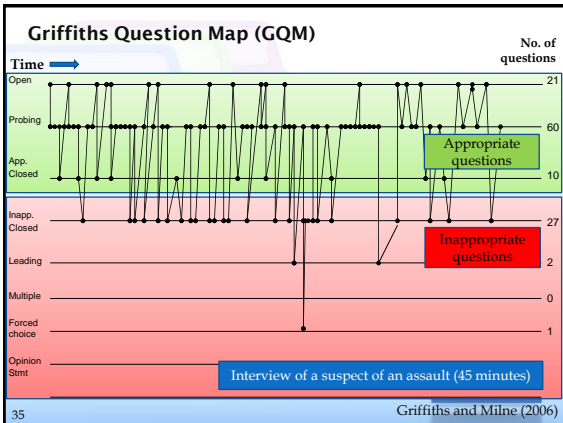
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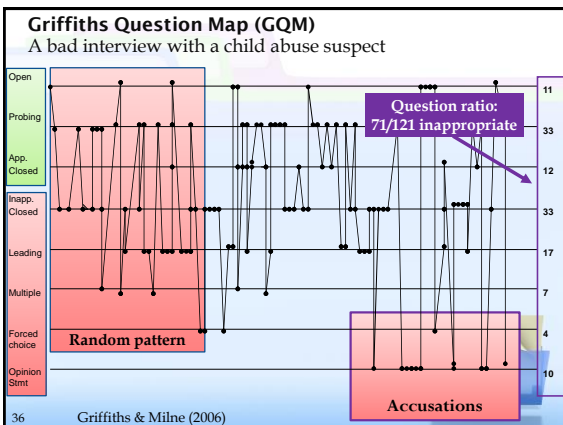
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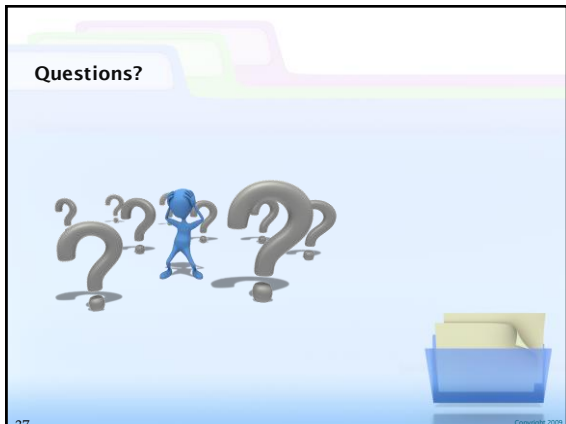
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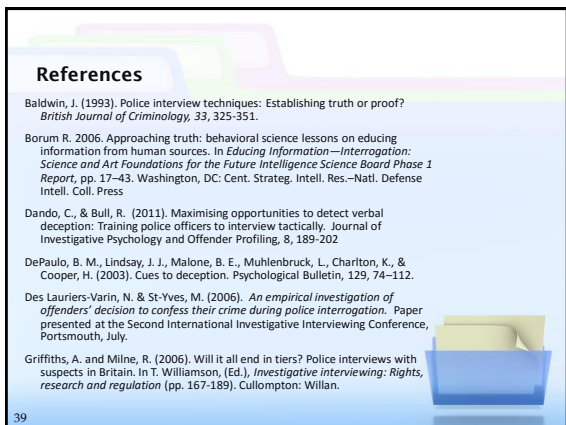
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