

## BOOK REVIEW

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### Review of: *Effective Interviewing and Interrogation Techniques*

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**REFERENCE:** Gordon N, Fleisher W. *Effective interviewing and interrogation techniques*. Academic Press, San Diego, California, 92101–4495.

This text is one of a limited number of books which address the subject of the use of interviewing and interrogation techniques by professional investigators. The authors of *Effective Interviewing and Interrogation Techniques* are polygraph examiners who also conduct training for polygraph examiners and for interviewers. The authors tip their hats to a series of past and current polygraph examiners who have written and lectured on the subject since the 1930s.

The authors begin in Chapter 1 with a review of the history of the search for truth. They address the ancient approaches involving various trials: by combat, by ordeal, by torture and leading to our current judicial system which uses a trial by jury. This historical review covers early attempts to detect deception using a more scientific approach beginning with experimentation conducted during the 1890s. This early work led to the modern analog and computerized polygraph instruments. The use of the polygraph, however, is not the focus of this text. At this point the authors break away from the instrumental approach to the detection of deception and offer what they refer to as the “Forensic Assessment Interview.” They point out the “inherent limitations” of the polygraph technique, including, “it requires written consent, a lengthy interview, instrumentation and chart analysis to determine the truth.” The “Forensic Assessment Interview” is presented as having the advantage of the suspect being “less aware of what is being monitored and less guarded and intimidated.” Further, the authors suggest that this interview technique will allow the interviewer to “evaluate a broader range of suspect responses to arrive at a reliable assessment of witness/suspect credibility.”

Chapters 2 and 3 discuss basic definitions of truth and lies and explain the essence of the “Fight/Flight” response as well as the “Freeze/Hide” theory for the psychophysiological basis of their approach to interviewing and interrogation. Subsequent chapters discuss preparation and question formulation approaches to the task of questioning a suspect or witness.

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It is not until Chapter 7 and 8 that the authors discuss the verbal and non-verbal behavioral components of the “Forensic Assessment Interview.” Chapter 8 provides a number of photographic examples of facial expressions, postures, gestures, neurolinguistic factors and other areas to observe as indicators of truth or deception.

In Chapter 9 the authors provide examples of how to score the interview answers and behaviors through a case study of a suspected theft case and also a child molestation case. One of the case subjects was interpreted as truthful and the other was deceptive. The verbal answers and non-verbal behaviors are scored to provide the reader with an explanation of the basis for the authors’ conclusions.

Pre-employment interviewing is presented as a short discussion in Chapter 10, with legal considerations and the taking of statements are minimally discussed in Chapters 11 and 12, respectively.

The topic of actually conducting an accusatory interrogation is not addressed until Chapter 13 where an “Integrated Interrogation Technique” presents ten “key aspects” to an interrogation. There is an example of an incest case, with the interrogator’s statements and the subject’s verbal and non-verbal responses.

The book concludes with Appendix A, which gives the reader a form the interviewer can use to conduct the “Forensic Assessment Interview” and Appendix B, which is the “Pre-Employment Booklet” form.

In summary, *Effective Interviewing and Interrogation Techniques* is disappointing to this reviewer as it represents a thinly disguised version of the John E. Reid Interview and Interrogation program, presented by a Chicago firm, John E. Reid & Associates. The approach presented in this book shows little personal innovation or development of the Reid Technique and merely substitutes different terms, such as “Forensic Assessment Interview” for the Reid term, “Behavioral Analysis Interview.” There is one footnote in Chapter 7 in which the authors “recognize” the work done by Reid and Associates, but does not give true credit to the source of much of the information contained in this volume. The highly limited coverage of actual interrogation techniques is a further disappointment, which is a key skill for investigators who may have some interviewing experience, but have little or no experience in conducting accusatory interrogations.