

BOOK REVIEW

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A Review of *Criminal Interrogations and Confessions* (Third Edition)

REFERENCE: Inbau, F. E., Reid, J. E., and Buckley, J. P. *Criminal Interrogation and Confessions*, third ed., Williams and Wilkins, 428 E. Preston St., Baltimore, MD 21202, 1986, 353 pp.

Simply put, this is a good book. Basically divided into two parts, Part I "Interrogation Tactics and Techniques" takes the reader from preinterview preparation through written confession, and Part II "The Law on Criminal Interrogations and Confessions" covers case law, comparisons, observations, and suggestions from pre-Miranda to publication. There is also an appendix on "The Psychological Principles of Criminal Interrogation."

In the Preface, coauthor Inbau, advises that this third edition is basically a new book in that the art of interrogation has vastly improved since the 1967 date of the preceding edition and the law governing interrogation and confessions has changed considerably. (Remember, the Miranda decision came down in 1966.)

Aside from the information on interview preparation, tactics, and techniques, a highlight of Part I is the analysis of the nine steps of effective interrogation. Without explanation, but to whet the appetite of the interested reader, they are:

- (1) direct, positive confrontation;
- (2) theme development;
- (3) handling denials;
- (4) overcoming objections;
- (5) procurement and retention of suspect's attention;
- (6) handling suspect's passive mood;
- (7) presenting an alternative question;
- (8) having suspect orally relate various details of the offense; and
- (9) converting an oral confession into a written confession.

Although these steps are for suggested use with subjects whose guilt seems definite or reasonably certain, there are also suggestions in the book for interviews of subjects whose guilt is uncertain. The information on evaluation of verbal and nonverbal behavior symptoms can be very useful to others besides investigators.

While not exactly light reading, Part I is written in an easy to understand manner with numerous explanative examples including many common situations. It gives good basic instructions for the beginner as well as helpful hints and suggestions for the more experienced.

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The authors rightly make it clear that the text is to be used as a set of principles rather than as a set of fixed, inflexible rules, and that the purpose of a successful interrogation is not to make an innocent person confess.

Of course, no interrogation of a custodial subject should begin without the Miranda warnings and a waiver. Part II gives an overview of interrogation law and confession law, including use of the accepted practices of trickery and deceit. The authors suggest a simplified, but permissible version of the Miranda warnings and acknowledgement waiver with the point made that

although Miranda prohibits talking a suspect out of his claim of silence or the assistance of counsel, it does not require that a suspect be talked into the exercise of those rights, which may be the practical effect of the ritualistic and waiver procedures that have been so frequently used (p. 289).

While Part II may not be geared to the average reader, it does provide a basic overview of confession and interrogation law which should make the reader aware of some of the problems and to assist them in conforming their conduct within the law.

The book has many cross-references within itself, and while some of those page referrals are a page or two off, it should pose no problem for the interested reader.

I recommend this book to all forensic scientists who want more background and information on the investigative interview process and definitely for those who conduct interviews or interrogations in their work.