

BOOK REVIEW

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Review of: *Practical Aspects of Interview and Interrogation, 2nd Edition*

REFERENCE: Zulawski DA, Wicklander DE. Practical aspects of interview and interrogation, 2nd ed., CRC Press: Boca Raton, FL, 2002, 523 pp.

Interviewing and interrogation, two of the most important tasks of an investigator, are skills that are developed over time. Proper development requires well-directed, systematic and appropriate training. Although there are principles that feature in such training, how those are applied depends on several circumstantial factors, including, of course, the interrogators' personal characteristics. There are a number of books now available on the market that purport to "teach" investigators how to conduct interviews and interrogations. This book, a revision of an earlier edition by the same authors, is one of them.

In this book, the authors focus on methods and advice that appear to have greater applicability in the private as opposed to the public sector. Although both situations call for the application of basic principles, there are differences of importance. Not the least of these is that the legal constraints are different in the two settings. This is because in the private sector "interrogators" are usually not public law enforcement officers who are bound by Miranda rules; rather they are typically private employees or hired "agents" of a commercial firm. In addition, in the private sector there may be no interest in criminal prosecution. An interrogation may be conducted only to identify the perpetrator of a specific act and to seek a remedy, such as the recovery of stolen money or merchandise in an internal theft. These and other differences are made evident at various points in this book, and they distinguish it from many other interrogation manuals. Beyond that, however, there is not anything new in this volume. That is, most of what is here is found in other such manuals. However, the authors have updated portions of their earlier edition to include broader consideration of such topics as sexual harassment, interviewing over a telephone, and the problem of false confessions.

What is in this book? There are eighteen chapters. In the first, one finds a general discussion of introductory comments on interrogational methodologies and a few "models" of the process that have appeared in the literature. Also included in that chapter are the basic elements that are said to make up the technique which the au-

thors advance. There is nothing in this technique that distinguishes it in any special way from what appears in other similar manuals. The remaining 17 chapters are organized into six parts. The first of these is referred to as preparation. Here, one is familiarized with basic concerns such as: how to plan for an interview/interrogation, what legal rules may guide questioning, the problem of false confessions and how one goes about making judgments of an interviewee's truthfulness based on behavioral mannerisms. Because it is common to find that both truthful and lying persons who are being questioned will deny involvement in the matter under investigation, the final chapter in this part focuses on reasons for denials. These, in some instances, are shown to be related to an interrogator's behavior and factors sometimes beyond control, including the common problem of the lack of solid evidence confirming or at least strongly suggesting guilt.

In part two, there are two chapters, one devoted to "interviewing" (distinct from interrogation) and the other to why people confess. Part three consists of one chapter. In it one is shown how to "accuse" someone of committing an act under investigation. This may seem to be a pretty straightforward concern but, in practice, it is a difficult and important element to be given careful thought and the authors make this point clear in their material. In part four one learns in two chapters, devoted to rationalizations and denials, each separately considered, what to do to overcome how questioned persons typically respond to being accused. If the interrogator can overcome denials, it may lead to an admission, often times one that needs to be elaborated because it is seldom the case that an initial "admission" is the complete and detailed statement that is being sought. How to get, and then how to elaborate on, an initial admission are the chapters in Part five and Part six, respectively. In Part seven, there is a chapter that focuses on how to complete a statement taken from the person who has acknowledged guilt and another on the process of drawing the interrogation to a proper close. In the last part, there are chapters devoted to frequently asked questions, telephone interviews and other, specialized interviews.

This book is aptly named. It is indeed a presentation of practical techniques, approaches and how-to-do-it advice that have been culled from the authors' experiences. There are numerous examples (and sometimes photographs showing, for instance, behaviors said to be indicative of truth-telling/lying) throughout the book,

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though in many instances these are brief and without a lot of supportive information. But, the focus on “practical” application is the hallmark of this volume. There is little that provides a broader understanding of either the interview or the interrogation process. Nor is there thorough discussion of any related concerns such as legal considerations or empirical evidence supporting any of the general

statements made by the authors. In short, the book is a collection of how-to’s drawn primarily from the authors’ experiences. For those who are interested in learning about the interrogation and interviewing process, this book is quite limited. However, for those seeking very basic advice on the conduct of an “Interrogation” this book is a place to start.