

Criminal interview techniques



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In the current times of criminal investigation, the interview is very important in making or breaking the case at hand. Many of the processes that police or criminal investigators use today tend to relate to a psychological tactic that breaks down their suspects. However, how far can the police or an investigator go before it is too much on the suspect? The whole purpose of an interview is to gather information about a crime and attempt to make sense of the crime.

Nonetheless, investigation will continue until there is enough information or possibly a confession surfaces. Gudjonsson and Pearse relate to two different types of interrogation that have been identified throughout the years in the United States and the United Kingdom- the Reid Technique (United States) and the PEACE model (United Kingdom). Both are used to psychologically understand the suspect's story of the crime and to purposely attain any important information possible. However, the Reid technique is more aggressive than the PEACE model.

The purpose of the article was to express the concern that the authors have for the techniques of these models, especially the Reid technique, which they find very aggressive and inhumane. In the end, there will be an explanation of why these techniques work but furthermore, which one should be used and which one should not even be considered. Throughout the article, the authors express the strengths and weaknesses of both techniques to the extent that the reader can understand the usefulness of both.

What needs to be understood is that both of these techniques have been used by investigative professionals and that they understand the dangers that come with the criminal investigative process. On the other hand, it is their job, and they have a crime to solve every time they use one of these investigative tactics. Therefore, that is why the authors of this article explain in depth both techniques and how they are used to solve even the most serious crimes. When the thought comes to mind, anyone could think that criminal investigation would be like what is seen on television or the movies. Although this depiction is somewhat accurate, how aggressive is it compared to the models described by the authors? The most troublesome technique of the two is the Reid technique which is mostly incorporated in the United States. According to the authors, this technique is used to find a confession in the investigation rather than find truth or fact about possible leads into solving the crime.

In order to attain a false confession, the interrogators continuously physically and mentally attack the suspect in order to manipulate their memory and judgment of the crime about what happened. They will go so far as to deprive the suspect of water and food in order to get them to come clean about something they never did or give some kind of information that will make the investigators believe they have the crime solved. It is sad to relate that these false confession accounts are a reality in any criminal investigation; in fact, most false accusations and confessions are the reason why some crimes may go unsolved.

The authors did not condone this technique and believed it to be far out of the appropriate level for treating a suspect and even "cruel and unusual

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punishment” in the way that it is harmful to a suspect’s both mental and physical health. Gudjonsson and Pearse describe the process of the technique with a two-stage process in which there is a nonaccusatory stage where information is gathered about the suspect and then there is the accusation stage where the physical and mental tactics of torture are used in order to get the suspect to falsely confess the crime.

What is amazing about this technique is that it works and many people have witnessed it. It is an astounding 80% confession rate when people are put through this technique and a 20% chance of the suspects standing their ground (Gudjonsson & Pearse). As the Reid technique continues to be executed in the United States, the United Kingdom has adopted the PEACE model which started in the UK and has remained there for a reasonable time. This model is used to make reason with the suspects.

It is a psychological maneuver that is used in order to make the suspects feel at ease all the while keeping them on their heels in case the investigators catch them off guard with a lie or evidence not yet discussed. PEACE stands for preparation and planning, engage and explain, account, closure, and evaluation (Gudjonsson & Pearse). This model does not easily have a turnover of confessions, but it does the job still. However, many UK investigators have learned that they need to use a little of the Reid technique in order to get the suspects rattled.

Having this power over the suspects makes their judgment much better and may make their memory more clear. The PEACE model works for the suspects to understand that the investigator knows a lot of information about

the crime but that they need the suspect to cooperate “ peacefully” in order to make sense of the crime and gather the correct information. The authors seem to believe, and I agree, this to be a more reasonable way of interrogation and believe it to be a better solution than the inhumane tactics of the Reid technique.

Overall, these techniques are very valuable to the execution of solving crimes in the United States or the United Kingdom. Although both of the models are very useful and make crime-solving easier, it is best to understand the effects that both of these techniques have on criminals. The authors would like for anyone to believe that the PEACE model is the best model and sincerely believe that the Reid model needs to be revised or completely outlawed. Gudjonsson, G. H. , & Pearse, J. (2011, February). Suspect interviews and false confessions. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 20, 33-37. doi: 1177/0963721410396824.