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## Problems Devolving Admissions

The insistent ring of the phone had a certain sense of desperation to it. One of those rings every parent recognizes...and dreads...before the phone is even answered.

"Hello...Dad," came the familiar voice of the youngest. "Ah... the car won't start," she continued. Damn, I thought, it's only twelve years old with 178 thousand miles and it gives out.

"What seems to be the problem?" I responded with more confidence than I felt.

"I don't know; it just won't start." She replied, obviously flustered. "I just stopped for gas and now it won't start."

The limited knowledge of cars and mechanics I possess were immediately recalled from the dark back regions of memory. Ticking off the possible maladies, I thought...battery, starter, alternator, loose wires, solenoid...do they even have those anymore? Seems like you could hit the solenoid with something hard and it would help. If I need to go out there I have to remember to take something like a hammer. I wondered what a solenoid, if it still existed, looked like. It would probably be inadvisable to just start whacking with the hammer until I have identified the solenoid. But, I added a hammer to the mental list of things I would take for the rescue just in case.

Intent on limiting the possibilities, the questioning began. Did you try to start it again? Have you been having problems starting? Does it making any funny noises? No, I mean any *new* noises that are funny? And no, I don't think you need a new car.

Flipping through the yellow pages for a tow truck, I continued to question the youngest thoroughly, convinced I could divine the answer to the problem if only I asked the right questions. As I ticked off the questions, it became apparent this was a rescue I was incapable of making, which made obtaining the number for the towing service seem sensible. I thought about all the cars I had over the years that had not started and examined those symptoms for clues.

"Oh, I forgot to put it in park!" she exclaimed, interrupting my thoughts. The roar of the engine sparked to life as she retried the ignition. "Fixed that," she giggled. "Bye."

Phone in hand, I heard the line go dead as she tore off to continue her day while my thoughts drifted to solenoids.

Interesting that what seems like the problem often is not really what is wrong. One of the most common concerns expressed by loss prevention senior management is the lack of admission development by interviewers. They want interviewers

to get to the truth of what the employee stole, not just get an admission to what was already known.

Development of an admission is much like the car that doesn't start—the problem lies not in the development of the admission phase of the interview, but begins much earlier in the conversation. When walking the interviewer back through his actions and strategies, there are implications to each decision impacting the resulting admission.

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### Cause and Effect

First, if there is a consistent failure of an interviewer to develop an admission past what is known, we can surmise the interviewer is likely doing the same things over and over to get this identical result; a result that can be anticipated and predicted with accuracy. "If one does this, then that will occur" can be fixed by looking at events leading up to the symptom.

The key to resolving the problem lies not with the symptom—lack of further admissions—rather the answer to the problem lies much earlier in the conversation. The real issue likely originates with the structure of the interview, the strategy employed, or statements made by the interviewer long before there was an attempt to develop additional admissions. The analysis of the development problem begins by carefully exploring what was said, its order, and the responses of the subject.

In the next column we will focus on those actions affecting development of the subject's admission. As a small exercise, we suggest jotting a list of things that could contribute to a subject's reluctance to offer additional admissions of dishonesty.

To start your list off, consider why people choose to confess to a theft or crime. Why people confess is a fundamental question that must be understood since the implications of the decision to confess are far-reaching and important to every interviewer.

How might the decision to confess affect an interviewer's selection of accusations and even his rationalizations? Your list should be growing longer.

## Missing and Exploited Children Update

Almost exactly a year ago we were asked to assist in the investigation of a juvenile missing since April 1986 from the City of Eastpointe, Michigan. Cindy Zarzycki, a lovely energetic 13-year-old girl, disappeared while going to visit her boyfriend at a local Dairy Queen.

When we were asked to join the investigation, it was evident our recording equipment was not sufficient to document a possible lengthy interview with the suspect. Since the suspect's statement would be critical to a prosecution, we asked for help in the project. We want to again extend our appreciation to two companies and thank their employees for the generous support.

Once again, we want to thank Pelco, Inc. and Peter Schmidt who graciously arranged the loan of a 5100 DVR to record the interview. Steve May, president of LP Innovations (LPI), arranged for Mike Korcuba, national account manager for Securex, a division of LPI, to provide the camera, microphone, installation, and removal of the equipment in the prison where the suspect was incarcerated. Their generosity in time and equipment helped bring this case to a resolution.

In early 2007 Wicklander-Zulawski (W-Z) associates Lou Tessmann, Dominic Cappaluti, and Jennifer Leibow twice visited the prime suspect, Art Ream, in his Michigan prison. Ream was the father of Cindy's boyfriend at the time she went missing and is in prison for sexual misconduct with another girl about Cindy's age. He is currently being held on his second conviction for

sexually abusing young girls. W-Z associates Bobby Masano and Leibow also conducted extensive background interviews with family and friends of the missing girl in and around the Detroit area.

During his prison interviews, Ream made incriminating admissions linking himself to Cindy's disappearance and the sexual abuse of other minor girls in his family. Follow-up interviews with his family confirmed other instances of sexual abuse by Ream with young female family members. Ream was scheduled for early release in January 2008, and he had planned to return home and live with family.

After additional investigation, Macomb County, Michigan, prosecutors now believe they know who caused Cindy's disappearance. On January 2, 2008, Macomb County Prosecutor Eric Smith charged Arthur Ream, 58, with first-degree and second-degree murder in the case. Smith alleges Art Ream killed Cindy after she spurned his sexual advances that Sunday in 1986.

During a final interrogation after being taken into custody for Cindy's murder, Ream admitted to Leibow he used his van to dispose of Cindy's body. Although Ream gave Leibow indications where Cindy may be buried, her body has not been recovered at this writing.

Ream has had his early release from prison canceled and is being held without bond for Cindy's murder.

Limited Brands has sponsored fundraising events for the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children ([www.ncmec.org](http://www.ncmec.org)) at the National Retail Federation loss prevention convention for the past several years. We encourage everyone's continued support for this charity. We applaud all companies that use Code Adam and protect our children in ways large and small. ■

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