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## Improving Detection of Deception Establishing a Behavioral Norm

Unfortunately, humans are not very good lie detectors. In fact, the ability to correctly detect truth and deception is often at about a chance level. Accurately determining truth and deception is often dependent on a number of factors. For example, if a subject has only to conceal the truth for a short period of time and face a limited number of questions, he will be more likely able to conceal the deception from his interviewer. Or when a subject believes that his deception may go undetected, his fear of detection diminishes as does the associated leakage of deceptive verbal and physical behavior clues.

An interviewer who is not observant or suspicious may not identify verbal or physical behavior associated with the attempted deception. Clearly, a subject who is permitted to lie using omission is less likely to be identified as deceptive because he is telling the truth, while omitting those details that would prove incriminating. It is also easier for a subject to carry off a deception when there has been no investigation that might contradict the subject's story.

However, one of the primary reasons that interviewers failed to detect deception is the lack of familiarity with the subject. Having a clear behavioral norm of the subject allows an interviewer to identify significant changes in behavior that may indicate the subject is attempting a deception.

It is often easier to detect deception with someone who is well-known to the interviewer than someone who has just been met. The well-known individual has over time provided the interviewer with a consistent pattern of behavior in a variety of different situations. This well-established pattern provides the interviewer with a baseline of behavior, both verbal and physical, that the interviewer can use as a comparison while questioning the subject in the area under investigation. Unfortunately, this familiarity may also lead to a bias for or against the individual, causing the interviewer to misinterpret or even fail to notice behavioral changes in the subject because he is predisposed to believe the subject.

Establishing a clear behavioral norm for the individual being interviewed affords the observer an opportunity to associate specific behavioral changes to topics being discussed. Changes from

the behavioral norm may offer indications that the individual is withholding or misstating information.

### Compare the Individual Against the Population as a Whole

The first assessment of the individual's behavior is a general comparison of how most people would act under a given situation. Does the subject conform or does he not? If not, why not? We can begin to hypothesize why the individual is acting in that manner and test this theory during the interview. Is it simple nervousness in a new situation or is the individual attempting to deceive? The interviewer's experience in a variety of

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environments will provide him the pattern of general attitudes and behavior for comparison. This will be useful in a pre-employment interview, deposition, behavioral interview, or even a social setting.

There could be any number of reasons why the individual does not conform to the behavioral norm of the population as a whole. There could be personality differences, status differences, geographic or cultural differences, any of which might contribute to the differences noticed from the general population. A police officer making a traffic stop evaluates the driver against all other drivers he has stopped to determine if the individual is unusually nervous, evasive, or quiet in his demeanor and comments. When extremes of nervousness or quiet are observed, it causes the officer to ask further questions to determine the cause. These behaviors may be caused by the concealment of contraband, or it could simply be the individual's normal behavior. Asking additional questions affords the officer an opportunity to determine which it might be.

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## Compare the Individual Against Himself

Comparing in individual against himself is obviously easier when the interviewer knows the subject in a variety of social contexts. This is more difficult when the subject has just been met. Through the use of careful observation, the interviewer observes the subject's verbal and physical demeanor while being led through a series of questions to which the individual will likely respond truthfully.

### *1. Determine the upper and lower ranges of the individual's speech pattern.*

As the interviewer listens to the subject's responses, he will mentally notice the upper and lower ranges of the voice. The voice will typically modulate between the upper and lower level as the individual takes and then uses the breath while speaking. The interviewer should note increases in pitch, drops in loudness, or changes in clarity from the subject's normal speech pattern.

### *2. Note the pace of the individual's speech.*

Look for changes of speed in the speech pattern of the subject. The slowing of an individual's words is often associated with a person who is carefully choosing his words.

### *3. Consider changes in the individual's posture.*

The interviewer should examine changes in the individual's posture from those observed while establishing the behavioral norm. The posture of the individual will generally become more open during the behavioral norm since the questions being asked are non-threatening or biographical in nature. Changes that occur during the later portions of the interview may indicate that the subject is under increased stress at those points. The observant interviewer recognizing these behavioral changes may return to these topics to determine if the subject is attempting to conceal information.

### *4. Look for on-time/consistent behavioral changes.*

An individual may exhibit a variety of observable behaviors that may be the

results of general nervousness or an attempt to deceive or withhold information. Wringing the hands, brushing lint, or other created job types of behavior are often the result of nervousness, rather than an attempt at deception.

The interviewer should look for consistent on-time behaviors that are associated with the introduction of a topic, word, or question. For example, a subject consistently responds to a topic by changing his position. The position change could be different on each occasion, but the consistency of a response to the topic strongly indicates that the individual is displaying increased stress as a result of the stimulus of that topic.

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### *5. Determine the individual's preferred pattern of communication.*

People will generally have a preferred pattern of communication using visual, auditory, or kinesics terminology. People can communicate using all three channels, but will generally have a favored channel of communication. While establishing the individual's behavioral norm, the interviewer should attempt to discern the preferred channel of communication. There will generally be differences in the physiology and speech patterns that will give an indication of the individual's dominant mode.

For example, people preferring a visual mode will often speak relatively rapidly and breathe high in the chest. These individuals will also use visual terminology in the language that they select. It would not be unusual for a visual individual to say things like, "when you see someone say," "picture this," or "when I see something like this." The interviewer who is able to recognize the subjects preferred mode can alter his speech pattern to increase rapport and

communication with the individual by using similar visual words or phrases.

### *6. Look for a consistent pattern when the subject recalls or creates information.*

The interviewer may elicit the individual's behavioral pattern using a variety of questions. These questions cause the subject to access the long- and short-term memory, information that is often used, such as age, date of birth, or an address, as well as questions that require the subject to test information against his memory or create a response. The interviewer observes the pattern of eye movement and associated physical behaviors to identify a consistent pattern for the subject. If the interviewer is able to determine a pattern that is

consistently used by the subject to retrieve a certain type of memory or to create a response, these observations can then be used to determine, in general terms, what might be going on in the subject mind.

For example, if any individual has displayed a consistent pattern of looking to his right when creating information, the observer may be able to deduce that the subject has created information not actively stored in his memory. This created information may or may not be reflective of the truth depending on the question asked and its context.

The key to using behavioral analysis to assist in determining the truth or deception in an interview is clearly defining the individual's normal behavior during truth telling and then looking for changes from that normal pattern when questioning. Examining the timing and consistency of the changes can give the keen observer insights into the thought patterns of the subject being interviewed. ■