

Investigative interviewing of suspects: the way forward

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Abstract

Investigation is at the heart of policing. To investigate is to gather information from a number of sources regarding an incident, and investigative interviewing (of suspects, witnesses as well as victims) is one of the core functions of investigation. Very often, the outcome of a case depends on the outcome of such interviews, and information gathering is one of the most valuable and at the same time difficult skills police officers can develop. The investigative interviewing of suspects is a topic which has received much attention over the years, not only from scholars but also from the media and the public. Police ways of handling suspects' interviewing have often been on the spotlight (mainly due to cases of miscarriages of justice) and for years experts on the field have criticized what they called 'inappropriate police ways of extracting confessions'. The procedures, effectiveness and ethics of police interrogations were often questioned. As a result, in many countries psychologists, including those who are also police officers, are involved in the development of investigative interviewing, with best practices based on findings from various empirical studies.

Key words – police, interrogation, investigative interviewing, tactics, confessions.

*The terms 'interrogation' and 'investigative interviewing' are being used interchangeably.

Introduction

The problem of suspects' interrogations became widely known by some notorious cases of miscarriages of justice caused by false confessions, which in turn were caused by wrongful interviewing. With some unknown degree of regularity, however, innocent suspects are also sometimes induced to confess to crimes they did not commit. Within the recent and growing population of post-conviction DNA exonerations reported by the Innocence Project, in the United States, false confessions were a contributing factor in more than 20% of these cases. As this sample does not include false confessions that were rejected by police or prosecutors, those for which DNA was not available, and those to lesser crimes that elicit less post-conviction scrutiny, it is clear that these instances represent the tip of an iceberg (<http://www.innocenceproject.org/>, cited in Kassin *et al.*, 2010).

Although it may be difficult to comprehend why people would admit to something they were clearly not responsible for, the fact remains that false confessions have occurred throughout the world, even though their frequency is difficult, if not impossible to estimate. What is known, however, with a certainty deriving from various case histories and notorious miscarriages of justice is that false confessions have occurred for a variety of reasons (Leo, 2004). Although a combination of factors is responsible, the character of the investigative interview and the tactics/techniques used by the police may well be the major 'culprit' for the extraction of false confessions (coerced compliant false confessions). In this way, what happens in the interrogation room and false confession are, in a way, interlinked (Soukara, 2011; Lassiter, 2004).

As some interrogation tactics can result in false confessions which will subsequently send an innocent person to jail (Gudjonsson, 2003), it is important to understand the nature of the problem and identify possible ways of preventing it. Possible remedies could include audiotaping and/or videotaping all interrogations, utilizing more information gathering techniques during interviews rather than accusatory style techniques, identify individuals who are vulnerable or at risk (those

open to suggestion such as children and adults with learning difficulties / personality disorders), as well as very good preparation and a detailed examination of all available evidence/facts before the interview takes place. Overall, a change of attitude towards the exact role of the confession is needed.

It is an undisputable fact that police interviews serve to gather information on alleged offences, and they are in this way of outmost importance as they help shed light to the truth. It is also a fact, however, that often police have come to rely on police station interrogation in order to secure convictions and confessions. McConville and Hodgson (1992) state that: “..the principal investigative strategy of the police is the interrogation..”, (p. 111).

According to many experts some important aspects of interrogation are the following: Firstly, confession evidence while not being the only way to secure a conviction, is still seen as the easiest method; when a clear and credible confession has been given by the suspect, there is no need for additional evidence, such as from witnesses or from forensic analysts. In this way cases are cleared up more quickly (Milne *et al.*, 2007, Williamson, 2006).

Secondly, during the course of an interrogation, the police may also secure other valuable information unrelated to the specific offence, such as a suspect's other possible offences, as well as information about the suspect's associates (if any). Police interviewing of suspects is not usually an easy process, and is viewed by the majority of researchers and officers as challenging. There is a proportion of suspects who seem happy to tell the police everything they know. This number is however low, since this attitude usually gains them nothing but can cost them a lot. Most suspects need some kind of reassurance that will persuade them to provide information which they do not want to provide; the interview is, in essence, a negotiating release of information in exchange of something worth gaining (Kassin, 2004).

It is important to note, though, that whatever the attitude of the suspect, police strategy is directed firstly in establishing control of the situation. The police are in charge of the time, place and manner of in-

terrogation, the questions asked, the information released to suspects as well as what is said to suspects outside the interview room. Unfortunately, very little research on real-life interviews with suspects has been carried out due to the sensitive nature of the topic, and all the difficulties of access that such research entails (Bull and Milne, 2004).

Influential Manuals of Interrogation/Investigative Interviewing

1. The Reid technique

In 1986, the influential text "Criminal Interrogation and Confessions" was published which incorporated a number of practical guidelines on how to elicit confessions during the interrogation of a suspect utilizing methods already in use by police forces all over the world (Inbau *et al.*, 1986, 2001). Even though it has exerted considerable influence upon the overall process of interrogation as well as specific techniques applied by the police, its mainis to "break down" the suspect's resistance and increase the chance of eliciting a confession. This is achieved through the application of a nine-step procedure designed to cope with the suspect's denial and negative mood, while highlighting the benefits of providing a confession (Inbau *et al.*, 2001; Hartwig *et al.*, 2005).

STEP 1: POSITIVE CONFRONTATION. The interrogator tells the suspect that there is no doubt that he or she is involved in the crime. Advise the suspect that the investigation clearly indicates that he is responsible for the commission of a crime. This, of course, may not be a true statement, but to persuade a guilty suspect to tell the truth the investigator must often exaggerate his confidence in the suspect's guilt.

STEP 2: THEME DEVELOPMENT. The interrogator begins developing a so-called 'theme', a rationalization or face-saving excuse for the crime provided by the interrogator, ideally adapted to the psychological characteristics of the suspect. The investigator offers moral or psychological excuses for the suspect's criminal behavior. The theme is not designed to plant new ideas in the suspect's mind but merely to reinforce the justifications that already exist in the guilty suspect's mind.

STEP 3: HANDLING DENIALS. The investigator discourages the suspect from offering weak denials and the idea is to negate denials before they are voiced. Inbau and colleagues list a number of verbal and non-verbal behaviours indicating that the suspect is about to deny the crime.

STEP 4: OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS. The idea is that guilty suspects will move towards a more offensive approach, and construct reasons for why the accusation of guilt is not true. The important part of this step is to turn this objection around and use it as a reason why the suspect should tell the truth.

STEP 5: RETAINING THE SUSPECT'S ATTENTION. The goal here is to retain the suspect's attention to the theme, and try not to lose concentration.

STEP 6: HANDLING THE SUSPECT'S MOOD. Responding to the suspect's passive mood is seen as crucial for the interrogation, and the interrogator is recommended to show sympathy for the suspect while repeating the proposed reasons for the crime's commission.

STEP 7: CREATING AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONFESS. The investigator presents two choices to the suspect concerning some aspect of his crime. The choices generally contrast a positive and a negative choice, therefore accepting either choice, of course, results in an admission of guilt.

STEP 8: ORAL CONFESSION. The suspect offers an oral admission to the crime where s/he gives his or her own account of events.

STEP 9: WRITTEN CONFESSION. The oral confession is converted to a court admissible document. It is also recommended to use a confession written in a question-and-answer format rather than a narrative form, partly because specific question can cover more information than the narrative account given by the suspect.

Although Inbau et al's nine-step approach seems to have become very popular among practitioners, mainly because it seems to work with uncooperative suspects, it has also been severely criticized (Baldwin, 1993). First of all, trickery and deceit is unlawful in several coun-

tries, and therefore evidence obtained in this way may not be admissible at court. Secondly, manipulating people via trickery and deceit may lead to false confessions. It must not be forgotten that tricks and deceit may not only make guilty suspects more willing to confess but also innocent ones (Pearse & Gudjonsson, 1999). Thirdly, trickery and deceit is considered unethical, and although Inbau *et al.* do not deny this, they believe that it is justified when dealing with criminals.

2. P.E.A.C.E model of interviewing

On the other end of the spectrum, away from Inbau and Reid's accusatory style of suspect interviewing, lies the PEACE Model of investigative interviewing. Developed in the early 1990's as a collaborative effort between law enforcement and psychologists in England and Wales, PEACE is a five stage model, information gathering and very structured in nature. This initiative aimed to improve the quality of suspect as well as witness interviewing. The new model was illustrated and explained in a booklet called 'A Guide to Interviewing' (1992a) supported by a second booklet 'The Interviewer's Rule Book' (1992b). These were issued to all police officers in England and Wales in advance of attending a five-day training course on investigative interviewing (Bull & Cherryman, 1995).

In 1996 a revised version of PEACE model was issued, with increased emphasis on suspect interviewing, which was published in 'Investigative Interviewing: A Practical Guide (1996). The Guide provided a clear and comprehensive guidance and explanation of 'best practice' and essential psychological issues. It included thirteen chapters which make up four parts (principles of investigative interviewing, interview skills, the PEACE model, interviewing law and procedure) rounded off by appendices on supervision, remote monitoring of taped interviews and the CJPOA (Criminal Justice and Public Order Act) (Bull and Milne, 2004). Nowadays police officers in UK as well as in other countries are all receiving specialized interviewing training using this model.

P – PREPARATION & PLANNING

It is one of the most important phases in effective interviewing, during which a planning session takes place considering all the available information and identifying key issues and objectives. The interviewer(s) should be well prepared, having examined all available details of the case and the interviewee (suspect). Practical arrangements should also be dealt with. The success of an investigative interview and thus of an investigation, often depends on the preparation and 'home-work' the police have done before the actual interview takes place.

E – ENGAGE & EXPLAIN

The essential element of engagement is an introduction appropriate to the circumstances of the interview. It is desirable that a proper relationship is formed between the interviewer and interviewee. The engage phase is followed by the explanation phase in which the investigator should outline the reasons for the interview and explain what kinds of action will be followed during the interview, particularly the routines.

A – ACCOUNT

Perhaps one of the most important parts of this model, this is the stage in which the interviewee's recollection of the events of interest is obtained. The stage is directed at obtaining the fullest possible account from the suspect. There are two accepted approaches of inducing recollection known as:

- The cognitive approach;
- Conversation management.

Different techniques for assisting recollection are associated with each method. With the cognitive method, the interviewee is asked to think back and mentally relive the event, initially with minimal interference from the interviewing officer. The interviewer does not interrupt, makes effective use of pauses and avoids leading questions. The interviewee is then encouraged to recall the event again using a differ-

ent chronological order, or from a different perspective (Griffiths *et al.*, 2011).

During the conversation management method, the interviewee is asked first to give his/her account of events, and subsequently the interviewer asks questions on the information the suspect has disclosed and consequently points out (any) contradictions/inconsistencies in the suspect's account. Hence, first there is the interviewee's account, secondly the officer's account (clarifications / questions), and finally challenging of the interviewee's account.

C – CLOSURE

During this stage is crucial that everybody understands what has happened during the interview as well as what will happen in the future. The interviewee should be given the opportunity to ask any questions or provide clarifications. It is crucial that the interviewer ensures that there is a planned closure, as well as summarizes and checks back as to what the suspect has said.

E – EVALUATE

After each interview is completed, the event and the material that came from it should be evaluated fully. The first consideration is whether the objectives of the interview were achieved. Decisions must then be made about whether any further interview is required or whether other inquiries need to be made. Determining whether any further action is necessary and determining how the interviewee's account fits in with the rest of the investigation is also very important. Last but not least, evaluation also helps interviewers to improve their interviewing skills.

In an information-gathering technique such as the above any form of trickery and deceit (such as fabricating evidence or exaggerating the seriousness of an offence) are not allowed, and communication skills are of utmost importance in order to establish a good relationship with the suspect. It has been argued, however, by some professionals that it is a rather "soft" approach and might not work too well with uncooperative suspects, especially those who have had vast experience in be-

ing interrogated (career criminals).

3. Kalbfleisch's 15 interrogation strategies

One of the most extensive reviews of the literature on police investigative techniques was carried out by Kalbfleisch in 1994. Kalbfleisch reviewed more than eighty books and articles about strategies used by practitioners to encourage uncooperative suspects to talk, and identified fifteen different strategies which are briefly stated below:

- INTIMIDATION: accusing the suspect of being a liar, laughing at him/her and exhibiting aggressive behaviour; the suspect is 'bombed' by a number of criticisms aiming to force him/her to reveal the 'truth'.
- SITUATIONAL FUTILITY: trying to convince the suspect that continued denial only makes matters worse, and there is no point of denying the crime since the truth will soon come out; the suspect is made to believe that there is nothing to be done and that continuous denial will be detrimental for his/her situation
- DISCOMFORT AND RELIEF: persuading the suspect that denial and lying only creates discomfort, whereas confession will be good for everyone involved.
- BLUFF: presenting fabricated evidence which suggests that the suspect has lied; he/she is made to believe that there is no chance for him/her to be found innocent and therefore the only way out is to confess.
- GENTLE PRODS: convincing the suspect to reveal information by praising him/her and encourage him/her to talk.
- MINIMISATION: trying to obtain a confession by reducing the seriousness of the crime, and even providing some excuse for the suspect regarding the reason behind his/her offence; the aim is to facilitate an admission of committing the alleged crime and reduce the significance of the offence in order to facilitate an admission of what happened.
- CONTRADICTION: emphasising any contradictions or inconsistencies in the suspect's account; the interviewer may try to elicit inconsis-

tencies by repeating the same questions more than once, perhaps differently worded, in order to identify any changes in the suspect's responses.

- ALTERED INFORMATION: asking the suspect a question(s) which contains incorrect information, in order to see whether or not he/she is telling the truth; accordingly, a truly innocent person should identify the 'wrong' question and correct the information.
- A CHINK IN THE DEFENSE: the interviewer tries to find flaws in the suspect's account, so that he/she can use them later on to make the suspect look unreliable.
- SELF-DISCLOSURE: the interviewer reveals things about himself/herself hoping that the suspect will trust him/her and will also reveal personal information; this strategy requires good social skills and relies on the norm of reciprocity.
- POINTING OUT DECEPTION CUES: telling the suspect that his/her body language and physiological manifestations are indicative of deception; this strategy does not rely on real indicators of deception, but on the suspect's belief that these manifestations (sweating, coughing etc) are associated to lying.
- CONCERN: showing empathy and understanding towards the suspect; the aim is to create a relaxed atmosphere facilitating a possible admission to the crime.
- KEEPING THE STATUS QUO: telling the suspect that his/her status quo is in danger if others find out that they have lied; once more, the costs and negative consequences of hiding the truth are pointed-out.
- DIRECT APPROACH: the interviewer tells the suspect directly to tell the truth; this strategy relies on moral grounds where telling the truth is the only desirable and appropriate thing to do.
- SILENCE: the interviewer maintains silence after the suspect has said something, in order to make him/her feel uncomfortable; the aim here is to make the suspect wanting to fill the pauses during the instances of silence by revealing information.

It has been claimed that the above strategies can be effective in elic-

iting information from uncooperative suspects (Kalbfleisch, 1994; Leo, 2004). However, although not all of them involve the use of trickery and/or deceit, the fact remains that some of them are oppressive. They are all based on the assumption that the suspect is actually guilty, and none of them can be considered part of an "information-gathering system" (Hartwig *et al.*, 2005). In addition, they are all aiming at securing a confession, which is not (or should not be) the primary objective of an investigative interview. It has been claimed that, when used, the above strategies can be effective in eliciting information from uncooperative suspects (Kalbfleisch, 1994).

The Role of the Interviewer

Inbau *et al.* (2001) provide a list of attributes that they contend make a good interrogator, and include a number of skills such as: good understanding of human nature, ability to get on with others, patience and persistence, good listening skills, good communicating skills, and good inner confidence. Inbau *et al.* make an interesting distinction by saying that since interrogation is a specialized area of police work, the qualities that make a good interviewer may not necessarily be the same as those that make a good investigator (Gudjonsson, 2003).

Meissner and Kassin (2004), cited in Lassiter (2004), go a step further and make suggestions on how to minimize the risks of police interviewers' biases. They suggest that it is important to recognize the fact that certain populations of suspects (i.e. juveniles, mentally retarded) are vulnerable to influence and the production of false confessions. In addition, they recommend that police interviewers should review and analyse the statements they take, because a full confession is not a mere admission but rather a post-admission account from suspects in which they give information on what they did, when, where, how, with whom etc.

Bull and Milne (2004) state a comparison made in one English police force of suspect interviewing between officers who had received PEACE training and those who had not yet receive it. Each of the interviews was classified as: a) highly skilled, b) skilled, c) average and

d) less skilled. Non surprisingly, perhaps, for those officers who had not received PEACE training 77% of the interviews were classified as 'less skilled' or 'poor' compared to only 34% of the trained officers who received such ratings. For the PEACE trained officers 10% of the interviews were classified as 'highly skilled' and 23% as 'skilled', whereas for the non-trained ones these numbers were 0% and 3% respectively.

In their survey in England of experienced investigators' / interviewers' beliefs, Walsh and Bull (2011) found that participants believed good interviewers to be those who planned, built and maintained rapport, listened, remained open-minded, calm, unrushed, and well organised in terms of questioning and of evidence / information presentation. Poor interviewers were thought of as being inflexible, aggressive, unskilled planners, who missed opportunities to appropriately question and challenge what interviewees said (Bull, 2013). Thus, initial rapport building of itself, is not sufficient in influencing overall interview quality and outcomes, since rapport also has to be maintained throughout the interview.

A number of studies have indicated that when interviewers show good communication skills (being a good listener and conversationalist), when they adopt a flexible approach towards the suspect, and they are not rigid in belief/judgment throughout the interview, when they keep an open mind and respond to what the suspect has to say, then the suspect himself is particularly responsive towards the interviewer (Soukara *et al.*, 2009; St Yves, 2006).

Holmberg and Christianson (2001) carried-out an innovative research in Sweden on murderers' and sexual offenders' experiences of police interviews and their inclination to admit or deny crimes. Their results revealed that when police officers interview murderers and sexual offenders, the suspects perceive attitudes that are either characterized by dominance or humanity. The dominant interviewing style was associated with a lack of calmness, impatience, aggression, abrupt approach aiming at eliciting a confession. The humane interviewing style revealed an interest in suspects as human beings, an interest in their needs and feelings as well as being a problem oriented approach.

O'Connor and Carson (2005) found that the predominant reason confessors (to child molestation) gave for why they confessed was the respect shown to them by the interviewers. Of the one third who did not confess/make any admissions (but who were found guilty), many said that this was because of the way they were interviewed / interrogated by the police (e.g., in a demeaning and/or coercive manner).

These authors recommended on the basis of what their participants said that an investigator/interviewer needs to demonstrate to the interviewee an understanding of the latter's view of the world, developing rapport, communicating in a non-threatening and non-judgmental way while showing understanding, empathy, and respect for the interviewee as a human being (Bull, 2013).

The relationship between interviewer characteristics and interview outcome/information gain was also studied in Japan by Otsuka, Wachi, Watanabe, Yokota, and Kuraishi (2011), cited in Bull (2013). Police officers who interviewed adult suspects (who denied having committed a crime when arrested but later confessed during or after being interviewed) filled in a questionnaire which included their level of 'empathic understanding'. For most types of crime studied (i.e. murder, rape, robbery) a significant positive association was found between officers' (self-reported) 'level of empathic understanding' and 'full confessions'.

One should also remember some basic rules: An effective interviewer should be an active listener, as well as an active observer. Even though both are learned skills they can be studied and improved with practice. Active listening means not only listening more than talking, but really hearing what is being said and how it is being communicated. Sometimes what is not being said is equally as important as what has been said by the interviewee.

It becomes evident from the above mentioned studies that there are a number of essential interviewers' skills present (or absent sometimes) during suspect interviewing, and therefore tactics are not the only factors during the investigative interviewing process. One cannot help but consider the co-existence of tactics and skills throughout the interview.

The way they may be interlinked makes the understanding of how a suspect's behaviour is affected by his/her interviewer even more complex (Bull & Soukara, 2010).

Concluding Comments: The Way Forward

The future of the investigative interviewing of suspects seems to be more than hopeful. Things are moving in a more positive direction, at least in the UK and in the USA, away from the ways of the past and the bad experience of being on 'the front' page for sending innocent people to prison for a crime they never committed, convicted on the basis of a confession elicited by unlawful interviewing tactics. It has to be noted, however, that this may not be the case for all countries (due to lack of available research data and also different judicial systems) and hence one cannot generalize.

One of the major updates in the UK concerns the PEACE interview model which has been developed into a five-tiered approach built upon academic research and recent developments in the justice system (Hartwig *et al.*, 2005). These five tiers are designed to guide investigators through different stages with different aspects of criminal and investigations, and there is a tier (number three) that deals specifically with the interrogation of, among others, suspects of very serious crime (Bull & Milne, 2004).

The attitudes of police officers themselves regarding the scope of the interviewing process seem now different. They no longer view confession as the only and main aim of suspect interviewing, nor do they underestimate the importance of such interviews in gathering valid information. They seem to have realised how important it is to be well prepared and appropriately trained for such interviews, and they more than welcome the introduction of new legislation which protects them as well as the suspects (Soukara *et al.*, 2002).

Professionals now identify the danger of guilt presumptuousness before entering the interview room and by recognizing its existence and reasons behind it they attempt to reduce its occurrence to a minimum. They also realise that not all suspects are the same (nor are the

offences) and should therefore be treated in different ways, and that social and communication skills from their part are necessary to deal with these matters.

In addition, officers now recognise that not only every interview is unique, but it might potentially generate intelligence which can be used not only in the specific investigation but also in other policing activities.

Soukara, Bull, and Vrij's examination of experienced detectives' views on the ways in which they say they conduct interviews with suspects revealed that the majority of those interviewed believed in the high importance of: specialised training, preparation of the interview, and social skills of the interviewer. Also, the overwhelming majority said that the search for the truth rather than the search for a confession should be the aim of an interrogation, and trickery/deceit should not be used no-matter how difficult the case or the suspect might be (Soukara *et al.*, 2005).

Inside the interrogation room changes have also become evident. Illegal and unethical tactics such as minimisation, maximisation and intimidation are not to be used. Police interviewers seem to exhibit a large repertoire of tactics in suspect interviews, a fact mainly observed in confession interviews where the overall number of tactics used is greater than in other interviews where no admission/confession was made.

A number of studies have indicated that are, indeed, some tactics whose presence and frequency seems to be associated with the suspects' decision not to confess: emphasizing contradictions, repetitive questioning, open questions, and challenging the suspect's account are some of them. On the other hand, some tactics are being used (slightly) more often in confession interviews and these include: positive confrontation, silence, leading questions, and suggesting a scenario. In addition to that, in confession interviews police seem to have a preference over some tactics (as they tend to occur more than others) possibly because they have come to know their effectiveness, and some tactics seem associated with the suspects' decision to change their position

during an interview and become cooperative (Bull & Soukara, 2011).

The seriousness of the offence (the type of crime) is also a key factor influencing the interviewee's behaviour and the degree to which they are affected by the use of different tactics; the more serious the crime the more likely (usually) that the suspect is 'difficult' for a longer time, as the consequences would be harsher than if faced with a charge of a less serious offence. Furthermore, the seriousness of the offence often relates to the tactics used by police (Williamson, 2006).

When faced with very serious crimes such as homicides or offences against children, it has been proven more successful to use 'softer' techniques and show sympathy towards the suspect.

In addition to the various types of offences, one should also bear in mind the individual differences between suspects. Each personality is unique and therefore is affected in different ways by the various tactics. For instance, a suspect who is timid and easily controlled by nature would be more likely to be affected by manipulative and/or persuasive tactics than someone who is daring and spirited. It becomes clear that due to such individual differences different interviewer's skills and tactics are required for different interviewees and different crimes. In addition, career criminals who are used to be interviewed by the police on a regular basis, will react differently during investigative interviews than first time offenders who find themselves in a threatening situation and do not know what to expect; also, career criminals would know how to handle a no-comment interview, and would take advantage of their previous experience as suspects to help their current situation (Oxburgh *et al.*, 2012; Kebbell, 2008).

Skills of the interviewers also seem to be very important as, coupled with the use of tactics, these seem associated with changes in the suspects' behaviour. Specific interviewers' skills, such as flexibility, open-mindedness and presumptuousness have been found to be associated with the use of 'bad' and 'not bad' tactics. In addition, the suspects' behaviour seems to be associated with the interviewers' behavior, and rapport building between suspect and interviewer seems to be correlated with the behaviour of the suspect within interviews. It is not sur-

prising that the interviewer's social skills do play an important role during the course of an interview (Bull, 2013).

What becomes clear is that the interviewer's behavior does have an effect on the suspect's behavior and perhaps on the suspect's willingness to cooperate and, in some cases, confess. It is this very fact which stresses the importance of such studies when considering policy implications for the police, as findings could be incorporated in investigative interviewing training packages.

For example, some tactics have been found to be more successful in eliciting a confession than others and this fact is highlighted in training courses for police interviewers.

Furthermore, specific interviewer skills have been associated with the suspect's behaviour during interviewing, which could suggest that police officers should be selected based on their personalities and skills to take part in suspect interviewing as they would be more likely to be successful in eliciting information from the suspect.

On a final note, it is a fact that investigative interviewing of suspects is far from an easy task and there are hardly any silver bullets. As Karl Roberts (2012) accurately points out:

Police interviewing is an acid test of the professionalism of the police. Frequently they are required to interview individuals under highly stressful circumstances, such as following a terrorist incident, whilst under pressure to get results quickly. It may be that under such circumstances it is understandable (though not excusable) how interviewers have over the years resorted to nefarious means to obtain the information they desire (p. 12).

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