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**Kinesic Interview and Interrogation  
Nonverbal Signals**

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
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## **ABSTRACT**

The author learned through research and in his own experience as a law enforcement officer, that deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals of the body that include kinesic interview and interrogation should be an important part of a police officer's training. This type of communication is clearly more effective in learning truth or deception of the individual by identifying character and personality types. An interviewer must learn the meaning of body movements, gestures, eye contact and individual behaviors. Each individual is different; therefore, an interview technique must be individualized in order to do little more than chance when seeking truth or deception. This type of method is subject driven. Inadequate training on interview and interrogation techniques tends to be taught in law enforcement academies. An accusatory or confrontational type method is taught. This method proves inadequate in seeking truth or deception. Understanding verbal and nonverbal signals of the body of each individual is just one of the skills a police officer should possess. The first arriving officer at the scene of a criminal offense is an extension of the trained investigator and is usually the first interviewer. Inadequate interviewing skills could lead to lost information that may not be recovered. An investigator's primary concern is the pursuit of truth or deception. Training materials on verbal and nonverbal signals of the body that include kinesic interview and interrogation will produce a better trained police officer. Kinesics is like a fingerprint of the body in truth or deception.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Should law enforcement training, as well as academies and continuing education, look more closely at time spent on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals that include kinesic interview and interrogation? It has been found that training materials in law enforcement on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals are inadequate (Vrij, 1998; Geiselman & Fisher, 1989). Most law enforcement academies devote minimum time to the topic. A police officer, in a basic academy, is taught minimum skills in interviewing and interrogation (Walters, 1997). If there were a suspect and evidence that link both to a crime, the suspect would be confronted with accusations in hope of gaining a confession. It has been found that this technique is least effective.

Law enforcement, through years of inadequate training on kinesic interview and interrogation, has relied on facial expressions as the indicators of deception. Through research, video and practical kinesic interview and interrogation, it is now becoming clear that entire body movement when under stress reveals deception as well (Walters, 1995). It is not just the facial expressions alone, but also the make up of all deceptive indicators from the entire body. An investigator's primary concern is pursuit of the truth. The interviewer must remain focused in his pursuit as well as protecting the person's constitutional rights. Poor or inadequate interview and interrogation techniques could lead to unwarranted confessions, which in turn can lead to the incarceration of an innocent person. On the other hand, the same poor techniques could lead to the release of a guilty person back into the mainstream of society. Other than the limited training on basics of interviewing and interrogation that a police officer is taught in the academy, it is

more likely he/she will learn techniques on the job or that which is passed down from a training officer which was passed on from their training officer (Gudjonsson, 1992; Baldwin, 1993). Interviewing and Interrogation techniques should vary for each person, because each person is different. A police officer's training on basic interview and interrogation will usually lead them to use the same technique on everyone, thereby reducing effectiveness.

The purpose of this project is to research kinesics as applied to interview and interrogation versus basic interview and interrogation techniques. This project will serve to educate police officers from the front line patrolman, who is normally the first to arrive and gather information at a crime scene to the arrival of the experienced investigator. Inquiry into this project was referenced from early and modern texts. The reviews of minimum basic interview and interrogation techniques compared to kinesic interview and interrogation techniques are intended to teach police officers how to identify verbal and nonverbal behavior. Movements of the body under stress can be identifiers of deception allowing officers to recognize a person's truthful and deceptive behaviors (Walters, 1995).

Law enforcement should recognize the need to adequately train police officers in proper kinesic interview and interrogation. Kinesics is like a fingerprint of the body in deception or truth, each person has a particular characteristic unique to that person. A benefit of this project could lead to better-trained police officers in identifying deception or truth. A police officer would become a better listener, observer and interrogator. Criminal cases would have stronger support in the judicial system when a confession is gathered based on truth or deception. With proper training in nonverbal body movement,

communication between interviewer and subject will increase. The interviewer through video will be able to recognize and identify nonverbal behavior, thus becoming a better interviewer and interrogator.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Since the 1970s the topic of detection deception has been a main focus of research in the behavioral science community (Harvath, 1973; Knapp & Comadena, 1979; Miller & Stiff, 1993; Ekman, 1992). The results of those studies have shown that when asked to identify lies using verbal and nonverbal behavior most judges-including trained veteran law enforcement officers, investigative interviewers and intelligence experts-do little better than chance (Ekman & O'Sullivan, 1991; Depaulo & Pfiefer, 1986).

Law enforcement training materials on the topic of detection deception by verbal and nonverbal signals has been in part evidence of "war stories." Many of the principles taught in law enforcement academies and in-service training even include major scientific inaccuracies (Vrij, 1998; Dillingham, 1998; Geiselman & Fisher, 1989).

Courses in Practical Kinesic Interview and Interrogation were developed through in-depth research of existing scientific studies and documented scientific principles of credibility assessment. (Hadiks & Davis, 1995; Walters, 1996; Davis & Walters, 1999). The predominant method used has been identified as an accusatory or confrontational approach but is also the least productive in terms of results. Practical Kinesic Interview & Interrogation utilizes the method consistently shown to be most productive-a narrative technique (Gudjonsson, 1992; Baldwin, 1993). The author has learned through research that the goal is to identify the unique characteristics of the offender or types of offenders based on their behaviors during the planning, execution or their crimes and their attempts

to elude detection as the suspect. Practical Kinesic Interview and Interrogation methods utilize a “subject driven” form of interview and interrogation. When a subject is interviewed and interrogated, the interviewer is looking for a personality type, thus resulting in an interrogation strategy for maximum results. Through his research, the author has learned that the simple buttoning of a jacket can reveal what a person is thinking or feeling. Ray Birdwhistell, senior research scientist at Eastern Pennsylvania through in depth studies, researchers has learned that the body never lies, a tilt of the head, a crossing or uncrossing of the legs reveals some type of a non-verbal signal. Research Institutes, presently engaged in filming encounters and noting through kinesics, analyzes gestures in nonverbal communication. The least controversial of all areas of nonverbal communication is facial expression. We focus our eyes on the face more often than on any other part of the body, and the expressions we see have widely different meanings. King Solomon of the Old Testament of the Bible, in the book of Proverbs describes the behaviors of the deceptive person. “A naughty person, the wicked man walketh with a forward mouth. He winketh with his eyes he speaketh with his feet he teacheth with his fingers.” Sigmund Freud wrote, “He that has eyes lips are silent, he chatters with his fingers: betrayal oozes out of him from every pore.” In the Hindu Scriptures 900 BC, Papyrus Vedas learned that “A person who gives poison may be recognized. He does not answer questions or they are evasive answers; he speaks nonsense, rubs the great toe along the ground and shivers; his face is discolored; he rubs the roots of the hairs with his fingers and tries by every means to leave the house.” The author has learned that no single kinesic behavior, verbal or nonverbal, by itself, is proof of truth or deception. The trouble with lying and deceiving is that their efficiency

depends entirely of a notion of the truth that the liar and deceiver wish to hide. In this sense, truth, even if it does prevail in public, has an ineradicable primacy over all falsehoods (Arendt, 1972).

## METHODOLOGY

Should law enforcement, as well as academies and continuing education, look more closely at time spent on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals that include kinesic interview and interrogation? The author feels that the current training offered at most law enforcement training facilities is basic interview and interrogation techniques. Hopefully, with enough evidence recovered at the crime scene, the investigator will interview a possible suspect with an accusatory technique. The interviewer hopes by placing enough pressure coupled with evidence or little evidence, to gain a confession. This technique, sometimes, can have a positive affect on a first or second time offender, however, a hardened or seasoned criminal, that has experienced the interview and interrogation process, may not be so willing to give an admission or confession. Researchers of verbal and nonverbal communication, body movement, gestures and personality assessment has learned through scientific research that the body will not lie. Each individual has a fingerprint of the body. Deception detection is found through the individuals own personality trait. After the interviewer identifies this trait, then a better understanding of the nonverbal signals the person portrays can be used to find the fingerprint of the body in deception. The author found research material dated back as early as the Old Testament of the Bible, early philosophers, Hindu Scriptures as well as early scientists. Books on deception detection have been written as late as the



1900s. The study is still currently under research. The author feels that law enforcement would benefit when interviewing possible suspects of crime if more courses and methods were taught in deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals from the body. The interviewer would change from an accusatory technique, that does little better than chance in gaining admission or confession, to a subject driven technique, which gives the interviewer more than chance in identifying deception, by understanding nonverbal signals from the body and identifying the fingerprint that leads to deception.

## **FINDINGS**

In researching non-verbal communication skills in the interview and interrogation process, the author learned that no single kinesic behavior, verbal or non-verbal by itself, is proof of **Truth** or **Deception**. Researchers have found that a person's personality and characteristic type must be identified. Each subject is different, therefore, the interrogation process must be individualized or the outcome in gaining a confession could be little more than a roll of the dice. Most Basic law enforcement academies still teach the accusatory or confrontational approach. This method is the least productive in terms of results, Walters, Stan B. (1995). The author found that in most cases, the field training officer usually teaches the rookie officer the very process of interview and interrogation that was taught to him by his training officer. The cycle seems to be on going. When an officer is promoted to an investigator or detective, usually he or she will use the training learned on the job and that taught in the basic academy. Police officer's are usually not afforded the opportunity to attend specialized investigative schools until after being promoted or assigned as a criminal investigator or detective. Research has shown that

through the years of inadequate training on kinesic interview and interrogation, law enforcement has relied on facial expressions as the indicators of deception. Through practical kinesic interview and interrogation, it is now becoming clear that entire body movement when under stress reveals deception as well (Walters,1995). Through the author's twenty five years in law enforcement, he has found that interview and interrogation begins with the street officer's arrival at the scene of the incident. The first arriving officer(s) is the primary interviewer in gathering details of the incident. This is where the interview process begins; therefore, law enforcement should look at the time spent in basic academies on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals that include kinesic interview and interrogation. First arriving police officer's are extensions of the trained investigators interview and interrogation process and it should be critical that details of an initial interview not be overlooked. Some details may not be recoverable.

## **CONCLUSION**

Should law enforcement training, as well as academies and continuing education, look more closely at time spent on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals that include kinesic interview and interrogation? It has been found that training materials in law enforcement on the topic of deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals are inadequate (Vrij, 1998; Geiselman & Fisher, 1989). Most law enforcement academies devote minimum time to the topic. A police officer, in a basic academy, is taught minimum skills in interviewing and interrogation (Walters, 1997). Research has shown through studies of audio and taped interview and interrogation

sessions, that understanding body language in verbal and nonverbal communication is a skill that law enforcement officer's should possess. The interview and interrogation of an individual, whether victim, suspect or witness is an important tool of an investigation. The author's findings clearly show that training in basic law enforcement academies on interview and interrogation techniques are least productive in results. Academies teach the accusatory or confrontational approach. Researchers have concluded that an individual's personality, character type and behaviors must first be identified. A subject driven method is then used to develop a unique interview and interrogation strategy for the individual subject. The author has learned not all individuals are the same and interview and interrogation techniques are different for each individual. Without a subject driven method of interview and interrogation, an interviewer does little more than chance in gaining truth or deception. While researching this study, it became quite apparent that interview and interrogation techniques taught in basic law enforcement academies are inadequate. While researching this study, the author found endless research materials dating as far back as the holy bible to modern day text. The communication of verbal and nonverbal body signals have been studied in the past and will continue into the future. Each individual is different, therefore verbal and nonverbal body signals are individualized with different messages.

In conclusion, this author has learned through research that deception detection by verbal and nonverbal signals that include kinesic interview and interrogation would clearly be time well spent as a training material in basic law enforcement academies. Law enforcement would ultimately reap the benefits of a better trained police officer in identifying deception or truth. The individual's constitutional rights would be protected.

Criminal cases would have stronger support in the judicial system when a confession is gathered based on truth or deception. A complete and accurate interview will be conducted that will sustain or discredit the information received from the individual.

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