January 2008
Volume 77
Number 1

**United States
Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
Washington, DC 20535-0001**

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Director**

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The attorney general has determined that the publication of this periodical is necessary in the transaction of the public business required by law. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* (ISSN-0014-5688) is published monthly by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, 935 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20535-0001. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Law Enforcement Communication Unit, Hall of Honor, Quantico, VA 22135.

This publication is produced by members of the Law Enforcement Communication Unit, Training Division. Issues are available online at *http://www.fbi.gov.*

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Cover Photo
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Send article submissions to Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Law Enforcement Communication Unit, Hall of Honor, Quantico, VA 22135.

FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin

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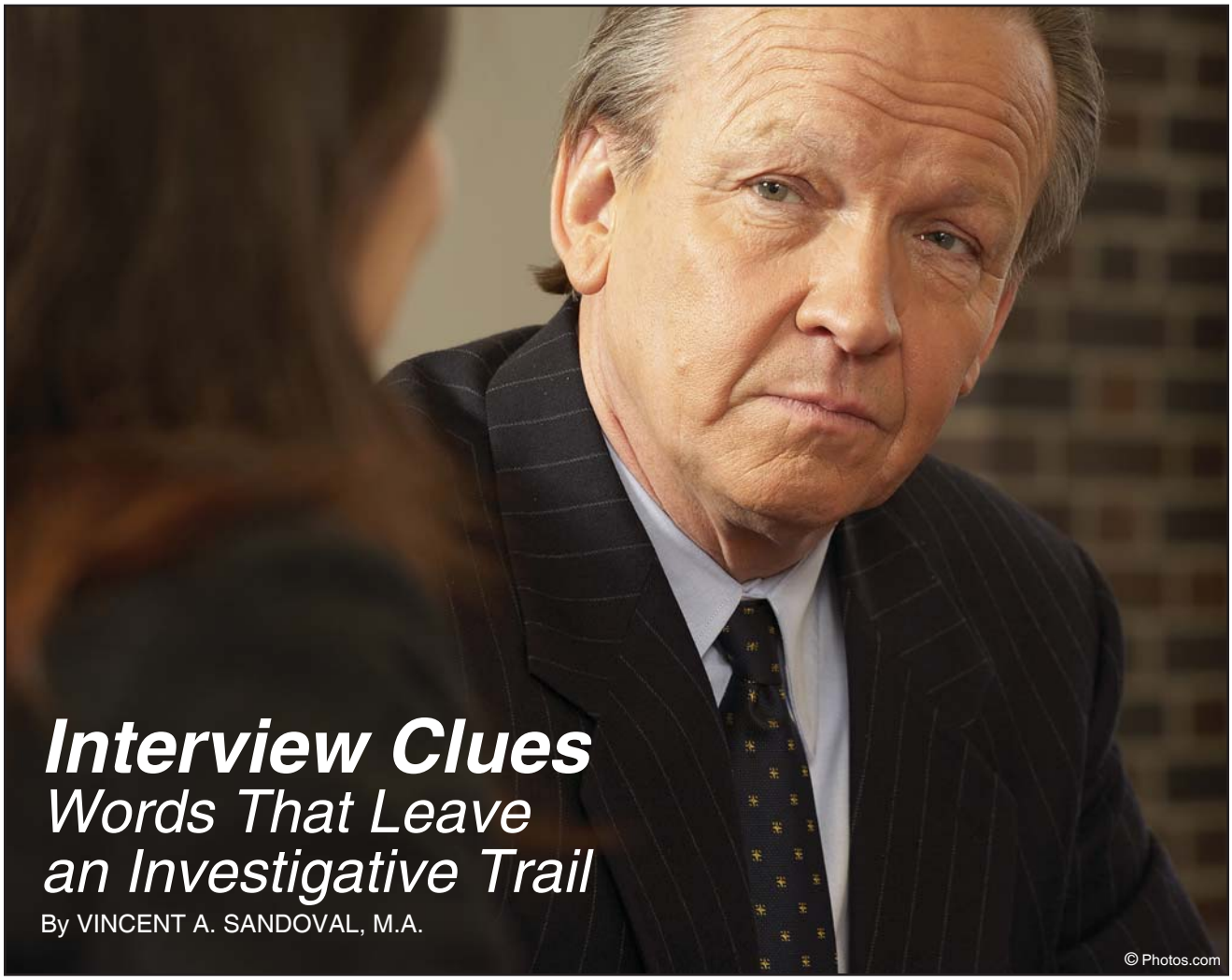
Departments

ISSN 0014-5688 USPS 383-310



Interview Clues
Words That Leave an Investigative Trail

By VINCENT A. SANDOVAL, M.A.

"Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him."

—Genesis 4:8

The first homicide in recorded history is revealing not only because it is the first known act of violence by one human being against another but because the narrative description of the incident[1] lends itself to an investigative analysis of the words used. Researchers have concluded what experienced investigators have known intuitively for some time; that is, when most people fail to tell the truth, they will omit information, as opposed to telling an outright lie.[2] As such, they often choose words—whether for a written narrative or during an interview—that camouflage or conceal the truth. Researchers concur with the assessment that the words used can and do reveal information that may be of substantive value to investigators. In addition, more often

than not, the writers or speakers of these words may not realize that they could be "tipping their hands."[3] "We should accept that a large part of our linguistic behavior is subliminal, and, therefore, we may find a lot of surprises."[4]

The analysis of someone's verbatim words involves scrutinizing structural and linguistic features to discover insight and identify areas of possible deception. It constitutes a tool to help investigators conduct thorough interviews in their quest to arrive at the truth.[5] To this end, investigators can learn to identify and capitalize on those words or phrases that people often use to camouflage or conceal their actions or activities. Because verbs comprise the principal part of speech that denotes action, they require particular attention.

WORDS THAT CONVEY CONVERSATION

Human beings continually communicate with each other through various mediums throughout the day. Therefore, if speakers or writers refer to any form of communication or conversation in their narratives, investigators need to determine the precise content and nature of that conversation, when it took place in relation to the incident under investigation, who initiated it, and whether the writer or speaker changes any words used to describe any verbal interaction.

The account of the first homicide draws investigators to, among other linguistic features,[6] the action verb *talked*. Whenever the writer of a narrative or the subject of an interview[7] uses a word or phrase that describes or implies some form of conversation, investigators should explore what the parties discussed. More often than not, descriptions of any form of dialogue involve action verbs, such as *spoke*, *discussed*, *argued*, *had words*, or *e-mailed*. Investigators also should listen and look for words or phrases that imply conversation, including *we met*, *shot the breeze*, or *hooked up*.

When Did the Conversation Occur?

Investigators always should remain alert to the timing or placement of any words that suggest conversation. Violent crimes do not take place in a vacuum but often are preceded by and even the result of verbal interaction between the involved parties. When the conversation took place in relation to the incident under investigation is vitally important. Investigators should strive to elicit detailed information about the dialogue and any bearing or relationship that it may have had on the crime.

The example at the beginning of this article describes a conversation between Cain and Abel ("Cain talked with Abel his brother"). The incident comes next ("Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him"). In other words, the crime was immediately preceded by Cain's talking to his brother. What Cain had to say to Abel prior to the commission of

> ***"...investigators can learn to identify and capitalize on those words or phrases that people often use to camouflage or conceal their actions or activities."***

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his crime proves integral to understanding the events and emotions leading up to the attack.

Who Initiated the Conversation?

Investigators should consider not only the words that convey conversation but also the person communicating them. In the case of Cain and Abel, the text ("Cain talked with Abel his brother") suggests that Cain took the initiative and possibly did most, if not all, of the talking. Investigators would want to know not only what Cain said but why he initiated the conversation with his brother.

A portion of a verbatim transcript of an interview with a man suspected of raping a known female acquaintance provides an effective illustration. Following his description of the sex act, which he claimed was consensual, the suspect said, "I put her clothes on and, um, and she and I walked outside and said our good-byes. I gave her a hug and told her I had a good time and she talked for a minute and then I left. I walked home."

This brief statement warranted close examination by investigators. Among other things, they especially paid attention to the words that conveyed conversation: "she and I...*said* our good-byes. I...*told* her I had a good time and she *talked* for a minute and then I left." Of importance, the suspect never used the pronoun *we* to describe the two, but, instead, he said, "she and I." In sexual assault cases, especially those where the subject alleges that the sexual contact was consensual, investigators should listen closely for the absence of the pronoun *we*, which would suggest that a healthy relationship did not exist between the two individuals and, thus, increases the likelihood that the sexual contact was less then consensual.

> ***Violent crimes do not take place in a vacuum but often are preceded by and even the result of verbal interaction between the involved parties.***

The suspect never stated that the woman said that she had a good time; instead, he said, "she and I said our good-byes," a vague and imprecise comment. In addition, he stated that "*she* talked." Aware of the importance of probing not only the content of the conversation but also determining which party did the communicating, the investigators asked the suspect some questions similar to the following:

- You said that "she and I said our good-byes." What did you mean by this? What exactly was said by her and then by you?
- You told her that you had a good time. What precisely did you tell her? Tell me exactly what you said. Did she ever state that she also had a good time? What did she have to say about the sexual relations? How did she feel about it?
- You said that "she talked for a minute and then I left." What exactly did she talk about? What words did she use?
- After she talked, you then left. What happened before you left? Why did you leave? Why did you go home? What did you do when you got home?

As a result of such specific questions, the suspect eventually admitted that the sexual contact with his female acquaintance had not been as consensual as he originally had stated. Because the investigators had previously interviewed the victim, they knew that following the rape, the suspect attempted to apologize to her for what he had done and even tried to give her a hug, which she rejected.

The victim had advised investigators that she told the assailant that she was going to report the rape to the police and that he tried to get her to reconsider before he left in tears. In this case, investigators, aware of the importance of any reference to conversation, elicited detailed information from the suspect by asking valuable open-ended questions and, thus, confirmed the victim's statement.[8]

How Was the Conversation Described?

Anytime that writers or speakers change their choice of words to describe the same type of activity is significant. This principle especially applies to conversation. Investigators should pay attention when writers or speakers change a word or phrase used to describe any verbal interaction with the same person. For example, if a narrative contains "we discussed" but later switches to "he and I talked," investigators should elicit detailed information to account for the change in language. They should ask themselves, "What was different about one conversation that the writer refers to as a 'discussion,' yet later in the narrative describes as 'he and I talked'?" Sometimes, writers or speakers change a word or phrase to describe their verbal interaction with two different people. This change may reflect the nature of the relationship that they have with these separate individuals.

An example may offer an explanation. A woman's response to an open-ended question about what she did the day before revealed a great deal through the words she chose. "I got up around 6 a.m. while he stayed in bed. He came down about 8 a.m., and he and I talked. I then left to pick up my partner, Stan, about 8:20. Met Stan and we chatted the whole way. We got to our rooms at 2 p.m., and I started to get cleaned up. That's about it." Through this brief narrative, investigators could gain insight into the nature of the writer's relationships from her choice of, as well as changes in, the words she used to describe the conversation that she had with the first individual. She wrote, "he and I talked," yet she later employed the much less formal word *chatted* to describe her interaction with her partner, Stan. It is significant that the writer never extended the courtesy of introducing the individual with whom she talked. She concluded her brief statement with "that's about it," a suggestion that there was more to her narrative than she originally disclosed. Further investigation revealed that the "he" she talked with was her husband whom she was in the process of divorcing and that she was having an extramarital affair with her partner, Stan.

> ***"Investigators should consider not only the words that convey conversation but also the person communicating them."***

WORDS THAT CAMOUFLAGE CONVERSATION

In addition to recognizing overt words that suggest conversation, investigators also should listen and look for any references to social gatherings typically associated with verbal interaction. Although writers or speakers may not overtly state that the parties talked, the activity itself could covertly suggest that some form of dialogue took place. Such remarks embedded in social encounters could include *got together for a drink*, *had a bite to eat*, *hung out*, *played video games*, or *watched TV*.[9] Investigators never should overlook any reference to a social event typically accompanied by conversation. Instead, they should assume that the activity included some kind of verbal interaction and then ask probing questions to elicit what the parties may have discussed.

The case of a mother who claimed that an intruder had killed her two boys and injured her can effectively illustrate the importance of words used to both camouflage and convey conversation.[10] During the investigation, the mother provided a written statement detailing her activities. "While Darin was gone, the boys brought down their blankets and pillows and asked if they could watch TV. I said yes. Darin came home and sat down with us while we watched TV. Soon after that, the boys both fell asleep. We talked about a few problems that we were having with the car and the boat and had a few words between us. I told Darin that I was desperate because I had not been able to take the boys anywhere because we only had one car."

An analysis of her words revealed that she was engaged in the social activity of watching television with her sons when her husband arrived and "sat down with us while we watched TV." Her choice of words proved insightful because she never indicated that her husband actively participated with them in watching television, a social encounter often used to conceal or camouflage verbal interaction. Wanting to know what transpired during this time frame, investigators in the case would have asked some probing questions.

- Tell me about your husband sitting down "with us while we watched TV." What were you watching?
- Who was the "we" that watched TV? Did your husband watch TV with you?
- What did the two of you talk about while the boys watched TV?

After the mother stated that her boys fell asleep, her words became much more transparent concerning the verbal interaction she had with her husband

just prior to the murders. Not surprising, parents often wait until their children cannot hear them before engaging in a serious conversation. In fact, after her sons fell asleep, her words suggested that the exchange with her husband became less than amicable. What were the "few problems" the couple talked about? What did she mean by "We...had a few words between us"? Her choice of words provided crucial clues to understanding the escalation of emotion that apparently characterized this exchange, which probably began with some form of verbal interaction embedded in the social activity of watching television and became very transparent and dynamic after the boys fell asleep.

During the criminal trial, prosecutors argued that the mother, who recently had given birth to a third son, murdered her two older children because of financial difficulties and her fear that their growing family would hamper their lavish lifestyle. They lived in an affluent neighborhood, drove an expensive sports car, and had a $20,000 boat. The court convicted her of capital murder and sentenced her to death by injection.

WORDS THAT CAMOUFLAGE ACTIONS

Investigators should remain alert to the fact that subjects intent on concealing their involvement in or knowledge of a crime occasionally camouflage their actions by inadvertently or intentionally manipulating their choice of words to describe their actions. Such variations could include changing the tense of action verbs, using passive voice instead of active voice, and employing "uncompleted" action verbs.[11]

Words That Camouflage Action

Principle: People may hide their actions by using present tense to describe past action, passive voice to distance themselves from their actions, or "uncompleted" action verbs when something interrupted the action.

What to Look For	Specific Probes
Does the writer go from present tense to past then back to present? "I woke up, got dressed, *meet* Stan, drove to work."	Walk me through your morning. Tell me about meeting Stan.
Does the writer use passive voice? "The pistol was fired by someone."	Tell me about the pistol being fired. Did you fire it?
Does this writer use an "uncompleted" action verb? "I started to pack my bags."	You said you "started to pack your bag." Did you finish packing?
Who or what interrupted?	Did something interrupt you?

Words That Convey Conversation

(e.g., talked, spoke, chatted, discussed, e-mailed)
Principle: The conversation may be pertinent to the incident being investigated.

What to Look For	Specific Probes
What was the conversation about?	Tell me what you talked about. Was this talk cordial, emotional, angry?
When did the conversation occur in relation to the crime?	When did you two talk? What time was it? Who else was present when you talked? Who might have overheard you? What happened after you talked?
Who did the conversing?	Who initiated the talk? Who said what to whom?
Were different words used to describe any conversation and, if so, why? Were different words used to describe any conversation with the same person or with another person?	You said, "He and I talked." Tell me about this. You said, "We chatted." Tell me more about this chat.

Words That Camouflage Conversation

(e.g., met for coffee, ate lunch, watched TV)
Principle: People typically engage in verbal interaction during social activities.

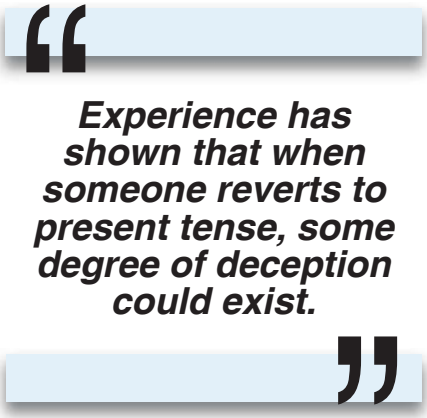
What to Look For	Specific Probes
What was discussed during the activity? (Pursue line of questioning as per above)	Tell me about your meeting for coffee. What did you talk about? When did you meet? Who else was there?

Present Tense for Past Action

Tense, the form of the verb that indicates time, has three main divisions: present, past, and future.[12] As a general rule, when people describe an action or event that occurred in the past, they use past tense verbs. For example, a written narrative depicting a person's actions upon waking could read, "I woke up at 6 a.m.; I got up and took a shower. I then got dressed and ate a bowl of cereal for breakfast."

Investigators should bear in mind the past action = past tense principle. In response to an open-ended question (e.g., What did you do yesterday?) or to instructions (e.g., Write down everything that happened yesterday.), investigators would expect a person to speak or write using past tense verbs. Experience has shown that when speakers or writers attempt to conceal or camouflage their actions, they occasionally violate the past action = past tense principle by reverting to present tense when describing events that allegedly took place in the past. Investigators must use caution, however, when interviewing victims of violent crimes because these individuals may be reliving the events cognitively and, thus, resort to using present tense.[13]

Bearing the past action = past tense principle in mind, investigators will want to ask subjects of interviews follow-up questions about the events depicted in their narratives at precisely the point where they have reverted to present tense. One experienced investigator suggested that when people remember something, their minds see what already has occurred. However, if a memory of an actual event does not exist, the mind must create the situation. Experience has shown that when someone reverts to present tense, some degree of deception could exist.[14]



As an example, a male driver became involved in a collision with another vehicle operated by a woman. Both alleged that the other person was at fault and should be held responsible for the damage to their respective vehicles. Investigators had the two provide a written narrative of the incident. As expected, the male driver began by describing activities using past tense. "I *was driving*... looking at the scenery. I *didn't* think much of it...I *was* not blocking traffic. She *had* plenty of room...she *moved* alongside of me and *stayed* there.... When I *glanced* in her direction, she *looked* at me like I was dirt." However, as his narrative continued, the driver reverted to present tense to describe events that he alleged took place. "We *drive* like this for some time and then she *cuts* right in front of me. I *don't* see her coming until *it's* too late." He then reverts back to past tense. "We *pulled* off the road and she started screaming that I *ran* into her."

Another driver, not involved in the accident but who witnessed the entire event, told investigators that the male was responsible because he had cut off the female driver. The witness' statement corroborated the investigators' suspicions that the male driver was lying about how the accident had occurred. A close examination revealed that the male lied at precisely the point in his narrative where he had reverted to using present tense verbs.

Passive Voice for Active Role

When describing their actions, people typically assume responsibility by using active voice.[15] In a hypothetical shooting incident, for example, a man acknowledging his role in the action would say, "I fired the

pistol." Another man attempting to conceal or minimize the extent of his involvement in the case would state, "The pistol was fired by someone," thus employing passive voice.[16]

To illustrate further, the husband of a woman who had disappeared wrote in his narrative about the incident that "it was determined that I would drop her off to run." Instead of writing, "I determined" or "we determined," the husband used passive voice. Suspecting that the husband was attempting to distance himself from this action through the use of passive voice, the investigator asked some follow-up questions.

- You wrote that "it was determined that I would drop her off to run." Can you explain this to me? Who exactly "determined" that you would drop her off?
- Where was Michelle when "it was determined"?
- Did Michelle participate in the decision to drop her off?

The husband eventually admitted that his wife was dead when he wrote his narrative about her disappearance. He had difficulty writing about this activity because, in actuality, he had dropped off her body in a remote field.

"Uncompleted" Action Verbs

In an effort to camouflage their deeds, people occasionally use "uncompleted" action verbs, words that denote reference to activity on the part of speakers or writers without any indication that this action was completed. Some of the more common words that fall into this category include *started*, *commenced*, *initiated*, and *proceeded*. For investigators, these words reveal the possibility that something or someone interrupted the action and, therefore, warrant scrutiny during the interview. Use of these words also may suggest a weakened assertion, thereby indicating that the speaker does not fully adhere to the activity. To say that someone started something does not convey the same message as stating actual completion of the act.[17]

> ***Investigators should pay attention when writers or speakers change a word or phrase used to describe any verbal interaction with the same person.***

For example, when asked to write what he knew about his wife's disappearance, the husband responded, "Michelle put a workout tape in the VCR and *started* her workout. I was in the bathroom for a while getting ready for the day." The word *started* captured the investigator's attention. Aware of the importance of the husband's use of this word and the possibility that something may have interrupted the workout, the investigator probed with some follow-up questions.

- You wrote that "Michelle put a workout tape in the VCR and started her workout." Can you tell me more about this? How long did the workout last? Where were you when she started her workout?
- You stated that you were "in the bathroom for a while." How long was "a while"? What did you do in the bathroom?
- Did Michelle finish her workout? Did something interrupt her workout?

The husband eventually admitted that his wife never completed her workout. Instead, the two became involved in an argument, and the husband strangled his wife, thereby obviously interrupting her workout.

CONCLUSION

Robert Louis Stevenson wrote, "The cruelest lies are often told in silence." But, in reality, most people who choose

to deceive will lie by omitting information or details from their statements or narratives.

Individuals deliberately camouflage the truth by using words that leave an investigative trail. Hence, it is up to investigators to identify these words and endeavor to capitalize on them during the course of an interview. ✦

Endnotes

[1] The author uses the term *incident* to describe the event in question that, within the context of a criminal investigation, generally is the crime committed. When a writer or speaker addresses the incident, the questions of what happened, how the crime occurred, and who was involved generally are answered. For additional information, see Susan H. Adams and John P. Jarvis, "Are You Telling Me the Truth? Indicators of Veracity in Written Statements," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 2004, 7-12.

[2] Paul Ekman, *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 2001).

[3] Over the past half-century, Walter Weintraub, M.D., has conducted numerous studies and applied verbal behavior analysis to areas, including psychopathology, wherein he has compared the verbal speech patterns of impulsive, compulsive, and other types of personalities. See his work, *Verbal Behavior in Everyday Life* (New York, NY: Springer Publishing Company, 1989).

[4] John M. Sinclair, "Trust the Text," in *Advances in Written Test Analysis*, ed. M. Coulthard (London, UK: Routledge, 1994).

[5] Susan H. Adams, "Statement Analysis: What Do Suspects' Words Really Reveal?" *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 1996, 12-20.

[6] For additional information about the use of words and phrases that writers or speakers use to bridge over action or activity, see John R. Schaefer, "Text Bridges and the Micro-Action Interview," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, January 2008, 20-24.

[7] The author uses the term *subject* to refer to the person who provided the narrative or the person being interviewed, the interviewee, whether that person is a victim, witness, or suspect.

[8] For more information on question construction in an effort to avoid contamination of the interview, see Vincent A. Sandoval, "Strategies to Avoid Interview Contamination," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 2003, 1-11.

[9] Avinoam Sapir identified "watching TV" as a social activity generally accompanied by verbal interaction in the Laboratory for Scientific Interrogation (SCAN) Advanced Workshop on Scientific Content Analysis, December 2002.

[10] Retrieved on December 10, 2006, from *http://www.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Darlie_Routier*.

[11] Don Rabon, *Investigative Discourse Analysis* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2003).

[12] John C. Hodges and others, *Harbrace College Handbook*, 12th ed. (Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1994), 76.

[13] For more information on interviewing victims and witnesses, see Ronald P. Fisher and R. Edward Geiselman, *Memory-Enhancing Techniques for Investigative Interviewing* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 1992).

[14] John E. Hess, *Interviewing and Interrogation for Law Enforcement*, (Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Company, 1997).

[15] Supra note 12.

[16] Wendell Rudacille, *Identifying Lies in Disguise* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall-Hunt, 1994).

[17] Supra note 11.

The author gratefully acknowledges Dr. Susan H. Adams for her invaluable contributions and assistance in the preparation of this article.

Wanted: Notable Speeches

The *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin* seeks transcripts of presentations made by criminal justice professionals for its Notable Speech department. Anyone who has delivered a speech recently and would like to share the information with a wider audience may submit a transcript of the presentation to the *Bulletin* for consideration.

As with article submissions, the *Bulletin* staff will edit the speech for length and clarity, but, realizing that the information was presented orally, maintain as much of the original flavor as possible. Presenters should submit their transcripts typed and double-spaced on 8 ½- by 11-inch white paper with all pages numbered. An electronic version of the transcript saved on computer disk should accompany the document. Send the material to:

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Perspective

The Art of Investigative Interviewing
Countering the Lie of Omission

By Robert C. Wells, M.S.

Investigators interviewed a prime suspect in a murder investigation. After requesting and receiving a statement describing the individual's whereabouts around the time of the crime, they found his response evasive. "I went to the bedroom. After leaving the bedroom, I left for work. After arriving at work, I met with my boss." Undeterred, the investigators then followed procedures to procure further information from the subject to "fill in the blanks."

Conducting an effective interview with a suspect poses one of the greatest challenges for any investigative interviewer. In such an instance, guilty persons likely will practice deception by omitting information they believe will incriminate them.[1] Leaving out these details is a common way to mislead investigators because, technically, it is not lying. It also does not produce as much stress as telling an outright falsehood.[2] To this end, interviewers, as their first goal, should strive to reduce or, if possible, remove any chances for individuals to engage in this practice. Guilty subjects continually will seek out such opportunities when engaged with investigators.

COUNTERING OMISSION

Disciplined interviewers force suspects to provide as much information as possible about activities or blocks of time, details that guilty individuals will prefer to omit. By preventing these persons from skipping over incriminating facts or fast-forwarding through past periods of time, law enforcement personnel also create an important initial impression—that they are thorough and proficient in the art of criminal investigation. Effective investigators will strive to reinforce this image with the subject during necessary follow-up interviews.

Interviewers should begin by having individuals complete a written or oral statement of activity. Investigators should advise subjects of the importance of detailed information to the investigation, asking them to be specific when describing their activities.

Missing Information

Investigators must carefully examine each sentence in the initial narrative for indicators of missing information. The opening scenario contains four potential areas of omitted details: 1) what happened in the bedroom; 2) what the suspect did after leaving the bedroom before departing for work; 3) what occurred on the way to work; and 4) what transpired after arriving at the office before meeting with the boss. Although these details may, in fact, not be important, investigators should not take the chance.

Interviewers also should recognize that certain words or phrases in a response can point directly to omitted information.[3] One such term, *after*, appeared twice in the preceding example. Others include *later*, *then*, *later on*, and *a short time later*. Even words, such as *eventually*, *finally*, and *when*, may indicate edited or hidden details.

Lack of Commitment

When analyzing a statement, investigators also should note when subjects demonstrate a lack of commitment.[4] For instance, using "I know" demonstrates a higher degree of commitment than "I believe" or "I think"—such language distances individuals from potentially incriminating testimony. Interviewers must consider the possible meanings of such statements as "I cannot remember" or "I cannot recall" and ask themselves if suspects simply are describing what they prefer not to do.

Subjects also show a lack of commitment in the narrative by using qualifiers. For instance, they may say something, such as "I have no *specific* recollection." Investigators should record all such language and each qualifier used.

Perhaps, the most dramatic method interviewees use to withdraw commitment is to suspend the

use of personal pronouns. For example, subjects may say "the corporate records" instead of "my accounts" to distance themselves from an area of contention.

Interruptions and Pauses

Recognizing that any interruption during the subject's response has negative effects, interviewers should note areas of missing or incomplete information and address them only at the conclusion of the narrative. Interruptions can cause even willing witnesses to increase the amount of information edited. They move from actively telling what happened to taking a more passive role in the process. Further, interruptions telegraph information to the interviewee. The question that follows the investigator's interruption may communicate known details or the officer's particular interest or suspicion. In turn, this information can lead the subject to omit even more details. Interviewers should hold their questions until the subject concludes the narrative with a statement similar to "And that is what happened last Thursday."

> **"Disciplined interviewers force suspects to provide as much information as possible...."**

During the initial statement, interviewers also must permit the subject to pause. Investigators should record where within the narrative the pause occurred and ensure that they take notes regularly throughout the interview so as not to telegraph interest in a specific bit of information. Interviewers never should interrupt pauses with anything more than a prompt to the individual to continue or a request for what happened next.

Backward-Reaching Questions

At the conclusion of the narrative, effective interviewers return to each area of missing information and seek out details by using carefully structured backward-reaching questions. Also, they should revisit areas that prompted significant pauses. Following this process will systematically close each opportunity for omission.

First, interviewers return to the exact point in the narrative where a possible omission of information began. Next, they restate word-for-word the information directly preceding the omission; it is important for investigators to use the exact language used by the subject. Then, they have the suspect expand on and amplify the previous information, ensuring, once again, that they identify any additional gaps in time and missing details.[5]

Some investigators make the mistake of going directly to the areas of greatest interest. Instead, they should fight this urge and proceed chronologically, beginning with and closing the first area of omission and patiently moving on to the subsequent areas. By doing so, interviewers avoid alerting the subject to specific areas of interest. In interviews, at least two people are seeking information—the investigator and the interviewee. With a carefully crafted initial interview and well-designed follow-up questions, interviewers do not reveal what is known through the investigation, what now has become revealed, or which areas of the subject's responses have triggered suspicion. Ideally, the individual will only learn that the interviewer is thorough, detail oriented, and proficient.

Interviewers should become adept at constructing backward-reaching questions. For instance, referring to the earlier example, investigators could ask, "Earlier you said that you went to the bedroom. What did you do *next*?" That word would force the subject to discuss the subsequent period of time with either the truth or a descriptive lie. Interviewers also could close the same omission by asking, "You said you went to the bedroom and that later you left. Tell me everything you did while in the bedroom."

When analyzing answers, investigators must ensure that they interpret the words used to construct the narrative literally. For instance, if a subject says, "That is basically what happened" or "That is about it," the interviewer should consider

Recommended Additional Reading

- David Lieberman, *Never Be Lied to Again* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
- Don Rabon, *Investigative Discourse Analysis* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2003).
- Wendell Rudacille, *Identifying Lies in Disguise* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1994).
- John Schafer and Joe Navarro, *Advanced Interviewing Techniques* (Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas, 2004).

the possibility that the interviewee has more to say. Again, the investigator should be careful to follow up by reaching back and restating the exact words used to compose the original statement: "Mr. Jones, a few moments ago, you said that is about all you can remember. What else happened at the meeting, or what else do you remember?"

The same technique can effectively address qualifiers. With the statement "I have no *specific* recollection," investigators could ask, "Earlier, you said you had no specific recollection. What recollection *do* you have?"

Backward-reaching questions also can address a noncommittal phrase, such as "I cannot remember." In this example, the interviewer could ask, "Mr. Jones, earlier, you said that you do not remember who was present at the meeting. Take a moment and think hard about the meeting again and tell me everyone who was present."

Details from the Initial Interview

Details obtained during the initial interview later will prove helpful when verifying the truthfulness of each statement. For example, if a subject reveals that he was at lunch with his girlfriend for 2 hours, much of the time period in question could be confirmed if the subject produced a credit card receipt showing both location and time. If investigators learn that the bill was paid with cash, verifying the subject's statement becomes more complex. Experienced investigators now will obtain considerable detail to confirm the accuracy of the narrative, considering, of course, the possibility that the statement about the 2-hour lunch may have been used to mask the subject's involvement in a crime. One method investigators could use is to interview both the subject and his girlfriend separately and then compare the information.

Of course, the couple may have agreed on some details beforehand to verify the story. These may include the location of the restaurant, the entrees and beverages ordered, and the arrival and departure times at the restaurant. To dig deeper, investigators may consider asking for a description of the server (not suggesting gender or any other characteristics), location of the table, and the daily lunch special.

CONCLUSION

Even the most experienced investigators find interviewing suspects challenging. Successful interviewers learn to guard against omissions and recognize when they occur, use backward-reaching questions to close gaps of time and retrieve edited information, recognize words that indicate missing details, detect when lack of commitment occurs during the statement, and realize the importance of detail in the verification of truthfulness and deceit. Regardless of the difficulty, investigators can learn to conduct effective interviews, thus leading to success in their investigations. ✦

Endnotes

[1] Paul Ekman, *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 2001). Also, see Joe Navarro and John Schafer, "Detecting Deception," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, July 2001, 9-13.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Don Rabon, *Investigative Discourse Analysis* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2003).

[4] For additional information, see Gene Klopf and Andrew Tooke, "Statement Analysis Field Examination Technique: A Useful Investigative Tool," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, April 2003, 6-15.

[5] Supra note 3.

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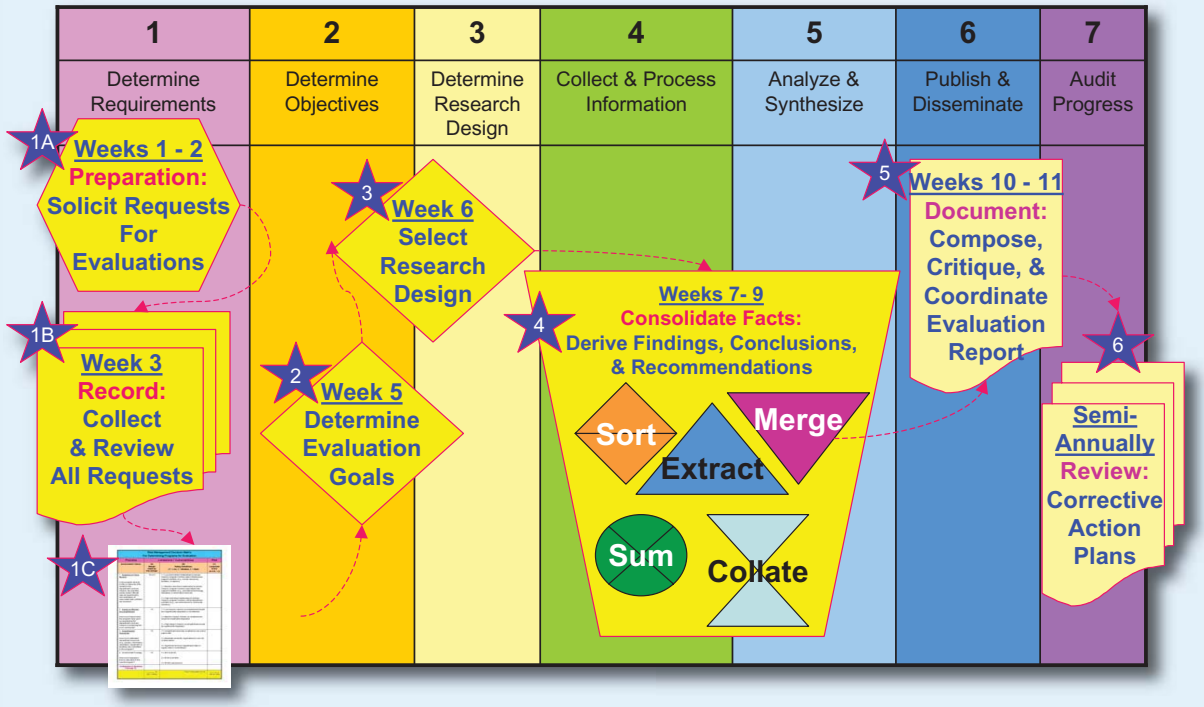
Program Evaluations

Improving Operational Effectiveness and Organizational Efficiency (Part Two)

By W. DEAN LEE, Ph.D.



Seven-Phase Evaluation Management Process

Part one of this article accented how law enforcement agencies at various levels can benefit from evaluations of their major programs. It also discussed the availability of several reference sources,[1] timing considerations, and the first two phases of a seven-step evaluation management process.[2] The second part of the article will focus on the next two stages.

Phase 3: Select Research Design

Research design is the overall written plan of evaluation on how the assessment will be performed to effectively collect, process, and present information. Changes in research design may be necessary as the evaluation evolves and new challenges are encountered. Research planning will continue throughout the evaluation as the factors influencing the objectives, scope, and methodologies usually overlap. In general, the research design will include applicable research methods, measurement instruments, predefined perimeters, and scheduling milestones for completing each task.

The plan of evaluation should take into consideration all appropriate information gathered during the previous

> ***"During the research design phase, evaluators should become more familiar with the program and its unique operating environment."***

Dr. Lee, originator of the FBI's Blue Book for Program Evaluation, heads the Organizational Program Evaluation and Analysis Unit at FBI Headquarters.

two phases. In addition, evaluators should have a working knowledge of the unique features of the programs being evaluated, including applicable laws and regulations; the program's purpose and goal; resources committed to the program; operational plans, policies, and procedures; output products and services; and documented outcome effects, such as crime reports and after-action reviews.

During the research design phase, evaluators should become more familiar with the program and its unique operating environment. This increased awareness will help them to better focus on what program managers need to gain from the evaluation and how best to convey the findings, conclusions, and recommendations to positively benefit all stakeholders. Some basic guidelines may help evaluators and stakeholders improve their awareness.

- Focus: Participants should concentrate on four fundamental questions.

  1) Is the program being implemented as planned?

  2) Is the program making progress toward achieving each intended goal?

  3) How successful is the program in reaching the overall desired end state?

  4) What is needed to help improve the program in achieving its objectives?
- Acceptance: Participants must mutually determine and agree on what will be acceptable evidence to satisfy these fundamental questions.
- Collaboration: Stakeholders' input and ongoing participation are essential in identifying and examining all relevant issues and influences affecting the program.
- Cultural influences: Increased understanding of internal and external organizational cultures proves crucial for retrieving, analyzing, and developing valid and usable findings, conclusions, and recommendations.
- Outcomes: Enhanced sensitivity to the demands of the stakeholders and consumers is paramount in meeting the desired outcome of the evaluation.
- Interpretation: Further understanding of the institutional barriers and operational climate will assist evaluators in capturing many of the important idiosyncrasies affecting the program.
- Meaningfulness: This entails an overall interpretation of the collected data and what it means to the stakeholders. "Data rarely speak for themselves but, rather, are given voice by those who interpret them. The voices that are heard are not only those who are participating in the project but also those of the analysts who are implementing and presenting the data. Deriving meaning from data in program evaluations that

are culturally responsive requires people who understand the context in which the data were gathered."[3]

In general, most evaluations commonly employ two time-honored research methods: qualitative (words/text) and quantitative (numbers/statistics). Each has its own strengths and weaknesses. In many evaluations, a mixed-method approach may be needed to fully exploit the strong points of both and to compensate for the shortcomings inherent in using a singular approach. Exploiting both in an interactive manner should improve and integrate overall data collection and analysis. For example, qualitative-based exploratory individual interviews and focus groups may uncover issues for further examination using quantitative-based structured survey questionnaires to sample other participants followed by more qualitative-based in-depth interviews to clarify the survey findings. Evaluators may use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research techniques. Table 1 shows how each has its own inherent applicability and suitability.

In selecting an appropriate research design, evaluators must consider each technique's unique capabilities and limitations as highlighted in table 2. Interpretation of qualitative data may be examined using such quantitative approaches as thematic coding (e.g., cataloguing specific

Table 1. Highlights of Qualitative, Quantitative, & Mixed-Methods Approaches

	Qualitative	Quantitative	Mixed-Methods
Purpose	- Sampling to address broad research questions.	- Sampling to address specific research questions.	-Sampling to address broad & specific research questions.
Design	-Applicable to evaluating complex & interactive social environments. - Suitable for formative, progressive, & post evaluations. - Examine a specific situation, select population, &/or limited locations.	- Applicable to evaluating straightforward & controlled environments. - Suitable for progressive & post evaluations. - Examine a general situation, collective population, &/or broad locations.	-Applicable to evaluating assorted simple, complex, interactive, controlled, & unpredictable environments. - Suitable for formative, progressive, & post evaluations. - Examine as needed both specific & general situations, populations, & locations.
Sampling	-Small sample size (one unit or less). - Purposeful, specific, & non-probability-based. - Samples are selected as needed before & during active data collection using researcher's best judgment.	- Large sample size (multiple units or department wide). - Random, non-specific, & scientific-based. - Samples are pre-selected before active data collection, using established statistical protocols.	-Sample size varies depending upon research focus & available resources. - Combination of purposeful, random, specific, non-specific, & probability-based & scientific-based. - Samples selected as needed before & during active data collection, using emerging leads, researcher's best judgment, & statistical protocols.
Characteristics	- Informal, open-ended, & in-depth interview questions with unlimited response options.	- Formal, closed-ended, possibly in-depth survey questionnaires with set response options.	- Both or either open-ended & in-depth questions with unlimited response options, & closed-ended question with set response options.
Influences	- Data collection & multi-level interpretation maybe affected by various sampling problems, cultural context, perceptions, & beliefs of participants & evaluators.	- Data collection maybe affected by various sampling problems, cultural context, perceptions, & beliefs of participants & evaluators.	- Data collection & analysis maybe affected by various sampling problems, cultural context, perceptions, & beliefs of participants & evaluators.
Yield	- Subjective & imprecise data collected & analyzed using quasi-standardized techniques which can be difficult to replicate.	- Objective & precise data collective & analyzed using standardized techniques which can be replicated.	- Subjective & objective data collected & analyzed using, as needed, standardized, quasi-standardized, & novel techniques, which may or may not be replicated.
Focus	- Focus on depth of information received from sampled individuals, focus groups, & select populations.	- Focus on breadth of information received from sampled individuals, focus groups, & select populations.	- Focus on both breadth & depth of information received from sampled individuals, focus groups, & select populations.
Presentation of Results	- Predominately narrative text, maybe supplemented by numeric data.	- Predominately numeric data maybe supplemented by narrative text.	-Overlapping & mutually supporting narrative & numeric data, as needed.
Generalization	- Transferability / generalizing results from one specific context to another.	- External validity / generalizing results to other settings, populations, & programs.	- Transferability & external validity.

descriptive comments and narratives) and content analysis (e.g., probing recurring themes and substantive topics). Subsequent analysis may require several iterations or cycles to complete as new issues may be uncovered or unexpected data patterns emerge that may lead to other areas for further qualitative or quantitative exploration.

To present meaningful quantitative or metrics-based findings of collective data, evaluators may employ basic trend-analysis methods involving descriptive and inferential statistics. For example, information extracted from archival documents using data-mining techniques, derived from content analysis of interviews and focus groups, or generated from survey questionnaires may be examined through modal responses (e.g., topics with the highest frequency of occurrence). Subsequently, synthesis will involve the distillation of those issues into a coherent framework of corresponding concerns, which should result in more supportable findings and valid conclusions.

Sampling techniques will depend upon availability of sources and appropriate types of evaluation measurements. These may include—

- random sampling of those directly or indirectly involved with the program and consumers of its products and services;
- directed sampling of select entities (e.g., field stations, key officials, primary users, or community leaders) and such techniques as stratified (examining a specific layer of a program), cross-sectional (several layers in one view), and selective (a specific area, process, or location); and

> ***Evaluators may use qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research techniques.***

- sampling that may involve individual or group interviews or the use of survey questionnaires employing standard five-point rating scales, multiple-choice responses, ranking, and free narratives to open-ended questions.

When developing survey questionnaires, it is important that each question and the overall instrument be scrutinized and tested for content, clarity, completeness, conciseness, structure, flow, and design. Specific techniques (e.g., check study by subject-matter experts, pilot study using external participants, debriefing, analysis, and revision) should help detect problems with the survey (e.g., confusing instructions, misleading questions, limited responses, and formatting errors). In addition, testing also should help eliminate problems with the questions, which could be ambiguous, redundant, leading, biased, too sensitive, degrading, invasive, or potentially self-incriminating.

Phase 4: Collect and Process Information

This phase involves the active gathering of relevant facts and details based on evaluation requirements. Collection activities traditionally cover searches of open, closed, and interactive sources of information (e.g., databases, after-action reports, archival records, publications, press releases, and the Internet). All sources used must be trustworthy and defensible, as much as possible, and the information should be confirmed using other independent sources. During logic modeling, select information may have been collected in specific areas that now may be further analyzed.

- Organization design: organizational charts, flow diagrams, and process schematics

- Operating standards: documents formalizing plans, policies, procedures, and performance
- Output products: distributed materials, bulletins, reports, pamphlets, and tapes
- Output services: recorded services, coordination, and information provided
- Internal outcomes: reported satisfaction, personnel retention, professional development, and advancement opportunities
- External outcomes: documented results and accomplishments

Table 2. Capabilities & Limitations of Select Research Techniques

	Capabilities	Limitations
Website, Archival, & Document Research	- May provide voluminous amounts of historical & useful background data. - Is easily accessible if locally available or Internet accessible.	- Requires experienced evaluators or subject matter experts to recognize meaningful, atypical, or erroneous information. - Information may be inaccurate, incomplete, or of questionable authenticity.
Interviews	- May yield the richest details & unique insights from subject matter experts or those intimately familiar with the evaluated program. - Provides immediate in-person interactive feedback to clarify both questions & answers.	- Requires trained evaluators to facilitate meetings, & to draw out & properly record useful information. - Increased flexibility may create inconsistencies among different interviews.
Focus Groups	- Provides opportunity to observe group dynamics, individual behavior, & language in a social environment. - Exploits group interaction to derive information, rich details, & unique insights.	- Group dynamics maybe influences, manipulated, stifled, or aroused by dominate speakers. - Participants may become more or less vocal depending upon social climate, peer pressure, acceptance, rejection, or fear of retribution.
Survey Questionnaire	- Collecting descriptive data, using a standardized process, from a large sample population. - May survey a wide assortment of topics using one measurement instrument & at same time.	- Measurement instrument must be pre-tested for validity & reliability, which is time consuming especially for new questionnaires. - Collected data may not provide sufficient depth or richness of information; limited ability to immediately probe & explore responses.
On-Site Observations	- Provides evaluators with first hand & direct exposure to the program's activities, individuals, & challenges in the natural operating environment. - Allows data collection on a wide range of activities, using a holistic perspective.	- Requires trained evaluators or subject matter experts to recognize meaningful, atypical, or staged activities & responses. - Is time consuming for all participants; and maybe expensive to conduct if extensive travel is involved.
Case Studies	- Provides unique opportunity to personally experience & engage in a program, through a participant's perspective. - Offers comprehensives exploration of various activities, situations, and individuals.	- Requires trained & experienced participant observers to successfully interact, & to recognize meaningful activities, conditions, & behaviors. - Is extremely time consuming & expensive to complete; and maybe hazardous if in a hostile environment.

When all relevant facts and figures have been collected, evaluators should consolidate the information by cataloging data into applicable distinct clusters for ease of analysis. These groupings include people, information, operations, equipment, facilities, and sociopsychological resources (PIOEFS).[4] Where applicable, program information also may be reconsolidated into the universal activities of organizational design (infrastructure used to support the program), operating standards (plans, policies, and procedures to maintain functions), output products (publication of reports and presentations to select audiences), output services (direct and indirect assistance to consumers and users), internal outcomes (improved information sharing and operational effectiveness), and external outcomes (prevented crimes, disrupted illegal activities, and convictions).

The synthesis of data, especially using different qualitative and quantitative techniques, may result in some inconsistent or divergent findings. All attempts should be made to reconcile these differences, which may not always be possible. If this occurs, these discrepancies must be formally reported as such, along with plausible explanations describing the circumstances.

Conclusion

Conducting program evaluations and implementing subsequent corrective actions will improve a program's

operational effectiveness and an organization's efficiency with the mutual goal of better meeting the needs of the stakeholders and the general public. Evaluations provide key decision makers with the facts and opportunities to enhance their program's performance; to streamline plans, policies, and procedures; to successfully manage risks and realign priorities; and to best optimize the use of critical resources. The final part of this article will focus on the remaining three stages of the evaluation management process: analyze and synthesize information, publish and disseminate findings, and audit and track corrective actions. ✦

Endnotes

[1] U.S. Government Accountability Office, *Government Auditing Standards of 1994* (Washington, DC, 1994); Office of Management and Budget, *Program Assessment Rating Tool of 2002* (Washington, DC, 2002); President's Council on Integrity and Efficiency, *Quality Standards for Inspection of 2005* (Washington, DC, 2005); and U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Blue Book for Program Evaluations* (Washington, DC, 2007).

[2] W.D. Lee, "Program Evaluations: Improving Operational Effectiveness and Organizational Efficiency (Part One)," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, November 2007, 1-6.

[3] National Science Foundation, *The 2002 User Friendly Handbook for Project Evaluation* (Arlington, VA, 2002).

[4] For additional information, see W.D. Lee, "Risk Assessments and Future Challenges," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, July 2005, 1-13; or access *http://www.fbi.gov/publications/leb/2005/july05leb.pdf*.

Please forward questions and comments to Dr. Lee at deanlee@leo.gov.

Strengthening Leadership and Building Teams Through Networking

None of us is as smart as all of us.

—Ken Blanchard

Effective supervisors recognize the importance of building successful teams within their agencies. Opportunities for great accomplishments increase tremendously when leaders surround themselves with competent experts and seek their guidance. Additionally, good leaders should vigorously pursue team-building opportunities outside the confines of their agencies. Networking in this way becomes invaluable for building external relationships that can help solve problems of all types.

Leaders can find networking possibilities in a variety of venues, including training conferences, seminars, professional organizations, formal meetings, and social gatherings; each presents its own advantages. Experiences, such as the FBI National Academy and other executive training programs, allow law enforcement leaders to discuss issues in class and follow up with further deliberation outside of the classroom atmosphere. When leaders begin examining their problems and issues together, they often discover that they are dealing with the same difficulties, regardless of the jurisdiction or agency size.

Less formal gatherings also provide excellent networking opportunities for law enforcement executives. Issues and problems still can be discussed in these forums; however, it is just as important to build professional relationships during these more casual meetings. Creating and maintaining friendships and affiliations with leaders of other agencies is critical and should be done prior to requesting help from others. Networks should be in place before they are really needed, especially before a crisis develops.

Perhaps, a jurisdiction suffers great property loss and casualties from a disaster, and its resources are overextended. If leaders have properly laid the foundation through suitable networking, a simple phone call to a neighboring jurisdiction most likely would initiate overwhelming assistance. Moreover, if the agency becomes plagued with concerns involving retention, pay, morale, or any other personnel or operational issues, its leaders could brainstorm for solutions with those who have encountered similar problems.

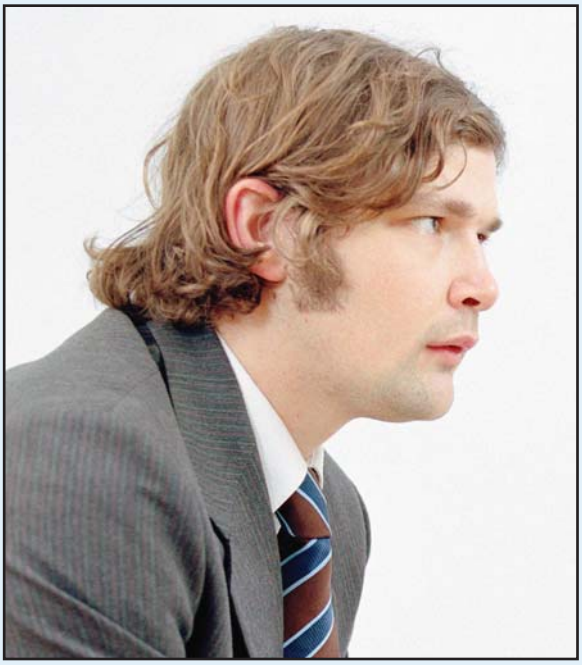
Leaders must recognize that asking for advice, assistance, or opinions does not indicate weakness. Expanding one's options by gathering a multitude of possible solutions from a variety of sources proves a valuable asset for any manager that engages in creative problem solving. The success that leaders often see as a result of internal teamwork within their own agencies only is magnified if they seek advice and guidance from external professional connections. As networking is a two-way street, a leader's counsel and guidance may offer the exact solution that a counterpart needs.

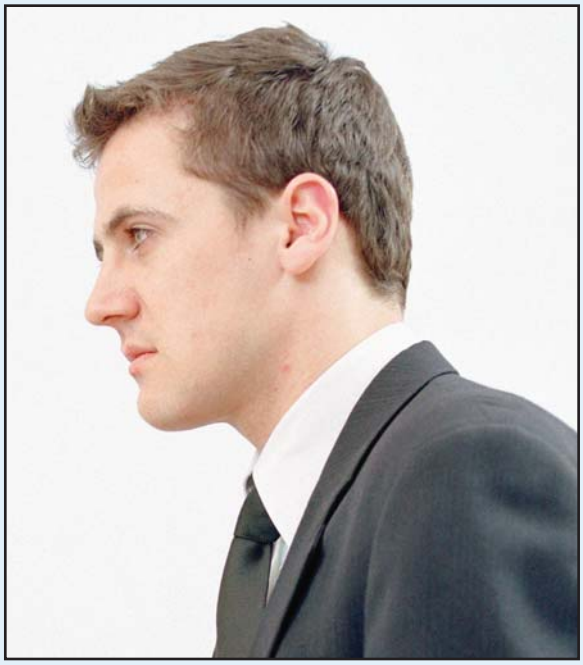
In conclusion, formal and informal avenues that provide opportunities to share ideas with other law enforcement professionals add a complement to structured training and experiences. As communication between agencies improves, best practices can be identified and shared. When solving problems together, leaders remove boundaries and avoid turf battles. And, their public service improves immensely as these professional relationships become stronger. ✦

John J. Heinen, Special Agent in Charge, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, prepared Leadership Spotlight.

Text Bridges and the Micro-Action Interview

By JOHN R. SCHAFER, Ph.D.





Law enforcement officers recovered a woman's body several years after she disappeared. A detective interviewed the dead woman's husband, the last person to see her alive.

Detective: Tell me about the last time you saw your wife.

Husband: I recall that, ah, it was one evening, probably 11 o'clock. We were both in bed and we had not gone to sleep yet and she got out of bed. I, ah, thought she was probably going to the bathroom and then I hear the, ah, front door close and I waited for a minute to see what she was doing and then I hear the car start and I look out the window and see the car disappearing around the corner and that's the last time I ever saw her.

The detective accepted the husband's answer and pursued another line of questioning. By not listening carefully to the man's words, the detective overlooked some valuable linguistic clues that indicated deception.

TEXT BRIDGES

Detecting deception remains a difficult task.[1] Most liars tell the truth up to the point where they want to conceal something, skip over the withheld information, and then tell the truth again.[2] Successful liars construct sentences that allow them to do this. Structuring a sentence to span the truth gap replicates building a bridge across a river. A road stops at the river's edge; a bridge spans the river; and the road continues on the opposite bank. Although bridges

come in a variety of designs, each must adhere to specific construction standards, or structural failure occurs. Likewise, sentence construction must follow certain grammar rules, and truthful people use the same guidelines as deceptive ones. The omission or distortion of the facts differentiates truthful communications from deceptive ones. The words or grammatical devices used to bridge the information gap, also referred to as text bridges, serve as markers to locate withheld information, which does not always indicate deception.

Text bridges allow people to transition from one topic to another without trivial details. For example, in the sentence "I got up, and then I took a shower, and then I ate breakfast," the text bridge *then* signals withheld information that does not constitute deception. The communicator did not want to bore the listener or reader with the details of taking a shower and eating breakfast. The omitted activities encompass turning on the water, soaping, rinsing, drying off, donning clothes, walking to the kitchen, taking a bowl from the cupboard, filling the bowl with cereal, going to the refrigerator to get milk, and so forth. However, text bridges used at critical times during interviews or interrogations may signal deception. Investigators must assess the potential value of the missing information—if it has no value, they can ignore the text bridge.

Text bridges comprise three categories: subordinating words, transitional terms, and adverbial conjunctives (table 1).[3] Some overlap categories, depending on the context of the sentence, but, regardless of their grammatical function, they still act as text bridges.

Subordinating Words

Subordinating words, such as *after*, *although*, *as long as*, *because*, *even though*, *if*, and *while*, connect unequal but related ideas and create time gaps. A husband suspected of killing his wife arrived home at 5 p.m. He told the investigating detective, "After I came home, I found my wife dead." The subordinating clause "After I came home…." creates a time gap. The husband wanted to give the impression that he arrived home and immediately found his wife dead; however, his statement did not indicate what time he found his wife dead. A time gap exists from 5 p.m. until the man found his wife dead. During this gap, he got into a physical altercation with his wife and killed her, hiding his actions by using the text bridge *after* in his statement.

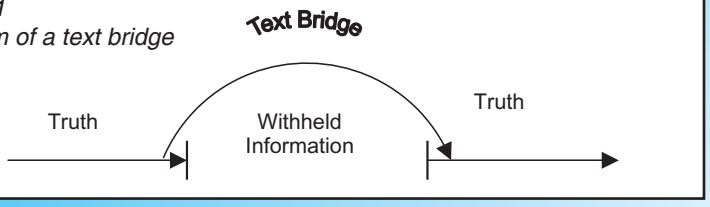
Transitional Words

Transitional words connect themes and ideas or establish relationships and fall into four basic categories: 1) time, 2) contrast, 3) result, and 4) addition (table 1). A motorist's written description of his automobile accident stated, "I saw the stop sign. Before I entered the intersection, I looked both ways, drove into

> ***"Text bridges allow people to transition from one topic to another without trivial details."***

Dr. Schafer owns an intelligence consulting company in Lancaster, California.

Figure 1
Diagram of a text bridge



the intersection, and was struck in the right passenger door by the other vehicle." A witness told the traffic investigator that the motorist did look both ways at the intersection, but he did not make a complete stop at the stop sign. In reality, the motorist saw the stop sign, looked both ways before entering the intersection, and had his car struck by the other vehicle. However, the motorist failed to write that he did not stop at the stop sign. He used the text bridge *before* to conceal that he did not stop at the stop sign before entering the intersection.

Adverbial Conjunctives

Adverbial conjunctives connect two complete ideas and create time gaps. A young boy told his parents, "I was playing, and then Tommy came over and hit me." The adverbial conjunctive *then* bridges the information gap. In reality, the young boy took a toy away from Tommy, who retaliated by striking him. The young boy instigated the attack but used a text bridge to make himself look like the victim by withholding incriminating information.

RESEARCH

The author conducted a study of 400 participants to test the text bridges theory. They viewed a video of a shoplifting event, pretended that they were the person depicted in the video, and wrote both truthful and deceptive narratives about their activities in the store. The study showed that the most commonly used text bridge in the deceptive narratives was *then*, used 57 percent. The text bridge *so* was used 22 percent; *after*, 7

Table 1. Text Bridges Identified by Grammar Function

Grammar Functions	Text Bridges
Subordinating Words	after, although, as if, as long as, because, before, even though, if, in order, since, so, that, than, though, unless, until, when, whenever, where, wherever, while
Transitional Words	
Time	after, afterward, before, during, earlier, eventually, finally, later, meanwhile, since, then, until
Contrast	however, in contrast, indeed, instead, nevertheless, on the contrary, on the other hand, yet
Result	because, consequently, as a result, on account of, so, then, therefore, thus
Addition	also, and, besides, for example, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too
Adverbial Conjunctives	according, however, besides, nevertheless, consequently, otherwise, again, indeed, also, moreover, finally, therefore, furthermore, then, thus

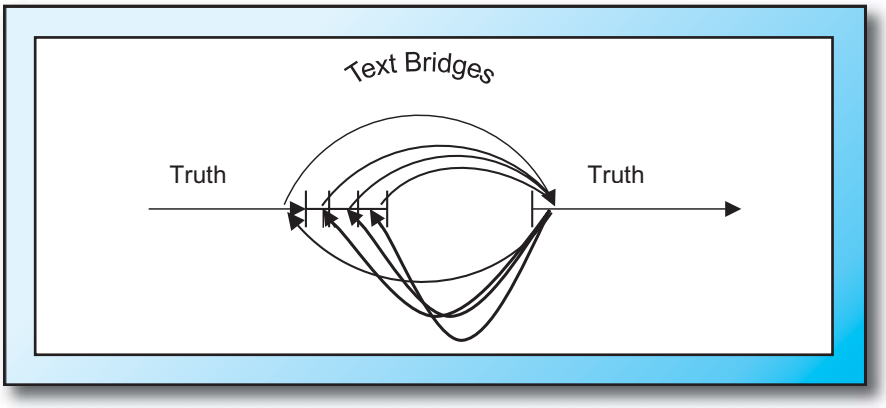
percent; *when,* 2 percent; *as* and *while*, 3 percent each; and *next*, 1 percent. Participants used these seven text bridges (*then*, *so*, *after*, *when*, *as*, *while*, and *next*) 95 percent of the time in the deceptive narratives. The remaining text bridges, *once*, *finally*, *afterwards*, and *eventually*, occurred less than 1 percent. The lack of text bridges does not mean that the communicator is truthful because not all of the study's participants used text bridges in their deceptive narratives. But, this easily memorized list of text bridges provides a powerful tool to identify where people may withhold information during interviews and interrogations.

MICRO-ACTION INTERVIEW

If investigators identify a text bridge and deem the withheld information important, they can close the information gap via a micro-action interview that will provide a systematic accounting for all of the interviewee's time and behaviors during the gap. The interview begins at the point just before the first text bridge. For example, in the husband's statement at the beginning of this article, the sentence just before the text bridge reads, "I, ah, thought she was probably going to the bathroom and *then* I hear the, ah, front door close…." The investigators should begin the micro-action interview at the point where the suspect and his wife got into the bed. Intuitively, this is a good place to begin because if something happened to cause the suspect's wife to get out of the bed other than her need to use the bathroom, that would be a significant event. The investigators should ask the suspect to describe his and his wife's actions from the time they got into the bed until she got out of the bed. They should obtain details, such as whether they were sitting up or lying down on the bed. If they were lying down, what side of the bed did each of them occupy? Were they under the covers or lying on top of the bedspread? Once the investigators establish the physical orientation of the suspect and his wife, they should ask what happened next. The suspect likely will provide a few details and then use a text bridge to span the shrinking information gap. The investigators should go back to just before the second text bridge and ask the suspect what happened next. They should continue this process until the suspect accounts for all of his time and actions from when he and his wife first got into the bed until she got out of it. Repeatedly asking what happened next can detract from the interviewing process, so interspersing some self-deprecating remarks, such as "I'm sorry. I zoned out for a second. Let's go back to (the point just prior to the last text bridge)"; "My brain is not processing as fast as you are talking. Can we back up to (the point just prior to the last text bridge)"; or "I'm confused; you said you were (the action just prior to the last text bridge)" can help.

The systematic narrowing of the information gap acts like a psychological vise. The unique feature of the micro-action interview is that only deceptive people place themselves in the vise. Investigators just ask the simple question (or some derivation of)

Figure 2 Diagram of a micro-action interview



"What happened next?" They should not raise their voices or become aggressive. As the information gap closes, liars feel increasing psychological pressure, which elevates to the point where they cross the fight–flight threshold, causing physiological changes that they find difficult to control. Consequently, deceptive people leak verbal and nonverbal indicators of deception. These cues provide investigators with immediate feedback as to the veracity of interviewees. Deceptive indicators signal investigators to continue the interview.

Conversely, truthful people will remain relatively calm and answer the questions as presented. Although they may find the line of questioning tedious, they typically will not emit verbal or nonverbal indicators of deception. Truthful individuals simply will relate facts, while deceptive ones will become nervous and try to convince the interviewers of the "truth."

The micro-action interview differs from other interviewing techniques. Simple questions force interviewees to account for every second of their time and all micro behaviors. Truthful people convey their stories; deceptive ones put themselves in the psychological vise. Eventually, the information gap becomes so small that liars no longer can find words to bridge the gap. At this point, investigators should pose a presumptive statement that merely affirms the obvious, such as "So, you were pretty angry with your wife." Further, they could make a more aggressive presumptive statement, such as "I can understand why you didn't want your wife around anymore." In most instances, deceptive people admit their guilt at this juncture. In the event that they remain steadfast, investigators can employ additional interviewing techniques.[4]

> ***The micro-action interview differs from other interviewing techniques.***

CONCLUSION

Text bridges signal areas in spoken and written communications where individuals withhold information, but they do not necessarily indicate veracity because both truthful and deceptive people frequently use them. However, the use of text bridges during critical times in written statements or interviews signals the high probability of deception. Investigators must decide the potential value of the missing information and conduct a micro-action interview when necessary. They can close the information gap by asking a series of nonthreatening questions that force interviewees to account for all their time and behaviors.

Deceptive people put themselves in a psychological vise. As the vise closes, detection apprehension increases. Consequently, verbal and nonverbal cues leak, providing investigators with immediate feedback as to the veracity of the interviewees. On the other hand, truthful people remain unaware that interviewers are testing their honesty. Overall, the combination of text bridges and the micro-action interview provides investigators with additional tools to use in the interviewing process. ✦

Endnotes

[1] For additional information, see Joe Navarro and John R. Schafer, "Detecting Deception," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, July 2001, 9-13.

[2] P. Ekman, *Telling Lies: Clues to Deceit in the Marketplace, Politics, and Marriage* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1992).

[3] Also referred to as conjunctive adverbs.

[4] For additional information, see, for example, Susan H. Adams and John P. Jarvis, "Are You Telling Me the Truth? Indicators of Veracity in Written Statements," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, October 2004, 7-12; Michael R. Napier and Susan H. Adams, "Criminal Confessions: Overcoming the Challenges," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, November 2002, 9-15; and Susan H. Adams and Vincent A. Sandoval, "Subtle Skills for Building Rapport: Using Neuro-Linguistic Programming in the Interview Room," *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, August 2001, 1-5.

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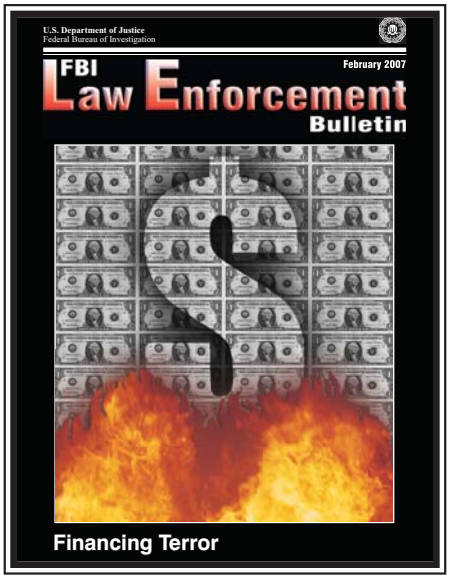

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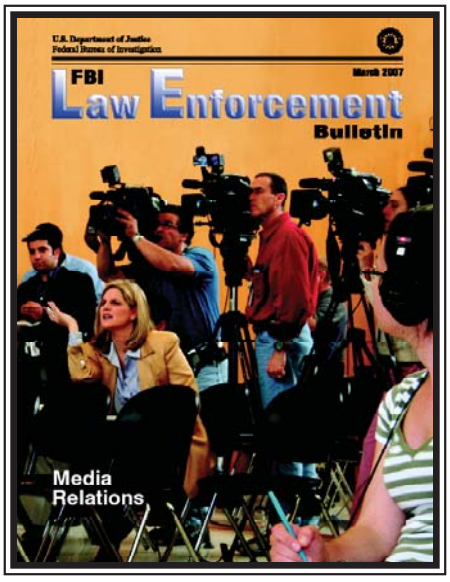

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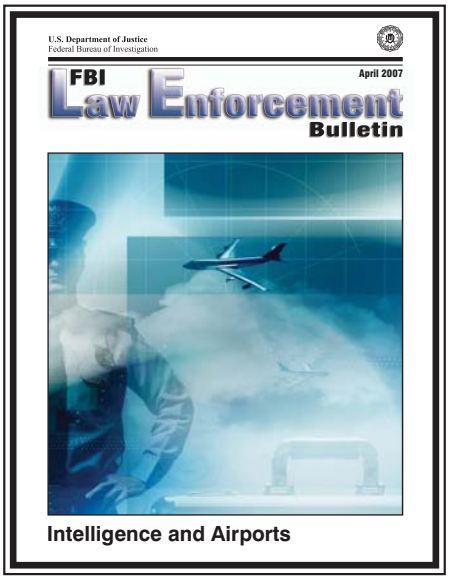

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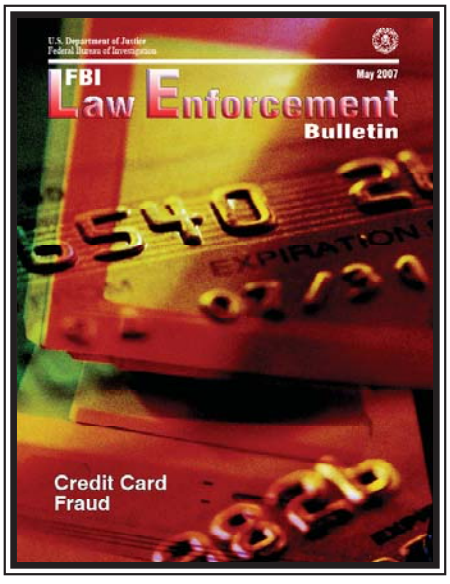

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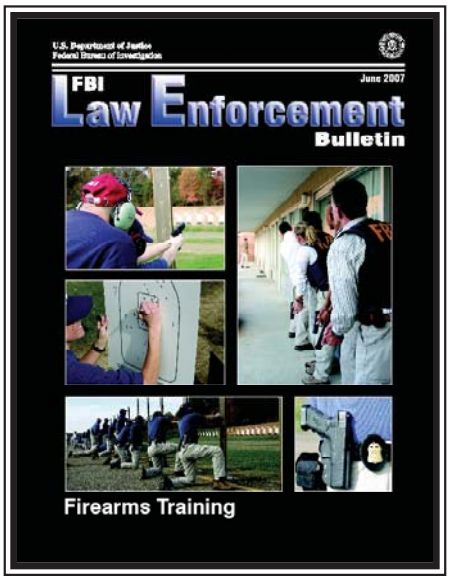

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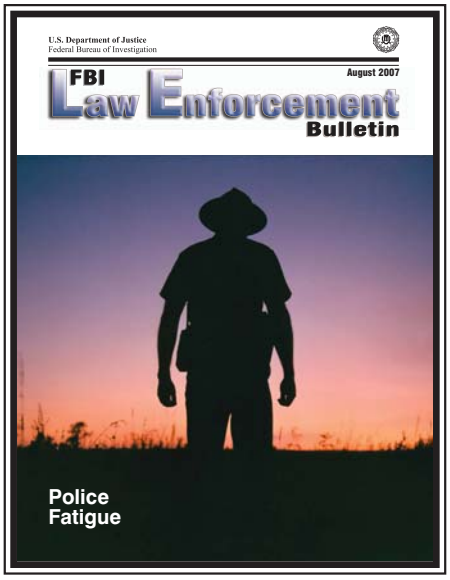

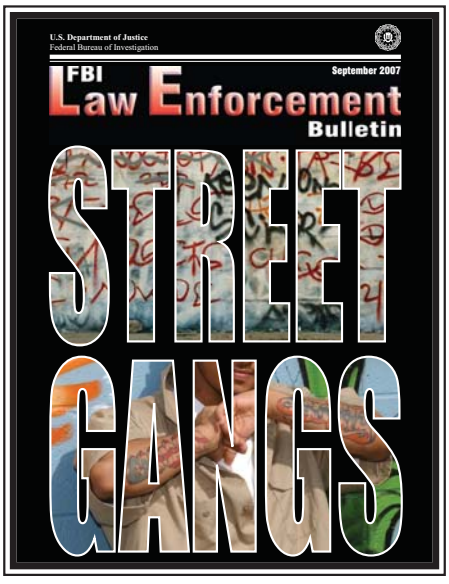

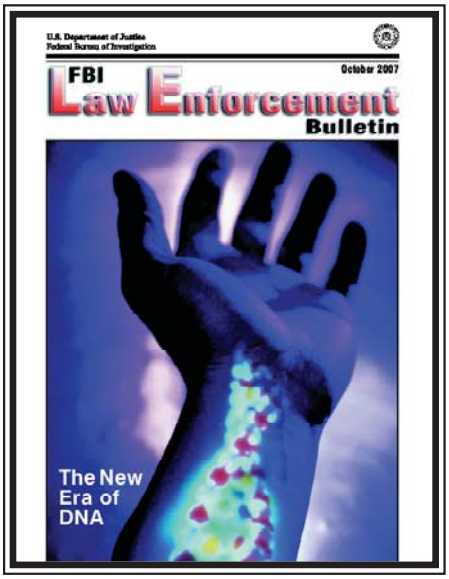

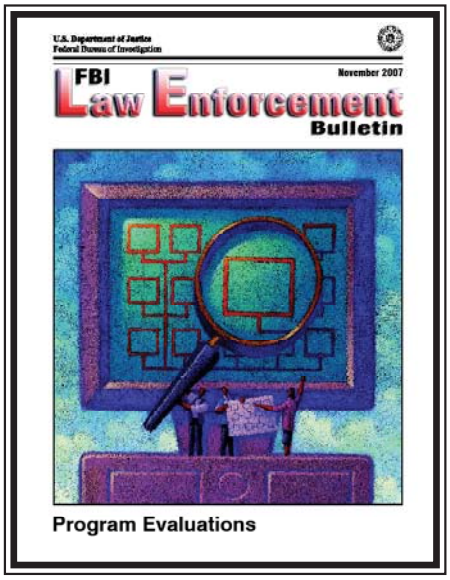

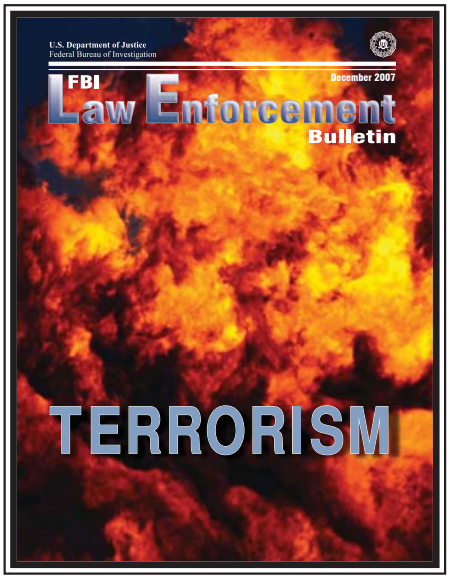

The Bulletin Notes

Law enforcement officers are challenged daily in the performance of their duties; they face each challenge freely and unselfishly while answering the call to duty. In certain instances, their actions warrant special attention from their respective departments. The *Bulletin* also wants to recognize those situations that transcend the normal rigors of the law enforcement profession.

Deputy Stenzel

One night while on patrol, Deputy Jason Stenzel of the Door County, Wisconsin, Sheriff's Department noticed a plume of smoke emanating from a residence. Upon approaching the house, he observed flames coming out of the soffits and the garage area. Deputy Stenzel immediately notified the fire department and then ran to the residence, which was filling with smoke. After breaking a window, he alerted, located, and removed one of the residents, who had been asleep. He then found and helped a second person, who also was unaware of the fire, to safety. As a result, no one was seriously hurt, and part of the home was saved.

Deputy Long

Lieutenant Butler

Deputy Andrew Long of the Greene County, Missouri, Sheriff's Department and Lieutenant Gary Butler of the Fair Grove, Missouri, Police Department responded to a report of an occupied vehicle swept off a low water bridge into a flooded river. Upon arrival, they found a truck almost completely submerged in the water; a young girl was clinging to the roof. Firefighters were awaiting the arrival of a rescue crew. Fearing the rapidly rising river, the officers took action immediately. Deputy Long borrowed a length of rope from the fire department and tied it around his waist after stripping off as much of his heavy gear as possible. He then entered the water. Lieutenant Butler also went into the river and secured the rope while Deputy Long swam to the truck and grabbed the child. Lieutenant Butler and the firefighters then pulled him back out of the water. Although frightened and cold, the 6-year-old girl was not injured.

Nominations for the ***Bulletin Notes*** should be based on either the rescue of one or more citizens or arrest(s) made at unusual risk to an officer's safety. Submissions should include a short write-up (maximum of 250 words), a separate photograph of each nominee, and a letter from the department's ranking officer endorsing the nomination. Submissions should be sent to the Editor, *FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin*, FBI Academy, Law Enforcement Communication Unit, Hall of Honor, Quantico, VA 22135.

U.S. Department of Justice
Federal Bureau of Investigation
FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin
935 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20535-0001

Periodicals
Postage and Fees Paid
Federal Bureau of Investigation
ISSN 0014-5688

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use $300

Patch Call

The patch of the Indiana Conservation Officers Organization is designed around the Indiana state seal and features the shape of an arrowhead. The seal depicts the rise of the state of Indiana and the continued trek westward of a new nation. A settler is seen clearing the forest as a buffalo runs to the plains. The sun rises over the mountains to the east.

The Gouverneur, New York, Police Department patch displays the Village Arch, a war memorial displaying the names of residents who gave their lives protecting their country. Over the arch is a gold eagle. The American and Canadian flags—Gouverneur is only 30 miles from the international border—stand in front of the arch.