

## **The Reid Technique.....Here's What's Really Going On**

The Reid Technique is the most widely used and well-known method of questioning subjects in the world because of its efficiency and built in safeguards to protect the innocent and identify the guilty. However, because the name is so universally known, it has become attached to all interview and interrogation techniques....even those that are egregious and that we teach never to employ.

It's like the name Kleenex. When someone asks for a tissue, even when they refer to it as a kleenex, they do not necessarily mean the brand name....but the term kleenex has become the universal term for a tissue. So to has the Reid name become associated with all interrogation techniques – even those that are bad.

Here is what we do teach:

- Always conduct interrogations in accordance with the guidelines established by the courts
- Do not make any promises of leniency
- Do not threaten the subject with any physical harm or inevitable consequences
- Do not conduct interrogations for an excessively lengthy period of time
- Do not deny the subject any of their rights
- Do not deny the subject the opportunity to satisfy their physical needs
- Withhold information about the details of the crime from the subject so that if the subject confesses the disclosure of that information can be used to confirm the authenticity of the statement
- Exercise special cautions when questioning juveniles or individuals with mental or psychological impairments
- Always treat the subject with dignity and respect
- The confession is not the end of the investigation – investigate the confession details in an effort to establish the authenticity of the subject's statement

We also teach to follow these Best Practices:

*Conduct an interrogation only when there is a reasonable belief that the suspect is guilty or withholding relevant information*

*Consider a suspect's behavior in conjunction with case facts and evidence*

*Attempt to verify the suspect's alibi before conducting an interrogation*

*When interrogating a non-custodial suspect, do not deprive the suspect from his freedom to leave the room*

*Do not conduct excessively long interrogations*

*Exercise extreme caution when interrogating juveniles, suspects with a lower intelligence or suspects with mental impairments*

*When using interrogation tactics involving deception the investigator should not manufacture evidence against the suspect.*

*When a suspect claims to have little or no memory for the time period when the crime was committed the investigator should not lie to the suspect concerning incriminating evidence.*

*Do not reveal to the suspect all information known about the crime.*

*Attempt to elicit information from the suspect about the crime that was unknown to the investigator.*

**A review of all of our books and training materials for the last several decades will confirm all of the above.**

So...when you hear someone on TV or in a magazine article or newspaper/internet story say:

the Reid Technique teaches investigators to promise the subject leniency if the confess;

to promise the subject psychiatric care instead of incarceration;

to threaten the subject with more serious consequences if they do not confess;

to ignore the subject's rights;

to deprive the subject of food, water, sleep or bathroom facilities;

to isolate the subject so that he can not contact a parent or attorney;

to interrogate a subject to the point that he is so exhausted that he will say anything;

to ignore the special precautions that must be exercised when questioning juveniles or individual with significant mental or psychological impairments;

**you can be 100% sure that they are not describing the Reid Technique.**

Rather, they are describing behaviors that can lead to a coerced and involuntary confession. We detail on our website numerous cases in which the courts describe behaviors that are coercive and investigators should not engage in....we feel an obligation to keep all investigators up to speed with what the courts deem to be acceptable practices. (See all of our website entries entitled Legal Updates)

That is why the Innocence Project and Attorney Kathleen Zellner have used us as expert witnesses on proper interview and interrogation techniques.

Don't be misled – as we stated at the outset, the Reid Technique is the most widely used and well known method of questioning subjects in the world because of its efficiency and built in safeguards to protect the innocent and identify the guilty. However, because the name is so universally known, it has become attached to all interview and interrogation techniques....even those that are egregious and that we teach never to employ.