

In this article, “*The Systemic Side of Disinformation: The Reid Technique as Exploitative Knowledge Production*,” published in the Binghamton University Undergraduate Journal, February 2025, the author, Jayden Perez, completely misrepresents the essential elements of the Reid Technique.

He suggests that the Reid Technique, “employs disinformation to reinforce the power and authority of the police while disregarding the harm caused to the individual suspect..” and that the technique produces false confessions. The author further suggests that the technique relies on inducing psychological stress to elicit confessions, and that “the technique is designed to induce psychological stress through weaponizing authority, isolation, lying about evidence, and internalization.”

The author certainly does not understand the Reid Technique process, and the fact that we always begin with a non-accusatory, non-confrontational information-gathering interview designed to develop the subject’s activities at the time of the issue that is under investigation; their relationship, if any, to the victim, their alibi, etc.

For decades, the Reid Technique has been a science-based process – see our Investigator Tip, **The Reid Technique: Science-Based Interviewing** at www.reid.com. Here are the essential elements of the Reid Technique:

- The Reid interview process is a non-accusatory, non-confrontational information-gathering conversation.
- Throughout the interview process, the investigator should maintain a neutral, objective, non-judgmental fact-finder approach.
- No accusations of guilt should be made during the interview process.
- All interviews should be conducted in accordance with the guidelines established by the courts, such as the appropriate advisement of rights, the presence of a parent or guardian for a juvenile; etc.
- The interview should begin with casual conversation, biographical information, employment information, etc. to acclimate the subject to the interview process, develop the subject’s behavioral baseline, and develop rapport.
- The investigator should use open-ended questions to develop the subject’s statement, story, version of events, or explanation of what happened.
- After the subject relates their initial story or version of events the investigator should then ask a series of questions to develop additional details, as well as questions to clarify the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the incident that is under investigation.
- During the interview, the investigator should attempt to resolve any inconsistencies or contradictions that may have surfaced from the interviews of other subjects or from the investigative information.

- If the subject offers an alibi for the period in question, every effort should be made to substantiate the alibi.
- We encourage investigators to follow the 80/20 rule – during the interview the subject should do 80% of the talking and the investigator should do 20%.
- The investigator should observe the subject's verbal and non-verbal behaviors as a guide for the interview questions. It is important to remember that no behavior is unique to truth or deception – behavior must be evaluated in context and against the subject's normal behavioral patterns. Numerous factors can affect a subject's behavior during the interview, including culture, mental capacity, emotional and psychological stability/impairments, physical condition, drugs and alcohol, the severity of the issue involved, and the subject's level of social responsibility...all of which the investigator must consider.
- A subject's verbal and nonverbal behaviors are not a substitute for evidence but can help identify when a subject may be less than candid during the interview, prompting additional follow-up questions which may in turn lead to the discovery of additional information, incriminating facts or evidence.
- The investigator should not tell the subject what they know about the case but rather evaluate whether or not the subject's statement is consistent with what is known or on the other hand, if the case facts and evidence contradict what the subject has stated.
- In addition to the investigative questions, the investigator should utilize behavior- provoking questions during the interview.
- The investigator should not reveal all of the details about the crime (it is critical to withhold crime details that can later be used to confirm the authenticity of the subject's acknowledgment of what he did).
- The investigator should not show the suspect crime scene photographs that reveal corroborating details.
- The investigator should evaluate the subject's possible involvement in the issue under investigation based on the investigation, case facts, factual evidence, and information developed during the investigation and the interview.
- The interview (and any subsequent interrogation) should be recorded.

The Investigative Questions are the core of the interview process. Do not tell the subject what you now.

As an example, John was found dead in his home on Saturday night. He had been shot in the head. John was a real estate agent and worked out of his home office. He had several real estate colleagues who occasionally also worked out of his home office. As part of the investigation, John's colleagues were interviewed, one of whom was Dennis. When Dennis was asked when was the last time he had been over to John's house he said "It's been quite a while, I would say at least a month, maybe 5 or 6 weeks since I was over there."

Unbeknownst to Dennis, when the police canvased the neighborhood, they found a lady who lived across the street from John, who that Saturday morning was filming her kids playing soccer in the yard, and in the background, you could see someone approaching John's front door and then going into the house. A close examination of the video revealed that it was Dennis who went into John's house at about 10:00 am Saturday, the day of the murder. The fact that Dennis lied to the investigator about when he had most recently been at John's house was very significantmore so than any behavioral observation.

In our book, Criminal Interrogation and Confessions we devote over 100 pages to discussing the proper way to conduct an investigative interview.

The Reid BAI also includes Behavior-provoking questions (BPQs), which are questions that most truthful individuals answer one way, while deceptive individuals often answer in a completely different manner.

Here is an example of two behavior-provoking questions from a daycare facility staff member being interviewed during a child sex abuse investigation at a day care facility:

The THINK question: "John did you ever think about engaging in sexual activities with any of the children here at the daycare facility?"

ANSWER: "I think that everyone working here has thoughts like that."

The PUNISHMENT question: "John, what do you think should happen to a staff member who has engaged in sexual activities with any of the children?"

ANSWER: "Well, I guess it depends on how often it happened."

The Essential Elements of the Reid Interrogation Process

- Interrogations should only be conducted when the case investigative information indicates the subject's probable involvement in the commission of the crime. The purpose of an interrogation is to learn the truth.
- The investigator should conduct all interrogations following the guidelines established by the courts - advisement of rights; the presence of a parent or guardian for a minor; etc.
- The investigator should not make any promises of leniency, threats of harm or inevitable consequences, or physically abuse the subject.
- The investigator should not conduct interrogations for an excessively lengthy period of time.
- The investigator should not deny the subject any of their rights.
- The investigator should not deny the subject the opportunity to satisfy their physical needs.
- In a non-custodial interrogation, the investigator should not deprive the subject of the opportunity to leave the room.

- The investigator should exercise special precautions when questioning juveniles or individuals with mental or psychological impairments. The investigator should not misrepresent the case evidence to these subjects.
- When a suspect claims to have little or no memory of the period when the crime was committed the investigator should not misrepresent the case evidence to the subject.
- The investigator should never manufacture evidence implicating the subject.
 - Investigators should adopt a general practice of avoiding misrepresentations concerning incontrovertible or dispositive evidence.
- The central focus of the persuasion process is to propose to the suspect reasons and motives that will serve to psychologically justify or excuse their behavior – not legally justify or excuse their behavior.
- When the subject acknowledges what they did, the investigator should ask open-ended questions to develop corroborating information – the location of the murder weapon or bloody clothes; how the subject gained entry into the building; where the subject sold the stolen jewelry, etc. Corroboration is an essential element to establish the authenticity of the subject's statement.
- The interrogation should be recorded.
- The subject's confession is not the end of the investigation...the investigator should continue to develop additional details about the subject's behavior before and after the commission of the crime and to further verify the details of his statement of involvement.

All investigators should adhere to the following principles:

- Always treat the subject with dignity and respect
- Always conduct interviews and interrogations according to the guidelines established by the courts
- Do not make any promises of leniency
- Do not engage in any physical abuse of the suspect
- Do not make any threats of harm or inevitable consequences
- Do not conduct interrogations for an excessively lengthy period
- Do not deny the subject any of their rights
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- Exercise special cautions when questioning socially immature juveniles or individuals with mental or psychological impairments

The author suggests that the REID technique causes false confessions. Consider the following:

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