

# Gaining Insight Through STATEMENT ANALYSIS



# THE STATEMENT

- Ideally, obtain the statement before the interview
- Purpose-lock the interviewee into the details
- Deters changes
- Focus investigation to either prove or disprove
- Must be obtained before the interrogation
- Not necessarily a confession

# Standards for Obtaining a Hand-Written Statement

- Use notebook paper – lines and margins
- Use a pen
- Ask the person an open-ended question to elicit a narrative response
- Write the question on the top of the paper
- Allow adequate time to write

# GAINING INSIGHT THROUGH STATEMENT ANALYSIS

1

**Obtain the statement**



2

**Analyze the statement**



3

**Interview using analysis (amplify)**



**A tool for uncovering the TRUTH**

# First Steps to Analysis

## INCIDENT AND BALANCE



# First Steps to Analysis

- Xerox the statement
- Read the statement
- Number each line
- Look for the incident

# First Steps To Analysis

- Draw a box around the ***Incident*** in **orange**.
- Calculate the balance by counting the lines to determine the percentage of the prologue, incident and epilogue.
- Examine the largest portion.
- Note the writer's/speaker's focus.

# Lying – Possible Verbal Indicators of Deception

- Omission vs. Commission
- Convince vs. Convey
- The deliberate camouflaging of the truth for the purpose of deceiving.

Sandoval, T., (January, 2008). Interview Clues: Words That Leave an Investigative Trail, *Law Enforcement Bulletin*, p. 1.



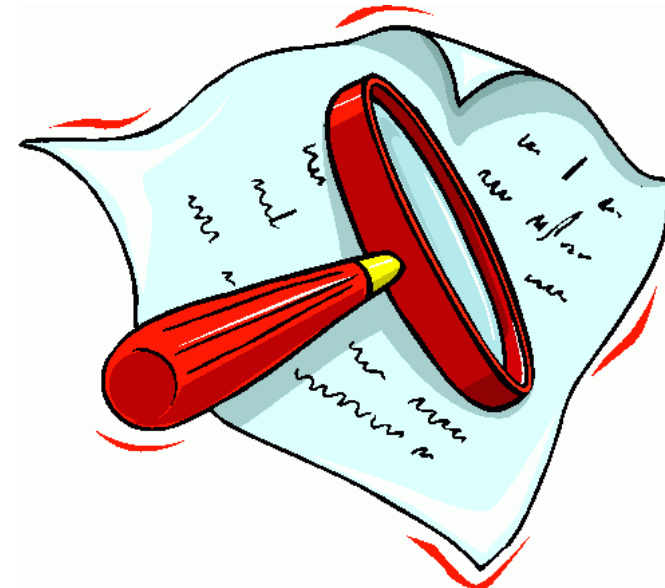
# Lying by Omission – Factors to Consider

Missing Time/Change in Pace

**Equivocation**

Non-Prompted Negation

**Editing Adverbs**



# Equivocation

- To avoid committing to what one is saying
- May be deliberate vagueness – ambiguous communication
- Examine the context in which it is used
- **Equivocation** - to use **equivocal** language especially with the intent to deceive

# Non-Prompted Negation

## **NEGATE**

- to deny the existence or truth of
- Premise  
People forget trivial matters but  
NOT significant events.

# Non-Prompted Negation

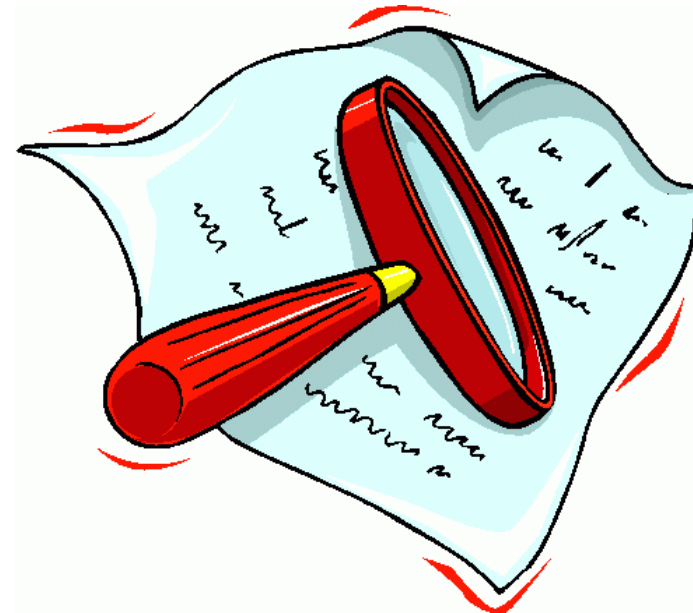
- Underline all words of non-prompted negation in **green**.
- Examine the context.
- May be possible deception.

- Trying to Convince rather than Convey Information – Factors to consider

**Extraneous Information**

**Intensifying Adverbs**

**Minimizing Adverbs**



# Extraneous Information

- Anything that does not answer the question is **extraneous**.
- This is true if you have asked a direct question,  
“Did you take the money?”
- This is also true if you have asked an open ended question,  
“Tell me what happened.”

To give reason for something is to breed doubt

# Extraneous Information

- Consider this –
- If we ask a question and the person answers our question, their answer is important.
- If we ask a question and the person says something but it doesn't answer our question, then it is critically important.
- Examine the **extraneous information** carefully because he/she could be justifying his/her actions.

# Indicators of Veracity – Factors to consider

Balance

Unique Sensory Detail

Spatial Detail

**Emotion**





# Veracity

- Undeutsch Hypothesis:

“A statement based on reality will be different from one based on imagination. Therefore, truthful accounts differ significantly and noticeably from false accounts because of the superior quality of the former.”

Undeutsch identified differences in structure, quality, and content of truthful vs. fabricated statements.

Undeutsch, U., *The Development of Statement Reality Analysis, in Credibility Assessment*, ed. J.C. Yuille, (London: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), p. 101.

# Memory Based Cues

- Real accounts *typically* have all 5:
  - Could it have happened? Most invented accounts could happen
  - Spontaneous reproduction: Ability to move around in memory/recall
- Appropriate detail: Considering significance of event to person
- Contextual embedding: Woven into the fabric of the person's life
- Descriptions of interactions: Who did what to whom

# Memory Based Cues

- Real events ***More Likely*** to have:
  - Reproduction of conversation: Quoted dialogue
  - Unexpected complications: Eg., phone call, key didn't work...
  - Related external associations: Information of personal significance
  - Accounts of subjective mental state: Access to our own minds
- Attributions of other's mental state: *Access to our inferences about others thinking*
- Details characteristic of a particular act: *Known only to those with specialized knowledge*
- Accurate details misunderstood

# Nouns

- From a statement analysis perspective, there are three things that we will consider with respect to **nouns**:
- **Persons** in order of appearance in the statement
- Unexpected nouns
- Changes in nouns

# Verbs

- From a statement analysis perspective, there are five things that we will consider with respect to **verbs**:
- **Present tense verbs used to describe past actions/behaviors**
- **Verbs/Words of communication**
- **Stop action verbs**
- **Passive voice**
- **Quality of verbs**

# Police Officers Statement to IA

“I made my rounds near the park. The man gets closer and grabs for my weapon. A struggle occurs. Tried to get away. He stabs at me. I looked for my weapon but couldn't find it.”

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# Passive Voice

- Typically, we speak in active voice –

Actor → Performs Action → On Object

“Someone            assaulted            him.”

- The person who is responsible for the act is spoken about first.



# Passive Voice

- When we use passive voice, we are distancing the actor from the act.

Object → Receives Action → By Actor

“He            was assaulted            by someone.”

- Use of passive voice is a possible indicator that the writer/speaker is trying to conceal the identity of the actor.

# Moderating Adverbs

- From a statement analysis perspective, there are three things that we will consider with respect to adverbs:
  - **Editing Adverbs**
  - **Intensifying adverbs**
  - **Minimizing adverbs**

School House Rock, ABC (1974)



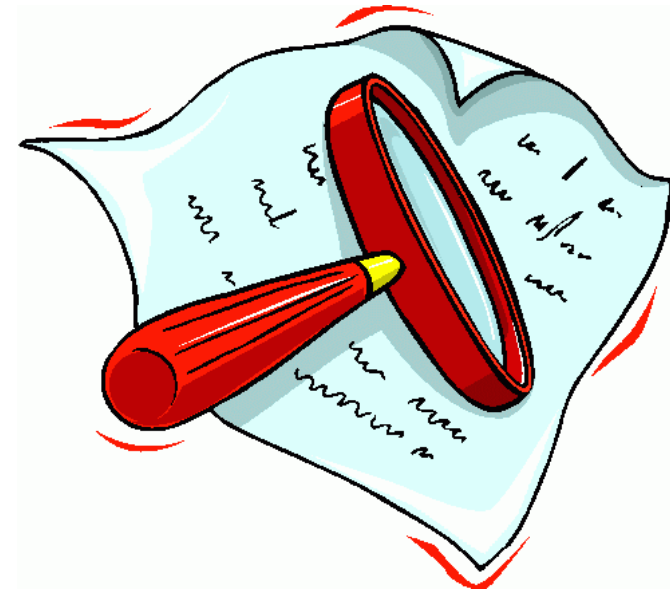
# Lying by Omission – Factors to Consider

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# Most Commonly Used **Editing Adverbs**

- then
- so
- after
- when
- as
- while
- once
- next



School House Rock, ABC (1974) & Schafer, J. (2007). *Grammatical Differences Between Truthful and Deceptive Written Narratives.*

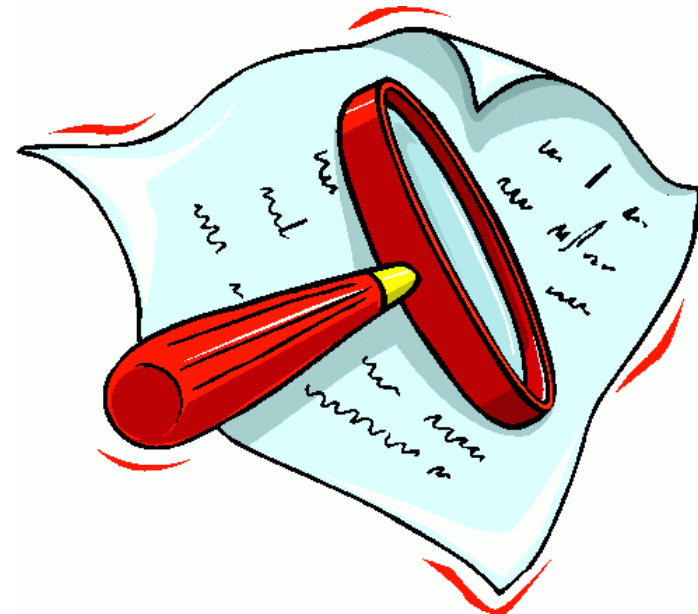
# Convince Rather than Convey

- Trying to Convince rather than Convey Information – Factors to consider

Extraneous Information

Intensifying Adverbs

Minimizing Adverbs



# Pronouns

- From a statement analysis perspective, there are four things that we will consider with respect to **pronouns**:
- Singular Personal Pronouns
- Missing Pronouns
- The Pronoun “We”
- Possessive Personal Pronouns

# Articles

- There are two types of articles: definite and indefinite.
- Definite article – *the* - refers to a specific person, place or thing.
- Indefinite articles – *a* or *an* – refer to a person, place or thing in general.

# Unexpected Adjectives

- Most adjectives are used to help us get a mental picture of the incident. So, they are not unexpected. Therefore, most are appropriate and will be noted as unique sensory detail.
- Circle any unexpected adjectives in **blue**.
- **Do not** circle every adjective – only those that are unexpected.



# Amplification of the Statement

- Use the writer's statement to probe for more details in those places where he has left himself vulnerable.



# Amplification of the Statement

- Amplification format
- Repeat the interviewee's words verbatim:

“Melissa, you said that ‘We were only driving for about 10-15 minutes.’ Tell me more about that.” or “Explain that to me.” or “Go on.” or “Continue.” or “Draw me a diagram.” or “Help me get a mental picture.” or “Demonstrate that for me.” or “Describe that for me.”

- Use open-ended questions to encourage the subject to provide more details.
- After each open-ended question, you may follow up with as many questions of any type as you choose.

# Amplification of the Statement

- You may need to intersperse the questions with self-deprecating remarks, such as:
  - “I’m a little confused. You said...”
  - “I want to make sure that I understand. Did you say...”
  - “Help me get a mental picture.”
  - “Put me in your shoes.”

# The Analogy of an “Interview” Funnel

## Open-Ended Amplification Questions

**Active Listening**

**Active Listening**

**Clarification Qs**

**Clarification Qs**

who  
what  
why  
when  
where  
how

**Questions to Assess Behavior**

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