



# Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Section – 20??

## 18 Scientific Interviewing of a Fraud Suspect

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The goal of this presentation is to disclose the scientific method for interviewing a fraud suspect using forensic interrogation techniques and to show the benefit of using a scientific method over traditional methods of interrogation.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by stimulating persons having to deal with fraud crimes towards learning scientific interrogation. Using the forensic approach to interviewing will result in more clearance of fraud crimes through more effective interviews and confessions.

Attendees of this session will understand and be aware of the personality type that commits various types of frauds against the general public victim. The attendees will be exposed to the scientific approach that best results in obtaining a truthful confession from the fraudster.

The fraud offender is a typical anti-social or non-emotional offender whose entire outlook is egocentric in nature. The key to a successful interview/interrogation of this personality is a combination of themes based on logic and perceived benefit on the part of the offender.

The scientific interviewer/interrogator must not cause the interview process to become a contest. The anti-social personality of the fraud offender is such that he or she will constantly seek to fool authority. Much of the emotional satisfaction gleaned by the offender comes from being able to deceive opponents in a battle of wits. The interviewer must learn to restrain themselves from falling prey to such a contest. The ego of the interviewer must be totally subdued. The general rule of interviewing applies in that the perception of the suspect about the interviewer is more important than the interviewer's confidence or self-perspective. The suspect must believe the interviewer is sincere and empathetic to their (suspect's) plight.

The interview setting must be completely controlled by the interviewer. No interruptions or unnecessary witnesses should be present. The interviewer should know as much about the suspect and demographic of the victims selected as possible prior to conducting the interview. Knowing the history of the offender is critical in determining the types of fraud he or she has perpetrated in the past and the likelihood of a specific method of fraud used by the offender. The victim demographics help the interviewer form a theme blaming the victims for their own victimization.

The interrogation portion will initialize following the interview component of the process. During the interview the interviewer will determine whether or not the person being interviewed is guilty of the fraud offense being investigated. This is not guilt or innocence as determined by a court but rather a mechanism to determine if an interrogation is merited.

The scientific interrogation process relies on observations of normative behavior and deviations on the part of the offender. Because of the acting ability of the fraud offender, the observations of behavioral change are often more subtle than other type of offenders. The interviewer must have a full view of the suspect from head to toe. Distractions in the interview room must be minimized. The observations of the reactions by the suspect for deviations of normative behavior will include language choice, language or voice stresses, and kinesic body reactions. Kinesic body reactions are broken down into micro or minor movements such as facial tics as well as macro movements like arm gestures or posture changes.

Actions and verbalizations designed to show empathy on the part of the interviewer must be subtle. The fraud offender suspects everyone of thinking like they do. In their paranoia, they often recognize tactics that might work on a more emotional offender. This might appear to be patronizing to them and counterproductive to the successful interview. The fraud offender does not do well with a positive confrontation which is a tactic normally utilized by scientific interviewers between the interview and interrogation process. It calls for a revelation that the investigation has concluded that the suspect had indeed committed the offense being investigated. While this tactic is effective for many types of offenders it is a detriment when interviewing a fraud offender.

The goal of the scientific interviewer is to get the truth. The fraud offender will tell enough of the truth to get them into the best possible position from a legal standpoint. The interviewer must draw details from the fraud offender as they will not be volunteered under most circumstances. Once the confession is obtained and recorded the interviewer must never relay a victorious attitude. The offender may have to be re-interviewed and it would interfere with the possibility of a second successful interview.

### **Interview, Fraud, Interrogation**