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Interviewing Techniques: Detecting Deception thru Statement Analysis and Body Language Observations



According to Groucho Marx,
"There's one way to find out if
a man is honest—ask him.
If he says, 'Yes,' you know he
is a crook."

What is Statement Analysis?

- Analyzing Statements to Make a Determination About Whether the Interviewee is Being Truthful or Deceptive

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Statements lacking conviction and evasive language
 - Sanjay Kumar, CEO of Computer Associates was asked about his company's business and accounting practices. He answered: There is "nothing wrong fundamentally" with the company's "business practices."
(Plead guilty to securities fraud)
- Inappropriate verb tense
 - Susan Smith: "My children wanted me. They needed me. And now I can't help them."
(Convicted of 2 counts of murder)

Scott Peterson Statements #1: Video



(Convicted of 2 Counts of Murder in 2003)

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Exercise #1: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements by Mr. Peterson indicate he may not be truthful?

Scott Peterson Statements

#1: Transcript



DIANE SAWYER: Tell me about the state of your marriage. What kind of marriage was it?

SCOTT PETERSON: The first word that comes to mind is, you know, glorious. I mean, we took care of each other very well. She was amazing. Is amazing.

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Not speaking in the first person
 - Skilling of Enron: "We are innocent. By 'we' I mean Enron Corp.," he said.
- Inconsistent use of pronouns
 - "I made the trades in question, but we did not have any insider information."
- Sigh or Snicker (Scott Peterson Video #2)

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Uses of the Word “No”
 - Several no’s or denials to a single question
 - Timing—before you finish your question or well after
 - ½ a “No” (i.e., “Nn..”)

Scott Peterson

Statements #2: Video



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Exercise #2: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements of Mr. Peterson indicates he may not be truthful?

Scott Peterson Statements

#2: Transcripts Part 1

- Sawyer: I think everybody at home wants the answer to the same question—"Did you murder your wife?"

Peterson: No. No. I did not. And I had absolutely nothing to do with her disappearance. And you use the word murder and right now every one is looking for a body. And that is the hardest thing because that is not a possible resolution for us. To use the word murder and—yes, and that is a possibility. It's not one we're ready to accept and it creeps in my mind late at night and early in the morning and during the day all we can think about is the right resolution to find her.

Scott Peterson Statements

#2: Transcript Part 2

Sawyer: But as you know, increasingly in the public, suspicion has turned on you.

Peterson: Yes (unintelligible)

Sawyer: Did you ever hit her? Did you ever injure her?

Peterson: No, No (unintelligible). Violence towards women is unapproachable. It is the most disgusting act, to me.

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Overuse of the word “Never”
 - Did you make any personal trades in 2009?
 - “I never make trades for myself. Never have and never will.”
- Failure to Answer Questions
 - Did you approve the trades?
 - “I always follow the firm’s policy on trades.”

Richard Nixon's and Jim Bakker's Statements



RICHARD NIXON: "I've made my mistakes but . . . I have never profited—never profited—from public service . . . And in all of my years in public life, I have never obstructed justice . . . Well, I'm *not* a crook." *(On August 5, 1974, tape recordings were found that implicated the president in the Watergate cover-up and of obstruction, and on August 8, 1974, the president admitted "some of [my judgments] were wrong".)*



JIM BAKKER: "There was never a misuse of funds here. There just never has been, never will be." *(Convicted of 24 Counts of Fraud on October 5, 1989).*

Exercise #3: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements of President Nixon and Reverend Bakker indicate they may not be truthful?

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Reminder—keep looking for:
 - Use of inappropriate verb tenses
 - Use of the word “we” to distance
 - Inconsistent use of pronouns

Bill Clinton's Statements: Video



(On December 11, 1998, President Clinton apologized for the "inappropriate relationship" with an intern and for "misleading the public.")

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Exercise #4: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements by President Clinton indicate he may not be truthful?

Bill Clinton's Statements: Transcript

CLINTON: "There is no improper relationship and I intend to cooperate with this inquiry, but that is not true."

LEHRER: "No improper relationship, define what you mean by that."

CLINTON: "Well, I think you know what it means. It means that there is not a sexual relationship, an improper sexual relationship or any other kind of improper relationship."

LEHRER: "You had no sexual relationship with this young woman?"

CLINTON: "There is not a sexual relationship. That is accurate. We are doing our best to cooperate here, but we don't know much yet, and that's all I can say now."

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Qualified Memory Lapses
 - “Not that I can think of...”
 - “Not as far as I know...”
 - “Not to my knowledge...”
 - “I don’t recall...”
- Opposites and Qualifiers
 - “You may not believe this, but...”
 - “I’m not the type of person...”
 - “This is going to sound like a lie, but...”
 - Credibility diversion: “just ask my [spouse, friend, etc.]”

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Religion
 - "Honest to God..."
 - "I swear to [any deity, relative, etc.]..."
 - "As God is my witness..."

Larry Craig Statements: Audio Clip



*(Plead guilty to misdemeanor disorderly
conduct in August 2007)*

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Exercise #5: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements by Senator Craig indicate he may not be truthful?

Larry Craig Statements: Transcript Part 1

- CRAIG: Did we bump? Ah, you said so, I don't recall that, but apparently we were close.
- OFFICER: Yeah, well your foot did touch mine, on my side of the stall.
- CRAIG: All right.
- OFFICER: Okay, And then with the hand. Um, how many times did you put your hand under the stall?
- CRAIG: I don't recall. I remember reaching down once. There was a piece of toilet paper back behind me and picking it up.
- OFFICER: Okay. Was your palm down or up when you were doing that?
- CRAIG: I don't recall.

Larry Craig Statements: Transcript Part 2

LATER IN THE INTERVIEW

- OFFICER: You don't recall
- CRAIG: I don't believe I did that. I don't.
- OFFICER. I saw. I saw.
- CRAIG of the stall divider: I don't do those things.

LATER IN THE INTERVIEW

- OFFICER: Unbelievable, unbelievable.
- CRAIG: I'm a respectable person and I don't do these kinds of...

Statement Analysis: Indicators of Deception

- Disruptions in speech pattern
 - Stammer, Stutter, Slur
- Buying time by repeating the question or willfully missing the point of the question
- Odd Statements can also indicate deception

Scott Peterson Statements #3: Video



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Exercise #6: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements by Mr. Peterson indicate he may not be truthful?

Scott Peterson Statements

#3: Transcript



- Sawyer: "Are you afraid police will arrest you?"

Peterson: "No. I know there is no basis. I had nothing to do with her disappearance so, there's no possible evidence or anything like that."

Susan Smith's Statements

#1: Video

(Convicted of 2 Counts of Murder July 29, 1995)

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Exercise #7: Analyzing Statements for Deception

- What statements of Mrs. Smith indicate she may not be truthful?

Susan Smith's Statements

#1: Transcript



Smith: "I would like to say to whoever has my children, that they please, I mean please bring 'em home to us where they belong."

Body Language

Body Language: Indicators of Deception

- Key: Determine normal truthful behavior and then look for CHANGES, especially repetitive actions when possibly lying.
- A former FINRA employee told me he was able to deduce when a certain firm executive was lying to him, because the executive would rub and brace his ring each time when lying.
- Other actions which may indicate lying:
 1. Perspiration
 2. Arm crossing
 3. Manipulation of clothing/item in hands
 4. Deep breaths
 5. Smirk instead of smile (see Scott Peterson video clip #2)
 6. Licking lips (due to dry mouth)
 7. Lack of eye contact
 8. Shifts in posture in response to difficult questions
 9. Inconsistent emotions (see Scott Peterson video clip #2)

Ted Haggard: Body Language

Exercise #8: What actions by Mr. Haggard may indicate untruthfulness?

(In November 2006, he resigned from all of his leadership positions after he admitted buying methamphetamine and committing other indiscretions).

Susan Smith: Body Language

Exercise #9: What actions by Ms. Smith may indicate untruthfulness?



SUSAN SMITH

**CONVICTED OF MURDER
8 MONTHS AFTER
THIS INTERVIEW**

 MSNBC

ANY QUESTIONS?