The Reid Technique Webinar

**SUMMARY**
The three-hour Reid Technique webinar is an excellent summary of the 40-hour instructor-led classroom course. It serves as both an introduction to the Reid Technique and as a refresher to the course.

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THE REID TECHNIQUE WEBINAR

THE REID TECHNIQUE DELIVERED RIGHT TO YOUR TRAINING ROOM.

> By LAW and ORDER Staff

The three-hour webinar covers the core of the 40-hour course. It starts with Behavior Symptom Analysis.
In their new webinar, the five-day Reid Technique of Interviewing and Interrogation for Investigators training course is condensed into three hours. The three-hour online training involves seven modules ranging from 15 to 45 minutes, with the average training block 25 minutes. Each module has a downloadable six- to eight-page workbook-style handout.

How good is the Reid Technique? In 1994, the United States Supreme Court referenced the Reid Technique in its Stansbury v. California decision. In 2004, the Supreme Court again referenced the Reid Technique in their decision on Missouri v. Seiber.

The online class covers the core of the Reid Technique: 1) Behavior Symptom Analysis, 2) Behavior Analysis Interview and 3) the Reid Nine Steps for Interrogation. Behavior Symptom Analysis is the verbal and non-verbal behavioral characteristics that distinguish a truthful person from one who is withholding or fabricating information.

The Behavior Analysis Interview involves the structure for the interview and how it is designed to get both factual and behavioral information, so as to suggest a direction for the investigation. The Nine Steps is the interrogation process that follows the interview process. These are tactics and techniques designed to obtain an admission of guilt.

While it may seem obvious, the Reid Technique is in fact a technique, not a general approach. The technique is quite structured: the right questions asked in the right order and at the right time. There is nothing free-wheeling here, nothing informal, nothing done by the seat of the pants of gut feel. It is as it says: a specific, well-developed technique, not a general philosophy. It is an easy-to-understand and an easy-to-do technique.

During the webinar, the speed of speech is about right, and so is the emphasis and enunciation.

During the presentation, there is a continual reference to what page the speaker is on, and what bullet points to fill in.

There is no blah-blah. In fact, the content is delivered rapidly enough that the summary at the end of each module is very helpful.

The handout becomes both a refresher and a critical resource. The live interviews are well-done, the video clips are extremely good. The narrator carefully follows the handout. At the end of each module, the major points are repeated and summarized.

**Interview Then Interrogate**

Using the Reid Technique, the “interview” is totally separate from the “interrogation.” They each use drastically different approaches. The interview must be done first, and there must be some kind of time gap between the interview and the interrogation.

The interview is completely non-accusatory. It is a question and answer time where the detective does 20 percent of the talking and the suspect does 80 percent of the talking. The questions are both investigative in nature and behavior provoking in nature. The word “provoke” is important. Some of the questions are designed to be uncomfortable for the suspect—asked so the detective can observe the non-verbal behavior.

The interrogation, in fact, starts off with a direct accusation of guilt. It is not at all a Q&A time. Instead, it is an uninterrupted monologue by the detective. The detective offers the suspect a face-saving way out, offers the suspect a “good reason” for the suspect to have committed the crime. This “good reason” is called a “theme” and it is the very core of the Reid Technique.

**Behavior Symptom Analysis**

Over the past 67 years, Reid practitioners have been able to identify 1) verbal and non-verbal characteristics of truthful people, 2) verbal and non-verbal characteristics of deceptive people, and 3) verbal and non-verbal characteristics of both truthful and deceptive people.

What most truthful people say (verbal) and do (non-verbal) is different than what most deceptive people say and do. This block of training also includes: 1) factors that may influence the reliability of the behavior symptoms, and 2) establishing a baseline of a normal behavior pattern.

**Non-Verbal Cues**

The real problems for most detectives are the things that are common to both truthful and deceptive people. Both can be nervous or fearful. Both can be angry or quiet. That said, truthful people are more likely to be composed, concerned, cooperative, spontaneous, open and authentic. Deceptive people are more likely to be overly anxious, unconcerned or bored, defensive, overly helpful or polite, evasive, and guarded in the words they pick.

In addition to these different attitudes between truthful and deceptive people, other differences exist. Truthful and deceptive people have different postures and also make different posture changes. The truthful and deceptive people use their hands in different ways to illustrate, demonstrate or emphasize their response. The online version has role play examples of each.

Each group has different stress or tension relieving gestures, i.e., times during key questions when the person’s hands come in contact with his/her own head, mouth, face, hair or clothes. The eye contact may be different between the groups but a baseline during normal, non-confrontational conversations must be established first.

In all of these, the entire group of activities must be evaluated as a whole—no single stand-alone behavior or pattern of speech is an indication of truthfulness or deception. So the real meaning of what was said by the suspect is a combination of what words they chose to use and how they acted as they spoke those words.

**Verbal Cues**

Truthful and deceptive people may respond with different words and in different ways. Truthful people deny in general, overall terms while deceptive people may deny specific acts or specific parts of a crime.

Truthful people have a reasonable memory while deceptive people have a memory of extremes. The deceptive person will remember something when nothing out of the ordinary happened to make that event memorable.

The truthful person may use harsh words like “steal” while the deceptive person may use downplaying words like “take.” The truthful person may be direct and spontaneous in making answers while the deceptive person may be evasive and delayed with answers, even ask-
The Reid Technique is just that, a technique: asking the right questions in the right order at the right time.

Investigative Interview
This is the actual process for how to conduct the initial investigative interview. The training block covers the three kinds of questions. The non-threatening questions include biographic information, employment, activities, and casual conversation. During this time, a normal conduct, baseline is documented. The person gets settled in, and perhaps an initial rapport is established.

The investigative questions are next, and these apply regardless to witness, victim and suspect. Ask open-ended questions and allow the person to tell his/her story.

This is the part where the subject does 80 percent of the talking. Ask questions to clarify details. Ask questions to get information not covered. Don’t interrupt. Allow the subject to tell the entire, “pure” version. Prompt him/her to go on, to add detail.

The behavior provoking questions are different. These can be punishment questions like, “What do you think should happen to the person who committed this crime?” Truthful and deceptive people will answer these series of innocent questions in drastically different ways. For example, on the punishment questions, the truthful person will give appropriately strong, throw-the-book-at-them answers. The deceptive person will offer a softer punishment, one that may depend on circumstances, one where paying back a thief or a warning or an apology is the essence of the punishment.

Other provoking questions include the topics of a second chance, whether the subject ever even thought about doing such a thing, how he/she thinks the investigation will turn out, and how the subject would explain incriminating evidence if such evidence is developed. With each behavior provoking question, the truthful person and the deceptive person will respond and react in drastically different ways.

Nine Steps
Reid is famous for the Nine Steps of Interrogation. However, they are quick to point out that these hinge on the three segments of questions given during the Behavioral Analysis Interview. The interrogation depends on, and is conditional on, what was learned during the interview.

Since this is a three-hour version of the 40-hour course, only Steps One, Two, Three and Seven of the Nine Steps are covered. These are arguably the most important ones. The other Steps are common to any interrogation method.

Step One is a direct, positive confrontation where the suspect is clearly accused of guilt. It is a calm, non-nonsense, “The investigation shows that you committed the crime.” Importantly, the detective waves off, shuts down any denial, and instead immediately moves onto Step Two—the theme development.

The theme, or good excuse, or face-saving reason, is by far the most important phase of the Reid Technique. In a monologue, the detective will propose or suggest reasons and motives as to why the suspect committed the crime. This can be an attempt to place blame on another person or a set of circumstances. The whole idea is to develop a theme for WHY the suspect did the act, not IF he did it.

Step Three is handling denials before they can be fully voiced. The more the suspect denies the act, the harder it is to get him/her to admit to it later. Use verbal statements and non-verbal gestures. Step Four, overcoming objections, is related to handling denials. Step Five, keeping the suspect’s attention, the related and Step Six handling passive moods are all briefly covered.

Step Seven is presenting an alternative question. This is active persuasion and it includes a supportive statement. The question offers the suspect two incriminating choices, one with a good reason, one with a bad reason. Either answer is an admission. The detective uses the supportive statement to tell the suspect that he/she thinks it was done for the good, face-saving reason.

“Was the robbery planned out, or just an impulse, a spur of the moment? I am sure it was an impulse.” “Has this happened several times before, or was this the first time? I am sure this was the first time.”

Step Eight follows the suspect’s admission of involvement in the crime. The detective asks for details of the crime he/she just admitted doing, something only the guilty would know. Step Nine is simply turning the verbal confession into a written confession.

Conduct a non-accusatory interview. Observe the verbal and non-verbal responses. Develop a “theme,” which is a good reason for the suspect to have committed the crime. Shutdown denials. Ask the alternative questions, which are two incriminating choices, one that is face-saving, one that is not.

Reader Service Number 201.

Ed. Note: Heads-up for the instructor who is setting up or moderating the online presentation: the main narration is monophonic. However, most of the role-play case studies are stereo. The question asked by the detective comes through one speaker/channel. Be sure your laptop picks up both. Do a test on Part Seven to be sure.