

Investigating a murder with forensic psychology



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Week 1: Introduction to the case

Introduction

Welcome to *Investigating a murder with forensic psychology*. In this free course, you will take the role of a detective investigating a murder. Alongside two fictional detectives, you will work with the Senior Investigating Officer to solve a complex criminal case. You will explore the way that suspects are dealt with during a police investigation and examine whether and how psychology can help the police with investigating such crimes.

Because the course involves a murder (albeit a fictional one), the topic under question is of course sensitive and you should take time to consider whether or not the content is likely to affect you personally. If you enjoy crime dramas or documentaries about policing then the course is likely to suit you, but if you find the idea of following a murder investigation upsetting, it might not be the right course for you.

We must also warn you that in some of the videos you may see the characters in the case study use swear words. This is to stay true to the characters in the scenario (and the pressures they find themselves under) but also because learning points are made throughout the course about dealing with verbal aggression and anger.

1 Psychology and investigations

In the course you will encounter a number of important psychological skills, such as how to develop rapport with people in difficult situations, how to plan interviews effectively, how to assess the credibility of what people tell you and how everyday human thought processes can lead to biased decision making.

You may have joined this course because you have studied our previous [Forensic psychology course](#), which focused on eyewitnesses. This current course has a different focus – it looks at suspects of crime, and different psychological content – but you may recognise the investigation team. DS Sund and DI Bullet are both still involved in this course, for example.

The course is specifically designed to focus on psychology rather than the intricacies of the policing system, recognising that our learners will be based in a range of jurisdictions with different legal processes. As a result, while the fictional case is based in England, the course is not intended to be an accurate portrayal of all legal processes and rules within England and Wales.

1.1 Meet the psychological team

This course was written by two academic psychologists, [Zoë Walkington](#) and [Graham Pike](#), who you will meet in the video below and listen to them explain how the course will work and what to expect as a learner. They will appear at various points in later weeks to provide further information and discuss the psychology of the investigation.

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1.2 Fictional detectives

It is very likely that you will have experience of policing and criminal investigations through reading or watching crime fiction, and this experience is likely to lead to expectations about what happens in an investigation. Do you think these expectations might affect how

you approach the current case? To start, think about who your favourite detectives are. They might come from novels, drama series or films.

Zoë's favourite detective is DCI Gene Hunt, the maverick and politically incorrect detective from the show *Life on Mars* played by Philip Glenister. This is partly because of the humour that is to be gained from Gene Hunt's 1970s brutal policing methods being juxtaposed against more modern expectations of policing. It is also because, like many fictional detectives, Hunt is depicted as intuitive and instinctive, and it is enjoyable to believe that these are important traits in real detectives. In fact, as you will discover in this course, being curious, open minded and resilient are probably much more important traits.



Graham's favourite detective is Inspector Sara Lund from the Danish drama series *The Killing* ('*Forbrydelsen*'), played by the immensely talented Sofie Gråbøl and famous for wearing Nordic wool jumpers. Lund is dedicated and relentless in pursuit of her case, and although she has a clear disdain for policing politics and will not let them get in her way, she is psychologically astute and careful to follow the evidence, using techniques that do not distort it. She is not so careful with her personal life, where her emotional distance and prioritisation of her work cause problems in her relationships. The combination of repression and passion make her a fascinating character, and her obsession with the investigation is an irresistible force that carries the viewer along.



As you find out more about DI Bullet and DS Sund, the detectives in this course, you may begin to see the influence of Zoë and Graham's favourite detectives in how their characters were developed.

Think of who your own favourite detectives are and do pay attention to how they have shaped your expectations of how police investigations are conducted and also what the 'right' way of doing things might be. Whether you are a Gene Hunt, anything goes if it gets a result, or favour a more play-by-the-rules approach like Sara Lund, may well affect how you perceive the crime and investigation as it unfolds.

In the activity that follows you will think further about how your expectations might be influenced by media depictions of policing.

Activity 1

Do you think that what you might want from a police detective will differ depending on how you are involved in the investigation? To explore this question further, have a go at the two polls below.

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Interactive content is not available in this format.



Did you choose different detectives depending on whether you were the victim or suspect? If so, reflect on what it was about the detectives that made you choose them given the scenario.

2 Police briefing and timeline



Many fictional depictions of investigations include a scene, often near the start, where the lead detective briefs their colleagues on the initial details of the case. Not only is this a very useful narrative tool for providing the audience with a useful summary but also something that is a routine part of real police investigations. You will keep to this convention by starting our investigation with a briefing. In this section, you'll start by meeting the Senior Investigating Officer (or SIO) who will introduce you to the case.

Timelines, in which all of the evidence and information obtained is mapped out to show the order, and timing, in which events occurred are routinely used by the police in a real investigation. Following the briefing from the SIO you will learn about the importance of using timelines in criminal cases and also get to create your own.

2.1 Senior Investigating Officer – police briefing

In this video you will meet Lyndon Harris, the SIO for the investigation, who will provide you with a police briefing on what is known so far about the death of the victim Leonard Anderson.

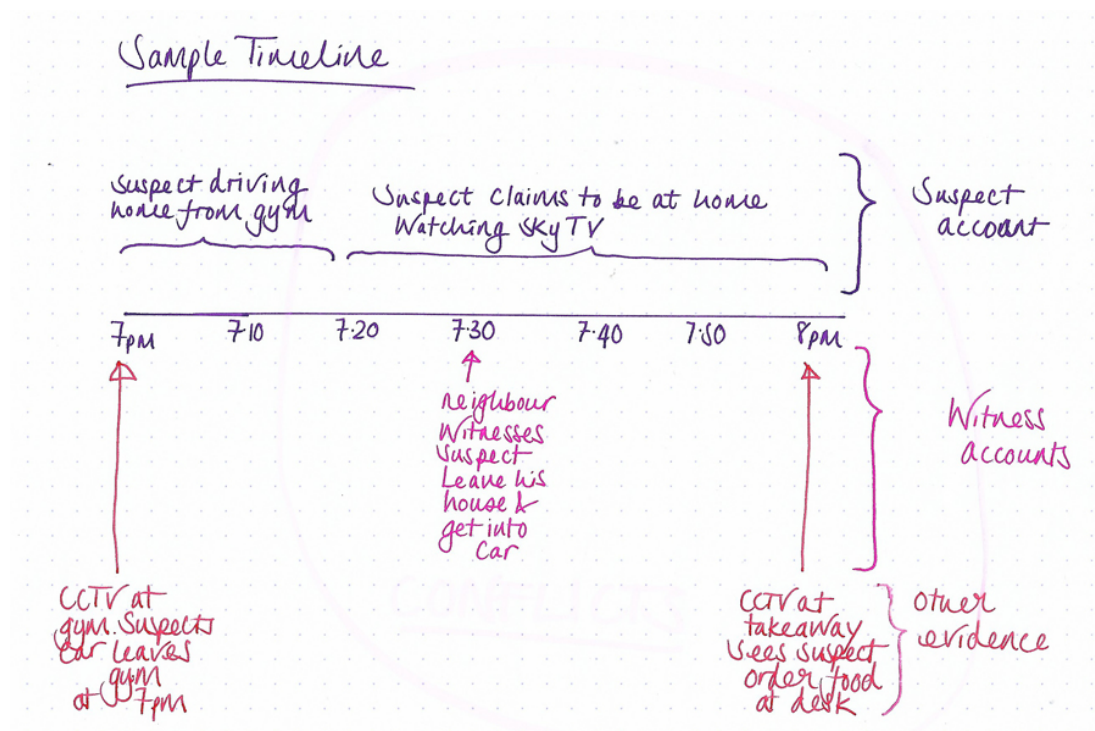
Make notes on the information, as you would if you were a detective being briefed on the crime. These will be useful to you later in an activity where you start to create a timeline of events.

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2.2 Using timelines in investigations

The timeline of events is an important tool that police use in an investigation. It allows the officers to establish when key events related to the crime happened.



A timeline will include both physical and digital evidence (such as CCTV footage, payment receipts and phone calls, for example) as well as evidence from the people that might

have been involved in the crime (including suspect and witness accounts). It is a simple way for investigators to keep track of the information that is known about the criminal event in a way that allows them to develop lines of enquiry, and also enables the investigation team to notice where there are discrepancies in the accounts of what happened.

A timeline will start at a certain date and time that is relevant to the offence and will stop at a certain date and time. The timeline will run from the left-hand side of the page with the first significant time, through to the right-hand side of the page with the final time. It will record all the information about what happened during that period and will be organised by the source of that information. Sometimes colour will be used to organise the source of the information to make the timeline simpler to interpret (for example all the witness statement information might be in pink, all the suspect information in purple and all the other evidence in red).

2.3 Creating and using your own timeline

Now you will start to create your own timeline for the criminal incident you heard about in Section 2.1. Exactly how you create your timeline is up to you. You can create it physically on a large sheet of paper or digitally using programs like Visio, PowerPoint or Word. You can be creative, and make it visually interesting by using lots of different colours, or you can keep it very simple.

Activity 2

Once you have decided on a method for creating your timeline, you should start by plotting the information you obtained from the video police briefing by SIO Lyndon Harris. This will start to form a visual representation of the information that is currently available to you.

Bear in mind when creating your timeline that at this moment you only have a VERY basic backbone of information, and there will be additional details and further evidence to add as you progress through the course, so leave plenty of space.

The SIO has recommended that your timeline should start from 5pm on Sunday 9 February 2020 (on the left-hand side) and run through until midday on Tuesday 11 February 2020 (on the right-hand side). If you are drawing this timeline on paper, it is recommended that you use it in landscape orientation, which will allow you to make the best use of the space.

You will return to your timeline several times during the course, so please keep it safe, whether it is a digital document or a sheet of paper. Over time, you may start to be able to identify discrepancies by using the information on your timeline. For example, a suspect in the investigation may claim to have been in one place, while several witnesses claim to have seen them in another, or there may be discrepancies with digital information and what people are telling officers in interview. The ability to identify these discrepancies quickly is one of the reasons timelines are so useful.

3 The initial witness interview



Shortly you will get the chance to see the first interview that is conducted as part of the investigation, which is a 'witness interview' and conducted in quite a different way to those you will see later in the course that are 'suspect interviews'. While watching the witness interview you will observe the approach and technique used by the detective and use this to evaluate the interview and to decide whether or not you think the witness is credible.

3.1 Introducing the police team

The investigation that you will follow involves you working with a team of investigating officers. You have already met SIO Lyndon Harris in the police briefing. As the Senior Investigating Officer, Lyndon is responsible for the senior-level decision making in the case, and the rest of the team will report to him.

The other officers in the case are Detective Sergeant (DS) Lara Sund and Detective Inspector (DI) Jake Bullet. In UK Police Forces ranks are structured as Constable, Sergeant, Inspector, Chief Inspector through to Chief Constable (who leads the force).

DI Jake Bullet



DI Jake Bullet represents the 'old school' of policing. He thinks of himself as a highly intuitive police officer who works from gut feel rather than an evidence base. He tends to be domineering in personality, preferring talking to listening. He is highly motivated and enthusiastic, although he is not always a fan of more modern and more ethical policing standards.

DS Lara Sund



DS Lara Sund is much more receptive than her counterpart to the idea of evidence-based policing. Evidence-based policing is the use of approaches to policing that rely on a proven evidence base, rather than following a particular hunch regardless of the supporting evidence. Lara is open minded and curious in her outlook and is happy to listen and learn in her approach to her job. In the next section, you will get to see an interview where Lara demonstrates some of these qualities.

Because this is a fictional case, Lara and Jake will undertake a range of duties that real detectives would not actually do. For example, conducting both witness and suspect interviews (in real life detectives are trained as specialists in one or the other).

Of course, there is a much wider team of police officers involved in the investigation alongside this core team, such as the officers who attend at the scene, the Crime Scenes staff and the staff from the forensic science service, all of whom have a role to play.

There are other ways in which some of our material may differ from real life. For example, because we want you to really concentrate on the psychological communication between particular individuals in this investigation, we haven't included solicitors and second interviewers in our interviews. More often than not in real police suspect interviews, there are four people in the room: the lead interviewer, the co-interviewer, the suspect and their solicitor. This has been simplified in each interview, so that you will only see interviews with lead interviewers, and with no solicitors present.

3.2 DS Sund interviews Neale Anderson

As you learned in the SIO briefing, Neale Anderson, the son of victim Leonard Anderson, is being interviewed by DS Sund as a significant witness.

As you will be aware, because Neale was the first person to attend the scene, his account is particularly important, and he may have useful observations that could provide clues to solving the murder. However, the nature of the situation he found himself in (which was obviously very stressful) may also have interfered with his ability to easily recall the events of the day.

Part of the purpose of this interview is for Sund to allow Neale the best possible opportunity to remember as much as he can about the day in question. By doing this, she will generate as many leads as possible that might be useful to the investigation.

During the following activity, you should watch this interview carefully, paying close attention to the behaviour of both the interviewer and the interviewee. By 'behaviour' we don't just mean the non-verbal communication of the interactants, we also mean paying attention to the content of what they both say.

Activity 3

While watching the video, you should attend to, and make notes about, how DS Sund questions Neale. It might be helpful to consider the following questions:

- Does she seem open minded towards him or does she appear accusatory?
- Does she allow him the opportunity to remember by offering him different ways of accessing his memories of the day?

As you observe the interview also think about the credibility of the witness. Does his account appear credible and true? Are there any signs you can spot that he might not be telling the truth about what happened that day?

Note down any other observations you have about the interaction. Everything that you observe may turn out to be relevant and could prove important as the case develops.

Video content is not available in this format.



3.3 Evaluation of DS Sund's interview



Now that you've had a chance to watch the interview between DS Sund and Neale, and to make notes about their interaction, you probably have an opinion about how both behaved. Complete the activity below. You will then look at some of the things that struck Zoë and Graham, as psychological experts, as interesting in the next section.

Activity 4

Gather your notes from the interview together and write a brief summary of your thoughts on how the interview was conducted. As a way of structuring this you may want to focus the points you make on the following questions:

1. How does DS Sund behave towards the interviewee?
2. What do you think of Neale's behaviour towards DS Sund?

3.4 Observations about DS Sund and the witness



The following are observations from Zoë and Graham about the interview.

Observations regarding Sund

There are a number of positive ways in which DS Sund behaves towards Neale, the witness. She sets up the interview by asking him to report in as much detail as he can, and she asks him to imagine himself back at the scene. She hands him control over what he talks about, making clear that he is in charge of where the conversation will go, by saying 'I will try not to interrupt you, or ask you further questions'. All these things are likely to help increase the amount of information he can remember, and increase the amount of information he will therefore report.

In addition, she is empathic to his situation: 'I understand this might be difficult for you, Neale. Just take your time. And if you need a break at any point, please just ask.' Also throughout the interview, while she does interrupt him once, to clarify an important point, she generally lets him talk.

Observations regarding Neale

Neale appears to want to speak to the officers and to help them, he is willing to speak. There were some things that appeared to be unusual about his testimony, although it is important to remember he does state that things were a bit of a blur.

For example:

- He spoke about his father as if he were still alive
- He thought his father may be unwell but flagged down the police rather than calling an ambulance
- He said he did not know his father had a mobile phone
- He did not have keys to his father's house despite living locally

3.5 Credibility of the witness

Think back to the video you watched in Section 2.2 and consider the points you may have recorded in your notes and that were made in the previous sections about the interview

and the behaviour of the witness. Overall, taking into account his apparent willingness to cooperate and also any oddities in his account, do you think he is credible (essentially telling the truth) or not credible (and that what he says is suspicious)?

Activity 5

Use the poll below to indicate your evaluation of Neale.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



4 Detecting deception



An area that has attracted a lot of research interest within psychology is whether or not it is possible to tell when someone is telling the truth or lying.

This psychological research area has obvious application to the criminal justice system because if we were able to accurately tell if someone is lying, or telling the truth, it would be very helpful and save a great deal of time and money!

In this section you will have a go at detecting deception using a lie-detection scenario which has frequently been used, over the years, in psychological research.

Activity 6

Through the link below you will explore an interactive in which you will use your skills of observation to assess whether or not someone is lying or telling the truth about the theft of £10. Each of the people you see interviewed were left alone in a room with a bag with £10 inside and each had the opportunity to steal the money. Each person will deny taking the money, but some of them actually have the money in their pocket as they are making that denial – so they are lying.

Complete the interactive to see if you can identify the liars and truth tellers: [Detecting deception](#) (open the link in a new tab or window so you can easily navigate your way back to the course).

When you have finished the task, return here and look at the questions below.

1. Was your estimate of how easy it is to spot when someone's lying to you accurate?
2. Did you find the task easy or difficult?
3. What cues did you use?

4.1 Psychological theory and research on detecting deception



It would be very beneficial if there were ways in which we were able to detect deception within the criminal justice system. However, as you have learned in the detecting deception task you have just carried out, decades of psychological research suggests that when using our skills of observation, we are at around chance level at detecting deception. This means that we would perform just as well on deciding after each clip if the person is lying or telling the truth by tossing a coin! Also, importantly for our investigation, the research suggests that even in professional groups such as police officers, people are still at chance level when trying to detect deceit (Vrij and Mann, 2001).

We also learned in the deception task that people's confidence and accuracy regarding their decisions about deception do not correlate (Vrij and Mann, 2001). This may be particularly problematic in the area of criminal justice, where people such as police officers may appear confident that they know someone is lying, but the research evidence shows that confidence doesn't mean that they are actually accurate in the lie-detection decisions they make.

The psychological research suggests that when given a lie-detection task, most lay people tend to be better at detecting truths than lies – this is often referred to as a 'truth bias' (Levine, Park and McCornack, 1999). This human tendency to assume people are telling the truth makes sense a lot of the time. It would be pretty exhausting to always assume in our everyday interactions that someone might be lying to us, and so as a form of decision rule it probably saves us a lot of processing effort to hold a systematic bias that we are being told the truth.

Interestingly though, research has found that professional lie detectors (e.g. law enforcement officers or judges, for example) do not tend to hold this bias towards assuming people are telling the truth. Instead, they hold a lie bias (Bond and De Paulo, 2006) which, it has been suggested, may be caused by a generalised suspicion resulting from their professions (Masip et al., 2005).

In the next activity you can consider how your own responses might relate to these research findings.

Activity 7

By looking at your own results from the detecting deception activity you can work out whether or not you a) displayed a truth bias and 2) were better at judging lies or truths.

1. From your results, how many out of the eight did you think were telling the truth (regardless of whether or not you were correct)?
If you thought that more than half were telling the truth then you displayed a truth bias.
2. How many of the liars did you get correct (Person A, B, G and H) compared with the truth tellers (Person C, D, E and F)?
If you correctly spotted more of the truth tellers than the liars then you were better at detecting truths than lies – though note that simply by making more ‘truth’ decisions than ‘lie’ decisions’ (in other words displaying a truth bias) you will appear to be more accurate with truths than lies.

4.2 Applying detecting deception research

You might already have realised that there are problems with applying an activity such as the detecting deception activity to a policing setting such as the investigation that you are following. These problems include the fact that the consequences to the people lying or telling the truth in the activity we created were quite minor. In psychological research, this is referred to as involving ‘low-stake’ lies. First, the people were only involved in the theft of a small sum of money. Additionally, in the scenario we presented you with, if they convinced the interviewer they weren’t lying when they were, they won a small reward, but the incentives for truth tellers were non-existent and there were no negative consequences for those people who lied and were caught by the interviewer. Obviously, it would have been unethical to impose any real punishment on the participants in this task. This is very different to the situation facing Neale in the investigation you are following. If he is caught lying, the criminal justice implications would be incredibly serious and so these types of lies would be referred to as ‘high-stake’ lies. For example, if Neale has lied to the police – even if he isn’t involved in any way in this crime – he could be convicted of a public justice offence such as perverting the course of justice.

Some psychologists would argue that while cues to deception might be seen in high-stake lies, they might not be seen where the lies are much lower stake. That said, in 2011, Vrij and Mann carried out an interesting study to test this idea. They showed police officers clips of ‘pleaders’ (i.e. people who appeared on TV to plead with the public about the whereabouts of their missing relatives but who were subsequently found to have killed them). Surely these completely realistic high-stake lies would be detected? Unfortunately, not – they found an accuracy rate of just 50%.

Research on detecting deception has identified an important flaw in how many people try to spot lies, which is that they tend to rely on cues to deception that are not diagnostically useful. For example, they may focus on nonverbal behaviours such as eye gaze, which do not actually correlate with deceptive behaviour (Vrij and Mann, 2001).

Interestingly, though, research has shown that the person carrying out the interview is perhaps less well equipped to observe when someone is lying than someone who is just observing, just as you are able to when following this investigation. As the interviewer, DS Sund is mentally very busy during the interview. She will be trying to think about the questions she needs to ask as well as concentrating on what Neale is saying, meaning that she is under what psychologists would call ‘high cognitive load’. In their research, Buller, Strzyzewski and Hunsaker (1991) found that observers perform better than interviewers in lie-detection tasks, probably because they are less mentally busy.

There are areas of lie-detection research that have shown some promise. For example, Shaw et al. (2013) found that asking someone to recall something out of its normal temporal order (in other words the order in which things actually happened) meant that liars tended to provide less detail than truth tellers. This is likely to be because liars rehearse events in normal temporal order and unexpected questions from interviewers such as, 'What happened just before that?' mean that liars have to inhibit what really happened as well as retrieve imagined data. Having to do all that at the same time requires a high cognitive load meaning the person is only able to provide short answers with limited detail. Therefore, asking unexpected questions is one possible way to differentiate truths from lies.

In summary, there is a lot of evidence to suggest that people are not that effective at detecting deception from their observations of either verbal or nonverbal behaviour. It also doesn't seem to make a difference if they are a police officer or not. For this reason police officers need to find evidence regarding whether or not people are lying, rather than just rely on their sense that someone might be.

5 New witness statements



SIO Harris has now received two new witness statements that have been gathered as part of the ongoing investigation. These comprise a statement from one of the officers who attended at the scene (Sandra Ashton, whom Neale flagged down in the street) and a statement from Coral Gledhill, who lives next door to Leonard Anderson, the victim. You should read both statements with care, paying attention to all of the details. Make note of any detail that you think is relevant to the case, and also bear in mind that after reading these statements you will be asked to update your investigation timeline.

[Witness statement: Coral Gledhill](#)

[Witness statement: Sandra Ashton](#)

As you learned earlier, it is important in investigations that new information is added to the investigative timeline. In the following activity you will update the timeline you have already created.

Activity 8

Go back to the timeline that you created earlier and add to it any other information that you have picked up from these witness statements. You can add general notes on what each person was doing between particular times to help you get a sense of what was going on when the body was discovered. While many of these general notes might not seem a great deal of investigative use, they will help familiarise you with the case in all its detail. You may also want to read through the witness statements again.

6 Summary of Week 1

In this video, the two detectives, Sund and Bullet, brief SIO Lyndon Harris on their progress on the case so far.

Video content is not available in this format.



Next week you will pick up the case after SIO Lyndon Harris has had time to deliberate on the evidence provided by his detective team and to decide what actions to take to progress the case.

You can now go to [Week 2](#).

Week 2: Police suspect interviews

Introduction



Welcome to Week 2! In this week, as the case develops and gets a little more complex, you will start to learn about the psychology of how the police interview people suspected of committing criminal acts. You will see that this differs from how they interview witnesses. You will learn a little about the history of how police suspect interviews have been carried out and will learn about the contributions psychology has made to police practice in this area

Following the briefing that you saw at the end of last week SIO Harris has decided that Neale should be arrested, so this week you will be planning and preparing for Neale's interview as a suspect.

While last week Neale was interviewed as a witness, his status has now changed. A change of status from witness to suspect or from suspect to witness can happen in investigations, as it can become apparent that someone who initially is suspected of committing the crime is in fact a witness and vice versa. This change of status means some changes for the interviews. For example, someone being interviewed as a suspect has to be given the standard legal caution.

In your journey through this week, you will not only think carefully about the topics you might want to cover in the interview with Neale, but will also learn a little about the interpersonal dynamics of police suspect interviews.

1 Types of interview



While there have been a lot of technological advances in the area of criminal justice, there is still a huge role for interviewing in establishing 'what happened' in criminal offences.

Crimes are often solved by gathering information from several human sources, as well as using forensic evidence, CCTV and other sources of evidence. Suspect interviews allow a useful and flexible way of obtaining information that enables the police to establish whether or not someone is likely to have been involved with a crime.

In a police interview, information must be obtained professionally in ways that can be used in court, otherwise the investigation will potentially be compromised. Good quality investigative interviews allow investigators to gather relevant material which can either support the prosecution or ensure that an innocent person is not tried for a crime that they did not commit (College of Policing, 2023). The need to adhere to evidence obtained in legally permissible ways is part of the reason why police suspect interviews are such a challenge to carry out, and there are many regulations that the police must abide by to ensure that the evidence can be used, and is obtained both ethically and fairly. Of course, in different legal systems, the rules differ regarding what is acceptable for the evidence to be used in court. For example, the legal rules of how interviews must be carried out are quite different in the UK and in the USA.

Because the investigation we are following regarding the murder of Leonard Anderson is in England, we will continue using the legal systems of England and Wales for this investigation. However, you should bear in mind that if you are a learner studying this course in a different jurisdiction, different rules might apply.

1.1 The introduction of PACE in England and Wales

Before 1984, in England and Wales, interviews were governed by 'Judges' Rules', in which an account of what was discussed in the interview was given from the memory of the interviewing officer. Interviews were not tape recorded and so no 'true' record of them

existed. From a psychological viewpoint, this approach would (in the present day) be perceived as problematic. First, of course, this would allow officers to lie about what the conversation included if they wanted to do so. However, even for officers trying to do a good and honest job (which would be the majority of them) this system can introduce a lot of errors. Errors are likely to be particularly problematic as interviewers are under high cognitive load (i.e. they are extremely mentally busy) because they not only have to think of their next question, they also have to pay attention to the information the suspect is giving them. If they also had to commit all of the conversation to memory, it is very likely that selective recall consistent with their main theory about what happened would take place.

The Police and Criminal Evidence Act (introduced in 1984), known by the acronym PACE, is legislation that was brought in to regulate and monitor interviewing in England and Wales and to protect the rights of suspects. It introduced the right for all suspects to have a legal advisor present, and phased in the compulsory audio recording of all suspect interviews.

The recording of police suspect interviews also allowed for a much greater proliferation of research into this area by psychologists, which in turn led to an awareness that some of the practices taking place in interviews were less than ideal. In the early 1990s, the national Association of Chief Police Officers and the Home Office (the government ministry responsible for security matters) working with experienced detectives utilised some of the psychological literature on this topic to develop what is called the PEACE approach – which had at its heart the desire to obtain as much information as possible from witnesses or suspects (Bull, 2013).

The PEACE model is based on the idea that successful interviews don't just come about as a result of investigative genius on behalf of the interviewer, but rather are built and managed in a way that is consistent and logical. It is also based on the idea that such important conversations should be planned for in advance, as well as evaluated at the end.

1.2 The PEACE model

- **Planning and preparation** – which includes the pre-interview preparations.
- **Engage and explain** – which refers to all the relevant introductions, how to get the interview started and explain the rights and ground rules regarding the interview.
- **Account, clarify and challenge** – which refers to obtaining the suspect's version of 'what happened', clarifying any elements of this and if required challenging this account (if for example it is found to be inconsistent with other evidence).
- **Closure** – which refers to closing the interview in a professional manner so the suspect, solicitor and all parties are clear about the close of the interview and what will happen next.
- **Evaluation** – which refers to looking at what the interview achieved and how it fits into the investigation as a whole, as well as the interview practitioner reflecting on their own performance and learning (perhaps obtaining feedback from peers or managers).

While you won't be able to follow all aspects of this model in the course, you will notice how various activities you will undertake relate back to this model. Shortly you will plan an interview with Neale, i.e. you will be working on the **P** part of the PEACE model. The activity will be to make a plan of how you would approach interviewing Neale if you were the interviewing officer, or were working on the team with Sund and Bullet. However, first

we will briefly introduce the idea of the legal caution, which must be given to all suspects at the start of their interview.

1.3 The legal caution

As mentioned earlier, a key difference between interviewing Neale as a suspect and as a witness is that for the suspect interview, Neale needs to be given the legal caution. This is because his answers must be capable of being admissible evidence. The legal caution is: 'You do not have to say anything. But it may harm your defence if you do not mention when questioned something which you later rely on in court. Anything you do say may be given in evidence.'



2 Planning topics for Neale's interview



The planning and preparation part of the PEACE model (among other things) involves making a written plan of the interview, including important topics and potential questions. In the following activity you will start to make your own plan for the interview of Neale.

Activity 1

Imagine that you will be working with Sund and Bullet, helping them to prepare for the interview.

Topics

Think about the different topics you might want to explore with Neale. Your timeline might give you useful information to go on here. You will notice that in the PEACE model, the A stands for 'Account, clarify and challenge' and bearing in mind that you are planning for the first suspect interview, you will want to concentrate more on the 'account' aspects (rather than the clarify and challenge aspects which might come later on in the interview if they are considered relevant). You will need to decide which you feel are the topics you would like to question Neale about. Asking for the account essentially means getting the suspect to give their account of what they were doing, and their involvement (or lack of involvement) in the crime in question.

Questions

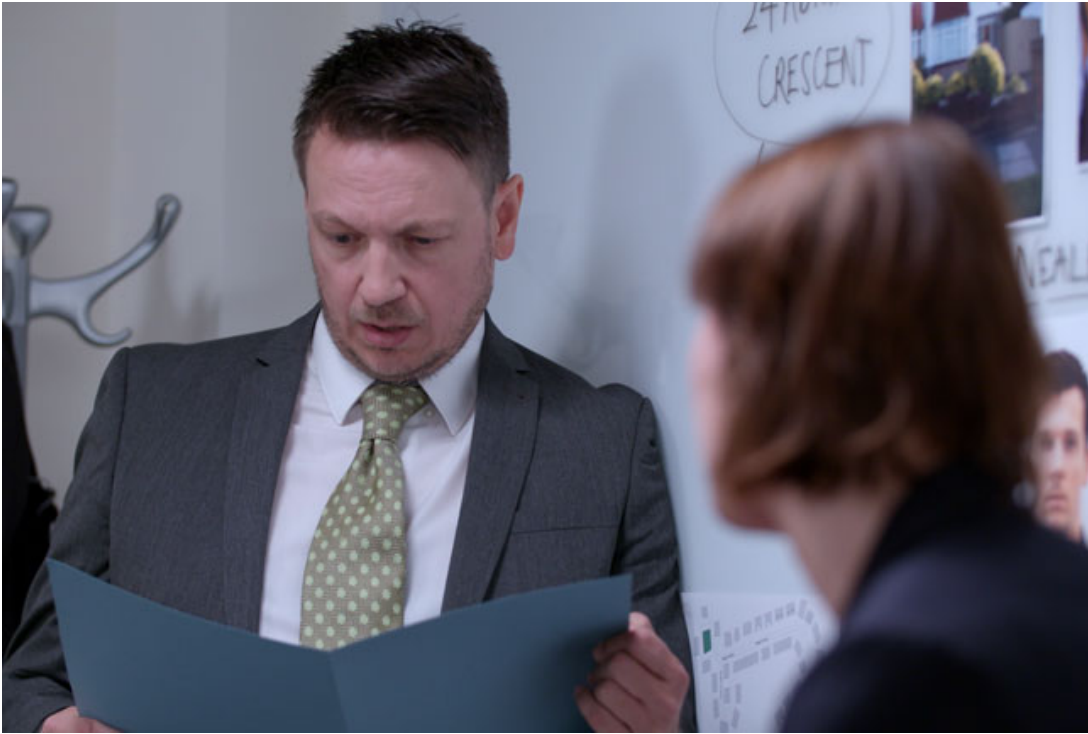
Within each topic, think about the most important questions that you want to ask. Don't worry about how you will phrase these questions as you will move on to this shortly. At this stage concentrate on the content of the question.

HINT: by topic, we mean a broad area of interest, for example one topic might be Neale's previous relationship with his father, and three questions within that topic might be:

- How would Neale describe his relationship with his father?
- How close was the relationship between Neale and his father?
- Would he describe the relationship as problematic?

Make a plan of the topics and questions you might like to cover. Make a record of your plan either digitally or just note it on a piece of paper.

3 How to talk to suspects in police interviews



Of course, when asking questions in police interviews, there is a lot more to consider than what topics to cover. It's helpful to think about the whole interview as a complex and important social interaction, during which the other person will be constantly evaluating whether or not they want to keep talking.

It is probably also helpful to think about police suspect interviews as an example of a difficult conversation. While most of us will never find ourselves in a police suspect interview (as either suspect or interviewer) many of us will find ourselves having some difficult conversations during the course of our lives. Therefore, thinking about the conversations we have had in our own lives can help us get a better feel for how those same principles might apply in a police suspect interview.

Of course, a police suspect interview has a lot of rules and regulations that everyday interactions don't have, but it is very important to remember that interviews are still (from an interpersonal and psychological viewpoint) very human conversations. One of the reasons for encouraging you to consider police suspect interviews in this way is that a lot of our everyday impressions about them come from drama series, which often give quite a false impression of how police suspect interviews are carried out. As a result, focusing on examples from your own experience might be useful.

Police suspect interviews are referred to as '*difficult* conversations' because very often the suspect will not want to be there, but for legal reasons has to be. Regardless of their innocence or guilt of the offence in question, the suspect is likely to find the conversation stressful and may not want to talk to the officers. The officers themselves are likely to be under pressure too. You can probably imagine the pressure you might feel to deliver results should your interview topic plan be accepted by SIO Harris as the one to be used. So suspect interviews can be difficult and stressful for all participants to varying degrees.

How to approach talking with people in these situations (and indeed in lots of other situations) is very important. Research into police interviewer styles carried out in 2002 by Holmberg and Christianson was illuminating. They carried out a very neat study in which

they asked men in prisons, who had been convicted either of murder or sexual offences, about the police interviews that had led to their conviction. The questionnaires asked the men to remember these interviews and how they felt the police officers interviewing them had treated them. They also asked them whether or not they admitted or denied the crimes in those interviews.

The researchers found that there seemed to be two main interview styles – one of which was where officers appeared impatient, aggressive and brusque (the dominant style). This style tended to be associated with suspects denying the crime. In the other style, the officers were more helpful and accommodating and showed more empathy (the humanity style) and this was associated with more admissions of guilt. This research goes against what is often shown in television drama series and is a good example of why not to take what you see in these shows too seriously.

4 The importance of rapport

You'll now move on to explore one of the most important aspects of effective investigative interviewing. This concerns the ability of police officers to build rapport with suspects. Rapport can be tricky to define. Berniero and Gillis (2001, p. 69) provide quite a formal definition: 'A positive and productive affect between people that facilitates mutuality of attention and harmony'. Alison and Alison (2020, p. 5) refer to it as being when '... two people connect or "click" ... In other words, rapport occurs when two people "get" each other'.

Rapport is a form of interpersonal behaviour, and you will also learn about a way of representing interpersonal behaviour that is called the interpersonal circle, or to give it its more technical name, the interpersonal circumplex (a circumplex is basically a graph that uses a circular representation).

Circumplex models are often found within psychology because they enable a simple visual circular representation of complex statistical relationships between a lot of different variables. In a circumplex model, variables that are similar are visually represented as being close together, with opposing characteristics displayed at opposite points on the circle. Such circular depictions sound quite complicated when described in the abstract, but as you will discover, are quite simple to grasp when you look at a particular example.



4.1 Rapport – an introduction to the interpersonal circle

Building on the research conducted by Holmberg and Christianson (2002), other psychologists have developed the notion that similar principles might be important in building a rapport with, and relating to, other people. The interpersonal circle is an example of one such development and has a long history in psychology. In the 1950s, Tim

Leary (1957) developed this model as a way to visually represent the interactions between people.

In the video, Zoë Walkington introduces you to the principles of the model.

Video content is not available in this format.



4.2 Diagnosis of behaviour using the interpersonal circle

Watch the following video. In the activity that follows you will be asked to plot the interaction using the interpersonal circle that you have just learned about.

Video content is not available in this format.



Activity 2

Have a go at trying to 'diagnose' the behaviour you observed in the video, using the interpersonal circle. Where you would place the man who is challenging you in a car park about your poor parking technique?

Think about his behaviour along the two axes you learned about – is he dominant or submissive, and is he hostile or cooperative? Also remember to consider the intensity of the behaviour, with more intense behaviour being towards the edge of the circle, and more neutral behaviour towards the centre.

Using the following plotting tool, plot where you would position the person in the video on the interpersonal circle. Hover over the circle and then click where you think is the correct position. You can then either save your answer or reset and have another go. It is fine for you to rewatch the video as many times as you would like.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



It is worth reflecting on how the behaviour of the man towards you made you feel as you watched. Did it make you feel like you wanted to dominate the conversation or go quiet? Did you feel hostile or did you want to be highly cooperative with the man, wanting to befriend him?

4.3 How rapport is applied in criminal investigations



You have learned about the fundamental principles underpinning the interpersonal interactions that we have with one another.

You have probably already reflected on what this model might tell you about some of your own conversations in your own relationships. However, the model becomes much more useful in application to policing (and possibly your own conversations too) when we add in a bit more complexity. Alison et al. (2013) researched the use of the model in policing contexts and (along with other researchers such as Birtchnell, 2014) developed the basic model of the interpersonal circle to take into account the fact that there are both '**adaptive**' and '**maladaptive**' versions of behaviour. In 2013 Alison et al. developed their model of rapport based on coding many hours of police suspect interviews. They developed the two 'adaptive' and 'maladaptive' circles which you will learn about in the next section.

4.4 Adaptive and maladaptive variants of the interpersonal circle

In the video, Zoë Walkington introduces the adaptive and maladaptive versions of the interpersonal circle.

Video content is not available in this format.



Having now learned about the adaptive and maladaptive versions of the interpersonal circle, you should have also learned to recognise behaviour from both of these types. You should bear in mind throughout, though, that the interpersonal circle isn't a 'technique' to be deployed on someone else, nor is it something you can use to manipulate others. It very much characterises how interactions feel holistically.

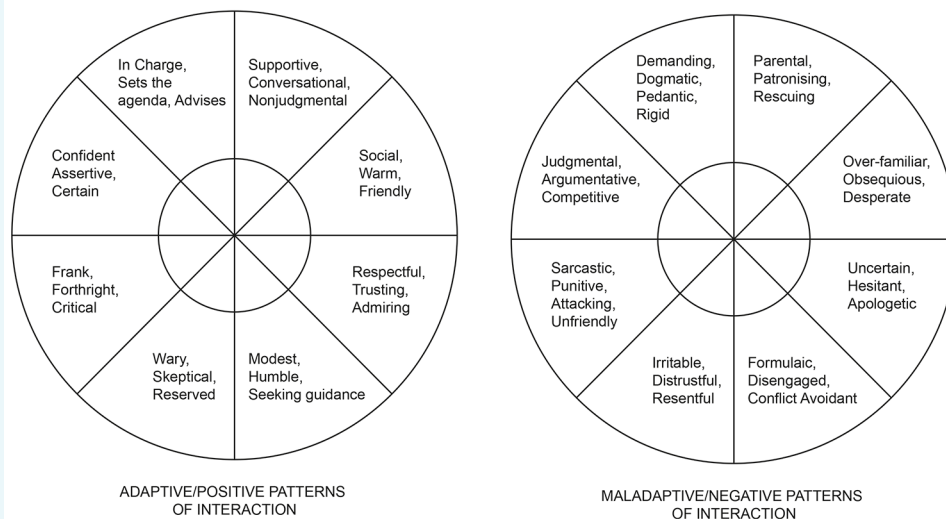
Next, you will move on to think about applying these principles to the investigation of Neale.

4.5 Rapport principles

In the next activity you should start to develop your ideas about how you might approach the interview with Neale based on the principles of rapport you have learned about.

Activity 3

To help you with this activity, here are the adaptive and maladaptive interpersonal circles taken from Alison et al.'s (2013) ORBIT model (Observing Rapport Based Interpersonal Techniques). You should use these to help you start to make a plan for the interpersonal interaction with Neale.



To structure your thoughts you might want to consider the following questions:

- Where do you expect Neale to be on the interpersonal circle?
HINT: you already have some good intelligence on this, because you have had the benefit of seeing his witness interview – but you need to factor in the impact that being arrested might have on him.
- Where do you think the interviewer might need to be on the interpersonal circle?
- Do you think Neale needs adaptive or maladaptive wheel behaviour from the interviewer and does he need dominance or submission and hostility or cooperation?

As you develop your ideas, remember that this type of planning conversation might comprise part of the 'P' mnemonic for planning in the PEACE model. If you make a note of your ideas, you will be able to reflect on your own plans, and compare them to the approach of DI Bullet who carries out Neale's interview.

According to Alison et al. (2013) the principles of the interpersonal circumplex and also some principles borrowed from counselling psychology (specifically motivational interviewing) suggest that adaptability is also a very important interview skill. Sometimes things need to change as interviewers may need to adapt to how individuals behave, but it is good to devote time to thinking about likely opening interactions with suspects in preparing for interviews, while being open minded that adapting is always an important skill.

5 DI Bullet interviews Neale



Having made your own interview plans, you will next observe the interview of Neale from the current investigation.

The interview is going to be conducted by DI Bullet. As you observe the interview, imagine yourself in the role of a psychologist who has been asked to downstream the interview (i.e. to watch it on video as it takes place in another room) and to provide feedback on the interview practice that you observe in the interviewer, given what you have learned.

For the purposes of this task, focus on the psychological aspects of the interaction (you may notice things about the policing agenda too and it is fine to note those down). Have the principles of the interpersonal circumplex at the forefront of your mind as you observe (perhaps even have the [PDF](#) open as you observe the interview).

The interview you watch will be split into two halves. After you watch part one, you will complete an activity where you are asked to 'plot' where you think the interviewer is on the adaptive and maladaptive circles. You therefore might want to make some notes to support these plots when you observe the interview – and note if there are particular examples of adaptive or maladaptive behaviour that seem important to you.

As you watch, you will also be able to carefully attend to the behaviour of Neale, the suspect.

5.1 Suspect interview by DI Bullet: Part 1

In the video, DI Bullet interviews the suspect Neale Anderson.

Remember as you watch to focus on the psychological aspects of the interaction. In the activity that follows you will be asked some questions that draw on the observations you have made.

Video content is not available in this format.



5.2 Rating DI Bullet's interview skills



In the following activity, you'll think about DI Bullet's interviewing technique.

Activity 4

Having watched the interview consider the following questions.

- How did this section of the interview 'feel' from a psychological perspective? Did it feel like an adaptive interview characterised by positive and adaptive behaviour from Bullet or a maladaptive interview characterised by negative behaviour from him?
- According to the interpersonal circumplex, is Bullet dominant or submissive? And is he hostile or cooperative?
- Looking at the police agenda, do you get the impression that DI Bullet is sticking to the 'Account' phase of PEACE?
- Moving the focus to the suspect, what do you notice about his behaviour – is it adaptive or maladaptive?

Note down your answers to the above questions. Summarise your answers and add any other observations you have about Bullet's interview style and rapport.

5.3 Expert analysis of the interview so far from

In the next video, Zoë Walkington analyses the performance of the interviewing officer according to the principles of the interpersonal circle. You might like to compare your own analysis and notes from the interview to the some of the points she raises.

Video content is not available in this format.



6 Summary of Week 2

This week you have learned about the principles of interpersonal behaviour in difficult conversations such as police suspect interviews. You have also started to think about planning and preparing for interviews.

Considering what you have learned about the principles of rapport this week you might already be starting to formulate some expectations about what the second part of the interview by DI Bullet might look like! You will return to observe part 2 of the interview next week.

You can now go to [Week 3](#).

Week 3: How reliable are confessions in criminal investigations?

Introduction



Welcome to Week 3! You'll jump straight back into the investigation.

Last week you observed the first part of the suspect interview with Neale and this week will open with you returning to that interview. You will re-join the interview several hours later. Of course, Neale will not have been interviewed continuously throughout this time as there are rules and regulations about allowing breaks for interviewees. You will re-join the interview at the 'Challenge' stage (from the PEACE mnemonic) where Bullet is challenging Neale's account with other evidence that he has obtained.

Remember that the detective team and case are entirely fictional, and this course is not attempting to replicate a police investigation exactly as it would be conducted by a real police force. It is fair to say that the interview being conducted by DI Bullet would be considered bad practice by the police in the UK.

What you think of it and how it would be seen in other jurisdictions are questions you will return to later in the week.

1 Suspect interview by DI Bullet: Part 2

Now you will watch the second part of the suspect interview of Neale Anderson by DI Bullet.

As you watch, make any notes that you want to. These will help inform a report you will make this week to SIO Harris regarding the ongoing investigation.

Video content is not available in this format.



1.1 Perceptions of guilt

As you saw, at the end of the interview Neale confessed to killing his father. Did this surprise you or had you always had a suspicion that Neale was guilty?

Before you begin to look at the interviewing techniques that were employed by DI Bullet in more depth, use the poll below to indicate whether, in light of this confession, you believe Neale is guilty or not guilty.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



1.2 Considering questioning techniques



Although DI Bullet's interview would be considered bad practice according to UK guidelines, police from different jurisdictions may well view the interview as a relatively mild and effective approach, and certainly the techniques used are quite subtle and passive compared with those we often see in fictional investigations. For one thing, DI Bullet did not use actual, or even the threat of physical aggression, both of which are often used by fictional detectives.

Activity 1

Think back to films and drama series you've seen and books you've read that have featured a fictional officer questioning a suspect that has led to a confession. Note down the techniques you've noticed and consider whether:

1. you think this method has been used in a real suspect interview (in any jurisdiction)
2. there is evidence from research that it is a reliable technique.

Consider which techniques you think are reliable, and remember that you are not being asked to judge what is *currently* the practice in England and Wales (or in any other particular jurisdiction), but whether the technique has *ever* been used in *any* jurisdiction.

You will take a closer look at some possible techniques in the next section.

1.3 Evaluating questioning techniques

How many techniques did you come up with?

Below is a list of example techniques selected from crime dramas, along with information about whether the technique has been used in a real case and whether it is considered to be reliable based on evidence obtained from research.

Technique	Used in a real case?	Is it reliable?
Polygraph (lie detector)	Yes	No
Threatening suspect physically	Yes	No
Physically harming the suspect	Yes	No
Pretending a photocopier is a lie detector	Yes	No
Sleep deprivation	Yes	No
Falsely claiming there is forensic evidence	Yes	No
Falsely claiming a witness has identified the suspect	Yes	No
Falsely claiming an informant has provided evidence	Yes	No
Offering a lesser charge in exchange for a confession	Yes	No

You will have seen a clear pattern emerge: that a lot of techniques have been used to intimidate or trick suspects, but there is no evidence that they get reliable results. Research in this area suggests that although such techniques may increase the chances that the suspect will make a confession, they predominantly increase dramatically the chances that this confession will be false! This is one reason UK police do not 'interrogate' suspects, nor use false claims and other tricks, but instead interview them fairly. DI Bullet did not employ any of the techniques from the list above in his interview, so does that mean the resulting confession must be true?

2 Interrogation, suggestibility and false confessions



In many fictional portrayals of criminal investigations, the confession represents the finale of the story, and is used to reveal who the perpetrator was and demonstrate the prowess of the detective. The idea is that confessions are proof of guilt and can, therefore, be used as a narrative device to conclude a story definitively.

But are confessions always ‘true’ in reality? In this section you’ll start by exploring confessions obtained in real cases before looking at the psychology of why someone might confess.

2.1 A look at real criminal cases: The Innocence Project

To answer the question of whether confessions are always ‘true’ in reality, you will look at the work of The Innocence Project, an organisation that (among other things) represents people who believe they were wrongfully convicted, usually by using post-conviction DNA testing. At the time of writing, the Project has assisted in the exoneration of 375 people in the USA. These wrongfully convicted people had served an average of 14 years in prison and 21 had been on death row.

As well as helping to free the innocent (and convict the guilty), the work of The Innocence Project has also been very helpful in determining the factors that tend to lead to a miscarriage of justice. This is achieved by determining which elements the investigations had in common. West and Meterko (2015) analysed cases from the first 25 years of The Innocence Project and found that the most common factor by far was that of mistaken eyewitness identification, which was a feature present in 72% of the 325 cases examined. You may be surprised that the second-most common factor, present in 47% of cases, was the misapplication of forensic science. The third most prevalent contributing factor was that of false confessions, which featured in 27% of the cases.

Activity 2

The Innocence Project website contains details of very moving, and very revealing, cases of miscarriages of justice. The site allows you to explore cases containing specific contributing causes. Visit the site and explore cases that involved false confessions:

- Access [The Innocence Project](https://www.innocenceproject.org/) website
- Click on ‘The Cases’ at the top right of the window
- Click on ‘Filter’
- Click on ‘Contributing Causes of Conviction’
- Select the cause(s) you are interested in

- From the search results, explore at least three cases.

One case you may have looked at is that of Damon Thibodeaux, who spent 15 years on death row, in solitary confinement, before being exonerated. Damon was convicted of the murder and aggravated rape of 14-year-old Crystal Champagne (a distant cousin). His confession followed 9 hours of interrogation, in which he was told by law enforcement officers that he had failed a polygraph. The same officers told him they would seek the death penalty unless he confessed (which they did anyway).

As well as the interrogative techniques that led to the confession, this case demonstrates just how important a confession is in an investigation and trial. The confession led to Damon being convicted despite there being no forensic evidence linking him to the crime and even despite there being key differences between his (false) account and the evidence recovered.

2.2 The psychology of false confessions



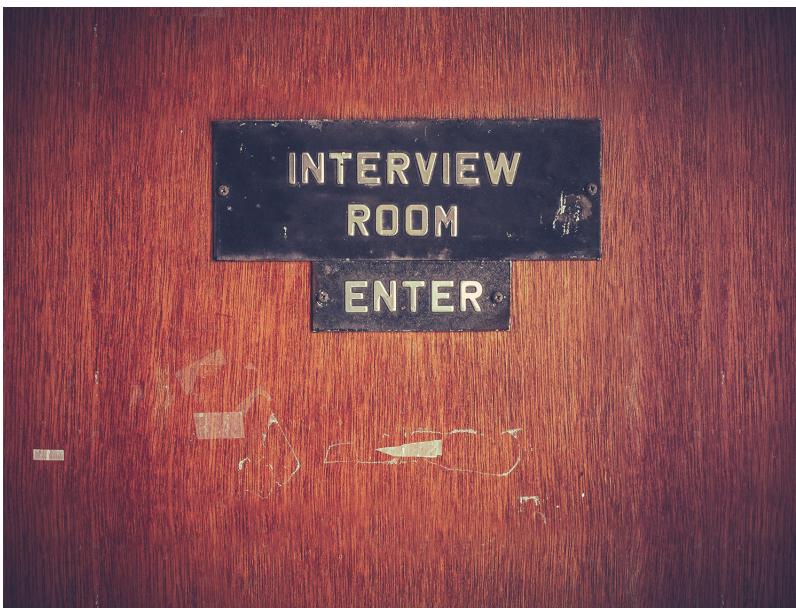
You may have noticed that many of the exonerations involving a false confession that are described on The Innocence Project's website involve cases from a number of years ago. Indeed, most predate the standard use of DNA testing and were obviously from the US. Following several high-profile miscarriages of justice in the UK in the past, legal rules and regulations were introduced to protect suspects in the UK. These included the use of interview techniques that avoid coercing a suspect and, critically, that all interviews are recorded. Hopefully these measures have helped to reduce the incidence of false confessions. However, the psychology of false confessions remains a fascinating area of study that we would like you to further explore.

Psychologists interested in this area (e.g. Gudjonsson, 2003) tend to draw a distinction between two different types of confession that can arise as a result of the interview process. These are 'coerced-compliant' and 'coerced-internalised' and you may have found examples of both in the examples from The Innocence Project.

- Coerced-compliant confessions refer to confessions made when the suspect knows that they have not done what they are accused of, but they confess to escape the immediate situation of the interrogation.
- Coerced-internalised confessions differ in that the suspect comes to believe that they may have actually committed the act, for example, believing that maybe they blacked out during the relevant time period due to drinking too much.

There is also a third type of false confession called a voluntary false confession. Unlike the false confessions described above, voluntary false confessions don't arise due to interview pressure. They describe a scenario where someone voluntarily claims to have committed a crime when they have not. This might involve handing themselves in at a police station claiming to be the culprit after they have seen a particular crime on the news. While this sounds unlikely, it is surprisingly common. For example, when the baby of famous aviator Charles Lindbergh was kidnapped in 1932 from his home in New Jersey, US, there were around 200 confessions. You'll look at these voluntary false confessions in more detail later in the course.

2.3 Interrogative suggestibility



Of the three types of false confession, the 'coerced-internalised' is perhaps the most psychologically interesting as it does not involve an innocent suspect making a conscious decision to confess, but instead that they are coerced into actually believing they committed a crime.

One way of looking at this phenomenon is through the concept of 'suggestibility'. The pioneering psychological research on false confessions was led by the work of Gisli Gudjonsson, who refuted the existing belief that only suspects with learning disabilities or other mental health issues were vulnerable to suggestion. Instead, Gudjonsson demonstrated that potentially anyone might falsely confess due to factors such as the psychological drive to comply and particularly through being prone to 'interrogative suggestibility'. That is, how affected by leading questions a suspect is and how much they alter their responses when pressure is applied. Gudjonsson developed a 'suggestibility scale' to measure how prone someone might be to interrogative suggestion, and it has been used within the criminal justice systems of many jurisdictions.

2.4 Suggestibility and the Reid technique

One particular method of suspect interrogation, known as the Reid technique, which has been widely used in the US, has been criticised by many researchers for involving coercive techniques very likely to lead to false confessions (e.g. Walsh, O'Callaghan and Milne, 2016). This is particularly the case in more vulnerable suspects through mechanisms such as suggestibility, as well as causing less vulnerable suspects to shut down and stop answering questions. It is, perhaps, fair to add that the company that provides training in the Reid technique states that this criticism mischaracterises the methods involved, and that false confessions arise from officers misapplying their training and using approaches that are not part of the technique.

The Reid technique comprises a three-stage process. Stage 1 is a 'factual analysis' involving information on the crime and on the suspect, designed to estimate probable guilt. Stage 2 is based on a relatively short 'behaviour analysis interview' to determine the truthfulness of the suspect (by asking 'behaviour-provoking' questions and whether to proceed with stage 3, which is a full interrogation. The interrogation that comprises stage 3 involves nine steps. Below is a brief summary of these nine steps based on Connecticut General Assembly (no date):

1. **The positive confrontation.** The investigator tells the suspect that the evidence demonstrates the person's guilt.
2. **Theme development.** The investigator then presents a moral justification, or 'theme', for the offence in a sympathetic manner.
3. **Handling denials.** The investigator should discourage the suspect from making any denials, as this can make it harder for them to tell the truth later. Innocent suspects will not move past step 3.
4. **Overcoming objections.** The investigator should accept objections that the suspect is innocent as if truthful and use the objection to develop a 'theme'.
5. **Procurement and retention of suspect's attention.** The investigator should make the suspect focus on the 'theme' rather than on potential punishment.
6. **Handling the suspect's passive mood.** The investigator should continue to display a sympathetic manner and intensify the 'theme' and psychological justification of the act.
7. **Presenting an alternative question.** The investigator should encourage the suspect to choose the more sympathetic explanation offered by the 'theme' over an alternative, less justifiable rationale.
8. **Having the suspect orally relate various details of the offence.** When the suspect admits guilt by choosing the explanation offered in the 'theme', the investigator should reinforce this by asking for an overview of the events.
9. **Converting an oral confession to a written confession.** The investigator converts the oral overview, and thereby confession, into a written confession.

As stated previously, the Reid technique has been heavily and widely criticised by psychological researchers because rather than using interviewing elements designed to elicit accurate evidence, it is instead aimed at pressuring the suspect into confessing, and so is very likely to lead to a false confession. If you would like to find out more about the Reid technique and its potential to lead to false confessions, you might like to read the article by Starr (2013), ['Do police interrogation techniques produce false confessions?'](#), written by a journalist who went on the training course to learn how to use this technique.

3 Evaluating DI Bullet's suspect interview



Did reading about interrogative suggestibility and false confessions make you think differently about the interview conducted by DI Bullet?

As mentioned earlier, DI Bullet did not use any of the more coercive techniques we often see in crime fiction (such as those involving physical aggression).

However, his interview did involve quite a few elements that are not part of standard suspect interviewing practice and that would be considered very poor practice in the UK. Moreover, some of these techniques involve the same type of coercion that the Reid technique has been criticised for.

3.1 Evaluating Part 2 of DI Bullet's suspect interview



Research has found that, broadly speaking, interrogation techniques can often be classified as either:

- 'minimisation', where the investigator appears supportive and attempts to downplay the seriousness of the offence, or
- 'maximisation', where the investigator employs 'scare tactics' to emphasise the seriousness of the offence.

Both minimisation and maximisation have been shown to lead to false confessions.

Activity 3

Now you have read about false confessions and the role of suggestibility and tactics such as minimisation and maximisation, re-watch DI Bullet's interview with Neale that you first watched in Section 1, but this time try to evaluate it in order to determine what techniques he may have used that could have coerced the suspect. Make a note of any technique you think may be seen as problematic. You will look further at these in the next section.

3.2 The psychological team's evaluation

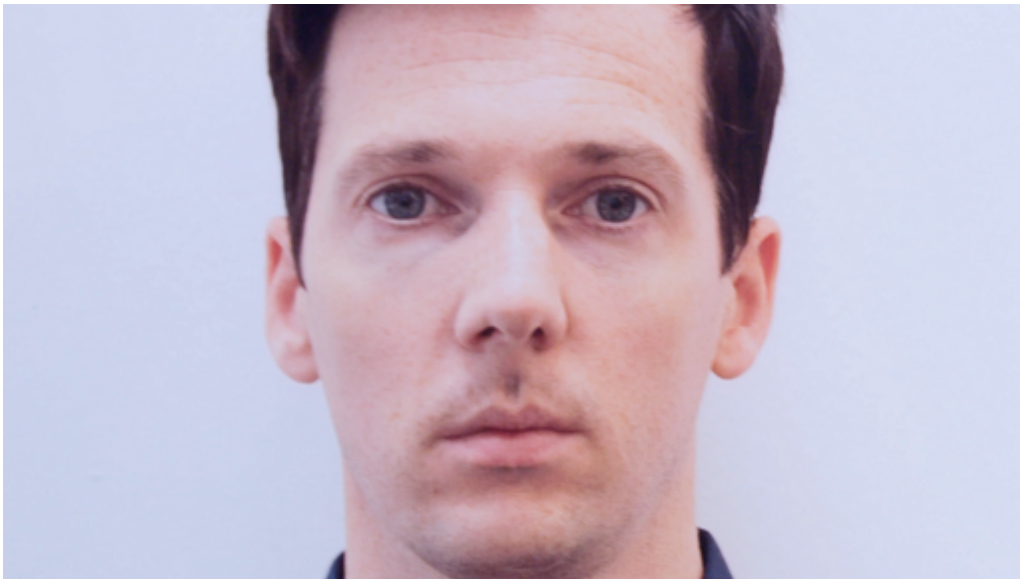


Zoë and Graham who, given their expertise, are also acting as the psychological team in the investigation, identified the following techniques as problematic:

- The interview took place over a long time, leading to the suspect becoming exhausted.
- DI Bullet kept up a barrage of accusations of guilt.
- DI Bullet concentrated on apparent 'guilty knowledge' of the suspect (i.e. that Neale knew his father had been stabbed) and did not explore other evidence.
- DI Bullet claimed he was understanding of why Neale may have committed the act.
- DI Bullet suggested to the suspect a timeline of what took place.
- DI Bullet suggested a motive/rationale (blacking out from being drunk) for why Neale committed the act.

How did your evaluation compare with this?

3.3 Is Neale's interview confession true or false?



You have now explored the psychology of false confessions and read about them in relation to real cases. You have also evaluated these techniques used in the interview with Neale. Given this new knowledge, use the following poll to indicate whether you think Neale is guilty or not.

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3.4 Reporting back to the SIO



Did you change your mind as to whether Neale was guilty or not? Hopefully, even if you thought he was not guilty previously, reading about miscarriages of justice and false confessions in the real world, and also the psychological theory and research seeking to explain why these happen, will have given you new insights into how the behaviour of an officer can affect what the suspect says.

Being aware of good interviewing practice and identifying where an officer may have influenced a suspect is an important part of police investigations. You will now get a chance to use your expertise in the psychology of suspect interviewing as you prepare to report back to the SIO.

Activity 4

Based on your thoughts about the validity of Neale's confession, prepare a final list of psychological issues to present to SIO Harris outlining your view regarding Neale's confession.

While creating this list, imagine yourself in the role of a psychological expert who has been asked to comment on the psychological issues that have arisen in the interviews of Neale by Bullet.

Once you have created your own list of psychological issues you think arise in the suspect interviews of Neale by Bullet, move on to the next section where you'll watch Zoë and Graham discuss their view of the psychological issues in the case.

3.5 The expert view on the confession

Watch the video, where Zoë and Graham discuss the issues with the confession of Neale Anderson.

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How close were you to the 'expert' view on the interview of Neale? Were there things you noticed that they didn't? Or things they noticed that you hadn't included in your report to the SIO?

4 New evidence and new suspects



If the current investigation finished with Neale's confession to DI Bullet then the whole case would hinge on whether Neale's confession was legitimate or whether it was coerced by DI Bullet. It is easy to see that this could lead to a conviction given the weight that courts and juries seem to put on confessions.

Thankfully, DI Bullet is not the only detective investigating this case and the wider policing team have been hard at work locating new evidence from which additional suspects begin to emerge.

In this section, you'll learn about these new areas of enquiry.

4.1 Important new evidence



SIO Harris has had some important evidence come in from the wider investigation team. One of the detectives was tasked with trying to contact Dav Spandler, the colleague of Neale's whom Neale claimed to be with on Sunday night. Dav has now made contact from Delhi via his mobile phone. Dav was unavailable for the past few days as he was on an adventure holiday, trekking in the remote countryside, and was outside of cellular contact. He has now been able to confirm that Neale was with him on Sunday night. Not only that, Dav has concealed CCTV at his property which he believes will have captured Neale's exact time of arrival and departure at the house on the Sunday in question. Detectives are following this up, but Dav's recollection is that Neale was with him from approximately 6 pm to 11.30 pm.

Having had confirmation that Neale Anderson has a verified alibi, Sund and Bullet have now established that there are three further persons of interest to the investigation, who have arisen as a result of door-to-door enquiries in the neighbourhood.

Next, you'll find out about these new persons of interest.

4.2 Three additional suspects



The broader investigation has identified three additional suspects. Due to the initial focus on Neale Anderson, only preliminary information about these people has been gathered so far.

Person 1: Costi Spiliopoulos, 47 years old and of Greek origin

- Costi is known to be very actively involved in supporting his community, being a voluntary leader at a local day care centre for youths with head injuries.
- He is the owner of a tree surgery business called Treegreen Landscape Services.
- A neighbour reported that a white, flat-backed van had been seen in the area of Leonard's house around **10 February** and in the week prior to that date. Two youngish lads with hoodies were seen leafleting the neighbourhood for Treegreen Landscapes, but some neighbours reported that the lads looked to be eyeing up properties on the road and had, on some occasions, parked up but not dropped leaflets. Calling the number on the leaflets put the police in touch with Costi Spiliopoulos who confirmed he is the business owner.
- In an initial statement, on the evening of the murder, Costi claimed to have been picking up medical supplies for the day care centre from a hospital in a neighbouring town, but could not provide details of anyone who witnessed him doing this.
- Costi was happy to provide a volunteer buccal sample (a method of obtaining DNA using a swab of the inside of the cheek).

Person 2: Mick Brough, 35 years old and of British origin

- Neighbours report that Mick's visits to Leonard are to offer support with tasks he is finding harder to manage given his deteriorating health. When entering Leonard's house he often takes in groceries in bags from ASDA.
- Mick's work comprises casual labour – working cash in hand as a builder's labourer for a variety of different builders in the local area.
- Mick has been seen visiting Leonard in the fortnight running up to the murder (dates uncertain). He is the brother of Leonard's 'girlfriend' Anita, who is 32 and often goes by the name 'Nita'.
- Mick drives an Audi A5.
- Mick has previously served time in prison but in the last 5 years has not come to the attention of the police.
- In an initial statement, Mick claims to have been at home watching TV at the time of the murder. He states that Anita can confirm this as she was also there.

Person 3: Dorek Bosko 'Polski', 25 years old and of Polish origin

- Dorek was not happy to provide a volunteer buccal sample. He does not have official immigration status in the UK and claimed he does not want his DNA to be recorded in case it affects his application for citizenship.
- Dorek describes himself as a local odd-job man. He works cash in hand and has an advert in the Post Office window, as well as adverts online via Facebook for his services. He came over from Poland five years ago.
- A neighbour witnessed Dorek going into Leonard's house with a tool kit and a Henry hoover on **8 February 2020**. The neighbour reports that Dorek had been to the property several times in the week preceding that date, although cannot remember the exact times and days of most of the visits. Dorek appeared to be working there. The neighbour remembers seeing Dorek on **8 February** as he drives a distinctive small orange van, which had partially blocked his own drive on the Saturday morning. The neighbour approached Dorek on Saturday morning as he left Leonard's house to complain about the van blocking his drive, and Dorek had not made eye contact, but had said 'Go fuck yourself', and had spat on the floor.
- The neighbour knows Dorek's name as they both drink in the same local pub on a Friday evening. The neighbour reports that Dorek is a heavy drinker, and always drinks alone. He regularly plays the slot machine in the pub.
- In an initial statement, Dorek admits to having been at the house on **8 February** but claims that was his last visit. He also denies having sworn and spat at the neighbour. At the time of the murder he was at his usual local pub, but did not speak to anyone there other than the bar staff.

You have now had a chance to read the existing information about the new suspects.

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4.3 Route of enquiry

The police decide to investigate each of the three suspects further.

Activity 5

Below, a number of possible routes of enquiry for each suspect have been listed. Your job is to decide how to begin investigating each of the suspects by selecting the evidence you think should be explored first.

Costi

- Search flat-backed van for forensic evidence.
- Look at CCTV evidence from the neighbouring town when Costi claims to have been there.
- Interview people from the day care centre about Costi's general character.
- Show images of Costi to local residents to see if anyone can identify him.

Mick

- Search Mick's tools for a possible murder weapon.
- Show images of Mick to local residents to see if anyone saw him at the time of the crime.
- Interview Anita to see if she confirms that Mick was at home at the time of the murder.
- Search Mick's Audi A5 for forensic evidence.

Dorek

- Search Dorek's tools for a possible murder weapon.
- Contact Europol and the Polish police for any previous convictions or intelligence on Dorek.
- Search Dorek's van for forensic evidence.
- Interview the bar staff and regulars at Dorek's local pub to see if anyone remembers him being there at the time of the murder.

For each suspect make a note about which piece of evidence should be explored first.

4.4 Biases



It can be attractive to think of ourselves as objective decision makers, weighing the pros and cons of any given situation and making a decision based on the evidence available. However, a very large amount of research has demonstrated that any decision we make, including which applicant to hire or whether a suspect is guilty, is prone to bias. In other words, decisions are affected by who we are, the opinions and values we hold and our previous experiences, and this bias can happen without our knowing and even if we do our best to try to prevent it.

Known as unconscious, or implicit, bias, the stereotypes and general opinions we hold about a subsection of the population can strongly affect any decision we make about an individual person. This means that someone's ethnicity, sex, sexual identity and age will affect how we perceive that person and in turn affect any decision we make about them.

Other forms of bias arise from the way in which we tend to process information. This includes confirmation bias (Nickerson, 1998), which is the tendency people have to focus on information that is likely to confirm their existing views on a topic. In a police investigation, confirmation bias can mean that officers may concentrate on evidence of guilt when investigating a likely suspect and downplay, or ignore altogether, evidence and routes of enquiry that would establish that suspect's innocence.

Decisions can even be biased by the order in which information is presented, with the first information encountered acting as an 'anchor' (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). This effect, known as anchoring, means that the first thing revealed about someone may gain more significance than subsequent information.

4.5 Biases in an investigation

It is clear that there is the potential for bias to have a significant impact on a criminal investigation. As was said previously, confirmation bias may mean detectives focus on evidence of guilt and obviously unconscious bias could mean they are disproportionately likely to see people from certain sectors of society as being guilty.

You have been participating in the investigation but do you think you have demonstrated any bias?

Activity 6

Think back to the last two tasks you completed, in which you first said which suspect you thought was most likely to be guilty and then what evidence should be the initial focus in investigating each suspect. Do you think any of your decisions may have been biased?

Before reading the text below, see if you can spot an bias in your decisions and thinking. Did you show any confirmation bias, for example, or were your decisions affected by anchoring?

In describing each suspect, a possible anchoring effect was introduced by beginning the description with a positive piece of information for Costi and Mick but began with something negative for Dorek. Anchoring suggests that this could have led to you forming a more negative opinion of Dorek.

The list of possible routes of enquiry for each suspect contained one element that would establish that person's innocence (such as confirming their alibi) and other elements aimed at establishing their guilt (such as a neighbour having seen them on the day of the crime). Confirmation bias would suggest that you may have chosen to focus on potential evidence of guilt for the person you thought most likely to be guilty and on potential evidence of innocence for the other two suspects. Did the initial step for the enquiry differ according to whether you thought the suspect was likely to be guilty or innocent? If it did, you may well have been affected by confirmation bias.

5 Summary of Week 3



This week you have seen that the confession of a suspect is not the definitive, 'truthful' end to a criminal investigation that we are used to seeing in fiction. Instead, confessions can be false for a number of reasons and innocent suspects can even be coerced into believing they committed a crime. Moreover, the way a suspect is interviewed, including the demeanour of the investigator and the techniques they employ, can profoundly increase the chances that a suspect will falsely confess.

You have also learned that bias means we are not the objective decision makers we like to think of ourselves as, and these biases can lead to criminal investigations focusing on and pursuing innocent suspects.

Returning to our fictional investigation, on Monday 17 February 2020 DI Bullet and DS Sund receive new evidence that causes them to make Mick Brough their prime suspect, and to prepare to arrest him.

To find out what this evidence is, and how our intrepid detectives handle it, move on to Week 4, where you will also have a chance to deploy your own investigative skills by briefing the SIO and preparing your own interview plan.

You can now go to [Week 4](#).

Week 4: Solving the case

Introduction



Welcome to Week 4! There have been some developments in the case and some information to catch up on.

The suspect, Mick Brough, has been arrested and you, alongside the investigating detectives, now need to prepare for this interview.

You are probably interested to know what led to the arrest of Mick over and above the other suspects. The officers who made enquiries regarding whether or not Mick had been seen in the local area discovered some interesting information. They found that Mick and his sister Nita had both been spotted visiting Leonard in the last fortnight, and one local resident has now confirmed that they saw them at the property on Sunday night. Additionally, the investigation team found other relevant information that led to both Mick and his sister Nita being arrested.

There are several pieces of evidence (presented here in no particular order) that the investigation team have now discovered that led to the arrest of Mick (and also his sister Nita, who was Leonard's 'girlfriend').

1. A local resident from Abigail Crescent saw both Mick and Nita visit Leonard at what they estimate to be between 7 pm and 7.15 pm on the evening of Sunday 9 February 2020.

2. A forensic science report from Richard Peters regarding the body of Leonard Anderson confirms the following findings:
 - a. Bodily fluid (in the form of spittle) was recovered from the left-hand side of the face of the deceased. This spittle was tested and matches a buccal swab taken from Mick Brough.
 - b. The amount of fluid recovered was significant and was consistent with a substantial amount of spittle being deliberately projected onto the face of the deceased in a 'spitting' pattern. It is not consistent with the expected transfer of spittle which may happen from conversing with an individual at close quarters.
3. Leonard was last seen alive at the bowling club on Sunday morning and CCTV has now been obtained which shows him leaving the bar at 11.58 am.
4. An automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) camera picked up an Audi A5 registered to Mick Brough entering Abigail Crescent at 7.10 pm on Sunday evening, and passing by again (in the opposite direction) at 8.07 pm.
5. Both Nita and Mick's fingerprints have been recovered from inside the property.

1 Dealing with the new suspect



Part of what makes investigative work so interesting is the need for flexibility and adaptation as new information and evidence arises. Given that we now have two new potential suspects in the case, the rest of this week will get you to focus on how best to take the investigation forward.

First you will need to think about how best to proceed given several pieces of new evidence. This includes what information you should and shouldn't share with the suspects during the interviews.

You will also add to your timeline.

1.1 Evidence and testing the truthfulness of a suspects account

In a suspect interview, decisions about what evidence should be disclosed to the suspect are quite important for a number of reasons. The suspect must understand what they are suspected of, and why they are suspected of it, but there are reasons why police may elect not to disclose all of the evidence that they hold.

There are three main reasons for this:

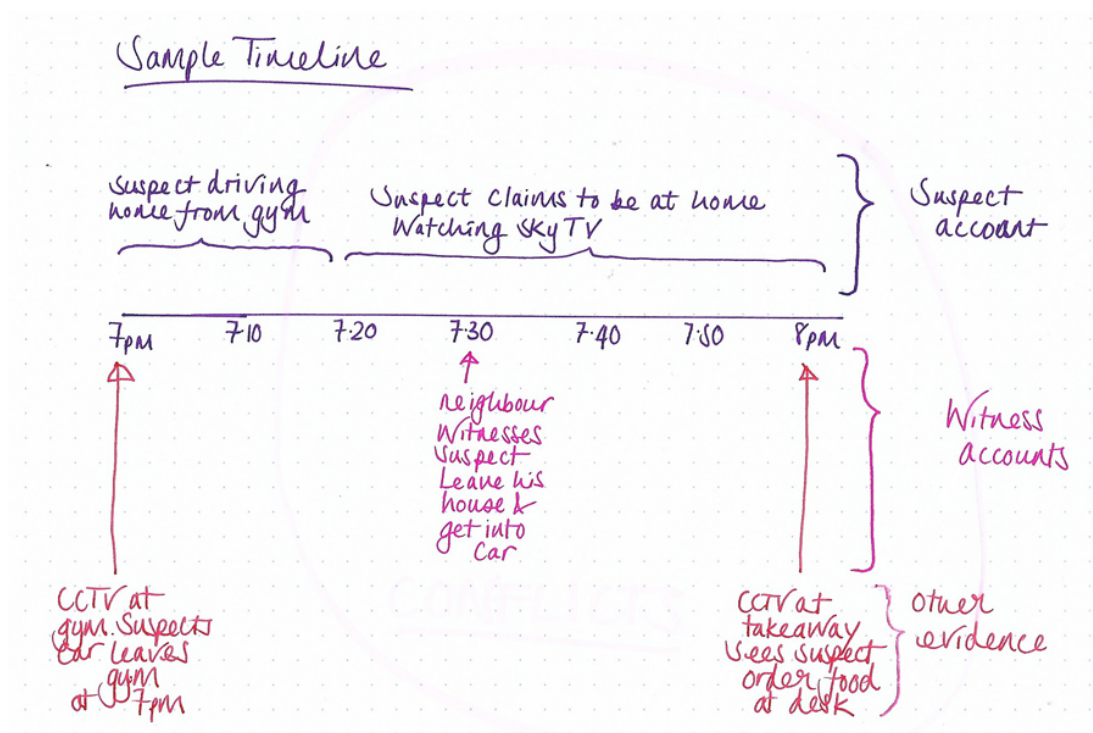
- First, the suspect needs to be able to provide their own account based on their own memory of the event. Like in a witness interview, it is important not to potentially 'contaminate' someone's recollection of what happened by first presenting them with what someone else said.
- Second, allowing the suspect to provide their own account first adds weight to this account if it is found to be consistent with other evidence.
- The final reason is that it is very important to be able to test the truthfulness of a suspect's account. This relates to something you learned about in Week 3 – the voluntary false confession. You may remember that the voluntary false confession is the type of false confession that does not arise as a result of investigative pressure. In this type of confession someone falsely, and voluntarily, claims to have committed a crime they haven't committed. The police need to be able to screen out such false

claims, and one of the ways they can do this is through the strategic use of evidence. This will be explained further later.

When a serious crime like a murder takes place, there might be some evidence which is not disclosed to the media or witnesses, that only the suspect (along with the police) will be aware of. Take, for example, Leonard's death. We know (because we are part of the investigation team) that Leonard was stabbed, but that would not be common knowledge. Let us assume that there has been no press coverage of the murder to date. Therefore, if someone hands themselves in at Chadborough Police Station claiming to have strangled Leonard on the Monday afternoon, we immediately know that they are not the right suspect. We know this because the information the person has provided conflicts with the other evidence we hold. We know the approximate time of death and the method of murder are both incorrect.

In suspect interviewing, investigators go through a process where they decide what information can be immediately disclosed to the suspect, and which bits of information might need to be held back.

1.2 Return to the timeline



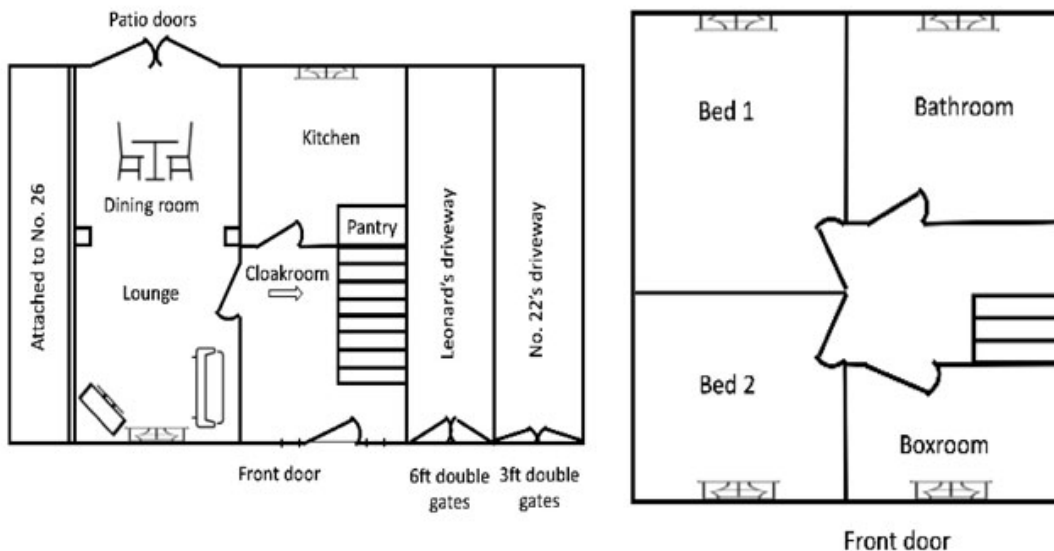
In the following activity you'll return to your timeline for the crime.

Activity 1

Go to your timeline and add the additional information you have just learned, as this is the first set of evidence you have that relates closely to the time of death.

Look over your timeline and consider whether all the evidence sits consistently together.

1.3 Planning what to disclose



In the following activity you will start to make a plan about the information that you hold and the order in which you might choose to disclose it.

Activity 2

As you have learned already you need to be clear with the suspect about why they are under arrest, but still allow the truthfulness of their account to be tested. Which of the pieces of evidence that you hold about Mick might you select to disclose initially? These are presented below (in no particular order) and you should make a note of which you would disclose initially and why.

- When the body was found.
- Where the body was found (address).
- The last time Leonard was seen alive.
- The estimated time of death.
- The cause of death (i.e. the stab wound to the neck).
- The ANPR matches of the suspect's car near the victim's address in the relevant time period.
- The fact that the victim's hands were tied with string.
- The spit recovered from the cheek of the deceased (and the DNA match to the suspect).
- The neighbour's identification of Mick and his sister at the scene during the relevant time period.
- The fingerprints of Mick and Nita at the scene.

1.4 The psychological team's thoughts on what to disclose



Zoë and Graham, as the psychological experts, would probably initially disclose the neighbour's statement, which puts the suspect at the scene, and also the corroborating evidence that their car passed by at 7.10 pm. This is because although eye-witness testimony can be unreliable, the two pieces of evidence together support one another.

They wouldn't choose to disclose the forensic evidence initially because they would want to obtain the suspect's uncontaminated account of what happened that evening first. They would, however, want the suspect to understand that they had been placed at the scene, and that is why they had been arrested.

You will return to this topic later on when you observe the suspect interview of Mick Brough. Before that, you will consider the psychological aspects of dealing with this suspect who is quite different to the first suspect you encountered.

2 Interviewing the new suspect



Having worked on some ideas about disclosure of the evidence you'll now consider how to plan for the more interpersonal aspects of interviewing the new suspect. You'll return to the concept of building rapport as part of the interview process. Earlier in the course you made a plan for Neale's interview. Of course, our new suspect Mick might need a different approach!

You'll then watch DS Sund's interview with the new suspect.

2.1 Planning for rapport with Mick Brough

You already have some information about Mick, which you got in Week 3.

For ease, this information is repeated here:

- Neighbours report that Mick's visits to Leonard are to offer support with tasks he is finding harder to manage given his deteriorating health. When entering Leonard's house he often takes in groceries in bags from ASDA.
- Mick's work comprises casual labour – working cash in hand as a builder's labourer for a variety of different builders in the local area.
- Mick has been seen visiting Leonard in the fortnight running up to the murder (dates uncertain). He is the brother of Leonard's 'girlfriend' Anita, who is 32 and often goes by the name 'Nita'.
- Mick drives an Audi A5.
- Mick has previously served time in prison but in the last 5 years has not come to the attention of the police.
- In an initial statement, Mick claims to have been at home watching TV at the time of the murder. He states that Anita can confirm this as she was also there.

So, you know that Mick has been regularly visiting Leonard and supporting him in ill health. You know that he is the brother of Nita who was Leonard's much younger 'girlfriend'. You know that he has prior convictions. The investigation team have looked further into these convictions and can provide the following information about them:

- **At approximately 18 years old** – Actual Bodily Harm. Fight outside a nightclub. Male victim jostles Mick in the club and Mick doesn't like it. He follows the victim out of the club and pushes a broken bottle into his face, causing the victim to require hospitalisation and stitches. Sentenced to 9 months in Thorn Cross Young Offender Institution (behaviour while in Thorn Cross was fine).
- **At approximately 22 years old** – Actual Bodily Harm. Attack takes place at a bus stop. Mick plus two associates are walking past a bus stop. Victim (19 years) is waiting for bus alone, listening to CD Walkman. Mick punches victim in face repeatedly and steals the Walkman. Victim hospitalised with broken jaw. Sentenced to 6 months in Category C prison.
- **At approximately 29 years old** – Grievous Bodily Harm. Mick walks into a small hardware shop. He arms himself with a Stanley knife while the shop proprietor talks with a customer who then leaves. Mick approaches the shop proprietor, reaches over the counter and slashes at the proprietor's face before stealing the contents of the till and running to a waiting getaway car. Victim is hospitalised requiring stitches to his face and minor plastic surgery reconstruction. Sentenced to 4 years in Category B prison. During time served, obtains three governor's reports for assaults on other prisoners and one for assault on a member of staff in the education block.

You are also fortunate in that the Custody Sergeant who has brought Mick into custody has some informal comments on his behaviour so far. He has said 'Mr Brough appears extremely agitated. He is argumentative, keeps shouting down the hallway that he is pissed off, and I'm afraid he is using a lot of bad language. I feel a bit sorry for the interview team.'

From the information above you are probably already forming an opinion of where the suspect might be on the interpersonal wheel, and you might already have a pit in your stomach at the idea of facing him in an interview!

Before the next activity, look again at the [adaptive and maladaptive interpersonal circles](#) taken from Alison et al.'s (2013) ORBIT model (Observing Rapport Based Interpersonal Techniques) that you used earlier. Plot where you think Mick will be on the interpersonal circumplex.

2.2 Interviewer rapport strategies

In the following activity you'll think further about rapport.

Activity 3

Given what you have learned about the interpersonal circles so far, and the principles of rapport, select which one of the following you think is the best piece of psychological advice for the interviewer who will speak with Mick.

- The interviewer needs to go in hard on Mick – show him who is boss. I would recommend shouting back at Mick if he shouts, and giving as good as you get if he swears.
- The interviewer needs to be careful not to get drawn into maladaptive behaviour. The predictions of Mick's behaviour suggest that because he will behave

maladaptively, that will tempt the interviewer into also behaving maladaptively. The interviewer needs to stay on the adaptive wheel (even though this might be difficult!).

- The interviewer should try to be really friendly with Mick. Maybe crack some jokes about the football or find another way to befriend him. Call him 'mate' regularly, laugh loudly at his jokes, fake an interest in his hobbies and so on.

2.3 DS Sund's interview of Mick Brough



Next, you will now observe the interview of Mick Brough. SIO Harris has asked DS Sund to carry out the interview.

As you watch the interview, you should think about what you have learned across all of the earlier weeks of this course. You will probably notice that you can relate aspects of the interview to:

- establishing the suspect's credibility (Week 1)
- establishing rapport, even in difficult circumstances (Week 2)
- the potential for coercive interview practices (Week 3).

You will also, of course, pick up on which aspects of the evidence DS Sund chooses to disclose initially and what she holds back, and be able to observe how that works out (Week 4).

You'll watch extracts from the interview first to emphasise different aspects. The first extract you watch will be from the account phase of the interview. However, you will notice that in the second part of the interview, DS Sund starts to move on to challenging some of the aspects of the account where there are discrepancies between what Mick says and

some of the other evidence. You will notice that this second part of the interview happens a few hours later, when the suspect and Sund will have both had breaks, to allow them to rest and gather themselves for the next part of the interview.

In order for you to be able to observe the most relevant (and interesting!) parts of the interview, we have omitted some other parts. For example, DS Sund would have offered Mick legal advice and explained his right to have a solicitor in the room and explained the other procedures at the outset of the interview.

2.4 DS Sund interviews Mick Brough

In this video, you will observe DS Sund interviewing Mick Brough.

You should watch the interview and make some notes of your observations. Be ready for questions about what you observed in the next section. You may wish to have your timeline in front of you as you observe the interview, to note any discrepancies that might arise.

Video content is not available in this format.



2.5 Noting discrepancies on the timeline

As you observed the interview, you may have noticed a few discrepancies between what Mick was saying happened and the other evidence. If you haven't already, make sure you have noted these on your timeline.

- In Week 3 (regarding the new potential suspects in the case), you may remember that according to his initial statement, taken at the time, Brough claimed to have been at home watching TV during the time period of the offence.
- In the interview, it would be difficult for Mick to maintain that claim because he has been sighted at the scene, and his car has been picked up close to the scene, both at the relevant time points.

- However, in the interview we see that Mick claims not to have left his car, which is inconsistent with the account of the witness who saw him walk up the drive of 24 Abigail Crescent.
- He also claims to have been there for a shorter time period, saying he left at 7.30 pm, which is inconsistent with the ANPR record, which shows the car leave at 8.07 pm.
- Additionally, Mick claims not to have been at the property in three years, and this conflicts with the forensic evidence – in particular the spit found on the face of the murder victim.

There are, therefore, a number of conflicts between the other evidence and the story that Mick is trying to present that can be seen when you attend to the timeline of events.

3 Assessment of the suspect interview and case closure



Having observed the interview with DS Sund and Mick Brough you'll now make an important decision: do you think Mick Brough is involved in the case?

You'll also see the investigation team discuss their final thoughts on the case.

3.1 Your assessment of the suspect Mick Brough



In the following activity you will be asked your opinion on the case so far.

Activity 4

Take part in the following poll.

Interactive content is not available in this format.



3.2 An assessment of Mick Brough as a suspect



Now you've had a chance to make your own assessment of Mick as a suspect, read the expert opinion.

Suspect credibility

As discussed, in the interview you will have observed a lot of different accounts of what happened from Mick, and these are hard to reconcile unless Mick is lying at various points. In the account he provided prior to the interview, Mick claimed to be at home watching TV. In the interview while he initially claims not to know who Leonard is, he later claims that he dropped his sister off at Leonard's property but did not enter the property himself. It is obvious to an observer that Mick is not likely to be telling the truth in some of what he is saying to the police as the accounts are inconsistent.

As well as that, there are inconsistencies with both versions of Mick's account and the other evidence. There are reasons therefore to doubt the truthfulness of Mick's account.

Note that these judgements about deception are not based on body language or any other form of nonverbal communication (as you have learned that these cues are often unreliable), they are made based on discrepancies in the claims being made.

Rapport

Mick is not an easy suspect to interview. He is dominant, hostile and displays maladaptive behaviour, especially at the start of the interview. He refuses to sit down, swears a lot, shouts and is very difficult to manage.

Despite this, DS Sund does an excellent job. In particular she does not match Mick's maladaptive hostile behaviour. When Mick says 'Suit yourself, why am I here?', which is very hostile, she is calm and explains in a frank and forthright way the reasons for his arrest. She is on the adaptive, rather than the maladaptive, circle. Likewise, she is similarly frank about the relationship Leonard was in with Mick's sister. She does not shy away from covering that, even though Mick might not approve of the relationship.

DS Sund does not try to catch the suspect out when he reveals that he is lying. For example, when he initially claims not to know Leonard but then later says he dropped Nita off there, she doesn't allow herself the 'Aha, so you *do* know who he is' moment that it might be tempting to have. Instead, she allows him to give the account. Sund does not get drawn into maladaptive arguments, instead she is predominantly in a positive version of the hostile and slightly submissive space, by being frank and forthright. This is a good place for her to be with this suspect.

Coercive practices

There is no evidence of coercive practice on Sund's part. She doesn't lie, her behaviour could not be considered oppressive, and she seeks to neither maximise nor minimise the offence. She doesn't suggest an account to the suspect, she seeks an account from him.

Use of evidence

In the interview you will notice that Sund disclosed the following initially:

- the time of discovery of Leonard's body
- the last time that Leonard was seen alive
- the fact that a witness claims to have seen Nita and Mick at around 7.00 pm on Sunday
- the ANPR record of Mick's car passing by the road at 7.10 pm.

This meant that in the interview Mick was able to be located in the relevant time period and at the relevant location (remember that his initial statement said that he was at home watching TV). However, it also meant that there were elements of the evidence that could be used to either support the suspect's case if he was innocent, or test the truthfulness of his account.

3.3 SIO and the two detectives debrief the case

Watch SIO Harris and the two detectives discuss the conclusion to the case.

Video content is not available in this format.



4 Conclusion of the case



Well done! You have followed a murder investigation to its conclusion and learned how psychology can be applied to many stages of the investigative process. You have learned about the experiences of suspects in the criminal justice system and learned a little about how psychological processes can apply to the experiences of both the investigation team and the suspects.

You may remember that you were asked at the very start of the course to look out for some mistakes in the investigation, and to note them down. There were some mistakes in the investigation as these can, and do, happen, and we wanted to make the case one where a realistic amount of error was included. One of the main mistakes that was made early on in the investigation was made by the junior officers who attended the scene at Leonard's house. This was the mistake of informing Neale about the injuries to his deceased father.

This is a problem in terms of disclosure, as it should have been information that was withheld in order to be able to test the truthfulness of someone's account. As you saw in this investigation, DI Bullet became rather obsessed with how Neale could possibly know that information (even though in fact he was told it by the police!).

Another mistake made at the point of the discovery of the body was that the officers at the scene did not check the access points to the property themselves, before breaking the front door down. If they had done so, they would have discovered that the patio doors were open at the back and could have entered the property that way.

You can rest assured that Mick Brough is now serving a 25-year prison service for his part in the murder. DS Sund is currently enjoying a well-earned holiday in Devon, SIO Harris is now heading up a new murder inquiry involving organised crime gangs, and DI Bullet? Well, he is spending a few weeks back at police training school!

Did the case resolve in the way you expected at the start of the course?

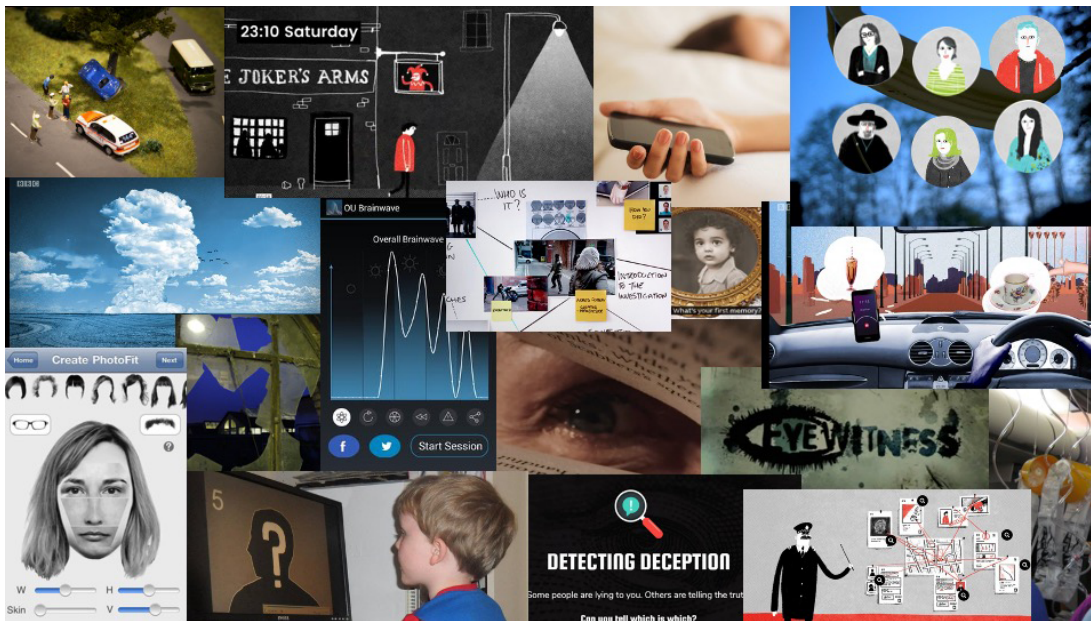
5 Course summary

During this investigation you have learned about the application of psychology to the criminal justice system.

Specifically, you have covered the assessment of credibility and the detection of deception in human communication; the importance of honest and authentic rapport and respectful communication and the possibility of creating false confessions through police interviewing and you have applied all of this to a real case.

Well done! We hope that you have enjoyed the experience.

Where next?



If you have enjoyed this course and are interested in further learning opportunities, explore the links below.

Short courses

There are other [free courses from The Open University](#) that might interest you, specifically:

- [Forensic psychology](#): This course explores psychology applied to the criminal justice system too, but it is more focused on the witness experience, rather than the suspect experience.

Qualifications

If you have enjoyed this course, and wish to study more formally with The Open University then the following qualifications might be of interest. The Open University has both an undergraduate degree and a masters qualification which cover material relevant to forensic psychology.

- [Undergraduate forensic psychology](#)
- [Masters in forensic psychological studies](#)

Book

Since this course was first developed, Emily and Laurence Alison (2020) have written a book called *Rapport: The Four Ways to Read People*, which talks about their research into rapport in a very accessible way. It is published by Penguin.

Podcast

You might be interested in listening to an episode of the podcast Bad People, which features one of the authors of this course, Zoë Walkington, talking about the changes to the legal system of England and Wales (including PACE and PEACE) that arose as a result of miscarriages of justice. It features the case of Maxwell Confait, which was central to changes made in the criminal justice system.

- [Bad People Blue Lips: Does good cop / bad cop actually work?](#)

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Glossary

adaptive

Positive ways of relating to others. Behaviours leading to positive interpersonal communication.

maladaptive

Negative or inappropriate ways of relating to others. Behaviours leading to a damaging effect on communication.