

Spring 2017

Member Meeting Recap March 14

The MCPI membership meeting was enjoyed and a good time was had by all who attended. The speakers, Attorney Gregory Rohl and Lil Bear, graciously accepted the invite to come and talk to our group. They both did an outstanding job. Attorney Greg Rohl presented valuable information related to the Attorney and Professional Investigator relationship; what the attorney needs from the PI and the protected aspects of the information shared. Lil Bear, owner operator of Spy Ops, who is a well-known vendor to the Professional Investigators in Michigan and elsewhere, displayed and talked about his spy wear. He focused on some of the newer features and useful components in his inventory.



Attorney Gregory Rohl

There were over 38 people in attendance. Katherine Johnston donated four Detroit Tiger baseball tickets and the lucky winner was Sherwood DeVisser. The money from the drawing has been earmarked for the "new MCPI Website" which is currently underway and should be completed for all to view, and in use by the end of the summer 2017. Yeah!



Raffle winner
Sherwood DeVisser

Also, please hold the date and mark your calendars for September 19, 2017 for the MCPI Fall Membership Conference. MCPI is putting together a fantastic lineup of speakers who will present relevant educational information. Watch your email inbox and postal mail for further conference updates. We hope to see you all in September.

Welcome New Members!

Nancy Rovik - Helganz Investigations
John D. Gifford - John D. Gifford & Associates, Inc.
Glenn Durfield - Caesar Investigations
Samuel L. Jackson - SLJ Production
Nathan Juett - Nathan John Juett
Anthony Ellis - 501 Security Inc
Robert Akouri - Akouri Investigations LLC
Joseph Akouri - Akouri Investigations LLC

FEATURED SLEUTH

by Russ Rheaume

Katherine Johnston of Mackinac Partners is our current Featured Sleuth. She was born in Detroit and graduated from Utica High School. She then obtained a Bachelor's Degree from Kalamazoo College with a double major in business and psychology. While at Kalamazoo College, she studied abroad in Spain, played 3 years of NCAA Division III basketball, and interned for both the Coast Guard Investigative Service and The Carl H Clatterbuck Agency. During the former internship, she worked in Washington D.C. for the Director and many senior Special Agents, assisting on a key project involving the agency's use of security forces. During the latter internship, Katherine assisted Mr. Clatterbuck in investigative matters as an auxiliary aspect to an independent study course she piloted, entitled "Investigative Psychology".



After Katherine graduated, the Director of the Coast Guard Investigative Service offered her a temporary federal appointment in Washington D.C. She worked closely with many senior federal law enforcement officials to research and facilitate the development of policies and procedures pertaining to the agents' field manual. She also assisted in a security threat assessment for President Obama's 2014 U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. She then returned to Michigan and landed her current position with Mackinac Partners, LLC- a leading financial advisory and turnaround management firm. She is a Certified Fraud Examiner (CFE) and Intelligence Analyst for the company's Business Intelligence Group (BIG), a division that provides comprehensive corporate investigation services to clientele such as publicly and privately-held entities, law firms, private equity groups, and hedge funds. She conducts and assists on many high-profile background investigations, corporate espionage investigations, fraud examinations, and security/vulnerability assessments.

Katherine routinely gathers intelligence for key clientele in Mexico, focusing on anything in the media or within government sources that may impact these clients' operations or executives' travel itineraries. She also recently assisted in completing a security risk assessment for a large shopping mall, which involved evaluating vulnerabilities that could affect the safety of the mall and its patrons. Some imperative areas of focus were physical security, electronic surveillance systems, access control, and effectiveness of the current security department.

Katherine is single and enjoys traveling, working out and spending time with her family. She loves her dog, Murphy an English Labrador.

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Katherine was recently elected to the Board of Directors of the Michigan Council of Professional Investigators (MCPI). She will definitely be an asset to our organization.
Welcome Katherine.

**2017 Membership renewals are now past due.
If you have not yet renewed, please contact the office.**

MCPI 2017 Board of Directors

Jerry Hardesty - President
Alan Blanchard - Vice President
Cheryl Gelnak - Secretary
Jane Boudreau - Treasurer
Jim Schoenherr - Sergeant at Arms
Katherine Johnston - Board Member At Large
Michael Cook - Board Member At Large



Hardesty, Gelnak, Boudreau,
Schoenherr, Cook & Johnston

**Save the date for the MCPI Annual Training Day
September 19, 2017**

Using Open-ended Questions During the Investigative Interview (Part 1)
March / April 2017

When evaluating an account, such as what happened to a victim, a suspect's alibi, or what a witness saw or heard, the investigator should elicit this information by asking an initial open-ended question early in the investigative interview. An open-ended question is one that calls for a narrative response. The following are examples of open questions:

- Please tell me everything you know about the fire at your warehouse.
- Please tell me everything that happened to you after school last Friday night. (Question aimed toward a claim of rape, battery, or robbery.)
- Please tell me everything about the accident you witnessed.
- Please tell me everything you did from noon on Friday until you went to bed. (Question designed to evaluate an alibi.)

Too often, investigators elicit this type of information by asking closed questions. For example, in a case involving a robbery that occurred at 7:45 P.M., the investigator might ask a suspect, "Where were you last Friday at 7:45?" The guilty suspect is likely to lie to this highly focused question by providing a fabricated statement and the investigator is left with the difficult task of detecting deception based on a single observation of behavior.

There are a number of benefits of asking an initial open-ended question early during an interview. First, because the subject is free to include or exclude whatever he wants to within his or her response, unless dealing with a fabricated victim's account, the subject is unlikely to include false information, as open questions do not invite fabrication. Information that is volunteered during a response to an open question—for example, a subject's alibi—will probably all be truthful, although perhaps incomplete. Second, the subject's response to an initial open question can be evaluated for editing, where the subject intentionally excludes specific information within the account. Finally, responses to open questions generally do not commit the deceptive subject to a position of denial, whereas a series of closed questions may cause the subject to stick to a lie he told early during the interview process.

To illustrate these points, consider the following response to an open question concerning a subject's alibi, where the issue under investigation is a drive-by shooting that occurred at 6:45 P.M. The open question asked of the suspect was, "Please tell me everything you did from noon on Friday until you went to bed."

Over the noon hour I was shooting buckets with some friends and we decided to go to the McDonald's on Sunset for lunch. We hung around McDonald's for a while and went over to a friend's house to see who was there. We were at her home for a while and sat and talked. After that we wanted to see a movie. The movie ended at about 7:00. Eventually, we went over to Paul's house, talked and stuff and I walked home from Paul's house around 9:00. I spent the rest of the night on the phone and listening to CDs in my room. I probably fell asleep around 11:00 or so.

The above alibi does not include any false information, even though the subject was involved in the shooting incident (notice that the subject never stated that he went to the movie). As will be described shortly, this alibi can be analyzed for editing and, by asking clarifying questions, the investigator may be able to establish that the suspect, in fact, had no alibi at the time of the crime. Had the investigator elicited the alibi by asking a direct question—"Where were you at 6:45 last Friday night?"—the subject is likely to lie and is now committed to the position that he was at a movie when the drive-by shooting occurred, as illustrated by the following dialogue:

Question (Q): Where were you at about 6:45 last Friday night?

Response (R): I was with Paul and Greg at a movie.

Q: What movie was that?

R: Hell or High Water.

Q: When did you leave the movie theater?

R: The movie ended around 7:00, so it would have been about 7:10 or 7:15.

Q: And then what did you do?

R: We were in Paul's car and he drove to his house where we talked for a while and I walked home at 9:00.

Eliciting an alibi in the above manner actually forces a guilty suspect to lie to the investigator's questions. It is an obvious principle of interviewing, but one worth mentioning: it is always more advantageous to have a subject omit part of the truth than to fabricate information through a lie. Developing truthful information that was omitted from a response is much easier than learning the truth from a subject who is committed to a lie already told. Open questions do not invite a guilty subject to lie to the investigator's question.

Phrasing Open Questions

Our social instincts teach us to ask open questions in a noninvasive manner (for example, "How was your day at work?" or "What happened at school today?"). These questions are certainly adequate to afford a person willing to disclose problems at work or school to reveal that information. However, they clearly are ineffective for the person motivated to deceive.

During the interview of a person suspected of involvement in a crime or fabricating an

event, the initial open question should be phrased in the broadest sense possible (for example, "Tell me everything you did..."). The investigator also does not want to place any parameters within the question that might limit the subject's response. Therefore, when questioning a wife concerning domestic violence, question 1 is improperly asked, whereas question 2 is properly asked:

1. Why don't you start off by telling me what your husband did to you?
2. Please tell me everything that happened here this evening.

The first question is improper because it assumes that the husband in some way injured the wife and also limits the response to her husband's physical actions. The second offers no direction to the wife and she can report whatever she chooses.

Typically truthful accounts will start off at some point in time prior to the main event. Before responding to an open question, however, a deceptive subject may ask the investigator, "Where would you like me to begin?" or "What would you like to know?" The investigator should respond, "Wherever you want to begin" or "Everything that happened."

Eliciting a Full Response

Once the subject starts responding to the initial open question the investigator should allow him to continue with his response without asking any questions. If the investigator does interrupt the account by asking a question, the truthful subject may edit the account to provide what he believes the investigator wants to know. Also, interruptions as a result of questions break the subject's flow of ideas and continuity of the account, which restricts the investigator's ability to evaluate the account for edited information.

To encourage a full response to the initial open question, the investigator may use a technique called forced silence. After the subject pauses, the investigator might say something like, "all right" or "okay," followed by silence. Inevitably, the subject will break the silence and continue with his response. When the response is complete the subject will generally let the investigator know this with a statement such as, "And that's everything I did."

(In the May/June Investigator Tip we will continue with Part 2: Evaluating the Response to an Open-ended Question)

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Inquiries regarding Investigator Tips should be directed to Janet Finnerty jfinnerty@reid.com.

MCPI Membership Directory

Have you updated your information on the MCPI website? Did you know you can make those changes at any time? Call the MCPI office if you need assistance to log in and update your contact information. MCPI office 517-482-0706

Attorney General's Office - Consumer Protection Division

How to File Complaints

Attorney Bill Schuette encourages any resident with questions or concerns to contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division toll-free by calling 1-877-765-8388. To file a consumer complaint, Michigan residents can submit an

[online complaint](#) through the Attorney General's website or mail a letter explaining the problem and desired resolution to:

Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette
Consumer Protection Division
P.O. Box 30213
Lansing, MI 48909

IDENTIFY THEFT & TAX FRAUD

TAX FRAUD: Identity Theft's Partner In Crime.



The Federal Trade Commission recently reported that in 2015, they received more than 490,000 identity theft complaints—that's nearly 50% more compared to 2014. Tax fraud is by far the biggest contributor to those numbers. According to the FTC's Chairwoman, Edith Ramirez, tax refund fraud is the largest and fastest growing segment in the identity theft category.

Tax fraud occurs when criminals use your Social Security Number to file a refund with the IRS in your name. In 2013, identity thieves who filed fraudulent claims using stolen information got away with \$5.8 billion. Victims usually only learn of the crime after having their returns rejected because scammers have beat them to it. Filing your taxes right away can help reduce the risk of being targeted for tax fraud.

Recognizing the warning signs.

One of the biggest indicators that you might be a target for tax fraud is when companies or individuals ask repeatedly or pressure you to provide personal information. The IRS does not ask for PINs, passwords or confidential access information, nor does it contact taxpayers via email to request personal or financial information. This includes any type of electronic communication, such as text messages and social media platforms. Additional warning signs include:

- More than one tax return filed using your SSN
- Owing additional tax, refund offset or having had collection actions taken against you for a year you did not file a tax return
- IRS records indicating you have received wages or other income from an employer for whom you did not work

To combat tax-related identity theft, the IRS, the states and the tax industry joined forces in January of this year to enact new safeguards against tax fraud. However, if you suspect you have been a victim of tax fraud or tax-related identity theft, report it immediately at www.identitytheft.gov.

PRECAUTIONS THAT HELP PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT.

- Always use strong passwords and never use the same password for all of your accounts
- Install security software with firewall and anti-virus/spam protections on your personal computers and change account passwords often
- Learn to recognize phishing scams—threatening calls, texts or emails from people posing as legitimate organizations—so you can avoid them
- Familiarize yourself with the Dirty Dozen, a list compiled annually by the IRS alerting taxpayers to a variety of popular scams
- Do not click on links or download any attachments from unknown sources or suspicious emails
- Don't give personal information over the phone, through the mail or on the Internet unless you have initiated the contact or you are sure you know with whom you are dealing
- Do not carry your Social Security card in your wallet or purse
- Make sure your tax records and personal data are kept in a secure place
- Don't give a business your SSN or financial information just because they ask—only when required
- Check your credit report every 12 months



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For more information, call (800) 482-6901 or visit www.mackinacpartners.com

[MP TaxFraud PDF](#)

Michigan Council of Professional Investigators, 235 N. Pine St, Lansing, MI 48933

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