

Polygraph Induced Confession: Real World Case Study

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Abstract—The polygraph test also called as Lie detection test works in physiological responses by measuring the activity of heart rate, blood pressure (BP), Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), and respiration. The principle behind polygraph tests is that when an individual is deceptive, his body exhibits involuntary responses in Polygraph examination. The result of polygraph examination is not only detecting lie but also work as psychological tools to induce confession. Post test interview play an important role when subjects see charts or sense the deceptive response, they experience a fear that deception has been caught. This emotional state makes subject to confess the crime under investigation.

This study presents a case where a polygraph test played a crucial role in solving a blind murder case. Following the polygraph test and subsequent interview, the suspect confessed to the crime in the presence of a judge and surrendered the murder weapon. The effectiveness of polygraph tests in this context is closely linked to the forensic expert's skills and the thoroughness of pre-test and post-test interviews.

Index Terms—Polygraph test, Confession, Blind Murder Case, Interviews, Behavioral Analysis Techniques, Investigation.

I.INTRODUCTION

Polygraph accuracy rates suggest that polygraph catches lie, sometimes makes suspects confess not by narrating convincing proof, but through psychological techniques that deception is guaranteed to be detected. Polygraph examinations aren't just about measuring physiological responses. Psychologist applies psychological interviewing techniques during pre-test and post-test that can result in confession from the subject. The polygraph strength lies in subjects' physiological readings but also in the pretest and post-test interview. By combining both, psychologist may induce confession.

Indian courts consider polygraph results as corroborative evidence (Selvi v/s State of Karnataka, 2010), but investigative agencies still use polygraph tests under NHRC guidelines and Supreme Court protocols to secure investigative leads. Any finding derived from this test considered under Section 27 of the Indian Evidence Act.

Cases Where Polygraph Testing Resulted in Confessions or Key Disclosures:

Cases	Year	Polygraph Outcome & Use
RG Kar Medical College rape-murder	2024	Under NHRC guidelines, suspects found deceptive. Deeper questioning during test identified witnesses and crime timeline.
Gokul Kidnapping & Murder	2019	Three juveniles subjected to polygraph test confessed abducting a toddler and killing the toddler.
Muzaffarpur Shelter-Home Sexual-Abuse Scandal	2018	Polygraph results lead suspects to reveal hiding spots of survivor testimonies and documentary evidence.
Kathua Rape & Murder	2018	Multiple accused broke down and admitted planning and execution during post test interview.
Unnao Rape Case	2017	Combined DDT (polygraph and Narco) produced admissions on perpetrators' roles and victim locations; confessions used as investigative leads.

Shakti Mills Gang-Rape	2013	Four suspects underwent polygraph and Narcoanalysis and gave detailed confessions.
K.M. Seema Azad (“Shashi” murder case)	2013	Co-accused Vijay Sen disclosed details implicating MLA Anand Sen.
Nirbhaya Delhi Gang-Rape	2012	Polygraph screening narrowed down the suspects. Two juveniles confessed involvement patterns, helped in charge framing.
Karnataka ATM Robbery (“Chinnaswamy Lane” Heist)	2010	Voluntary polygraphs broke suspect silence, primary accused confessed getaway routes and code words.

Note- Cases without direct court citations are drawn from public investigative reports. All tests were conducted on a voluntary basis, with informed consent recorded before a magistrate, and results were used to generate leads rather than serve as standalone proof.

II. CONSTITUTIONAL AND STATUTORY FRAMEWORK OF POLYGRAPH

Article 20(3) of the Constitution protects accused persons from being compelled to be a witness against themselves. Section 161(2) of the CrPC prevents forcing a person to answer questions that tend to expose them to criminal liability. Under the Indian Evidence Act, “confessions” (Sections 24–30) must be voluntary, while Section 27 permits use of important information of facts, even if inadmissible as confessions. Courts require a clear link between the post-test statement and the recovered fact (e.g., weapon location, victim’s hiding place). Sometimes confession also leads recovery of physical evidence. Under Section 45 court may call experts as an expert witness to explain test methodology, scoring, and limitations. Also Section 45A allows court-appointed tests when expert knowledge is essential to resolve disputed issues.

Before *Selvi v. State of Karnataka* (2010), High Courts admitted voluntary polygraph reports and linked admissions as corroborative evidence in many cases. Like *T.V. Vatheeswaran v. State of TN* (1979), *Bulaki Ram v. State of Haryana* (1981), *Hosamani v. State of Karnataka* (1984) etc. Later in the 2010, The Supreme Court in *Selvi* held involuntary narcoanalysis, polygraph, and brain-mapping unconstitutional under Articles 20(3) and 21. But if a post-test admission results to discovering a new fact (recovery of a weapon), that discovery may be admissible.

III. CASE STUDY

Background of the Case-The subject was the caretaker of a field/farm, the subject used to look after farming,

laboring and the other requirements of the field. The time on incident was when “Dhaan” farming was going on and the labours were working in the nearby fields/farms.

The Investigating Officer informed that the incident occurred two years ago in August, 2022, when a person was found dead under suspicious circumstances in a field. The local Police took over the case. After initial investigations, one person was FIR named accused as this person informed the family of the deceased that the deceased is fighting in his field with someone. If something happens to the deceased, he is no where responsible. The suspect was called for questioning by the police. The suspect revealed that he was passing by his field and saw him from the road itself in his field. As the deceased was a habitual alcoholic and used to talk badly with people. Seeing him in the field with other labors, he informed the family. The IO informed that the subject is sticking to his this statement, not revealing anything further. The IO also informed that the family of the deceased was also asked about the deceased and they informed that the deceased left the house stating that he is going to work as a labor to some another farm but not the farm incident took place in. On inquiring from the other farm caretaker, it was found that the deceased reached to him in second half of the day so deceased was not given any work. Deceased left saying that he is going to Suspect’s field to get his pending money with the suspect. The suspect said that the deceased did not come to him. The suspect said “main khet me dhaan ke liye paani kholne gaya tha, maine road se deceased ko dekha tha”. The suspect didn’t reveal anything further.

The Pre-Test Interview: During pre-test Interview with the subject (FIR named Accused), initially the subject

was reluctant for conversation. The subject was asked to give some information about his background like his name, family, education etc. He showed his Aadhar card but didn't speak anything. When asked about his kids, he said he has a son. He refused to mention age, just kept saying "abhi chota hai". On further inquiring about the son, multiple times asking same question about the age of the son with different reframing of the question, the answer was the same. On asking about the education of the son, he replied the same "abhi chota hai". By multiple questioning with reframing, by the end of pre-test interview the son was found to be a 32-year-old married person. The subject was having one daughter too and this was revealed during the number of family members staying together in a house. The subject had even a grandson also. The subject was not answering any question direct so indirect questions were put in front of him where he revealed information in bit and pieces.

On asking about the incident, he repeatedly passed one statement that he doesn't know anything about the incident. On asking that when did he saw the deceased? He answered "main khet me dhaan ke liye paani kholne gaya the, maine road se deceased ko dekha tha". The subject was asked about the distance he had seen the deceased, the subject mentioned about 2 acres. The subject was asked to name the color of the sticker pasted on window AC of the pre-test room (3-4 meter distance). The subject reported that he can't see things that far. Subject realized that he has been caught; the subject started pretending to be shivering, placed his hands on the table and said since he is shivering so his polygraph test cannot be conducted. The subject tried all his tactics not to cooperate in pre-test and the polygraph test.

During pre-test interview, the subject was told which weapon he had used (guessed by the expert after reading the postmortem report and knowing the crime scene), the subject's behavior got little aggressive and refused to talk further.

Behavioral observation during pre-test: deceptive behavior was observed; behavioral analysis techniques were used to identify potential deception by examining various verbal and nonverbal cues exhibited by suspects. Identifying deception through nonverbal behaviors is a complex process. It involves observing Micro expressions, Gaze aversion and blinking rate, posture shifts, body movements, voice pitch, speech

hesitations etc. which indicate dishonesty. Response latency, story inconsistencies, use of distancing language and over elaboration or vagueness are some of the linguistic patterns indicating stronger deception when coded and quantified in a proper manner. Combining structured protocols with observational data improves accuracy. During the pre-test interview, several behavioral cues commonly associated with deception were noted.

The Post-Test Interview: Polygraph test was conducted and the subject showed clear deception in the graph. During post-test interview, subject confessed for the crime under investigation. The post-test interview is an essential part of the polygraph procedure. It facilitates a thorough understanding of the results and provides an opportunity for further interviewing the subject. Post test interview plays a vital role in assessing the credibility of statements made during pre-test interview and during the statement to the investigator agency. The purpose of the Post-Test Interview is:

To review data: The expert reviews the physiological data collected during the test, This analysis helps to notice significant differences in physiological responses that may indicate deception.

Opportunity for Explanation: The post-test interview allows the expert to clarify any inconsistencies or unexpected responses if present. The expert use follow-up questions for a better understanding of specific physiological reactions.

Opportunity for Confession: In some cases, after reviewing data and follow up question, if a subject has been deceptive, they may feel a need to confess during the post-test interview when confronted with their physiological responses.

IV. CONCLUSION

This case study focus on the critical role of polygraph examinations not only as a lie detection tools, but also as a powerful psychological tool that, when used skillfully, can lead to confessions. In the blind murder case discussed here, the scientific polygraph analysis and expert-led behavioral interviewing techniques detected deception, post test interview triggered guilty feeling, and finally led to a full confession and recovery of the murder weapon.

Polygraph may not have the standalone evidentiary value in court, but its value in the investigative process is very important. Polygraph examinations not only detect the deception, but also help in recovery of evidences and other critical/important information related to the crime. This case shows how the skill of a Forensic Psychologist with polygraph tools guides the criminal investigations.

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