

The Psychology of False Confessions

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Typology of False Confession

- ☒ Voluntary False Confession
- ☒ Coerced-Compliant False Confession
- ☒ Coerced-Internalized False Confession

(Kassin & Wrightsman, 1985)

Confessions & the Criminal Justice System

- ☒ Most potent form of evidence (Kassin & Neumann, 1997)
- ☒ False confessions played a role in 25% of wrongful convictions

Factors Associated with False Confessions*

- ✍ Interrogation Techniques
- ✍ Investigative Bias
- ✍ Vulnerabilities of the Suspect

*For a complete review, please refer to Meissner & Russano (2003)

Interrogation Techniques

- ✍ Reid Technique
 - advocates the use psychologically based techniques
- ✍ Technique Types
 - minimization
 - maximization

Kassin & Kiechel (1996)

- ✍ False confession paradigm
- ✍ Alt Key experiment
 - false evidence
 - vulnerability
- ✍ 69% overall confession rate
- ✍ 100% confession rate with false evidence & high vulnerability

**Russano, Meissner,
Narchet, & Kassin (2005)**

- ✍ Examined true and false confessions
- ✍ The offer of leniency lead to higher confession rates
- ✍ The use of minimization led to higher confession rates
- ✍ Confession rates highest when the offer of leniency & minimization were used

Investigative Bias

- ✍ Kassin, Goldstein, & Satitsky (2003)
 - examine the influence of investigative bias
 - when armed with a guilt bias
 - ✍ more guilt presumptive questions
 - ✍ used more interrogative techniques
 - ✍ exerted more pressure

Suspect Vulnerabilities

- ✍ Age
 - younger suspects are more likely to confess than older suspects
 - Redlich & Goodman (2005)
- ✍ Mental Capacity of a Suspect
 - IQ is 20 points lower than average among false confessors
 - Gudjonsson (1990)
- ✍ Altered Mental State
 - suspects who consumed an illegal drug were more likely to falsely confess than those who had not consumed an illegal drug
 - Pearse, Gudjonsson, Clare, & Rutter, 1998)

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