

12. SELECTION AND TRAINING OF POLYGRAPH EXAMINERS

The selection and training of polygraph examiners within the various branches of the Government proceeds along similar lines; the differences are not significant.

It is preferable, but not mandatory, that a prospective examiner be a college graduate; in some agencies, one to two years of college is acceptable. It is desirable in all agencies, and mandatory in some, that the candidate be a qualified field (or security) investigator. The ability to speak one foreign language is required for field examiners in one organization. All examiners are civilians in the Navy and military in the other services. It is highly desirable that a candidate be mature, poised, intelligent and emotionally stable but no formal measures are in effect to help screen people for these traits, such as a psychological assessment test and/or an interview with a psychiatrist. In at least one organization, an applicant's record is evaluated by a committee of senior polygraph examiners before he will be accepted for training; in another organization, the applicant is interviewed by a board of five senior examiners whose independent judgments are a basis for acceptance.

Formal training ranges from 6 to 10 weeks at full-time schools. Most curriculums appear to be derived from the Keeler Polygraph Institute and include operation of the polygraph, interrogation procedures, record interpretation, legal, medical and psychological aspects, practice, and casework.

After formal training, some effort is made to supervise the work of a novice examiner but no consistent practice is discernible. In one organization, the examiner is supervised for 18 months after schooling before he is permitted to examine a case without supervision in the field.

There is no reason to doubt that a reasonable and conscientious effort is made to select and train polygraph examiners within the limits imposed by the competition for qualified personnel and the training facilities available to military and governmental organizations. An attempt to improve the professional status and quality of this operation would afford an opportunity to review the curriculums, selection policies, training procedures, and facilities provided for this purpose. It is believed that increased support and recognition would prove helpful.

There is room for improvement by providing for psychological assessment of candidates before they are qualified. Since the examiner's manner and bearing must affect his ability to conduct an interrogation, it is surprising that an overall psychological evaluation which would include a battery of psychological tests and a psychiatric interview is not used to screen prospective examiners. An incidental value of this step would be to provide data for improving selection procedures in the future. One would initially try to select candidates with the psychological characteristics of the effective examiners and to reject the others; and confirm the effectiveness of such procedures as experience builds up. It may also be desirable to review examiners for psychological suitability every year or two after they are on the job, since changes in psychological stability are not unknown in stressful occupations.

There are also some civilian training facilities. The Keeler Polygraph Institute (Chicago) and the National Training Center of Lie Detection (New York) provide 6-week training sessions which have been attended by police trainees, Coast Guard, and a few private operators. The National Training Center sponsors 3- and 5-day work conferences for polygraph examiners which have been attended, in addition to those mentioned above, by representatives of the Armed Forces (excluding the Navy), the Treasury Department, and employees of manufacturing or sales companies. Courses are also provided at such colleges as the University of California, Washington State College, New York University, and San Jose State College (California). At one time, C. H. Stoelting, a respected manufacturer of lie detection equipment provided a 6- to 9-month correspondence course supplemented by 2 weeks of apprentice training at a police department. Several attempts to establish professional qualification standards and a certification program have led to the formation of the American Academy of Polygraph Examiners, the Board of Polygraph Examiners (now merged with the American Academy), the Academy for Scientific Interrogation, and the National Capitol Polygraph Association (organized recently in Washington, D.C.) There is no way, however, to stop anyone with \$1,000 from buying a polygraph and setting himself up as an examiner in civil life.

13. GENERAL DISCUSSION

There is a remarkable absence of objective information concerning lie detection and the polygraph. No explanation for this state of affairs appears plausible.