

## Inside

News You Can Use

### 26 Automatic license plate readers

Know their value, drawbacks and considerations for use.

### 30 Military assets for police

An overview of the 1033 Program and why it has prompted public concern.

### 34 Improve your pistol-handling

Boosting these skills can not only increase your efficiency but also save your life.

### PLUS...

8 Leader to Leader

12 Nationwide

## Depression screening

Routine maintenance for your mental health

by Dr. Stephanie Barone McKenny

Officer wellness matters. It's not just words; it requires action.

October is National Depression Screening Month and October 5 is National Depression Screening Day, an annual reminder that you should get screened. Just as you should get your blood pressure

Continued on page 14

# American Police Beat

OCTOBER 2023 VOLUME XXX NO. 10 • PRICE \$5 • www.APBweb.com



**HAVING A BALL** NYPD officers maintained security and joined the festivities at New York City's Mexican Day Parade on September 17, an annual celebration of the local Mexican community and Mexican Independence Day. This was just one of many events held across the country during National Hispanic American Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15), which honors the diverse histories, cultures and contributions of American citizens whose ancestors hail from Spain, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. (NYPD)



istock.com/standret

## Why every agency needs a polygraph examiner

by Dave Bryant

Lie detection is one of the most misunderstood tools of law enforcement. There is no such thing as a lie detector machine. That technology does not exist. Lies are a normal and even necessary part of human communication. Some lies are socially acceptable and expected in a polite society. They are complex psychological processes that serve to spare hurt feelings, expedite interactions or avoid conflict. However, some lies cause great harm. There is good reason why "Thou shalt not bear false witness" made God's top 10 list. In law enforcement, we waste a great deal of effort because of lies. The ability to detect deception has always been critical to obtaining justice.

Continued on page 18

## Do cops need *more* training?

Amid public outcry, a longstanding industry norm may be the real culprit

by Scott Savage

After any high-profile use-of-force incident, a familiar mantra is soon repeated. Police critics and politicians decry the officer's actions and declare that "Police officers need more training!" Assuming there is a problem to

begin with, proposing that officers need "more" implies that the problem is simply a matter of the quantity of the training.

Any experienced officer can point out the flaws in this mantra that the police need more

Continued on page 22

Subscribe & SAVE! We offer digital subscriptions. See page 39 for more details.



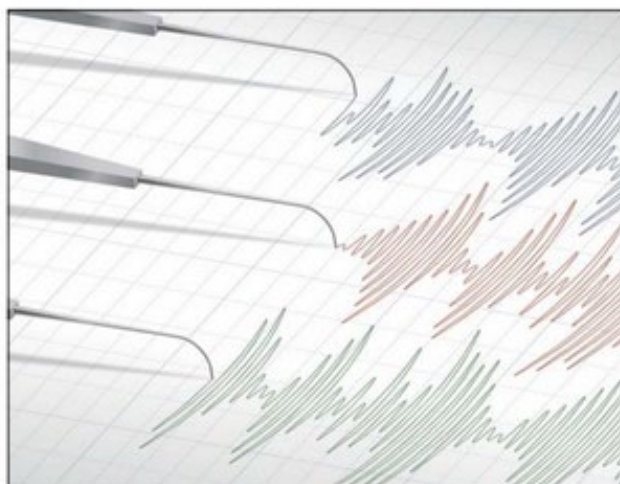
# Why every agency needs a polygraph examiner

Continued from page 1

The polygraph instrument is not the magic box we see used so easily in movies. It simply records multiple channels of physiological data simultaneously that are affected by psychological processes. The goal of the detective is to obtain truthful information while motivating the suspect toward confession. Interrogators use a variety of techniques to elicit information. Some are simple conversational tactics, while others — such as kinesics and statement analysis — can be very technical. The best tool by far is polygraph. Hollywood has trained so many with bad information that people who should know better believe polygraph to be either an infallible panacea or worthless voodoo. Neither is true, of course. Done

properly, it is a critical technology that should be part of every law enforcement agency.

There are no cheap substitutes. Computerized voice stress analysis (CVSA) has no scientific validity; it is merely an interrogation prop that mimics polygraph to trick a subject into revealing information. Lots of research has been done by the federal government to determine whether it has any limited usefulness as a forensic science. It does not. It is true that the costs of training and maintaining a detective certified in polygraph are significant, but the cost of not doing so is even greater. Smaller agencies should consider hiring a part-time detective specialist or contracting with a qualified private examiner. Applicant screening, internal affairs investigations and major crimes are some of the areas where these specialized interrogators get information that may otherwise be impossible to obtain. Enhancing the credibility of informants for search warrants is another area often overlooked. Understanding this unique combination of the art of interrogation and the science of collecting psy-



chophysiological data is key to appreciating its value.

## Polygraph best practices

A proper polygraph session will begin with the examiner obtaining all the information possible about the case and the subject. Then, in the interview, the examiner will elicit all the information the subject will disclose on the relevant issue. The relevant questions are

reviewed, with the objective being to verify truthfulness rather than detect lies.

Testing consists of asking the reviewed questions several times. Data must be replicated and consistent in order to meet scoring criteria. The data collection utilizes a pneumograph to record inhalation/exhalation ratio and

Continued on page 20

**At C3 Education and Research, we are focused on providing original, customized training and consultation to fit your agency and offer a full suite of mental health and wellness training programs and workshops for law enforcement agencies, fire, and EMS, mental health organizations, and professional service agencies.**

**Many of our LE training programs are approved for POST credit!**

### Some of our training offerings include:

- Awareness and Response to Delirium, Dementia, and Aging
- Introduction to Crisis Intervention Team Training
- Mental Health: Knowledge, Awareness, and Safety for the Police Officer
- Missing Persons with Alzheimer's
- Opioid Exposure Risk and Prevention
- Promoting Officer Health - Both Physically and Mentally

- PTSD Training for Pension Trustees
- Recognizing, Handling, and Managing Excited Delirium
- Recognizing and Responding to Mental Health Issues
- Respectful Workplace Training: Awareness and Prevention of Discrimination and Harassment for Law Enforcement
- Situational Awareness Training
- Stress and Trauma: Awareness, Recognition, and Prevention for Officers

Call us today at **708-764-5180**  
**c3educationandresearch.com** [info@c3educationandresearch.com](mailto:info@c3educationandresearch.com)





# Why every agency needs a polygraph examiner

Continued from page 18

changes in breathing patterns; electrodes to monitor galvanic skin conductivity; a plethysmograph to measure blood flow; a sphygmomanometer to monitor mean blood pressure levels, pulse rate and blood volume changes; and a motion sensor to ensure the subject remains still during the collection of data.

Once a sufficient quantity and quality of data is collected, the examiner evaluates and scores the charts. The scoring systems are well researched and standardized. Computer algorithms help with quality control, making results even more reliable.

Ideally, the subject has disclosed all relevant information in the pre-test and will show no significant reactions. Passing the

test confirms the information given is complete and accurate. If the subject fails, the examiner has a huge advantage to begin interrogation. First and foremost, polygraph examiners are interrogators.

## Myths about polygraph

Let's dispel some common myths:

**"Polygraph is not admissible in court."** Although most states give no blanket admissibility for polygraph as evidence (nor should they, in my opinion), this argument misses the real value of this investigative tool. Polygraph does find its way to court in a number of ways, but generally it is used in pre-trial negotiations and post-conviction probation issues, such as with sex offenders.

**"Nervous people will fail."** Everyone is nervous, but not everyone lies. There is a difference between being nervous and being deceptive. It's normal to be nervous.

**"People who habitually lie can beat it."** True pathological liars will show no deception on polygraph only because they actually believe they are telling the truth.

These rare individuals are clearly mentally ill, not just good liars.

**"Psychopathic people like Ted Bundy can pass a polygraph."** Psychopaths have no empathy or remorse, but they do have self-interest at stake and know when they are lying. If they lie, they fail.

**"One can get confused by the questions."** During the pre-test interview, all the questions are discussed and reworded until they can be comfortably answered with "yes" or "no."

**"People can take drugs or put a tack in their shoe to fool the polygraph."** Any well-trained examiner can easily spot pain or discomfort and distinguish it from the subtle, genuine phasic reactions consistent with truth or deception. Drugs act uniformly to suppress or stimulate the system and cannot be selectively deployed for individual questions, thus making this attempted countermeasure futile.

**"Polygraph results are 100% accurate."** Even DNA testing has an error rate. Validity studies show polygraph is about 85% to 95% accurate overall — very good and useful, but not per-

fect. Some situations can utilize a searching peak of tension format that has a less than 1% error rate.

## The takeaway

Having certified forensic polygraph examiners available saves time in investigations, not only in getting confessions from criminals but also in gaining cooperation of witnesses and clearing the innocent. In applicant screening, there are many issues that will only be revealed with polygraph. There are good reasons why all of the three-letter federal agencies rely on it. The American Polygraph Association and the American Association of Police Polygraphists offer training, set standards for certification and are a great resource for establishing a polygraph program, including model policies for accreditation.

Take care of yourself and stay safe!

*Dave Bryant is a retired police officer with over 30 years of experience with several agencies. He has a private business as a polygraph examiner in Tampa, Florida. He can be reached at [SenseiDave@msn.com](mailto:SenseiDave@msn.com).*

# JOIN COAST GUARD LAW ENFORCEMENT



The Coast Guard needs the leadership skills and expertise of law enforcement professionals like you. Embrace the Coast Guard values of honor, respect, and devotion to duty as you lead your team to protect our shores, defend our nation, and save lives. There are full-time and part-time opportunities to serve your community and country while advancing your career. Job benefits include:

**HEALTHCARE**  
You and your family will be eligible for Tricare, a low-cost family medical plan. Visit [tricare.mil](http://tricare.mil) for details.

**VETERAN'S STATUS**  
Through your service, you may be eligible for federal or employer veteran hiring preferences, retail discounts, and more.

**MONEY FOR COLLEGE**  
With qualifying service, you can become eligible for the GI Bill—an educational benefit you can use yourself or transfer to your family.



UNITED STATES  
**COAST GUARD**  
PROTECT / DEFEND / SAVE



Find a recruiter at [GoCoastGuard.com](http://GoCoastGuard.com)