

Yogurt Heist Mock Trial

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Executive summary

This report provides an analysis of the mock interview and interrogation for the yogurt heist case. The yogurt heist case was a theft of the yogurt inventory from Charlie's on Sunday night March 27th, 2018. The manager reported the crime the next morning upon discovery of the stolen yogurt. The findings were that one student worker and one student athlete were suspected of taking part in this crime. The student worker was to be interviewed and the student athlete was to be interrogated by Richard and Tatyanna. Tim, Brenda, Franklin, and Edwing all assisted in creating questioning and note taking providing Richard and Tatyana everything they needed for the interview and interrogation. Both suspects are business majors with economic struggles of their own. The student worker worked the night of the crime being committed and has access to the location of the crime. The student athlete is a very well known figure around campus that plays volleyball for Lewis University at a division one level with the NCAA. We suspect that the two to be working together. They have been in classes together and share similar struggles. Those are the suspects we decided to interview and interrogate. The results of our findings showed that the student worker was the one who committed the crime. We were unable to obtain a confession from the student athlete who we initially suspect of having committed the crime. In conclusion we obtained the confession of the student worker. Although we didn't obtain a confession from the student athlete we still suspect that the two worked together on the crime. This may require more investigation from the investigators. We will proceed with prosecuting both to the maximum extent the law provides.

Roles

Note Taker: Brenda H.

Interrogator: Richard D.

Interviewer: Tatyana G.

Investigators: Tim K., Franklin W., and Edwing L.

Characteristics of suspects

Suspect #1: Student worker personality:

- Works at Charlie's during dinner shift (Sunday, March 25th)*
- They have access to the kitchen*
- Economic struggles*
- Business major*
- Junior*

Suspect #2: Student athlete Personality:

- Volleyball player*
- Well known around campus*
- Business major*
- Low on meal plan money.*
- Senior*

Questions

Student worker: (Interview by: Tatyana)

1. How long have you worked here on campus?
2. What is your major?
3. What year are you?
4. Out of all the jobs offered at Lewis, why are you working at Sodexo?
5. Do students usually give you a hard time while at work?
6. Are you allowed to take food home? Do you get discounts (if so, how much)?
7. Are you allowed to give discounts?
8. Are you usually the last to leave when you close?
9. Do you ever feel tempted to give out free food to your friends or to gain respect from well-known people at school?

Questions:

Student Athlete (Interrogation by: Richard)

1. What is your major, and year?
2. What sport do you play? How is that going? (Followed up by asking how it felt to be a big shot)
3. Would you say you're well known around school?
4. How often do you eat at Charlie's?
5. Do you find yourself running out of money quickly on your meal plan?
6. What is your relationship with the workers at Sodexo? (Tied in the previous interrogation where the sodexo worker admitted to giving them yogurt)

Do you watch what you eat? Do you like to eat healthy, anything specific?

Tim Kuchynka's impression:

I would say the group dynamic worked out really well. As a group we were able to divide up tasks pretty well, Brenda was our note taker, Richard and Tatyana both conducted our interrogation/interview. As a group we all worked together to create a base set of questions that Richard and Tatyana were able to wonderfully expand on. I feel like I took some leadership by writing the executive summary and organizing the report as a whole. Richard and Tatyana also volunteered to be our groups interviewers and interrogators. The actual event went surprisingly well. I thought it would be a little awkward as people wouldn't role play as well as they did. Tatyana and Richard did a great job of asking follow up questions. This was nice to be able to see the Reid technique in action and show how it can manipulate an interrogation. I can definitely see how this method could lead to false confessions and create problems for the criminal justice system.

Richard Davila's impression:

Due to me being the interrogator and the person being interrogated it was a bit difficult to observe how the process was going from a third party perspective. My priority was to put on a show whether it be being a hard ass or giving the police new information on a lead that may solve their missing glove case. I do feel that I had to be compliant to achieve a result that would show the effectiveness of this mock interview. Nothing would stop a student from just denying everything similar to my version of the interview where Ashley kept denying everything no matter how hard I grilled. This is due to the fact that there are no stakes for her to crumble under pressure to. I do believe me and my partner had a great dynamic and the first person we interrogated played along nicely. The only lesson I learned is that the Reid technique isn't for everyone, it cannot be applied universally to every suspect so there should always be a plan B. Tim was an excellent leader as he kept things organized and everyone in the loop.

Tatyana Gonzalez's Impression:

Surprisingly I thought this project of mock trials went way better than I imagined. I never done a mock trial, but I immediately thought that the students wouldn't get into their roles or take it serious. At the beginning we assigned every student in our group their roles and then began to form the personalities of the student interviewees and the questions. I felt that we worked extremely well as a group, we all got a say on what we were going to do and nobody was left behind. Brenda and Richard took leadership when it came to note taking and the overall report of interrogation. Brenda volunteered herself as note taker and was great one! Tim had no problem with taking charge and keeping us all intact. Franklin and Edwing were very helpful with conducting questions and which direction we should take when it came down to the interrogation/interview. Richard and I volunteered as the lead roles and I felt like we both did awesome. Richard really got into his role and made sure to put on a performance. I think that was one of the best things from the interrogation because although it was a serious setting, everyone was laughing and it overall kept the audience intrigued, and focused on the interrogation instead of reading one question after another. As a interviewer I felt like I did an impressive job at follow up questions. I actually found myself never looking at my sheet of paper of questions but instead just feeding off of the suspect's responses. It surprisingly felt so easy and natural. I got a little taste at how to examine and read into little details of the suspect. I would say that I used the Reid technique by inspecting the behavior of the suspect such as long pauses, nerves, or how certain things didn't add up. I also had an attitude of trying to "help" the suspect out, rather than yelling at them. I used the Reid technique and ended up getting a confession out of it.

Edwing Lazaro Impression:

Our group did a great job conducting the interview/interrogation. I did not think the mock trial were going to be as interesting as they played out. Tatyanna and Richard did a great job teaming up and backing themselves up after almost each question. The best part was when, one would ask a question the other would right away jump in either adding to the question making Clarissa feel as if she was really being questioned for something. The amount of energy and emphasis Tatyanna and Richard put on in front of everyone was amazing. Tatyanna and Richard did a great job using the Reid Technique because throughout the interview they were insisting, using high voices, getting into her head and that's what lead to the confession. Overall I enjoyed this project because it was something new, we worked very good as a team, and in the future, going into Law Enforcement it's something I will eventually need to use, and getting a feel of how it may play out really was good.

Brenda Hernandez's impression:

My impression before the assignment was unsure, because I felt like my team and I were not going to be able to get a confession out of the person we were interviewing/interrogating. I thought that if I were to get picked all I had to do was deny, and say no to everything; that's how I thought it would be with the opposite team. I wasn't sure how it was going to play out at first, if the questions we wrote were going to trigger any hesitation or confession. Once we actually went through with the mock trial, it went in the total opposite direction I thought it would go. Tatyana and Richard did a great job at asking questions, they even made some questions up on their own, as well as follow up questions. They were not shy at all and they were quick to respond and have each other's backs. My team in general was nice to work with, we got straight to what we had to do, we assigned roles without any hesitation and everyone did what they were supposed to do. After experiencing the fake mock trial, I was happy my teammates were able to get a confession because I don't think I would have if I would have been the interviewer/interrogator. I was surprised that the first person felt pressured enough even if she didn't do anything or even if she had no prior knowledge of the case. The second person was interesting to watch also, because she made Richard hesitate. She made him rethink how to word some of his questions and I think it was good that it happened because I could connect that to real life and how interrogators may have to be prepared for back up questions if things don't go as planned. I think this project was a good experience, it was also fun to do. It was a break from the regular lectures we have in all my other criminal justice classes.

Franklin West's impression:

The mock interview was a good way to help get a sort live interrogation experience almost. Although it is kind of hard to simulate the tension and uneasiness that people in interrogations experience. I believe we were still able to capture some of that when my group members asked certain questions that tripped up the person interrogated. The acting during the mock interview was pretty decent as well and it kind of displayed the emotional tension as well as unexpected events such as a confession. Overall I thought it was a good experience with the project and my group members who also did a good jobs with not only acting but also assisting in what type of questions as well as creating a sort of criminal profile that the other chosen group members had to follow.