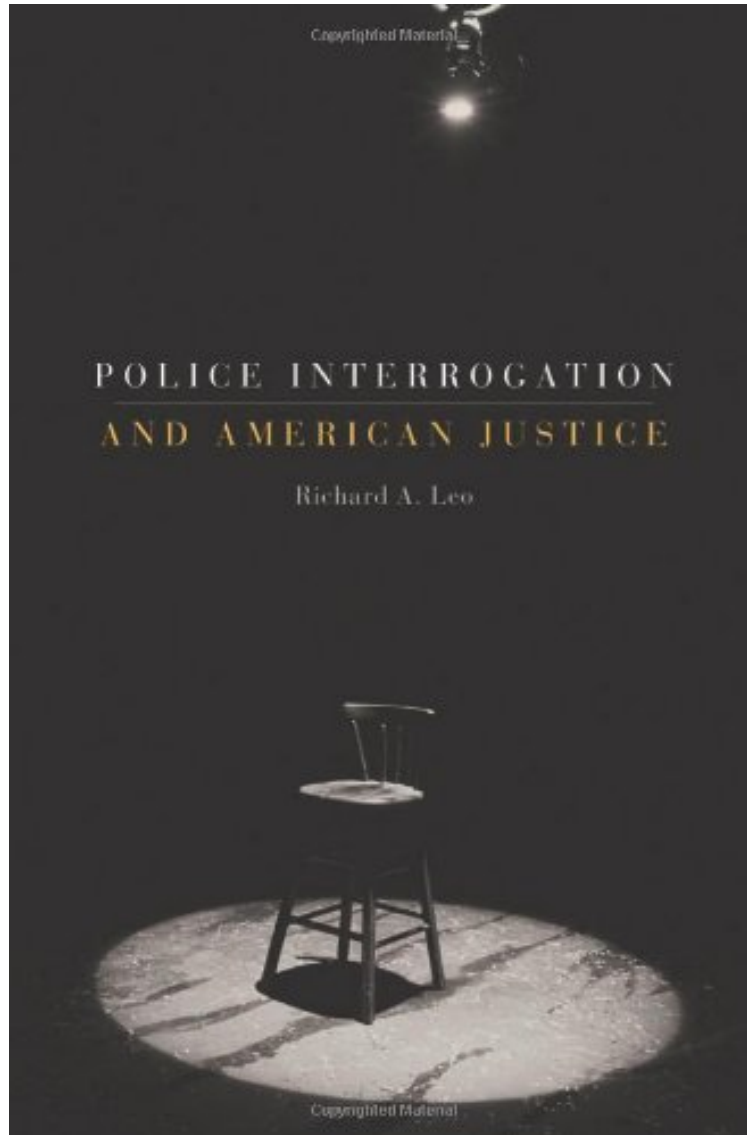


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## Police Interrogation and American Justice

*Richard A. Leo*

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#1311597 in Books Harvard University Press 2009-09-30 2009-08-24 Original language: English PDF # 1 .90 x 6.10 x 9.10l, 1.30 #File Name: 0674035313384 pages | File size: 57.Mb

**Richard A. Leo : Police Interrogation and American Justice** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Police Interrogation and American Justice:

24 of 24 people found the following review helpful. Brilliant analysisBy Karen FranklinRichard Leo brilliantly analyzes the function of police interrogations within the larger adversarial system of U.S. criminal justice. Whereas interrogations are presented as a neutral tool for truth-seeking, Leo shows how in reality police function as an unmonitored and unchecked arm of the prosecution, targeting both guilty and innocent suspects alike in a ruthless and

fraudulent game of psychological manipulation in which they hold all the cards. Leo uses a historical lens to show how today's psychologically coercive techniques evolved from the widespread "third-degree" practices outlawed in the 1930s. Whereas the third-degree was visibly vicious and lawless, modern interrogators hide behind a facade of science and professionalism that allows them to wield enormous unchecked power and influence over criminal justice outcomes. Popular belief in the "myth of the psychological interrogation" - that only the guilty confess and that confession statements are reliable - prevents judges and jurors from understanding that the extreme and sophisticated psychological coercion tactics wielded in some interrogations, especially in serious or high-profile cases, can make almost anyone feel helpless enough to falsely confess, Leo argues. He explains how the final product is jointly scripted by the police and the hapless suspect into such a compelling narrative that a fair trial is rendered impossible. One of the book's many strengths is its focus on topics that are rarely studied in much depth, such as this topic of how the postadmission narrative is constructed. Another rarely highlighted topic is the corrupting effect of systematic police deception in reports and court testimony about what goes on in the interrogation room. Leo also analyzes the state of the Miranda warnings, which he argues have been transformed into a "public relations coup" and gutted to the point that they serve not as a protection for suspects but as yet another tool of law enforcement. And he provides timely discussion of the limitations of applying artificial laboratory research to the real world of law and order. Leo concludes by arguing that we are entering the "Era of Innocence," as symbolized by DNA testing exonerating hundreds of innocent convicts, in which reforms can be undertaken to transform police interrogation from an adversarial to a truth-finding practice. His proposed reforms include mandatory electronic recording, requiring probable cause to interrogate, prohibiting promises or threats, protecting vulnerable populations such as the mentally retarded, mentally ill and juveniles, and allowing expert witness testimony about coercive interrogation techniques. Throughout this compelling volume, Leo strengthens his arguments using rich examples drawn from his massive collection of firsthand data from research and consultation in actual criminal cases. This cutting-edge book is a must-read for anyone involved in or interested in the criminal justice system.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good book on police interrogation methods and the history of ...By TR  
Good book on police interrogation methods and the history of interrogation. The author at the end kind of sums up the process as positive but that's not what I got from the presentation. Really gives a good impact to your rights being manipulated. Good starting point why it's important to be an informed US Citizen  
0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!! Excellent book  
By Paul Evans  
Very enlightening book on Police Interrogation! Covers lie detector test fallacies, but most important discusses actual cases of innocent people who confessed to crimes they did not commit. This book covers the history of police interrogation, from the early uses of physical force to psychological tactics now used to day, and how the interrogation process is adversarial, manipulative, and what tools law enforcement use to get false confessions from innocent suspects. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!! Excellent book.

"Read him his rights." We all recognize this line from cop dramas. But what happens afterward? In this book, Richard Leo sheds light on a little-known corner of our criminal justice system--the police interrogation. Incriminating statements are necessary to solve crimes, but suspects almost never have reason to provide them. Therefore, as Leo shows, crime units have developed sophisticated interrogation methods that rely on persuasion, manipulation, and deception to move a subject from denial to admission, serving to shore up the case against him. Ostensibly aimed at uncovering truth, the structure of interrogation requires that officers act as an arm of the prosecution. Skillful and fair interrogation allows authorities to capture criminals and deter future crime. But Leo draws on extensive research to argue that confessions are inherently suspect and that coercive interrogation has led to false confession and wrongful conviction. He looks at police evidence in the court, the nature and disappearance of the brutal "third degree," the reforms of the mid-twentieth century, and how police can persuade suspects to waive their Miranda rights. An important study of the criminal justice system, *Police Interrogation and American Justice* raises unsettling questions. How should police be permitted to interrogate when society needs both crime control and due process? How can order be maintained yet justice served?

The 'third degree' is long gone. But as Richard Leo shows, trickery, manipulation, and deceit are still basic tools of police interrogation of suspects. His unsettling and brilliant book gives a bird's-eye view of systematic coercion that undermines basic rights at the entrance to the legal system. (Elizabeth Loftus, author of *Eyewitness Testimony*) This is the best book on police interrogation I have ever read-- and I have been reading about the subject (and writing about it) for 50 years. The long chapter on the 'third degree' is fascinating-- and it reveals that a century ago the city police of America were using some of the same harsh interrogation techniques that the CIA used after 9/11. (Yale Kamisar, University of San Diego) A gripping indictment of what goes on behind the closed doors of police interrogation rooms. From psychological manipulation, to threats of harm and promises of leniency, to lengthy incommunicado questioning, all the way to outright brutality...Leo's book is a powerful contribution to criminal justice public policy...*Police Interrogation and American Justice* causes one to marvel at the extent to which the parties in the justice system have been complicit in enabling lawless police to effect convictions of suspects by coercing their confessions.

Leo offers suggestions for reform, which are fair and reasonable in a country that has the highest incarceration rate in the world. (Heidi Boghosian Federal Lawyer 2008-09-01)It is the best book on this subject. Richard Leo uses data not ordinarily available. He brilliantly documents the everydayness of police dialogue with suspects in chapters discussing "professionalizing the police" and "the third degree in America" as well as through analysis of relentlessly systematic police use of deceit, manipulation, lying and disguised coercion...The result is both convincing and brilliant...This is an excellent book. Read it. Use it. Such books are exceedingly rare. (Ephraim Margolin The Champion 2008-09-01)[A] brilliant analysis of police interrogations. In this rich tome, [Leo] analyzes police interrogations in the broad context of the adversarial system of American criminal justice. He presents a thorough look at interrogations as a truth-seeking tool as well as a manipulative means to coerce suspects to say what they should not say, and do not necessarily want to say. Leo's approach of using case studies to supplement his scholarly arguments makes this an interesting and valuable read for anyone interested in police work...The result is a well-organized, well-written social scientific account of police interrogations...His book is an important contribution to the workings of the police in America. (Geoffrey P. Alpert Contemporary Sociology 2008-09-01)Law professor Leo, one of the most prolific and knowledgeable scholars on police investigations, offers a book both eye-opening and important. (B. J. Goetz Choice 2009-02-01)About the AuthorRichard A. Leo is Professor of Law at the University of San Francisco.