But other means of intelligence are *not* normally available under the circumstances in which torture for strategic information becomes a plausible choice. The clumsiest method becomes the best one because other more reliable methods have proven fruitless in anticipating the enemy's behavior. How then to weed out the inevitable lies under *these* conditions?

One alternative would be to try to keep prisoners separate and compare stories. But this will not do. As all stories are coerced, this strategy compounds misinformation rather than corrects it. Each lie reinforces the others. The Tuol Sleng interrogators produced precisely this hall of mirrors and described a vast internal conspiracy that still puzzles analysts today.[109]

The best alternative is to train interrogators to spot the truth with reasonable accuracy. Good interrogators can tell when prisoners really have no information, and they will not put them in a position where they would have to lie and taint the information. Trained interrogators can persist with other prisoners because they can tell that they are lying. Such skills would enable organizations to assemble the right bits of information, and they are a standard part of most modern interrogation training.

How Well Do Interrogators Spot the Truth?

The standard text for modern interrogation is Fred Inbau and John Reid's *Criminal Interrogation and Confessions*. Over the last sixty years, this book has become "the definitive police training manual in the United States, if not the Western World." Since it appeared in 1942, it has been rewritten as two series, with three editions in the first series and four in the second, totaling seven different manuals (1942, 1948, 1953, 1962, 1986, and 2001).[110]

Inbau and Reid do not endorse torture. Indeed, their aim has always been to reduce police incompetence, corruption, and brutality and enhance the police's efficiency and public image. To this end, they set out to put interrogation on a scientific basis.[111] Their manuals train interrogators to detect deception and understand the criminal psyche. Police trained in these techniques become human lie detectors. Reid and Associates claims today that those trained in this method have an 85 percent success rate in identifying deception.[112]

Since 1974, Reid and Associates has trained 150,000 law enforcement personnel in North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Other programs typically follow their method. Reid and Associates advertises courses that are "on the cutting edge of the most sophisticated and updated material on interrogation offered anywhere."[113]

Detecting deception is a very difficult task. Experiments show that most people are terrible at it. In 1980, a survey of all the available scientific literature

found an accuracy rate (percentage of correct answers) of 57 percent. This is a low score since a 50 percent accuracy score would be the same as flipping a coin. In 2000, a second study of thirty-nine additional studies after 1980 found an almost identical accurate rate, 56.6 percent.[114]

More nuanced studies showed that people are more likely to believe statements are truthful and so people have high accuracy rates for true statements (67 percent) and worse rates for lies (44 percent). This number, 44 percent, is less than what would be generated by chance, and in these cases, flipping a coin would be *more* accurate than letting people guess.[115]

Psychologists have also tested professional lie-catchers. After all, ordinary people are not used to dealing with liars and are easily fooled. Psychologists have been particularly interested in police trained in the Inbau and Reid method, since 85 percent is an extraordinary accuracy rate.

Consistently, over twenty years, "Psychological research has failed to support the claim that individuals can attain such high average levels of performance in making judgment of truth and deception." On the contrary, "Training programs produce only small and inconsistent improvements in performance compared with a control condition and . . . police investigators and others with relevant on-the-job experience perform only slightly better than chance, if at all."[116]

Police accuracy rates generally fall between 45 percent and 60 percent. Some groups are better than others, notably interrogators for the U.S. Secret Service (64 percent), the CIA (73 percent), and sheriffs (67 percent).[117] In laboratory experiments, rates did not exceed chance levels when police interviewed suspects. Indeed, those who conducted interviews were less accurate than those who judged videotapes.[118] Police accuracy rates also did not improve in real criminal investigation settings. Police accuracy did not exceed chance levels (57 percent accuracy on average compared to 54 percent for untrained observers).[119]

The Dutch researcher Aldert Vrij reasoned that perhaps, in these studies, police were interrogating in unfamiliar contexts, dealing with unfamiliar suspects (e.g., foreign nationals), or working in low-stakes situations. He then chose familiar settings, in high-stakes situations with the typical suspects. Police detecting abilities improved (an accuracy rate of about 65 percent for detecting truths and lies), but remained "far from perfect, and errors in truth-lie detection were frequently made."[120] Police who reported extensive interrogation experience were modestly better than those who lacked it. Since the case material was sensitive, police did not allow Vrij to use a control group, and Vrij notes that laypersons may have the same success rate, making police success unremarkable.

Perhaps the most disturbing result of Vrij's research is that those police who followed the Inbau and Reid method were actually worse at detecting deception. "The more police followed their advice, the worse they were in their ability to

distinguish between truth and lies."[121] Moreover, Vrij could find no relationship between their accuracy and the confidence police expressed in their judgment. Police displayed an overconfidence effect typical in deception studies and they were just as likely to have false beliefs about deception as laypersons.[122] Other studies have also suggested the "disturbing possibility that police training in the detection of truth and deception leads investigators to make prejudgments of guilt, with high confidence, that are frequently in error."[123]

Police turn out to be slightly better in contexts that are familiar with people they know, but that might be true for laypersons too. Those trained in the Inbau and Reid method are likely to be more prone to error, but just as confident about their opinion. Police may regard interrogation as an essential part of criminal investigation, but research does not even show this. A study funded by the British government examined 1,476 cases from London and Birmingham and concluded that police interrogation did not contribute greatly to the discovery or conviction of criminals. "Claims made for the efficacy of 'traditional' methods of detection are, save in a small minority of cases, nothing short of myths; most serious offences are discovered and cleared up without much investigative activity on the part of the police."[124]

Torturers have far less training or experience in interrogation than police, and so the prospect that they will be better at spotting deception is not good. Most torturers are ordinary soldiers and policemen, usually selected because they have endured hardship and pain, fought with courage, kept secrets, possessed correct political beliefs, and been trustworthy and loyal.[125] Known torture manuals offer them little training on spotting deception. Most are compiled stories about "the characteristic mistakes of poor interrogators."[126]

Not surprisingly, torturers interrogate with background assumptions and harvest self-fulfilling results. For example, the Chilean DINA in the early 1970s subjected Sheila Cassidy, an English citizen, to various tortures, especially electrotorture on the *parilla*. After several days, she broke down and revealed the names of the nuns and priests who had sheltered her. The devout interrogators could not believe her and continued torturing her for days afterward. "They found the truth more difficult to believe than the lies I had told them at first, and I received many gratuitous shocks because they could not believe the nuns and priests were involved."[127] The notion that one will stop torturing when one hears the right information presupposes that one has gathered circumstantial information that allows one to know the truth when one hears it. That is precisely what does not happen with torture.

It is possible to train people to be better lie detectors by reading microexpressions. These expressions are shorter than one-twenty-fifth of a second, and reading them requires slow-motion films.[128] Currently, multiple U.S. military agencies are funding programs to develop computerized cameras to track

microexpressions. According to the psychologists receiving these grants, microexpressions "do not vary among cultures and races."[129] That would be news indeed, but all this funding is still speculative and the research has yet to yield the results claimed. What effect torture would have on reading microexpressions is anybody's guess.

What is plausible currently is that police who arrive with assumptions about the crime and follow folk wisdom on deception (the darting gaze, shiftiness, etc.) or the Inbau and Reid method are likely to be worse than others who come with an open mind and draw on their own extensive experience. Torturers are better off listing their questions and flipping a coin for each one.

How Well Do Cooperative Prisoners Remember?

Torturers gain information from individuals by exhausting them (sweating, positional tortures, sleep deprivation, exhaustion exercises) or applying traumatic pain (e.g., electrotorture). Uncooperative individuals may not give up, but they do make mistakes in judgment, accidentally revealing information. During World War II, for example, an Allied radioman gave what he remembered as the discarded security code under torture; it turned out to be the correct one.[130]

Such lapses in judgment and memory also occur among cooperative prisoners. Lawrence Hinkle, a neurologist who, along with Wolff, advised the CIA on brainwashing, puts it bluntly: "Any circumstance that impairs the function of the brain potentially affects the ability to give information, as well as the ability to withhold it."[131] In coerced interrogation, as the unedited CIA *HRET* manual explains, "The subject's ability to recall and communicate information accurately is as impaired as his will to resist."[132]

After torture, cooperative prisoners make two kinds of errors in relating information. They express high confidence in mistaken information, and they suffer peculiar lapses in memory remembering recent events. While prisoners *want* to cooperate, these problems are not in their control.

Lapses in Memory

Torture inhibits a prisoner's ability to communicate in two ways. Sometimes the prisoner cannot talk at all. "I was so paralyzed, my tongue could not work, so I could not speak, only groaned a bit, crying, naturally, always."[133] Interrogators are more troubled by its effects on thought. "I couldn't speak clearly or focus on ideas or think, and it was impossible to have a clear idea of what was happening around me."[134] Tortured co-operative prisoners forget even simple information about the recent past.