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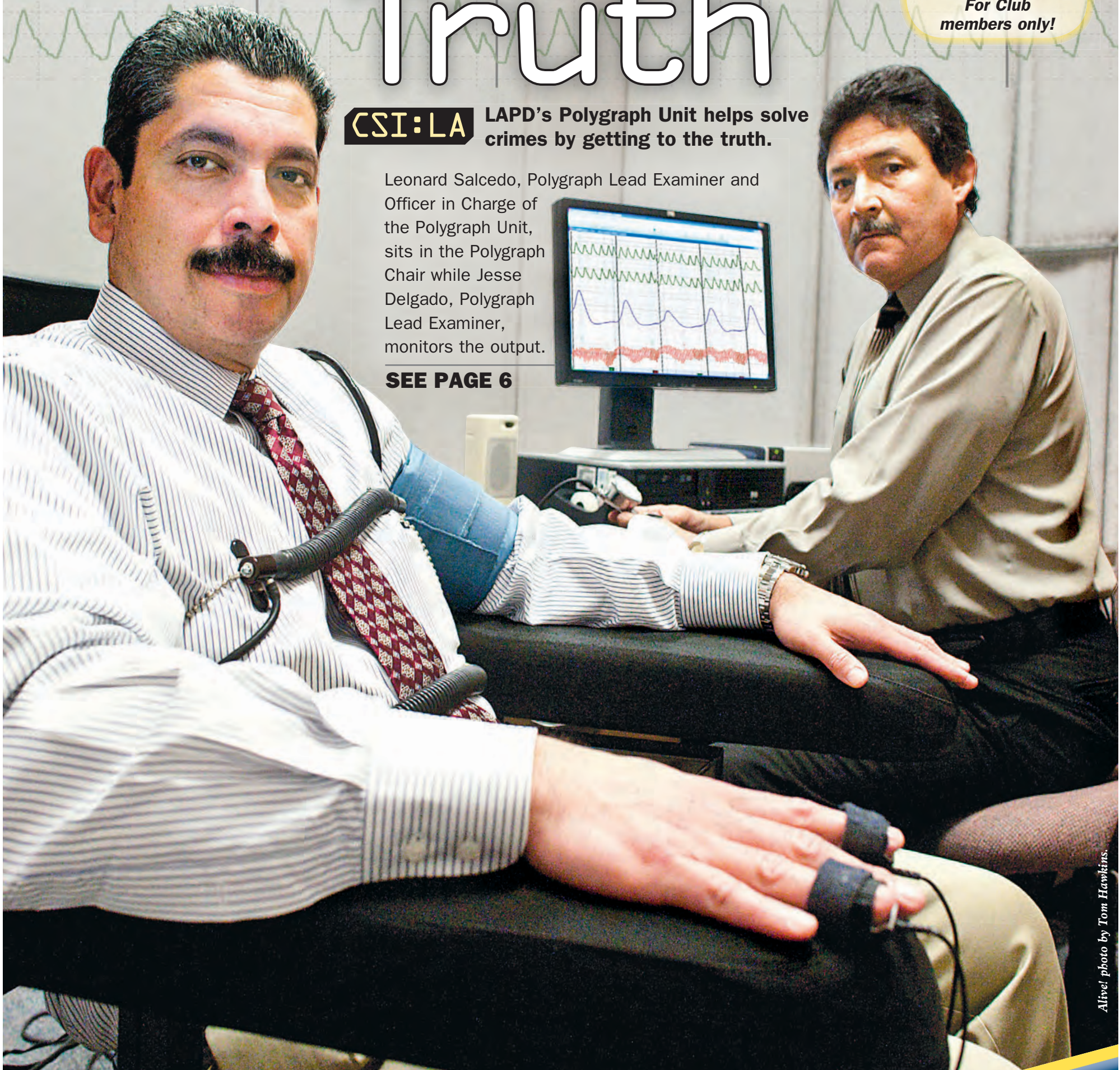
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LAPD To Tell the Truth

CSI:LA LAPD's Polygraph Unit helps solve crimes by getting to the truth.

Leonard Salcedo, Polygraph Lead Examiner and Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit, sits in the Polygraph Chair while Jesse Delgado, Polygraph Lead Examiner, monitors the output.

SEE PAGE 6



Alive! photo by Tom Hawkins.



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Alive! Feature

The Police Dept.'s Polygraph Unit plays a significant role in crime fighting.

To Tell the Truth

Sitting in the polygraph chair... cables attached... and the questions begin. It's the moment of truth for tens of thousands of Angelenos over the decades. And it's a major crime-fighting tool, keeping us all safer.

Welcome to the Polygraph Unit of the Los Angeles Police Dept.

An Overview

The use of the polygraph has proven to be an invaluable investigative tool for the exoneration of the truthful and for the detection of the deceptive. Polygraph examinations have assisted federal, state and local law enforcement agencies throughout the world. This investigative tool can assist a detective's ability to focus in on key areas or suspects, thereby reducing resources committed to an

investigation. The Scientific Investigation Division's (SID) Polygraph Unit has frequently assisted detectives when there has been insufficient evidence to affect an arrest and/or obtain a District Attorney filing. Polygraph examiners have routinely obtained confessions from suspects during the interrogation phase of the exam, following a deceptive result.

The Scientific Investigation Division's (SID) Polygraph Unit was first established by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1939 with the assignment of one examiner. During the first month of operation, the unit boasted just seven polygraph examinations. During the past 70 years, the Department has recognized the valuable contributions polygraph examiners have made in the support of the Department's mission, and the unit has expanded to 14 full-time, civilian polygraph examiners.

In its 70-year history, the Polygraph Unit has played significant support roles in famous cases, including the Black Dahlia murder; the Tate-La Bianca murders (the Charles Manson case); the O.J. Simpson murder case; the Skid Row Slasher case; the \$18.9 million Dunbar heist; and the theft of the Oscar statuettes in 2000. In 2010, the Polygraph Unit administered more than 2,700 polygraph examinations. The unit is on call 24/7, with personnel ready to respond to the needs of the Department. The majority of the unit personnel is comprised of retired federal and local law enforcement officers, with extensive law enforcement experience; they are highly motivated and are considered expert interviewers and interrogators.

Left, in the Polygraph Chair: Leonard Saldeco, Officer in Charge of the unit; and Jesse Delgado, Polygraph Lead Examiner, monitoring the results.

THE PROCESS



How Polygraph Works

A polygraph instrument records physiological changes that take place in the body as a result of a lie. When a person lies to a question on the test, the autonomic nervous system's "fight/flight" response is engaged. This response cannot be controlled and will be triggered due to the examinee's fear of being caught in that lie.

The instrument measures and records several physiological responses such as blood volume, pulse, respiration, breathing rhythms, and skin conductivity while the examinee is asked and answers a series of questions. The polygraph instrument measures physiological changes caused by the sympathetic nervous system during questioning.

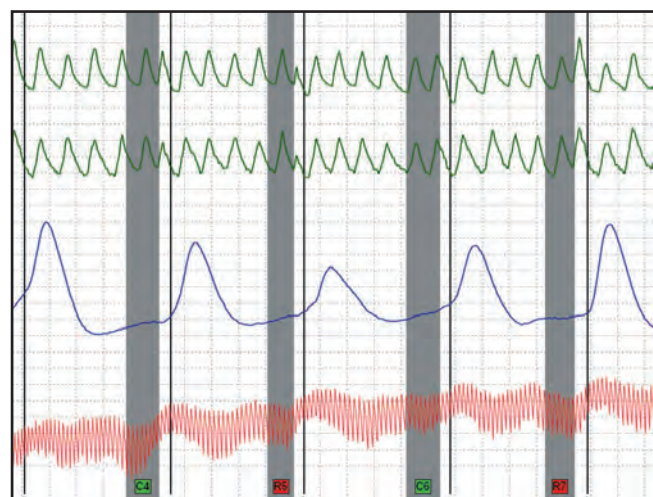
When It's Most Effective

Detectives often seek the assistance of the Polygraph Unit when they do not have enough evidence or probable cause to effect an arrest. When suspects fail polygraph examinations, the interrogations often become confrontational. In these instances, examiners must overcome vigorous denials by suspects and are often able to obtain full confessions from them. In addition, examiners may develop new information, which may provide detectives with new leads to pursue or may assist with the elimination of suspects.

Other Functions

In addition to providing criminal polygraph examinations for the Department, the Polygraph Unit is responsible for interviewing and administering polygraph examinations to police applicants and sworn or civilian employees seeking assignments in specialized units.

In addition, in 2010, polygraph examiners provided several interview and interrogation classes to detectives throughout the Department. Examiners also conducted classes in the use of polygraph at the new Detectives School and at a local law school.



A typical polygraph readout.

In the continuous pursuit of excellence and self-improvement, the SID Polygraph Unit successfully underwent a voluntary accreditation inspection in 2010 by the National Center for Credibility Assessment (NCCA). The NCCA is a federal agency responsible for training, overseeing, and inspecting federal polygraph unit programs throughout the country. The SID Polygraph Unit became the first local law enforcement polygraph unit in the country to achieve accreditation in the newly created Polygraph Law Enforcement Accreditation (PLEA) program, under the auspice of the FBI. The goal of the PLEA program is to standardize polygraph practices within the law enforcement polygraph community. PLEA requires that the accredited unit maintain the same standard of excellence and training that is required of all federal polygraph programs. The NCCA has referred to the SID Polygraph Unit as one of the most professional and premier law enforcement polygraph units in the country. On numerous occasions, NCCA has requested their assistance in the training and mentoring of other law enforcement agencies and the development of their polygraph programs to ensure they will that meet the PLEA standards.

It is an element within the SID mission statement to provide technical and forensic services to the Criminal Justice System with the highest degree of quality and ethical standards. The Polygraph Unit has certainly accomplished this objective through their extraordinary achievements, professionalism, and in the quantity and quality of work produced in support of the Department. Polygraph examiners routinely perform over and above the call of duty to assist, not just the Department and the victims, but for law enforcement agencies throughout the country. ■

Information courtesy the Polygraph Unit Photos by Angel Gomez, the Club's Member Services Director, and Tom Hawkins, Club Photographer



Some of the major cases that were resolved through the use of polygraph in 2010 included:

- Confession in a double homicide of a mother and her six-year old daughter (Mission Area);
- Confession in a stabbing death of suspect's wife; the wife was subsequently buried in suspect's backyard (Southeast Area);
- Confession in a 2006 murder of a police officer, where the shooters were identified (Robbery Homicide Division);
- Confession of a suspect who admitted raping a 10-year-old child (N. Hollywood Area);
- Confession in neglect of infant child, leading to infant's death (Abused Child Unit);
- Confession in neglect of infant child, leading to infant's death by drowning (Abused Child Unit);
- Numerous confessions regarding sexual and physical assaults against children; and
- Numerous cases in which additional information was obtained, identifying suspects in gang-related shootings and other homicides.

Through the use of polygraph in criminal investigations, examiners often assist detectives with how to best allocate their limited resources. When the detectives are faced with multiple suspects or multiple witnesses who report contradictory information, polygraph has proven to be a valuable tool in exonerating the innocent. When a suspect or witness is telling the truth, a result of No Deception Indicated (NDI) may offer a sense of vindication, enabling them to move on with their lives. Equally important, detectives may feel more confident about information provided by these individuals, which may develop new leads or identify new suspects. ■

Getting to the Truth

Here's how the LAPD's Polygraph Unit goes about its business of interviewing people and deciphering the truth.

1 Sign In

Those to be examined sign in at the front counter.



Leonard Salcedo (center) explains the sign-in process to *Alive!* editor John Burnes. Managing the sign-in process is Ellen Sahara, Sr. Clerk Typist.

2 The Hallway

The interview process actually begins here, in the hallway prior to entering the polygraph suite. Here, the examiner will begin the questioning to get a solid read on the examinee, and to check for mood, alertness, and other factors. Questions asked here include hours of sleep; when the examinee last ate; how the examinee is feeling; whether there have been any recent personal stressors, for example a death in the family; and other questions. "We want them alert, and we want them focused," Leonard Salcedo explains.

Leonard Salcedo (left) explains the hallway process to *Alive!* editor John Burnes.



— continued next page

Alive! Feature

THE PROCESS

3 The Polygraph Suite

THE POLYGRAPH SUITE

After a quick visit to the property lockers, where the examinee can secure personal items, the examiner checks the polygraph status board to see which suite is available. The illuminated red light indicates a polygraph examination is in session.

Then the examiner leads the examinee into the polygraph suite, a smallish, sound proof room that contains the polygraph instrument (machine) attached to a PC; the polygraph chair; and examiner's chair.



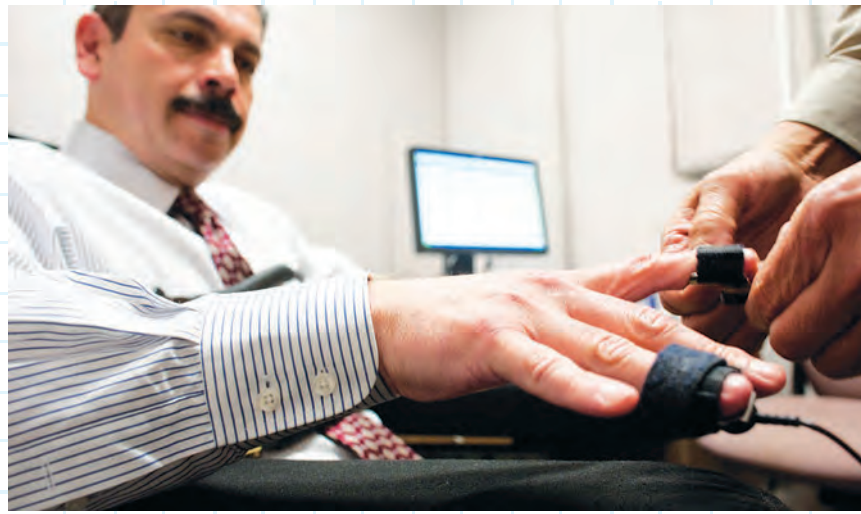
THE EXAMINATION BEGINS

Here, Polygraph Lead Examiner Jesse Delgado (right) explains the process to Club CEO John Hawkins (dark shirt).



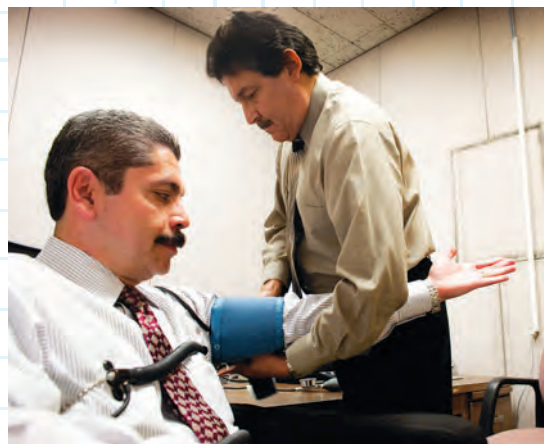
PLACING ELECTRODES

Electrodes are placed on the examinee's fingers and chest.



THE POLYGRAPH INSTRUMENT

The actual polygraph instrument is connected to a PC.



MONITORING BLOOD PRESSURE

A sleeve is used to monitor blood pressure.

ANALYZING THE DATA

Once the physiological data is collected, the examiner leaves the polygraph suite to analyze the polygraph charts in his or her office. After the initial analysis, the examiner will collaborate with a Lead Examiner before reaching a final conclusion. Once a conclusion has been reached, the examiner returns to the polygraph suite and notifies the examinee of the results of the examination. If the examinee is a Police Applicant and displayed significant responses, the examiner will give the applicant an opportunity to explain those significant responses. In a criminal examination when an examinee fails, the examiner will interrogate in an attempt to get a confession.

4 The Examiner's Office

The examiners return to their office and analyze the data. The examinee waits in the polygraph suite. In this office are Polygraph Examiners Rich Palacios (front left), Danielle Hill (back left) and Harold Hansen (back right).



Getting to the Truth_{continued}**5 Leads Office**

After an examiner has analyzed the data, he or she brings the data to a lead examiner, where an independent lead examiner evaluates the data a second time and critiques the first examiner's analysis. The lead examiner has not been privy to the examiner's results and therefore is neutral.

In this room are Lead Examiners (front, left) Jesse Delgado and Bill Beringer (back right).

6 Server Room

Here, all polygraph suites can be monitored at once.

**7 Viewing Room**

Only the examiner and examinee are allowed in the polygraph suites during an examination. In the separate viewing room, approved observers can monitor an examination. Here, LAPD Det. Frank Carrillo, Detective Supervisor, Wilshire Homicide Div., monitors a polygraph of an actual case he is working on.

Lawyers are also able to monitor an examination from this room.

**8 Historic Equipment and Books**

The Polygraph Unit maintains old polygraph equipment and books for nostalgia. These items are not functional. Here, Leonard Salcedo explains an old, portable polygraph instrument to Club CEO John Hawkins.



Alive! Feature: Interview

An interview with Leonard Salcedo, Polygraph Examiner and Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit

We Save Future Victims

On April 6, *Alive!* editor John Burnes sat down to talk with Leonard Salcedo, Polygraph Lead Examiner and Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit. The interview took place in his office at Parker Center; the Polygraph Unit is one of the few remaining units at Parker Center, although the unit is scheduled to move to Piper Tech soon. — Ed.

Alive! Leonard, thanks for meeting us today. So, when it comes to polygraphs, what's the proper terminology? "Polygraph" sounds official. Is "lie detector" frowned upon?

LEONARD SALCEDO: It's commonly referred to as a lie detector or "the machine." But the proper terminology is polygraph instrument.

How have those changed over the years?

LEONARD: They've changed quite a bit. [In the 1930s], they were large, bulky machines that ran paper with inkwells and ink pens. That's how the charts were recorded. That created a lot of problems, because the instruments were heavy. You had to deal with the ink. And a lot of times that ink would spill and would get on the examiner's clothing. So it was a messy process.

As the years progressed, they became computerized. What we use here in the department is regular computers [PCs] with a polygraph instrument attached. And it's very small. It's about eight inches by two inches. And it weighs, maybe, about a pound or two. And it's also very portable. We have a laptop that we use when we have to administer polygraph examinations in different jails. Or sometimes the detectives are working cases and their suspects are out of state. One of my examiners will fly to that state with the detective to administer the exam.

What the Machines Do

What do the instruments do? What is their methodology?

LEONARD: All the instrument does is record physiological changes that take place during a polygraph examination. It works during "fight or flight." Let's say that you're driving down the freeway. All of the sudden, you see a police car behind you. Your body's going to start reacting because you're going to feel threatened. You might think you're going to get pulled over. So your respiration might increase. You might start sweating. There are subtle changes that take place within your body. And sometimes they're so subtle, you don't realize they're taking place. The instrument is very sensitive. And it records all those physiological changes during the questions, when they're being asked. That polygraph instrument sends that data to the computer, where the examiner can view the physiological responses as he's asking the questions. He can see those reactions live on the screen.

So the physiological change or affect in your body is something that people can't control. It's almost an automatic thing?

LEONARD: Right. Since you were a young child, you have been taught that there are consequences for lying and that condition-

al programming will cause the body to react. The sympathetic nervous system instinctively takes over in an attempt to protect the body; it gets the body ready to fight/flight/freeze, which is typically referred to as "fight or flight." These physiological changes are automatic.

What do they do best? What does the whole polygraph process do best?

LEONARD: The only function of the polygraph instrument is to record physiological data that is being transmitted by the body, and transform it into visual responses on a computer screen that a polygraph examiner can analyze.

How many examinations do you perform a year?

LEONARD: Right now we are averaging approximately 2,500 examinations per year. From 2005 through 2007, we were extremely busy with police applicants; we administered an average of 5,000 examinations per year.

The Key: The Examiner

The instrument is half of the process, maybe not even half. At least half of the process is the examiner, isn't it?

LEONARD: The most important aspect of the polygraph examination is the polygraph examiner. The polygraph examination begins the moment the examiner greets the examinee and begins to build rapport. This can be accomplished by something as simple as shaking the examinee's hand and introducing yourself. The polygraph process is very stressful, and the job of the examiner is to make every attempt to relieve some of the stress and nervousness. This is usually accomplished during the pretest and when the entire process is explained to the examinee.

The examiner explains to the examinee that there will be no surprise questions and that they are going to review all the questions together before the examination. Another reason we review all the questions prior to the exam is to ensure the examinee understands them.

If you're an examiner, what is key toward your performing a good examination? Is it tone of voice? Is it attitude? Is it being calm? What are the keys to having a really good, effective examination?

LEONARD: It's everything you mentioned. One of the most important things is rapport building. One of the ways this can be accomplished is for the examiner to adapt his/her personality to that of the examinee.



Leonard Salcedo, Polygraph Lead Examiner and Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit.

Are the questions written before every examination?

LEONARD: No. If it's a criminal examination, we'll get an advanced copy of the crime report. The day of the examination, the assigned examiner will meet with the detective to review the case. At this time we also make sure the detective understands the capabilities of the polygraph examination. The questions that we ask the examinees have to be very specific to ensure we do not miss the target. At times, the detectives who are not familiar with how the polygraph exam works will give us a long list of questions they want asked. However, the process does not work in that manner; the fewer questions, the greater the accuracy of the exam.

How many questions is typical?

LEONARD: Typically, on criminal exams, we don't ask more than three questions.

Are there baseline questions, default questions? Like, "What's your birthday" or those kinds of questions that establish a baseline?

LEONARD: Yes, there are. We typically ask the examinee, "Are you in Los Angeles? Are you sitting down? Are the lights on in this room?" In addition, will also ask the examinee to write down a number and then they are asked to lie to writing that number. This type of question format is called an acquaintance test, and it serves two purposes. The first purpose is to get the examinee acquainted with the polygraph process and to allow them to see how it works firsthand. This also gives the examinee an opportunity to experience the feeling of having the polygraph components on his/her body and helps them alleviate some of the nervousness. The second purpose is to allow the examiner to adjust his/her polygraph tracings to each particular examinee. The examiner accomplishes this by analyzing the physiological responses when the examinee lies to the number they wrote and then adjusting the sensitivity on the instrument to obtain a baseline.

‘The polygraph instrument and our interview and interrogation skills are weapons that we use to fight crime [and] help protect the innocent.’

– Leonard Salcedo

Training and Guidelines

Okay. How much training does an examiner receive?

LEONARD: The typical polygraph school is approximately two months. If we hire a new polygraph examiner that just graduated from polygraph school, they are hired as trainees and are placed on an 18-month internship program. During this time period, the new examiners are trained in the polygraph formats that we use at LAPD. We follow federal polygraph standards; however, not all polygraph schools teach those federal formats.

This is an established science, isn't it? It's been around for a long time.

LEONARD: Yes. It's been around for a very long time.

Who They Examine

So you have three basic types of situations here. First are police applicants, people who want to work for the police.

LEONARD: Yes. That's the majority of our examinations. When a police officer candidate applies to the police department, part of the hiring process is that they have to take a polygraph examination.

And the second group is...

LEONARD: The second group is police officers, detectives or City Employees that want to work specialized units, for example, major crimes, vice, narcotics. Part of their hiring process is a polygraph examination.

And then, the last type of examination that we do is criminal examinations.

And that's people who are thought to have some involvement or have witnessed a crime?

LEONARD: Yes. A lot of times the detectives will come to us as a last resort if they don't have any physical evidence or they don't have enough probable cause to affect an arrest. The District Attorney won't file. So the detective will come to us, and if the suspect fails the exam, the examiner will interrogate. The majority of time, they'll get confessions. With those confessions, then, the DA's office will file charges.

If you were to break those three down into percentages, how would it go?

LEONARD: Police applicants, probably, are 90 percent of our

Leonard Salcedo, Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit, during the *Alive!* interview.



business. And then, criminal exams, probably, are the next highest, at about 8 percent. And then, internal screens. It really depends on the month. During some months, especially in the summer, the crime increases, so the percentage will increase.

Do you do work for outside agencies? Do you contract your work?

LEONARD: We don't do any contract work. However, in the past we have administered courtesy polygraphs for other police agencies. Recently, we administered a polygraph examination on the request of the New York City Police Department. One of their suspects had moved to the local area; the suspect was suspected of being part of a million-dollar scam.

Admissible in Court?

Are they admissible in court?

LEONARD: Yes, they are, with a caveat. If the attorneys want to admit the entire polygraph into court – and I'm just talking about California because all the states have different rules – but in California, the defense attorney and the DA's office have to agree that they're going to admit the polygraph. Then, they go in front of the judge. The judge will [then] allow the polygraph. The majority of the time, the defense attorney will not agree to a polygraph. The detectives bring the suspects. It's all voluntary. If the suspect fails the exam, and my examiner gets a confession, what gets into court is just the confession – what the suspect told the examiner after the exam. The polygraph is not mentioned in court, just the confession.

So it has limited admissibility, unless it's given full agreement beforehand.

LEONARD: Right. In some states, you don't have to go through this process. The entire polygraph is admitted into court.

Tell me why a criminal or suspect, shall we say, would agree to be subjected? Are they forced by law to do that?

LEONARD: No. Like I said, it's all voluntary. They cannot force them to take a polygraph exam. Sometimes the suspects want to appear that they're cooperating with the investigation. They're trying to throw off the detective. Some might think that they can beat the polygraph. There are a number of reasons. When they fail the polygraph, that's one of their excuses or defenses. They'll say, "Well, if you're telling me I did this, why would I volunteer to take a polygraph exam?" But after continuing with the interrogation, eventually they'll confess.



Leonard Salcedo, Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit, takes *Alive!* editor John Burnes on a tour of the unit's facilities.

To try to clear themselves from being under suspicion?

LEONARD: Correct. In the minds of the guilty they are willing to take a gamble and give the appearance they are cooperating with the investigation. In the case of the truthful, they may feel that is the only way they exonerate themselves. If the examinee is being truthful and passes the polygraph, it will help eliminate them as suspects.

Because – if they're not being forced to take a polygraph test, if it's volunteer, then they're really taking a risk.

LEONARD: Yes, they are.

Myths

What are the biggest myths? What is the biggest thing that you might see on one of the police TV shows – can you specify what the biggest myth is about polygraph units?

LEONARD: On a lot of occasions, the examinees have a misconception that the polygraph examination they are going to take is going to be the same as what they saw on television. They don't understand that what they saw on television was created for entertainment and to create a shock factor. But nothing could be further from the truth. A real polygraph examination administered by a professional is clinical, scientific, and would be very boring if it was televised.

First to Be Accredited

The science of the polygraph examination or the process of it really hasn't changed much.

LEONARD: Not the aspects of the polygraph process, but the technology has improved, and the professionalism and education of polygraph examiners has also improved. One of our major accomplishments in the Polygraph Unit was to receive

Alive! Feature: Interview, continued

CSI:LA LAPD SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION DIVISION: Polygraph Unit

accreditation from the Polygraph Law Enforcement Accreditation (PLEA) program. The PLEA was created to standardize the way police agencies administer polygraph examinations across the country and to improve the professionalism and training of the examiners. We were the first agency in the country to achieve such a milestone. I am very proud of this accomplishment and of the examiners that work in the Unit.

The Truth Comes Out

Tell me a couple of stories of some of those cases when you think the polygraph unit had a significant role to play in solving them.

LEONARD: One comes to mind. Detectives brought in a suspect who was accused of killing a female transient and then setting the building on fire to cover the crime. The detectives did not have enough evidence for an arrest. The suspect failed the examination, and after an artful interrogation by the examiner, the suspect not only confessed to that crime, but to two other homicides in other states.

In the [polygraph examination] room?

LEONARD: In the room.

Wow.

LEONARD: He also agreed to take the detectives to where he had hidden the body, as long as the examiner accompanied them.

How long ago was that?

LEONARD: Maybe four or five years ago.

And the polygraph process had a role to play in other big cases, too, right?

LEONARD: Yes. We had one case in particular where a woman reported to the police that she had been kidnapped at gunpoint and taken to another state. A lot of agencies including the F.B.I were involved in investigating the crime. The FBI asked if we

could assist them by giving her a polygraph exam. Some of the statements she made to the investigators had inconsistencies. The investigation was going to be labor intensive and a lot of money was going to be spent investigating the allegations. The woman failed the polygraph examination and, after a grueling interrogation by one of my examiners, she eventually confessed that she had made up the entire incident. The FBI agents were so impressed with the examiner's interrogation skills that they later requested a copy of the video for training purposes.

The Polygraph Crew

How good is your crew?

LEONARD: They're excellent examiners. Most of us are retired law enforcement officers, and we have a lot of experience with interviews and interrogations. Detectives recognize this fact, by our proven results. Recently we were asked by some of our detectives to put together an interview interrogation class. This class was taught to detectives at different LAPD divisions. We received great feedback from the detectives that attended the training classes. There have been instances when a detective made comments such as, "Well, that was a very good technique. I'm going to start using that technique during my interrogations."

Saving the Innocent

Any last points you want to make?

LEONARD: We are not just about catching the deceptive examinees, but most important is that we help exonerate the innocent. There is nothing worse or more traumatic that being accused of a crime you did not commit and feeling helpless when trying to prove your innocence.

In addition, one of the most important jobs an examiner has is saving future victims. For example, some of the suspects that are brought here for polygraph examinations are accused of



Leonard Salcedo, Officer in Charge of the Polygraph Unit, explains the unit's server room and function to *Alive!* editor John Burnes.

heinous crimes such as molesting defenseless children. In a lot of these cases, there is no evidence, and these child predators are free to roam the streets, always on the hunt for their next victim. After these child predators fail a polygraph examination and confess to their crimes to one of my examiners, they are taken off the streets, saving countless potential victims. Examiners may no longer carry handguns, work the streets, respond to radio calls or investigate crimes, but nevertheless we still help protect the community. The polygraph instrument and our interview and interrogation skills are weapons that we use to fight crime, help protect the innocent, and help our fellow detectives.

Absolutely. Thank you.

LEONARD: You're welcome. ■



James Abrams, Polygraph Examiner II.



Jesse Delgado, Polygraph Lead Examiner.



Michael Hurley, Polygraph Examiner II.



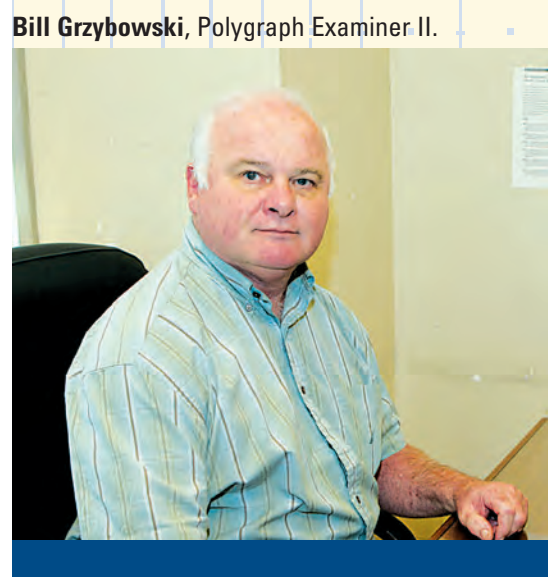
Bill Beringer, Polygraph Lead Examiner.

The Polygraph Staff

Here are more of the members of the Polygraph Unit. They make this excellent law enforcement tool really effective.

Joanne Honea, Polygraph Lead Examiner.

Harold Hansen, Polygraph Examiner.



Bill Grzybowski, Polygraph Examiner II.

