



Wicklander-Zulawski Discontinues Reid Method Instruction After More Than 30 Years

Decision based on false confessions tied to misuse of Reid Method, as well as WZ's continued focus on teaching multiple non-confrontational interviewing techniques

Downers Grove, IL – (March 6, 2017) – Wicklander-Zulawski & Associates, Inc. (WZ), a world leader in interview and interrogation training services for federal government agencies, law enforcement organizations and corporations, announced today the company will no longer offer training in the controversial Reid Method.

WZ has been licensed by John E. Reid and Associates, Inc., originator and developer of the Reid Method, and had included this direct, positive interrogation method in their standard public sector curriculum with WZ's non-confrontational techniques for the last 33 years. WZ Certified Forensic Interviewer (CFI[®]) instructors have conducted training for more than 200,000 law enforcement officers worldwide since the founding of the firm in 1982.

Going forward, WZ will standardize their core instruction on multiple techniques including the Participatory Method, Cognitive Interviewing, Fact-Finding and Selective Interviewing, as well as the popular WZ Non-Confrontational Method. A major city police department recently contracted with WZ to teach this exact combination of industry best practices in seminars for their new detectives. This customized course was designed to provide progressive, comprehensive training in multiple non-confrontational interviewing techniques with a focus on obtaining truthful information and admissions. It will now become WZ's flagship seminar for law enforcement.

"It's human nature to deny and defend oneself. Confrontation is not an effective way of getting truthful information," said WZ President and CEO Shane Sturman, CFI. "Rather than primarily seeking a confession, it's an important goal for investigators to find the truth ethically through a respectful, non-confrontational approach." Sturman added, "WZ has dedicated instructional blocks to educate detectives on the causes of false confessions and the risks of utilizing improper interrogation methods.

Approximately 29% of DNA exonerations in the US since 1989 have involved false confessions to the crime. A combination of factors could cause innocent persons to confess to a crime they did not commit. Academics have chronicled the commonalities among these cases and found the suspect is often mentally or intellectually challenged, interviewed without an attorney or parent, interrogated for over three hours, or told information about the crime by the investigators. In addition, the officers in these cases were often trained in confrontational methods of Interview and Interrogation. Many courts and law enforcement agencies are moving away from this confrontational approach to non-confrontational styles.

With the availability of DNA evidence, and with efforts from organizations such as The Innocence Project, there has been a heightened awareness of the danger of improper use of interrogation

tactics. Wrongful convictions, exonerations and false confessions have become a more global point of discussion, and justifiably so. Although these practices can be a useful tool in obtaining a confession, cases have shown that their improper use, combined with the intense emotional pressure put on the suspect, can lead to catastrophic results.

“Because of the possible abuses inherent in confrontational styles, we believe it is time to move away from these practices” Sturman concluded. “While the Reid Method has been successful in solving crimes over the years, there are serious pitfalls and significant risks associated with the incorrect application of the technique. WZ will remain a progressive, evolving organization dedicated to partnering with academics, attorneys, researchers, corporations, and law enforcement agencies around the world to ensure the tools we are teaching are ethical, moral and legally acceptable.”

About Wicklander-Zulawski & Associates, Inc. (WZ)

WZ is a nationally recognized firm established in 1982. The company provides investigative, consulting, and interview, and interrogation training services to the public and private sectors. The public sector includes: law enforcement, military, government, and diplomatic markets. The private sector includes: human resources, loss prevention, security and auditing professionals. WZ’s non-confrontational interview methods enable their clients to employ a wide range of ethical strategies to elicit relevant information and obtain voluntary admissions more often than a confrontational approaches.

The firm’s training experience includes services for a majority of U.S. police departments and federal agencies such as the U.S. Army, FBI, DHS, ICE, CIS, FLETC, EEOC, TSA, FAM’s, and the U.S. State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security Services. WZ conducts over 450 onsite seminars each year in over fifty countries worldwide and has trained over 500,000 law enforcement and private sector professionals in multiple non-confrontational interview and interrogation methods.

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