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Professor Council

Interpersonal Communications

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Throughout this scene the channel of communication is auditory and visual. In the textbook "Choices & Connections An introduction to communication" (page 6), they define a channel as a sensory dimension along which communicators transmit information. It also says that the most common channels are auditory, visual, and tactile. Agent Ford (the one who asked a majority of the questions) tried to form an impression of being cool and at ease as he asked questions throughout the scene to trick the suspect into being honest and saying just the right things they need to hear. As the book puts it; "mental images of who people are and how you feel about them." (page 45) A type of impression the agents set up was an algebraic impression. As said in the book an algebraic impression is to analyze the positive and negative things you learn about someone to calculate an overall impression, then updating this impression as you learn new information. (Anderson, 1989). (page 47). The information he was saying was positive for their investigation and was very important. The information he was letting out was negative towards himself because he was ratting himself out, and was showing who he really was. The Horn Effect is used, and it is defined in the book as "the tendency to negatively interpret the behavior of people for whom you've formed negative Gestalts." (page 47). They gathered all the evidence they have on this guy and formed a negative interpretation of him which made them decide to investigate him in this scene. When they were asking questions, at some points they would hint at

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something or not completely ask the question which is ⁵ high context culture, but then when the suspect started getting quiet they bashed him with words to scare him, and during this they were very honest and straight forward which is ⁶ low context culture. So they had a mixture of both in this scene. In our textbook it says “in high context cultures, such as China, Korea, and Japan, people use relatively vague and ambiguous language and even silence to convey important meanings.” “In low context cultures, people tend not to presume that others share their beliefs, attitudes, and values. Thus, they strive to be informative, clear, and direct in their communication (E. T. Hall & Hall, 1987)”. (page 95). They use ⁷ verbal communication throughout the scene, which is defined in the book as “the use of spoken or written language to interact with others.” (page 112). When the older looking agent says “usually when we accuse someone of murder they won't shut up” he used connotative meaning because he used words based on his life experience on interviewing so many killers. ⁸ Connotative meaning in the book is defined as “the meanings you associate with words based on your life experiences.” (page 113). They use the cooperative principle to get him to say what they want to hear. They use the evidence they have against him, but they are very clear and relevant with their questions and accusations. Cooperative principle ⁹ is defined in the book as “making your verbal communication as informative, honest, relevant, and Clear as required for a particular situation.” (page 116). The agents use a lot of “you” language because they are trying to focus the attention and blame on the suspect. “You” ¹⁰ language is defined as “phrases that place the focus of attention and blame on other people” (page 119), which is exactly what they are trying to do. I see they use prejudiced language ¹¹ towards males, which is sexist language, as agent Ford says “she thought you were cute”, “she was into you”, “she looked at least 14” he was trying to say like since she was into him it

was okay for him to get after her and try to get into her pants even though she is a young girl. In the textbook they say that "people who use prejudiced language speak in ways that display contempt, dislike, or disclaim for a group or its members." (page 124). The agents use verbal aggression against his intelligence by talking down to his level about him liking the young girl and then attacking him with questions to purposely get the suspect nervous and scared so that he can tell the truth. In the book verbal aggression¹³ is defined as "the use of language to attack someone's personal attributes, such as their weight, looks, intelligence, or physical ability (Infante & Wigley, 1986) (page). Agent Ford uses deception when he says that the young girl thought he was a "handsome cuss" and he also said "she was precocious to you, she didn't mind you were older". He says these things to trick the suspect into thinking it was true so he could confess to liking the young girl. Deception¹³ in the book is defined as "the deliberate use of uninformative, untruthful, irrelevant, or vague language for the purpose of misleading others." Nonverbal communication¹⁴ is "the transmission of meaning through an individual's nonspoken physical and behavioral cues (Patterson, 1983, 1995)." (page 127). The suspect towards the end shows he is nervous and scared because he is shaking and very quiet which shows he is guilty of committing the murder. Apart of showing nonverbal communication the suspect is showing congruent messages¹⁵ which in the book is said as "in which your verbal and nonverbal communications match" (page 135) which is exactly what the suspect is showing while he is being interrogated with questions he starts to answer them with honesty and basically rats himself out which matches with him shaking and rubbing off a guilty vibe. Like I've been saying, the shaking the suspect does is very vital to these agents as they can see right through him. Which is called kinesics¹⁶, "body movement" (Choices & Connections Intro to communication)(page 139). In the text book it says