

# SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Eliciting intelligence using the Scharff-technique: Painting up a tactical framework for  
the claim tactic

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## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

## Abstract

The current study examined the change in phrasing of the claim tactic aimed at intelligence gathering from human sources. We compared the change on two dimensions (1) response seeking, and (2) certainty when using the Scharff technique, to commonly used phrasing in the Scharff technique and to the Direct Approach. Participants ( $N = 252$ ) received background information and took on the role as a source in an online interrogation. As predicted, the differently phrased claim showed superiority compared to the Direct Approach, on the ability to hide the information objective and increase the perceived amount of the interviewer's knowledge. Thus, the newly developed online perception paradigm was validated. Furthermore, the results indicated that the information objectives were hidden better when using high response seeking and low certainty. This research provides empirical support for the superiority of the Scharff technique when compared to the Direct Approach and sets the first steps to the development of a tactical framework for the claim tactic.

*Keywords:* Scharff technique, claim tactic, human intelligence gathering, interrogation

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

### Eliciting Intelligence Using the Scharff-Technique: Painting up a Tactical Framework for the Claim Tactic

At the present time, no nation in the world is a stranger to terrorist threats. Media in Europe and North-America periodically inform about terroristic attacks that were and also were not prevented. A major task in the battle against terrorism is, first of all, the prevention of terroristic attacks. Prevention of terror plots can be credited to human intelligence (HUMINT). HUMINT is a form of information gathering targeting human sources (Evans, Meissner, Brandon, Russano, & Kleinman, 2010). Human sources can include, informants, prisoners of war (POWs), detainees, suspects, or witnesses. A specific form of human intelligence gathering is *information elicitation* (Justice, Bhatt, Brandon, & Kleinman, 2010). The goal of this method is gathering information with two objectives in mind. Firstly, that the source underestimates her/his contribution of new information. Secondly, that the source remains unaware of the interviewer's information interests. Specifically, the source should not be (fully) aware of providing information which is crucial to the exchange (Justice et al., 2010). The rationale is that if information elicitation is performed successfully the source might be more likely to provide crucial entities of information and get in contact with the interviewee again and thus prevent future terrorist attacks.

Although HUMINT is a crucial element in ensuring societal security, scientific evidence in this field is scarce. Only in recent years, researchers have begun to develop and evaluate methods for gathering human intelligence (e.g. Alison, Alison, Noone, Elntib & Christiansen, 2013; Evans et al., 2013; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Montecinos, 2014). One of the methods, namely the Scharff technique was designed to elicit specific pieces of information without the suspect realizing that the interviewer was interested in these pieces of information (Oleszkiewicz, 2016). This technique was developed by Hanns Joachim Scharff. It is known to have been very effective during Hanns' time at the German Luftwaffe during World War 2. Due to the promising anecdotal success of the Scharff technique more research has focused on the investigation of its efficacy in the past years.

Hanns Joachim Scharff (1907-1992) started developing the Scharff technique after having observed ineffective interview procedures. His technique identified *counter-interrogation strategies* and involves *perspective taking*. Counter-interrogation strategies are the suspect's attempts to withstand an interrogation successfully and appear convincing (Granhag, Clemens, &

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Strömwall, 2009). Scharff identified at least three general counter-interrogation strategies that POWs used: (1) I will not tell you very much; (2) I will try to figure out what they are after and not provide that information; and (3) It is meaningless to deny/withhold what they already know (Toliver, 1997). Consequently, Scharff formed his tactics to counter the POWs strategies. As Scharff identified counter-interrogation strategies by putting himself in the POWs shoe, his technique is based on the psychological concept of *perspective-taking*: the cognitive capacity to consider the world from another's viewpoint, which helps to anticipate other people's behaviour and reactions (Galinsky, Maddux, Gilin, & White, 2008).

Researchers investigating the efficacy of the Scharff technique brought vital findings to the field of comparative efficacy of techniques for gathering human intelligence, as only little research has previously focused on it (e.g. Evans et al., 2013). This research is striving to provide more insight into the use of the Scharff technique.

### **Scharff tactics**

In recent years, researchers started to conceptualize, and test the Scharff technique, and identified several tactics (e.g. Granhag, Kleinman, & Oleszkiewicz, 2016; May, Granhag, & Oleszkiewicz, 2014; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Kleinman, 2017).

The first tactic was the *friendly approach* in which Scharff allowed for a socially warm and comfortable atmosphere by showing understanding for the suspects' situation (Toliver, 1997). The second tactic is *not pressing for information*. Whereas other interrogators intimidated their suspects and asked direct questions to get information, Scharff rarely asked questions. Instead, Scharff presented the to him known information giving the prisoner the opportunity to add (missing) details or correct errors (Toliver, 1997).

The third tactic is *the illusion of knowing it all*. At the beginning of each interrogation, Scharff often stated that there is little chance that the suspect will be able to provide information that Scharff did not already know (Toliver, 1997). Afterwards, he presented all the information gathered by the intelligence services in a long and detailed story to the prisoner (Toliver, 1997). As the suspect has to reveal a minimal amount of information to be seen as cooperative, this tactic limits the suspect from providing already known information and also gives the impression that the interrogator knows "everything". Because of this framing, the prisoner might overestimate the amount of information the interrogator hold and unconsciously provide new information.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

The fourth tactic is to *ignore new information*. In moments where vital or critical information is provided by the source, the interrogator downplays it as unimportant, irrelevant or already known to mask the importance of the provided information. This enables the interrogator to hide his information objective (Toliver, 1997).

The fifth and the tactic that this research will be focusing on is the *claim tactic*. It is assumed that using claims will have the advantage of the source experiencing (dis)confirming the claim as less compliant since new information is not actively provided but merely (dis)confirmed what ‘was already known’ (May et al., 2014). When, for example, the interviewer would want to know a specific piece of information e.g. the location of the attack and would have information pointing towards it being the Amsterdam Central station, (s)he would claim “We know that the attack will take place at Amsterdam Central station” rather than asking “What is the location of the attack?”. Thus, the suspect might perceive the information of the location as already known to the interrogator and confirms it rather than answering a question about such vital information.

### **Previous research on the Scharff technique**

A series of studies compared the Scharff technique (Granhag et al., 2016), against the direct approach. Overall, these studies resulted in five consistent findings (Granhag et al., 2016): The Scharff-technique (I) elicits comparatively more new information, (II) lets the source underestimate how much new information they revealed, (III) lets the source perceive the interviewer as more knowledgeable about the topic, (IV) makes the source overestimate how much information the interviewer holds, and (V) makes it relatively more difficult to read the interviewer’s information objectives. These results can, firstly, be attributed to the source needing to provide information beyond the interviewer’s knowledge, which (s)he shares when creating the “illusion of knowing it all” (Granhag et al., 2016). This tactic makes it much more likely to elicit new information. Secondly, the interviewer in the Scharff technique does not respond to new information revealed by the source and the source likely misperceives the information the interviewer already holds (Granhag et al., 2016). Moreover, the difficulty in reading the interviewer’s information objective can be attributed to the interviewer neither pressing for information nor posing an explicit question and, as already mentioned, not responding to newly revealed information (Granhag et al., 2016). Importantly, it has to be

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

mentioned that the option of eliciting specific pieces of information was yet not investigated in previous research.

### **The Direct Approach**

The Direct Approach (United States Army, 2006) is seen as the gold standard of interrogation techniques (Obama, 2009). It consists of open-ended and direct questions which are posed in a business-like manner ('Where will the bombing take place?') (United States Army, 2006). Studies show that the direct approach is one of the most often used strategies by U.S interrogators (Redlich, Kelly, & Miller, 2011). The Army Field Manual (2006) states that 90 percent of the time during World War II the direct approach was effective and that 90 percent or more interrogation subjects cooperate in response to the direct approach, however, there is no empirical evidence supporting this claim. Because of the widely used and believed efficacy of the Direct Approach it was also used as a control comparison for this study.

### **Information gathering vs Intelligence gathering**

When gathering intelligence from sources it is of high importance to consider, not only the amount of elicited information, but also its quality (Dawson, Hartwig, Brimbal, & Denisenkov, 2017; Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Cancino Montecinos, 2014). As revealing a large amount of information does not equal that this information will be helpful to the interrogation, it is more important to consider gathering accurate and operationally useful information (Hartwig, Meissner, & Semel, 2014). Most commonly effective intelligence gathering includes the interviewing of a variety of individuals, which can provide relevant information (Loftus, 2011). In a lot of cases, one source will not be willing or able to provide the interrogator with all the vital information to e.g. prevent a terrorist attack. Consider a terrorist attack being a puzzle, the interrogator has some information about the attack but not all, so the interrogator has a puzzle with missing pieces and in order to fill these missing pieces he needs to interview sources. While it is quite unlikely that one source will provide the interrogator with all the missing pieces, it might be more effective to only try to gather one piece from one source, one from another and then combine those pieces. Thus, to ensure a more effective outcome, one can interview multiple suspects and set an information objective for each of them. However, when trying to elicit one specific piece of information, the interrogator also has to ensure that the information objective does not become apparent to the suspect.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Throughout this paper, the term *information gathering* will be used to refer to ‘collecting information with the focus on eliciting a high amount’ and the term *intelligence gathering* will be used to refer to ‘collecting isolated pieces of information’.

### **The claim tactic**

Although a considerable amount of research examining the Scharff-technique was conducted, there have been only few studies focusing specifically on the claim tactic. These studies largely compared the effectiveness of the claim tactic using confirmation claims or using confirmation claims vs the disconfirmation claims. Oleszkiewicz, Granhag, & Kleinman (2014) compared the efficacy of the confirmation claims and explicit questions (Direct Approach) and found the confirmation tactic to result in significantly more information. This finding was confirmed by Oleszkiewicz and colleagues (2014) showing the confirmation tactic to elicit a significantly higher amount of new information in comparison to explicit questions. Moreover, it showed that using a combination of confirmation/disconfirmation claims reveals less information than the Direct Approach and significantly less information than when only using confirmation claims.

May and colleagues (2014) then conducted a study focusing systematically on the (dis)confirmation claims and comparing these confirmation and disconfirmation claims in separate conditions with the Direct Approach. This study resulted in the following findings (1) using the (dis)confirmation claims tends to elicit more new information, (2) sources in the confirmation condition perceived the interviewer to be more knowledgeable compared to sources in both disconfirmation and Direct Approach condition, (3) sources in the Scharff condition believed to have revealed significantly less new information than they objectively did, (4) using confirmation claims masks the interviewer’s objective more effectively than disconfirmation claims. May *et al.*, (2014) have argued that the (dis)confirmation claims did not elicit more information in the second phase because a two to four times higher amount of information, comparing to the direct approach, was already revealed during the first phase when an open-ended question was posed. Thus the sources in the direct approach possibly wanted to reveal more information in the second phase to seem cooperative, whereas (dis)confirmation sources tried to reveal less information to reach a balance of revealing and withholding information (May *et al.*, 2014). Following this argument, the effectiveness of the (dis)confirmation tactic could not be confirmed or disconfirmed because of the influence of the first open-ended question.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

It must be noted that in past research the claim tactic was only investigated in the context of information gathering, thus focussing on the amount of collected information and on the overall difficulty to identify the information objective. However, the elicitation of predetermined and specific pieces of information is of high importance, in order to further develop effective intelligence-gathering tactics. When trying to elicit specific pieces of information, it is simultaneously important to ensure that this information objective remains hidden. It is proposed that the claim tactic could be used to target these specific information objectives. Thus, this research is going to implement different types of phrasings for the claim tactic and investigate which type hides the information best when trying to elicit one specific piece of information.

### **The phrasing of the claims – response seeking and certainty**

To investigate the effects of different phrasing of the claims, two dimensions were chosen: (1) *response seeking*, and (2) *certainty*. These will be either low or high (see Table 1 for an overview with examples).

Previous use of the claim tactic solely relied on using low response seeking and high certainty. High certainty ('*We know ...*') was used to pertain the illusion of knowing it all and hide the interviewer's information objective. Moreover, low response seeking was applied, meaning that the interrogator did not actively ask for a response. It was assumed that when presenting information with high certainty and low response seeking the source might perceive it as already known information and will be more likely to confirm it. However, when only using low response seeking the interviewer might run the risk of not receiving any response as (s)he might be perceived as already knowing all the information. As the claim tactic is seeking to elicit crucial entities of information, it is, from high importance to elicit a response from the suspect. Thus, this paper implemented a compromised version between posing a claim and asking a question, namely *high response seeking* ('*What would you say if I told you...*'). This is done in order to investigate whether participants will respond more positively and share more information than when just hearing a low response seeking claim.

The second dimension, *certainty* was chosen to investigate whether deviating in certainty changes the participants' perception of the interview and responses. Only using high certainty, as has been done in previous research, might give the participant the impression that the interviewer knows the presented information, and is not interested in additional information, low certainty



## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

might be perceived as the interviewer being unsure about the validity of the information. A framework with assumed participant's perceptions can be found in Table 2.

As the confirmation tactic was shown to be more effective compared to the disconfirmation tactic (May et al., 2014), this study will only use confirmation claims and test these based on the two dimensions. This study will be comparing five conditions: *low response seeking - low certainty (LR-LC)*, *low response seeking - high certainty (LR-HC)*, *high response seeking - low certainty (HR-LC)*, *high response seeking - high certainty (HR-HC)* and the Direct Approach.

Table 1

*Examples of claim phrasing based on the different levels of the two dimensions*

|                  |      | Certainty   |   |
|------------------|------|---|---|
|                  |      | High  | Low   |
| Response seeking | High | <i>What would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam CS</i> | <i>What would you say if I told you that we have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam CS</i> |
|                  | Low  | <i>We know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam CS</i>                                       | <i>We have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam CS</i>                                       |

SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Table 2

*Expected participant’s perception when hearing the claims*

|                  |      | Certainty   |  |
|------------------|------|---|--|
|                  |      | High  | Low  |
| Response seeking | High | Source experiences the interviewer as <i>interested in a confirmation</i>     | Source expects that interviewer is <i>very interested in a confirmation</i>        |
|                  | Low  | Source experiences the interviewer as <i>not interested in a confirmation</i> | Source experiences the interviewer as <i>somewhat interested in a confirmation</i> |

**The present study**

The major aim of this study is exploring new aspects of the Scharff technique, specifically the possibility of a tactical framework for phrasing claims. Specifically, how interviewers can strategize when formulating claims based on two dimensions: (*low-high certainty*) and (*low-high response seeking*). This is done, in order to investigate which phrasing can both hide the information objective best and result in more perceived interviewers’ knowledge.

In comparison to past research which has used an interactive paradigm, in which participants interact with the interrogator in real-life, this study implemented a perception paradigm in the form of an online study. The focus of a perception paradigm lies in the investigation of possible changes in the sources perceptions. Besides this change the experimental set-up is largely based on Oleszkiewicz *et al.*, 2014. All conditions will consist of an introductory phase, claims/direct questions and a final checklist where participants can decide which pieces of information to reveal. Within the Scharff conditions the third claims have a combination of low-high response seeking and low-high certainty, while claims surrounding the third claim are low on response seeking and have a high certainty.

The effects of the different phrasing of the claims will be tested on two outcome measures, namely (1) *perceived the interviewer's knowledge*, and (2) *perceived interviewer’s information objective*. As mentioned by Justice and colleagues (2010), successful information

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

elicitation must ensure that the suspect remains unaware of the interviewer's information interests, thus the outcome measure *information objective* was chosen. The second outcome measure *perceived interviewer's knowledge* was chosen as it presumed that sources that perceive the interviewer as more knowledgeable about certain pieces of information, will be more likely to confirm those pieces of information (Granhag et al., 2016).

### **Perception paradigm**

In order to ensure that this perception paradigm is as valid as previous studies which tested the efficacy of the Scharff technique using an interactive paradigm, the following aspects will be attempted to replicate: (Hypothesis 1) Sources in all Scharff conditions perceive the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable previously to the interview compared to sources in the Direct Approach. (Hypothesis 2) Sources in all Scharff conditions will have a less clear understanding of the interviewer's information objective, compared to sources in the Direct Approach.

### **Perceived interviewer's knowledge**

Concerning the effects of the different claim phrasing, (Hypothesis 3) it was predicted that participants facing an LR-LC claim will perceive the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable about the information presented in the claim compared to the Direct Approach and the Scharff control condition (LR-HC). This is based on the rationale that, as the interviewer is not seeking a response, it will be perceived that he does not necessarily want input.

### **Information objective**

It was, further, predicted (Hypothesis 4) that participants in condition LR-LC perceive the interviewer's objective as the area of the attack to a significantly lower amount than the DA and Scharff control participants. This is based on the rationale that as the interviewer uses low response seeking and low certainty, participants will be less likely to think that he is interested in the information.

## **Methods**

### **Design**

The study employed a between-subject design in which each participant took part in one of five conditions. Experimental conditions included the low seeking response, low certainty (LR-LC) condition, the high seeking response, high certainty (HR-HC) conditions and the "low

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

seeking response, low certainty” (LR-LC) condition. Moreover, a control condition “low seeking response, high certainty (LR-HC) and a hanging control, the Direct Approach (DA), were included. The independent measures were comprised of the different conditions. The two dependent outcomes measures for this study were (1) the participant’s perception of which information units the interviewer knew already before the interrogation and (2) the participant’s perception of the interviewer’s information objective.

### **Participants**

The sample consisted of 292 participants, of which 40 participants had to be excluded due to incorrect responses on the memory tests ( $N = 40$ ). The final cohort consisted of 252 participants (66% female, 33.2% male, 0.8% other) between the ages of 14 to 78 years old ( $M = 24.4$ ). Condition LR-LC had 49 participants, 55 were in condition LR-HC, 42 in condition HR-LC, 46 in condition HR-HC, and 60 in condition DA. The participants were recruited based on the premise that they would be taking part in a police interrogation as a police informant, through an online study. The study took place over the online survey site Qualtrics. The participants were recruited through the Behavioural, Management and Social Sciences subject test pool at the University of Twente (SONA), social media, SurveySwap, and via personal contacts. Participation was on a voluntary basis. The participants recruited through SONA were compensated with course credit for their participation. Due to the nature of the study, non-fluent English speakers were excluded from participating. Furthermore, potential participants were informed about the fact that the study might include socially stressful situations and is thus not suitable for socially anxious individuals. This study was approved by the BMS Ethics committee of the University of Twente.

### **Procedure**

The participants were informed that the purpose of the study was to examine decision making when acting as an informant during a fictional interrogation. They were then further informed regarding the procedure of the study and were shown an informed consent which included the risks or discomforts and participant rights.

**Phase one: Background and planning.** First, the participants in each condition received identical instructions to take on the role of an individual with some knowledge of an upcoming terrorist attack due to personal ties with a member of the radical group. Specifically, the participants were informed that a radical political group was planning a bombing at Amsterdam

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Central Station. In total, the participants received 22 pieces of background information regarding the group, a previous attack, and the upcoming attack (see Appendix A). Of this information, the interrogator knew 18 pieces of the total information. The participants were informed that the police *possibly* held some prior information, but received no specific information about this.

Furthermore, the participants were presented with a dilemma, namely to strike a balance between giving not revealing too much information and not revealing too little information. The participants were motivated, on the one hand, by knowing their role had taken part in a bank robbery, and giving the police enough information would secure free conduct out of the country with the stolen money (no legal consequences). On the other hand, they were told their role had sympathy with the group's beliefs and members, specifically, one member who was a close friend and thus not wanting to give up too much information. Additionally, giving up too much information included the risk of the group knowing who "ratted" them out, and consequently having the group come after the informant.

All participants were instructed to memorize the information as well as possible. After this, each participant took a memory test (see Appendix B) to verify that the participants had read the information, how well the information was retained, and to ensure participants who were withholding information, did so on purpose and not due to forgetting the correct information. If the participants gave the incorrect response, in the memory tests, regarding the place and date of the attack (as these were the two key pieces of information sought after in the claim tactic), they were excluded from the analysis. Finally, an example of how the claims/questions were going to be presented, and how to answer these claims/questions was given. The participants were then informed the interrogation was about to begin and instructed to confirm they were ready.

**Phase two: The interview.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of the five conditions. All participants started off listening to an introductory audio file from the interrogator. A 37-year-old male with experience in interrogation research the audio files using a recording device and an interview protocol (please find the interview protocol for the Scharff condition in Appendix C and for the Direct approach in Appendix D) for each condition. Next, the interaction between the interrogator and source occurred in four rounds. The participants received an audio file and had 15 seconds to respond in each of the four rounds. Interview protocols differed in line with the condition the participants were in. The interviews ended similarly with the participants receiving the question, whether they want to share additional

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

information with the interrogator by checking it off a checklist (see Appendix E). The following section will give an overview of the differences between the interview protocol in each condition.

*The Scharff claim conditions.* Scharff conditions were identical in the introductory phase and the first, second and last claims that were presented to the participants. During the introductory phase, the interrogator used the friendly approach-tactic, by empathizing with the participants' situation ('...before we start let me point out that I understand you are in a difficult situation...'). Moreover, the interrogator also made clear that his interest lies in preventing the attack ('...you must understand that we cannot accept this bomb attack to take place...'). Next, the interrogator presented the known pieces of information to the source in a narrative format ('Okay, if I should get more to the point, we know that five persons are involved in the current planning...'). After outlining the already known information the interviewer again showed understanding for the informant's situation ('I want to once again point out that I am aware of the situation you are in and that you feel threatened, but I hope you understand that I have no plans to sell you out...'). This first contact was then concluded by the interrogator acknowledging that he told the informant what was already known to them and that he was interested to hear what information the informant was holding. The interviewer then went on to present four claims which the participant could respond to. Claims in each condition concerned the same information (date of the planned attack, device to detonate the bomb, location of the planned attack and location of the bomb). The participants were able to choose between standardized responses from a 7-point- scale (for an overview see Table 3).

The manipulations were distinct on the level of response seeking and certainty of the third claim. For an overview of the differences between the conditions for claim three, please see Table 3 below.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Table 3

*Overview of the differences between the third claim in each condition*

| Condition   | Manipulation LR-LC   | Manipulation HR-LC   | Manipulation HR-HC  | Control LR-HC  |
|-------------|--|--|---|--|
|             | Low response seeking - low certainty   | High response seeking - low certainty  | High response seeking - high certainty  | Low response seeking - high certainty  |
| Claim three | <i>“We have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station”</i> | <i>“What would you say if I told you that we have information which suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station?”</i> | <i>“What would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station?”</i> | <i>“We know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam central station”</i> |

***The Direct Approach.*** The interviewer in the direct approach greeted the participants and showed direct interest in starting the interrogation ‘Shall we start talking about what we are supposed to talk about?’. Then, the participant received four audio files subsequently with a question from the interrogator regarding the same information as in the Scharff conditions (date of the planned attack, device to detonate the bomb, location of the planned attack and location of the bomb). For each of the questions, the participant could choose a standardized response from a 7-point scale (for an overview see Table 4). The interview was concluded with ‘If you would like to share any other information with the interrogator, please tick the boxes corresponding to the information you would like to share’. All conditions were concluded with a final memory test, identical to the first memory test.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Table 4

*Example for standardized answers (using the first claim)*

| Likert-scale | Scharff conditions                             | Direct Approach   |
|--------------|--|---|
| 7            | That's correct                                 | King's Day (27 <sup>th</sup> of April)                  |
| 6            | That's what I heard too but I am not sure      | I heard something about King's Day but I am not sure    |
| 5            | All I know is that it will be around that week | All I know is it will be around the last week in April  |
| 4            | I only heard it will be sometime in April      | I only heard it will be sometime in April               |
| 3            | I haven't really heard anything about that     | I haven't really heard anything about that              |
| 2            | I would say that is quite unlikely             | They were talking about some different options          |
| 1            | That is incorrect                              | *You provide a wrong alternative* to mislead the police |

**Phase 3: Post-questionnaire.** The post-questionnaire consisted of three sequentially presented questionnaires (see Appendix F). At first, participants were asked for demographic information such as gender, age, and occupation. Secondly, the participants were further asked about their perceptions of the interview (e.g. How much information do you think your contact person had about the attack prior to your conversation?) and their motivation (e.g. How motivated were you to complete the “mission”?). The scale was on a 7-point-likert scale (e.g. *I not nervous at all* to *7 very nervous*). Moreover, participants were asked to briefly list the information they experienced the interrogator wanted them to disclose. The last questionnaire was composed of a checklist with all xx pieces of information. Participants were presented with a checklist to mark the information they perceived their contact person having prior to the conversation. The checklist was identical to the checklist where the participants could share additional information with the interrogator. Before the final debrief, the participants were



## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

allowed to make comments regarding the study, if they so wished. Once the participants were fully debriefed on the objective of the experiment, the experiment was concluded. The participants spent between 10 and 60 minutes completing the experiment ( $M = 24.48$ ,  $SD = 8.86$ ).

**Coding of the checklist.** As the third and fourth claim in the manipulation conditions concerned the area of the attack, and the delivery method, these pieces of information from the checklist were categorized. For example, the theme “Area” contained a maximum of four pieces of information, running from no information to information with higher precision. Consequently, “None of the above” was given a score of 1; “In Amsterdam” was given a score of 2; “Somewhere in Amsterdam Center” was given a score of 2; “Amsterdam Central Station” was given a score of 3; and “The east end of Amsterdam Central Station” was given a 3. The score 1 was given the code “Interviewer did not know”, score 2 “Interviewer knew something” and score 3 “Interviewer knew”. The codes for each theme can be found in Table 5. These scores were used to

Table 5

*Used codes and meaning for the information objectives*

| Code                           | Area                                      | Disguise                   | Date                                  |
|--------------------------------|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 = Interviewer did not know   | None of the above                         | None of the above          | None of the above                     |
| 2 = Interviewer knew something | Amsterdam                                 | Placed in some sort of bag | Last week in April                    |
| 2 = Interviewer knew something | Somewhere in Amsterdam city centre        | Placed in a suitcase       | Around King’s Day                     |
| 3 = Interviewer knew           | Amsterdam Central Station                 | Placed in a black suitcase | King’s Day, 27 <sup>th</sup> of April |
| 3 = Interviewer knew           | The east end of Amsterdam Central Station |                            |                                       |

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

**Coding of the information objective.** Participants were asked to list the information they experienced their contact person wanted them to disclose. The list was coded for each participant concerning the date of the attack, detonation device, area of the attack and the bomb disguise. When, for example, the area of the attack was mentioned participants received the code 1, when “area” (or similar) was not mentioned it was coded as a 0. Similarly, when mentioning “bomb disguise” (or similar) participants received a 1 and when not mentioning it they received a 0.

### Results

#### Validation of the experimental paradigm

**Participant motivation & difficulty.** A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the participants’ motivation between the five conditions. Results showed that the participants’ motivation did not differ significantly between the conditions,  $F(4, 252) = 0.903, p = 0.463, \eta^2 = 0.015$ . The mean score for the motivation of all participants was well above the midpoint of the scale ( $M = 5.62, SD = 1.30$ ). Furthermore, it was assessed how difficult participants perceived it putting themselves in the role of an informant. An ANOVA showed no significant difference in perceived difficulty between conditions,  $F(4, 252) = 2.088, p = 0.083, \eta^2 = 0.033$ . The mean score was around the midpoint of the scale ( $M = 4.21, SD = 1.68$ ).

**Perceived interviewer’s knowledge.** A Pearson’s chi-square test of contingencies (with  $\alpha = .05$ ) was used to evaluate whether the condition that the participants were in, is related to their perception on whether the interviewer had knowledge about the area of the attack, prior to the interview. For that the condition was used as an independent variable and whether participants marked, in the checklist, that the interviewer knew nothing, something or knew the area as the dependent variables. The chi-square test was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, N = 252) = 38.19, p < .001$ . Further, the association between assigned condition and perceiving the interviewer as not knowledgeable about the attack area was moderate,  $\lambda = .45$ . As can be seen in Table 6, participants in the Direct Approach condition were significantly more likely to perceive the interviewer as less knowledgeable about the attack area.

A Pearson chi-square test of contingencies (with a  $\alpha = .05$ ) was used to assess whether the participant’s perception about the interviewer’s knowledge on the bomb delivery differs per

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

condition. The chi-square test was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(x, N = 252) = 38.19, p < .001$ . As can be seen in Table 6, participants in condition DA were significantly more likely to think that the interviewer did not know about the bomb disguise. Further, the association between assigned condition and perceiving the interviewer as not knowledgeable about the attack area was moderate,  $w = .40$ . Considering the result for both claims, support for hypothesis 1 was found.

**Perceived information objective.** A one-way ANOVA concerning the participants' perception of the interviewer's information objectives revealed a significant effect,  $F(1, 250) = 6.17, p = 0.014, \eta^2 = 0.02$ . As claims in the Scharff conditions were able to hide the information objective significantly better than the Direct Approach, hypothesis 2 found support.

### Framing of the claims

**Perception of the interviewer's prior knowledge.** It was predicted that participants in condition LR-LC perceive the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable regarding the information in the manipulated claim compared to the Direct Approach and the Scharff control condition.

A Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA provided strong evidence of a difference ( $p < 0.001$ ) between the mean ranks of perceived interviewer's knowledge in the LR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 100.13), the Direct Approach (*Mean Rank* = 107.29), and LR-HC control condition (*Mean Rank* = 45.38),  $H$  (corrected for ties) = 71.492,  $df = 2, N = 164$ . The effect can be described as "large" (Cohen's  $f = .088$ ). Post hoc analyses using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that there was no significant difference between the LR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 49.96), and the LR-HC control condition (54.76), meaning that the interviewer was not perceived any more knowledgeable. However, the interviewer in condition LR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 75.17), was perceived as significantly more knowledgeable than the interviewer in the Direct Approach (*Mean Rank* = 38.53),  $U = 481.50, n = 109, z = -6.52$  (corrected for ties),  $p < 0.001$ , two-tailed. Thus, only partial support was found for hypothesis three.

### Information objective

It was predicted that participants in condition LR-LC perceive the interviewer's objective as the information presented in the manipulated claim significantly less than the DA and Scharff control participants.

A Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA indicated there was a significant difference in participants, which perceived "area" as the interviewer's information objective between condition LR-LC

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

(*Mean Rank* = 67.16), DA (*Mean Rank* = 95.33), and LR-HC condition (*Mean Rank* = 82.16).  $H$  (corrected for ties) = 14.471,  $df = 2$ ,  $N = 164$ ,  $p = .001$ , with a “medium” effect size Cohen’s  $f = .31$ .

Post hoc analyses using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that participants in condition LR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 44.69), perceived the information objective as “area” significantly less, than in the DA hanging control condition (63.42),  $U = 965$ ,  $n = 109$ ,  $z = -3.8$  (corrected for ties),  $p < 0.001$ , two-tailed. This result indicates that participants in condition LR-LC have more difficulties identifying the information objective, compared to the Direct Approach. Moreover, participants in condition LR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 47.47), did not perceive “area” as the information objective significantly different in comparison to participants in the LR-HC control condition (*Mean Rank* = 56.98),  $U = 1101$ ,  $n = 104$ ,  $z = -1.882$  (corrected for ties),  $p = .06$ , two-tailed. Thus hypothesis four was only partially supported.

### Exploratory analysis

**Perceived interviewer’s knowledge.** A Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA indicated that perceived interviewer’s knowledge about the bomb delivery (fourth claim) was significantly different ( $p < 0.001$ ) between the HR-HC (*Mean Rank* = 100.58), DA (*Mean Rank* = 48.83), and LR-HC condition (*Mean Rank* = 99.72).  $H$  (corrected for ties) = 51.623,  $df = 2$ ,  $N = 161$ , with a “medium” effect size Cohen’s  $f = .069$ .

Post hoc analyses using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that participants in condition HR-HC (*Mean Rank* = 74.57), perceived the interviewer as significantly more knowledgeable about the bomb delivery, than in the DA hanging control condition (37.35),  $U = 411$ ,  $n = 106$ ,  $z = -6.67$  (corrected for ties),  $p < 0.001$ , two-tailed. Moreover, no significant difference was found between the interviewer’s knowledge about the bomb delivery, between condition HR-HC (*Mean Rank* = 49.70), and the LR-HC control condition (*Mean Rank* = 52.09),  $U = 1205$ ,  $n = 101$ ,  $z = -.55$  (corrected for ties),  $p = .579$ , two-tailed.

**Perceived interviewer’s objective.** A Pearson chi-square test of contingencies (with a  $\alpha = .05$ ) was used to map out the participant’s perception of the interviewer’s information objectives per claim/question. Table 7 summarizes the number of participants and whether they thought the interviewer was after information about the date, detonation device, area or bomb disguise in each condition.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Considering the date of the attack, the chi-square test was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(x, N = 252) = 31.05, p < .001$ . As can be seen in Table 7, participants in condition DA were significantly more likely to think that the interviewer's information objective was the date of the attack. Further, the association between assigned condition and perceiving the interviewer's information objective as the date of the attack was moderate,  $w = .35$  source.

The chi-square test assessing the detonation device was also statistically significant,  $\chi^2(x, N = 252) = 11.5, p = .021$ . However, further analysis using the Mann-Whitney U test indicated that only condition HR-LC (*Mean Rank* = 45.64),  $U = 1014, n = 102, z = -2.5$  (corrected for ties),  $p = 0.013$ , two-tailed and HR-HC (*Mean Rank* = 47.46),  $U = 1102, n = 106, z = -2.7$  (corrected for ties),  $p = 0.008$ , two-tailed, differed significantly from the Direct Approach (*Mean Rank* = 55.60; 51.13).

Further, the chi-square test assessing the area of the attack was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(x, N = 252) = 19.35, p = .001$ . As can be seen in Table 7, participants in condition DA were more likely to think that the interviewer's information objective was the area of the attack. Further, the association between assigned condition and perceiving the interviewer's information objective as the area of the attack was moderate,  $w = .3$ .

The chi-square test assessing the bomb disguise was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(x, N = 252) = 5.69, p = .224$ . However, further analysis showed a significant difference between condition HR-LC and the Direct Approach. As can be seen in Table 7, participants in condition HR-LC tended to perceive the bomb delivery less as the information objective, than participants in the Direct Approach. Further, the association between assigned condition and perceiving the interviewer's information objective as the bomb delivery was small,  $w = .22$ .

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Table 6.

*Distribution of answer choices per condition \* shows the difference is significant at the 0.05 level*

|  | Condition |       |       |       |      |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-------|------|
|  | LR-LC     | LR-HC | HR-LC | HR-HC | DA   |
| Knew area <sup>a</sup>                 | 69%       | 78%   | 71%   | 74%   | 10%* |
| Knew something about area <sup>a</sup> | 29%       | 22%   | 24%   | 24%   | 58%* |
| Did not know area <sup>a</sup>         | 2%        | 0%    | 5%    | 2%    | 32%* |
| Knew the bomb disguise                 | 78%       | 69%   | 71%   | 72%   | 12%* |
| Knew something about bomb disguise     | 4%        | 9%    | 5%    | 7%    | 25%* |
| Did not know bomb disguise             | 18%       | 22%   | 24%   | 22%   | 65%* |

a. manipulated claim

Table 7

*Overview of perceived information objectives per condition \* shows the difference, compared to all or one Scharff, condition(s) is significant at the 0.05 level*

| Information objective | Condition |       |       |       |                    |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|--------------------|
|                       | LR-LC     | LR-HC | HR-LC | HR-HC | DA                 |
| Date                  | 22%       | 26%   | 26%   | 24%   | 63%*               |
| Detonation Device     | 16%       | 13%   | 6%    | 7%    | 27%* <sup>bc</sup> |
| Area <sup>a</sup>     | 49%       | 67%   | 52%   | 52%   | 83%*               |
| Bomb disguise         | 27%       | 22%   | 12%   | 26%   | 32%* <sup>b</sup>  |

a. manipulated claim

b. only significantly different to HR-LC

c. only significantly different to HR-HC

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Table 8

*Summary of hypotheses status*

| Hypotheses  | Status             |
|---|--------------------|
| H1: Sources in the Scharff conditions perceive the interviewer as holding more information before the interview, compared to sources in the Direct Approach   | Accepted           |
| H2: Sources in the Scharff conditions will have a less clear understanding of the interviewer's information objective, compared to sources in the Direct Approach                                       | Accepted           |
| H3: Participants in the LR-LC condition will perceive the interviewer as holding more information before the interview, compared to source in the Scharff control condition (LR-HC) and Direct Approach | Partially accepted |
| H4: Participants in condition LR-LC will perceive the information objective as the area of attack to a lower amount than in the Scharff control condition and Direct Approach.                          | Partially accepted |

Table 9

*Summary of findings from the exploratory analyses*

| Exploratory  |
|--|
| Only HR-LC and HR-HC mask the information objective presented before the manipulated claim better than the Direct Approach |

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Only HR-LC mask the information objective presented after the manipulated claim better than the Direct Approach

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### **Discussion**

The main objective of the study was to set the first steps into the framing of the claim tactic as a tactic for intelligence gathering. It was specifically designed to determine the effects of changing the phrasing of claims on two outcome measures: (1) the perceived interviewer's knowledge, and (2) the information objective. The importance lies in the development of different strategies that can be used to influence the perceptions of the suspect, as this is a crucial element of information elicitation (Justice et al., 2010). In essence, this study found support for past findings of the Scharff technique, as all Scharff conditions outperformed the Direct Approach on (1) masking the information objective and (2) perceiving the interviewer as more knowledgeable. Moreover, this study found indications that suggest that the combination of high response seeking and low certainty can mask previous and following information objectives.

### **Experimental paradigm**

The results suggest that the construction of the online experimental paradigm was rather successful in giving the illusion of a real Scharff interrogation. This is indicated by the (1) high motivation of the participants to complete their mission, (2) participants perceiving the task as challenging but not too challenging, and (3) successful replication of previous research, specifically the interrogator in the Scharff conditions being perceived as more knowledgeable and the ability of the interrogator using the Scharff technique to hide the information objective more successfully than in the Direct Approach.

### **Perceived interviewer's knowledge**

Originally, it was predicted that using low response seeking and low certainty leads the participants to perceive the interviewer as knowledgeable. The interviewer is not seeking a response and thus gives the impression of not needing additional information. As predicted using low response seeking and low certainty has led participants to perceive that the interviewer held significantly more information concerning the area of the attack, compared to source in the Direct Approach. However, no difference in the perception in previous knowledge about the area



## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

of attack was found when comparing low, and high certainty. Thus, the first prediction could only be partially supported.

### **Information objective**

It was predicted that using low certainty will hide the interviewer's information objective more effectively than when using high certainty and when using the Direct Approach. This experiment did not detect any evidence for the prediction that by using low certainty the interviewer would be better at hiding the information objective regarding the area of the attack, compared to the interviewer using high certainty. Nevertheless, the evidence also showed that when using low certainty participants were significantly less likely to perceive the area of the attack as the information objective compared to sources in the Direct Approach. The prediction could therefore only be partially supported.

There are several possible explanations for this result. An overall peak in the participants identifying the third claim as the information objective can be observed, which can be caused by an order effect, the amount of presented claims, or by identifying the information presented in the third claim as crucial. An order effect would suggest that the order in which the themes of the claims were presented (date, detonation device, area, bomb disguise) affects the results. A different order of the presented themes could potentially cause different results. Next, the amount of claims could also influence the results. As most participants identify the third claim as the information objective, the claim tactic might become less effective in masking the information objective when presenting more than two claims. Moreover, although the presented information was controlled for importance, participants could have perceived information about the area of the attack (third claim) as most crucial. Specifically, because the Scharff interrogator mentioned in his introduction that he knew that the attack was happening in Amsterdam (but not Amsterdam Central Station). Therefore, as the interrogator already had some information about the area of the attack but not all, participants might have perceived it as the piece of information he was looking for.

### **Exploratory tests**

As the predictions did not result in differences between the Scharff conditions, the data was further explored for effects on the information presented before and after the manipulation.

**Perceived interviewer's knowledge.** When looking at the answer choices regarding perceived interviewer's knowledge, one unanticipated finding was that over half of the

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

participants in the Direct Approach thought that the interviewer had some information about the third presented question, while only a fourth thought that he had some information about the fourth question.

In the instructions, the participants were told that the interrogator knows some information about the attack but not which information. Even though, when phrasing the questions the themes were selected based on similar ‘information values’ (derived from personal communication with David Neequaye, February 2019), participants might have, perceived information about the area (third question) as more crucial. Specifically, participants might have thought that when not knowing where the attack would take place one does not need to know the bomb disguise and detonation device.

**Perceived information objective.** When looking at the perceived information objective, an interesting trend can be observed. While the Scharff conditions were able to hide the information objective in both the first round and the third, only high response seeking was able to mask the information objective better than the Direct Approach in the second and last round. Specifically, using high response seeking resulted in a better-hidden information objective for the second claim and high response seeking and low certainty resulted in a better-hidden objective in the fourth presented claim. A possible explanation may be that using high response seeking in the third claim resulted in the participants viewing the third claim as the information objective and disregarding the surrounding claims. Furthermore, using low certainty in combination with high response seeking might have strengthened the picture of the third claim as the information objective and thus resulted in the disregard of both the previous and following information objective.

### **Limitations & recommendations**

The generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. First, the sample for this study was compromised out of students and it must be noted that real-life sources would be more prone to plan their behaviour before the interview, and thus used counter-interrogation strategies (Soufan, 2011). However, the Scharff-technique is designed to counteract counter-interrogation strategies and thus might perform even better with real-life sources. Second, as the perceived information objectives were only coded by one coder, the results could have low reliability. To avoid this limitation, future research should consider using a checklist for the information objective. Another possibility is to improve the reliability of the coding with

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

multiple coders (Tinsley & Weiss, 2000). Moreover, it is advised to continue testing the efficacy of changing of response seeking and certainty levels, in an interactive set-up. An interactive set-up might give clearer results, as participants are required to engage in the experiment without the possibility of taking a break, which might decrease the illusions of the Scharff tactic.

Exploratory analysis showed indications for an interaction effect since the information objectives were hidden better when presented before, and after a high response seeking, low certainty claim. Thus, future research is advised to be focussed on further exploration of this interaction effect. Lastly, as mentioned before, although the presented information was controlled for importance, an order effect might have influenced the results. Future research could benefit from controlling for the presented order of the claims and controlling for the amount of presented claims.

### **Implication**

This research found indications that suggest that phrasing a claim with high response seeking and low certainty may hide the information objective surrounding that claim most successfully. If future research is able to replicate these findings, potentially a tactical framework for intelligence elicitation can be derived from these results. This framework could possibly make use of high response seeking and low certainty phrasing to set a 'fake' information objective and place the actual information objective either before or after the 'fake' information objective claim. In this way, the interrogator could possibly hide the actual information objective and make the source believe that the 'fake' information objective is the actual information objective. Thus, this research added more insight into the development of a tactic for intelligence elicitation.

### **Conclusion**

Research on effective tactics for intelligence gathering is an emerging field, and this study is one of the first to examine a framework for intelligence elicitation. It is the first study to investigate different phrasing of the claim tactic in the Scharff-technique. The main objective of this research was to explore the effects of changing the level of response seeking and certainty, in a perception paradigm, and examine the effects on the perceived interviewer's knowledge and the perceived information objective. In brief, support was found for the successful implementation of the Scharff-technique in an online perception paradigm. This aspect was reached by (1) the high motivational level of the participants, (2) perceived difficulty of the role

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

and (3) the ability to replicate past research. Moreover, previous research was advanced by investigating the efficacy of hiding the information objective when eliciting specific pieces of information. This resulted in preliminary indications for the advantages of using high response seeking and low certainty to hide a specific information objective. We hope to have set the first steps for the development of a tactical framework for the claim tactic, with potential for future improvements and replications.

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

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## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

### Appendix A: Background information

#### Information about the role

##### Background

Imagine that economic problems, not caused by yourself, made you participate in the robbery of a cash transport van in the fall of 2018. The actual robbery went fine, but three months ago, the other three involved in the act got arrested. The only one who is still free is you, but you feel that this is only a matter of time. You know where most of the stash (approximately 4,5 million EUR) is kept. You understand that your time is scarce, and you immediately need to get the stash and move yourself and your money out of the country. Some time ago you got an idea of how it could all be solved, and briefly, your plan is as follows: through a close friend, you have come by information that a radical political group in The Netherlands has future plans to perform a bomb attack in Amsterdam, around King's Day. Your plan is to reveal information about this bomb attack to the special police force (DSI: Dienst Speciale Interventies), and in favour of the information receive free conduct out of The Netherlands. Ten days ago, you contacted the special police (anonymously of course) and carefully asked if there was any interest in talking further about this matter. DSI said that they were very interested in talking more thoroughly with you, and **it is this call you are now about to make.**

The group that is planning this bomb attack is called MDA and consists of a loosely assembled network of approximately 10 members. You are a close friend with one of the members, **and you feel some sympathy for the group's opinions.** After a lot of consideration, you have decided to reveal some information about the planned bomb attack to the police. You do understand that it is possible that the police already have some information about the planning—partly because DSI have conducted their own investigations, and partly because you have heard, from your friend, that a few of the members in MDA suspects that their phones have been tapped (but this is nothing they know for certain). In brief, you don't know what the police actually know about the planned attack (or if they know anything at all).

##### Dilemma

But before the phone call, you have a very important additional dilemma to reflect upon:

When speaking to the police you should **absolutely not tell them everything you know.** First of all, you have, to say the least, a negative attitude toward the police. Also, if you would reveal everything you know about the planning, it could jeopardize the entire existence of MDA, including your close friend, and might get them convicted for planning a very serious crime. If you tell too much, there is also an obvious risk that they will find out that it was you who “sold them out,” which means that you will be hunted by the entire group (and you are not prepared to go that far). On the other hand, **you cannot reveal too little,** because if you do so, there is a risk that the police won't find your contribution to be significant enough to grant you free conduct out of The Netherlands. In order to be taken seriously, and appear trustworthy, you have to show some degree of goodwill and cooperation. In sum, you need to **find a good balance—neither**



## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

### **revealing too much nor too little information.**

In spite of all the effort you have put into thinking this through, you still feel very hesitant about talking to the police at all, but nonetheless, you have decided to give it a try. However, you have not fully decided what specific information (and how much) you will reveal to the police. This decision is partly held open, and you will in some degree allow the development of the upcoming conversation to direct this matter.

What you know about the planning of the upcoming attack is as follows:

### **Information about the attack**

#### **General**

You know that the group planning the attack is called MDA, it consists of approximately 10 members and is based in Amsterdam. You also know that the group has been around since 2015 and came to existence as a result of the various immigration riots across the Netherlands in 2015. You know that the group, in cooperation with two Germans, had plans to execute a bomb attack in a conference centre in The Hague in 2016, where a political top meeting was held at the time. But that operation was cancelled due to internal conflicts. This conflict resulted in one of the leading figures of the group, Niek Jansen, leaving MDA.

#### **Your Relationship to MDA**

David de Vries, who is your close friend, and Niek Jansen founded MDA. You know the names of most of the members of MDA: Martin, Johannes, Erik, Sara, Peter, Saskia, Lisa, but have no further personal information about them. You know the background of the internal conflict that occurred in The Hague. In brief, Niek Jansen wanted to increase the effect of the attack with human casualties, something the Germans refused to go along with. Since the other members sided with the Germans, this dispute led to Niek leaving MDA. Niek and David are currently bitter enemies, as it was David who introduced the Germans to MDA.

#### **Specific Details about the Upcoming Attack**

You know that five persons are working more specifically with the planning of the upcoming attack. Among these five there are two Germans (a male and a female) who are both experts on explosives. You also know that these two German bomb experts participated in the planning of the bomb attack that would have been performed in The Hague (2016), which was cancelled. You know that the train station subjected for the planned attack is Amsterdam Central Station, and you know that the attack will take place on King's day, namely Saturday the 27th of April. You also know that the plan is to plant the bomb during night time and that the bomb will be detonated in the morning at 7AM, remotely via an app on a smartphone. The bomb will be placed in a black suitcase, which will be placed in a locker in the luggage storing area of the station at 2AM on the 27th of April. The luggage storing area where the suitcase will be placed, is on the east end of Amsterdam Central Station. You do not know what kind of bomb it is. You do not know where the bomb is located at the moment (or if it is manufactured yet).

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

## Appendix B: Memory test

In this section, we will conduct a memory test to see how much information you remember

Please choose the correct statement:

- The group is called MDA
- The group is called SDF

Please choose the correct statement:

- The group is located in Berlin
- The group is located in Amsterdam

Please choose the correct statement:

- 3 people are planning the current attack
- 5 people are planning the current attack

Please choose the correct statement:

- Two of the people involved are Germans
- None of the people involved are Germans

Please choose the correct statement:

- The group has bomb experts
- The group does not have bomb experts

Please choose the correct statement:

- Niek Jansen left the group due to internal conflict
- David de Vries left the group due to internal conflict

Please choose the correct statement:

- The attack is going to take place at Schipol Train Station
- The attack is going to take place at Amsterdam Central Station

Please choose the correct statement:

- The bomb will be planted at the check points
- The bomb will be planted in the luggage area

Please choose the correct statement:

- The attack is planned for the 26<sup>th</sup> of April
- The attack is planned for King's Day the 27<sup>th</sup> of April

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

### Appendix C: Interview protocol Scharff Technique

#### **Introduction Scharff Conditions**

Hi, good thing you called. How are you?

Okay, well, there is an important reason for you contacting me, but before we start let me point out that I understand you're in a difficult situation, but at the same time you must understand that we cannot accept this bomb attack to take place. As you might understand, we already know quite some things about MDA and their planned attack in Amsterdam. So, I was thinking, in order to make this conversation more effective, I hope you don't mind if I start by sharing some of the information we already hold...

Okay, so we know that you and David are well acquainted and that you have known each other for quite some time; We also know that it was David who founded MDA together with Niek. Well, but now the times have changed. I am sure that you – as well as us – know that Niek is no longer part of the group after all the things that happened in 2016 – I guess this was just a matter of time as Niek never managed to get along with the bomb experts anyways.

Fortunately for the group, the other members did not have any problems with the bomb experts. ... of what we understand, Niek had a completely different philosophy than the bomb experts, when it comes to what and who to blow up so to speak. Yeah, and it was because of this conflict that their previous plans were cancelled.

Anyway, I understand that you have quite a bit of information about their current plans, but first let me share some of the information we already hold, without getting too specific.

We know that MDA is a political group which was formed in 2015 and that they consist of approximately 10 members. We also know that not everyone in the group will be involved in the actual execution of the attack. We understand that the purpose of carrying out this attack is to create political headlines for their cause, which will become quite dramatic as they plan to execute it around a national holiday. As you surely understand, it is of the highest priority for us to prevent this attack, because even if MDA doesn't aim to hurt people, the time and the location of the attack makes it very serious, considering the number of people traveling with trains and being by the station around such a big holiday.

Okay, if I should get more to the point, we know that five persons are involved in the current planning, which of course, includes the man and the woman... yeah the two bomb experts who are essential in running this difficult operation. We also know that they will want to avoid human casualties this time around, as this is more or less a condition for the people left in the group – However, I do believe they have underestimated the actual risk here, the risk to injure, or even kill people with this attack. I mean, it is quite clear that they will not be able to avoid making considerable collateral damage...

Well yes, this is some of the information we hold. I hope that I didn't make you uncomfortable by taking the initiative in this conversation. And I want to once again point out that I am aware

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

of the situation that you are in, and that you feel threatened. But I hope you understand that I have no plans to sell you out and I guarantee to you that your identity and involvement will remain completely confidential. So, after you have heard some of the things we already know, you probably understand that we already possess information that is of direct value for us... but we are of course interested to hear what you know.

### **Claim one**

...and we are aware that the members of the group are quite clever, so we take this all extremely seriously, so...we were pleased to come to know that they plan to execute this attack on King's day the 27th of April...

### **Claim two**

...we are aware that the bomb will be detonated using a cell phone...

### **Claim three**

**LR-LC:** ...we have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

**LR-HC:** ...we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

**HR-LC:** ...what would you say if I told you that we have information that suggests that they are going to blow the bomb at the Amsterdam Central Station...

**HR-HC:** ...what would you say if I told you that we know that they are going to blow the bomb at Amsterdam Central Station...

### **Claim four**

...we also know that they will place the bomb in a suitcase...

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

### Appendix D: Interview protocol Direct Approach

#### **Introduction Direct Approach**

“Hi, good thing you called. Take it you are well? Ok, shall we start talking about what we are supposed to talk about?”

#### **Question one**

When are they planning on executing the bombing?

#### **Question two**

What device are they planning on detonating the bomb with?

#### **Question three**

Where will the attack take place?

#### **Question four**

How will the bomb be masked?

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

## Appendix E: Checklist

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>GROUP</b>           | <input type="checkbox"/> Called MDA<br><input type="checkbox"/> 10 members<br><input type="checkbox"/> From Amsterdam<br><input type="checkbox"/> Founded after immigration riots across NL (2015)  |
| <b>HISTORY</b>         | <input type="checkbox"/> Planned an earlier attack<br><input type="checkbox"/> Planned bomb attack in Den Hauge<br><input type="checkbox"/> Planned bomb attack in 2016<br><input type="checkbox"/> The planned attack was cancelled<br><input type="checkbox"/> Cancellation due to internal conflict<br><input type="checkbox"/> Niek Jansen left the group after the internal conflict |
| <b>ACTIVE GROUP</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> 5 persons are planning the attack<br><input type="checkbox"/> 3 Dutch<br><input type="checkbox"/> 2 Germans  |
| <b>EXPERTISE</b>       | <input type="checkbox"/> There are members with specific expertise<br><input type="checkbox"/> There are bomb experts<br><input type="checkbox"/> The Germans are the bomb experts<br><input type="checkbox"/> There is one female and one male bomb expert   |
| <b>AREA</b>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Amsterdam<br><input type="checkbox"/> Somewhere in Amsterdam city centre<br><input type="checkbox"/> Amsterdam Central Station<br><input type="checkbox"/> The east end of Amsterdam Central Station   |
| <b>BOMB PLACEMENT</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> A self-storage room<br><input type="checkbox"/> Luggage storage<br><input type="checkbox"/> In a locker in the storage area  |
| <b>DATE</b>            | <input type="checkbox"/> Last week in April<br><input type="checkbox"/> Around King's Day<br><input type="checkbox"/> King's Day, 27th of April   |
| <b>BOMB PLACEMENT</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> At night time<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sometime past midnight<br><input type="checkbox"/> 2 AM (02:00)  |
| <b>BOMB MASKING</b>    | <input type="checkbox"/> Placed in some sort of bag<br><input type="checkbox"/> Placed in a suitcase<br><input type="checkbox"/> Placed in a black suitcase   |
| <b>DETONATION TIME</b> | <input type="checkbox"/> Day time<br><input type="checkbox"/> Sometime before noon<br><input type="checkbox"/> 7 AM (07:00)   |

SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Appendix F: Post-Questionnaire

Questionnaire for informants

Finally, we ask you to answer the following questions regarding the conversation with your contact person. We ask that you answer the questions honestly and correctly (meaning you are no longer "playing a role").

Gender: Male Female Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_
Age : \_\_\_\_\_ Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

1. If you think back to the conversation, how much of the total information did you share with you contact person? (circle the number which represents your own perception)

No information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 All the information

2. How much information do you think your contact person had about the attack prior to your conversation?

Very little information 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 A lot of information

3. Of all the information you shared, how much of it do you think was completely new information to you contact person?

Nothing was completely new 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 All of it was completely new

4. To what extent was it easy/difficult for you to understand the specific information your contact person was after?

Very easy to understand 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Very difficult to understand

5. Briefly list the information you experienced your contact person wanted you to disclose below.

- .....

SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

- .....
- .....
- .....

6. To what extent did you perceive your contact person as friendly?

|                        |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |               |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| Not pleasant at<br>all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very pleasant |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|

7. If you imagine you really were an “informant”, how likely would you be to talk with your contact person again?

|                   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |             |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|
| Not likely at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very likely |
|-------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------|

8. How demanding (strenuous) did you think the conversation was?

|                         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Not demanding<br>at all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very<br>demanding |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|

9. How nervous were you during the conversation?

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |              |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|
| Not nervous at<br>all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very nervous |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------|

10. How motivated were you to complete your “mission” (i.e. keeping the balance between not sharing too much/too little information with your contact person)?

|                         |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|
| Not motivated at<br>all | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | Very<br>motivated |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-------------------|

11. In comparison to what you had initially planned, did you give more or less information during the actual conversation (than planned)?

|                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |                     |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|
| Less information | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | More<br>information |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------------|

12. If you think back to what you initially planned: did you intend to give your contact person wrong information (to mislead) if a good opportunity presented itself?

YES NO

13. If you gave your contact person false information (or ended up saying something wrong), which false information did you give?

- .....



## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

- .....
- .....
- .....

14. Relative to how much information you revealed during the conversation, to what extent did you lie (give false information) to your contact person? *If you did not lie, skip to question 16.*

|                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |                      |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|----------------------|
| Lied very rarely |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Lied very frequently |
|                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |                      |

15. If you ever lied throughout the conversation, how successful do you think you were at getting away with the lie?

|                       |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |                 |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|-----------------|
| Not successful at all |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Very successful |
|                       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |                 |

16. To what extent were you surprised by the method your contact person used to interview you?

|                      |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |                |
|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|----------------|
| Not surprised at all |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Very surprised |
|                      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |                |

17. To what extent did you plan what you were going to say during the conversation prior to the conversation?

|                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |                  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|------------------|
| Very low degree |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Very high degree |
|                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |                  |

18. To what extent are you pleased with your own efforts during the interview?

|                    |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |              |
|--------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--------------|
| Not pleased at all |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Very pleased |
|                    | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |              |

19. How eager did you experience your contact person as, in regard to extracting information from you?

|                  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |            |
|------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|------------|
| Not eager at all |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |  | Very eager |
|                  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |            |

## SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

20. At the end of the interview, to what extent did you feel trust toward your contact person?

|                 |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |                  |
|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|------------------|
| Very low degree |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | Very high degree |
|                 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |                  |

21. What information did you share with you contact person? Select the alternatives that describe the information you gave your contact person during the conversation. It is important you only select the alternatives you are sure you said during the conversation. ***This information will be compared to what you actually shared during the interview.***

***\*Checklist from Appendix A was provided\****

22. What specific information regarding the attack did you perceive as your contact person knowing *prior* to your conversation? Select the alternatives that describe the information you perceived your contact person as already knowing prior to your conversation. It is important you select only the alternatives you are sure your contact person already knew. ***This information will be compared to what your contact person actually knew prior to your conversation.***

***\*Checklist from Appendix A was provided\****

***Finally, we would like to know what you thought of your contact person's presentation and the instructions given in the study***

23. How skilled did you think your contact person was at interviewing you?

|             |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |              |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|--------------|
| Not skilled |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | Very skilled |
|             | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |              |

24. How difficult did you think it was to understand the instructions of the study?

|               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |                |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|----------------|
| Not difficult |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | Very difficult |
|               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |                |

25. How difficult was it to put yourself in the role of an informant?

|               |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  |                |
|---------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|----------------|
| Not difficult |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |  | Very difficult |
|               | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |                |

26. To what extent did you experience your contact person using a form of tactic (strategy) during the conversation?

SCHARFF-TECHNIQUE: FRAMEWORK FOR THE CLAIM TACTIC

Very low degree                      1            2            3            4            5            6            7            Very high degree

27. If you experienced your contact person using a form of tactic (strategy), please describe it below:

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