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The Polygraph As A Truth Detector

By William Trevino

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The polygraph as a truth detector

1984

Summary

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association believes that there is convincing evidence to suggest that the use of the polygraph is arbitrary, subjective, biased toward accusations of guilt and claims of very high validity are scientifically indefensible. However, even if one is not willing to be persuaded by evidence on these matters, one must admit, at the very least, that there is no scientific opinion whatsoever concerning the validity of polygraph testing. In fact, there is extremely wide divergence over the validity of the test.

In these circumstances, the onus is clearly on the proponents of the polygraph test to establish a convincing scientific case for the claims of high validity that are made by polygraph operators. In other words, the burden of proof rests with the lie detector industry to satisfy the scientific community and legislators that there is convincing evidence to support claims of ninety percent or greater accuracy that are commonly made by polygraph operators. Without such agreement, it seems utterly irresponsible to allow the use of such a device in situations where it may ultimately interfere with the liberty of innocent citizens.

The B.C. Civil Liberties Association urges the Government of British Columbia to follow the example of Ontario in banning the mandatory use of polygraphs by employers in the province. We would go further: since the evidence we have presented throws considerable shadows of doubt on the usefulness of the polygraph test per se, we see no useful purpose for the procedure as either screening procedure for police candidates, or in the court system generally, both of which are uses allowed by Ontario, though there is no convincing evidence in support of the test in any situation. Ontario's compendium of information, including the Morand Report, in their 1983 amendment to their Employment Standards Act leads one to conclusions very similar to the B.C. Civil Liberties

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Association's: the polygraph test is a humbug of subjective, arbitrary and contradictory procedures that does not detect lies or guilt any more effectively, and in many cases not as well (because of procedural and machine bias), as interviews and cross examination that are already common tools of psychology, police work and the courts. The compounded danger in the instances of polygraphs lies in the sanctioned role that untrained persons with crude devices play in harrasing innocent persons in commercial and legal settings. To paraphrase an expert, it is the idiocy of idiocies. We urge its removal as an avenue of arbitrary persecution.

The background

The polygraph procedure and machine is an accretion of 1930s technology and popularized psychology rooted not in practices of modern science, but rather based on the traditions of polygraph

testing itself. In that sense, a polygraph examination is a self-fulfilling process, "measuring" a series of physical signs without the machine and drawing subjective, psychological sounding conclusions in varying ways depending upon the mental state and set and training of each, and the rapport between both, the examination subject and the examiner. The result of this exercise, associative of the monitoring machines of Scientology, is a series of conclusions about the veracity of specific statements or guilt generally, conclusions unsupportable by consistent scientific logic or by confirmation by other means. In fact, there is convincing evidence to suggest that the procedure is much more likely to create victims of false allegation than it is likely to detect purveyors of falsehood or paragons of guilt—however falsehood or guilt may be defined. The statistical illustration at the end of the paper provides an illustration of this phenomenon.

To read the rest of this article go to <http://www.police-test.net/polygraph1.htm>

Are Radar Detectors Legal in the US and in which States are they Prohibited?

By Nicola Kennedy

A good number of the people with cars in the United States have their own radar detectors. Their reason is that they feel that the speed limit at present is very low. Most of the American people are not satisfied with moderate speed while driving. They want to be the fastest driver on the road as well as get to the places they're going in record time; they want to be always in the race.

The radar detector serves as their alarm whenever there are police near them. Once the radar detector alarm sounds, they can ease off the gas and slow down their speed.

Because of the radar detectors being known to every motorist, cops are hiding, in alleyways or behind bridges in order to avoid being detected by the radar detectors.

Motorists on the other hand are being clever themselves, they are aware of these techniques from the police, so more enhanced, top-dollar detectors have entered the market.

Though the policemen are always improving their chances of catching the radar detector users, they

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are unable to make the streets of the United States radar detector-free.

Radar detectors are legal in many cities and states in the United States. But this does not mean that radar detector units are legal in all of the states in the US.

Here are some of the states that deem radar detectors illegal:

1. The usage of radar detectors are prohibited in the Commonwealth of Virginia. They have laws banning the use of radar detectors. Not only are radar detectors illegal to use in Virginia, they are also illegal to have in the vehicle.
2. Radar detectors and radar jammers are illegal in the District of Columbia. The passing of their laws to ban the use of radar detectors was set in 1995.
3. In Illinois, radar detectors are only regulated in commercial vehicles of over 26,001 pounds.
4. On US military bases, they are legal to have but illegal to use.
5. Radar jammers are illegal in the states of Utah, California, Oklahoma, Colorado and Nebraska.
6. Radar detectors are not specifically regulated, but things hanging from windshields are not permitted in the state of Minnesota.
7. For motor vehicles over 18,000 pounds and any other commercial motor vehicles over 10,000 pounds in New York, radar detectors are illegal.

And other states that prohibit the use of radar detectors are the following:

- Alabama
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- Colorado
- Delaware
- Florida
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Kentucky
- Louisiana
- Maine
- Maryland
- Massachusetts

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- Michigan
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey
- New Mexico
- North Carolina
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- South Dakota
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Vermont
- Washington
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

The state of Connecticut on the contrary has cancelled its anti-radar detector law in 1998 which make this radar detector now legal in this state.

Nicola Kennedy publishes articles and reports and provides news, views and information about and safe driving at Radar Detecting Information.

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