



With Gov. Ogilvie, former Sheriff of Cook County

Fred Inbau, 89, Criminologist Who Perfected Interrogation

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Fred E. Inbau, an early criminologist who helped elevate trickery and deceit to a high art of police interrogation, died on Monday at a hospital near his home in Chicago. He was 89 and had been a longtime law professor at Northwestern University.

In a time when law professors have often been looked on with suspicion by the police and prosecutors, Mr. Inbau was a law professor with a difference, a criminal law specialist who was the police officer's friend and ally in the never-ending battle against crime and criminals.

Among other things, Mr. Inbau championed the use of the polygraph test (but only as an investigative tool), and was an outspoken critic of the Supreme Court's 1966 Miranda decision, which requires the police to notify a suspect of his rights before interrogation.

Mr. Inbau, a native of New Orleans who obtained a law degree from Tulane University, said he had been drawn to the law when his father, a struggling shipyard worker, told him lawyers made a lot of money. But he came to his specialty by accident.

While studying for an advanced degree at Northwestern, he stumbled onto the law school's Scientific Crime Detection Laboratory and was so fascinated with the forensic work that he joined its staff in 1933.

The laboratory was established in 1929 after the St. Valentine's Day Massacre to give the police an edge in the fight against organized crime. By the time it was taken over by the Chicago Police Department in 1938, Mr. Inbau had

become its director. He held that post until 1941, when he began a four-year stint as a trial lawyer before joining the Northwestern law faculty in 1945.

Over the next five decades, Mr. Inbau, who retired in 1977 but remained active at the law school until shortly before his death, specialized in teaching, developing and demonstrating effective interrogation techniques.

When he began his work in the 1930's, society was growing squeamish about police use of rubber hoses and other forms of the third degree, an interrogation technique that often wrung confessions out of the innocent as well as the guilty.

In its place, Mr. Inbau helped develop an approach to interrogation that relied on presenting a mass of damaging facts to persuade criminals that they had no choice but to confess, and that used subtle psychology in dealing with crimes of passion.

In both cases, Mr. Inbau urged the police to use deceit, deception and outright lies to trick suspects into confessing.

Mr. Inbau, who was frequently called on to conduct interrogations in celebrated cases, was a master at applying his own techniques.

When questioning a man suspected of killing his wife, for example, Mr. Inbau would feign such sympathy for the hapless man's plight, sometimes shedding real tears, and showing such contempt for the bullying wife who had driven him to the deed that by the time the man broke down and confessed, his main regret would be that he had not killed the woman sooner.

A meticulous scholar, Mr. Inbau kept detailed notes on the various techniques he had used in the course of an interrogation. Then, to determine which had been most effective in obtaining the confession, he would interview the prisoner after his conviction, including one interview on death row three days before the execution.

Mr. Inbau, who once served as president of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences, shared his expertise through an outpouring of articles and 18 books, most written in collaboration. By far the most influential was "Criminal Interrogation and Confessions," which has been regarded as the undisputed bible of police interrogation since its initial publication in 1962.

The book, written with John E. Reid, received a high, if back-handed, compliment in 1966 when its catalogue of often deceptive and extraordinarily effective interrogation techniques was cited in the Supreme Court's Miranda decision as evidence of why suspects were entitled to be reminded of their rights before being subjected to such methods.

Once the Miranda decision was issued, Mr. Inbau became one of its leading scholarly critics. He formed an organization, Americans for Effective Law Enforcement, to fight what he regarded as a trend toward placing individual liberties ahead of society's rights in criminal cases.

He is survived by a daughter, Louise Bartine of Stover, Mo.; two brothers, Edward, of New Orleans, and Perrin, of Atlanta, three grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Photo: Fred E. Inbau (The Chicago Tribune)