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**Topic: NSA whistleblower (making things up...)**



posted 09-26-2012 01:02 PM



<http://www.usnews.com/news/blogs/washington-whispers/2012/09/25/nsa-whistleblower-reveals-how-to-beat-a-polygraph-test>

NSA Whistleblower Reveals How To Beat a Polygraph Test

By Elizabeth Flock

September 25, 2012 [RSS](#) [Feed](#) [Print](#)

Russell Tice, the National Security Agency whistleblower who blew the lid open on warrantless wiretapping conducted by the federal government on U.S. citizens post-9/11, says that he took between 12 and 15 polygraph tests during his nearly 20-year-long government career.

The tests mellowed over time, Tice says, and they may have also gotten easier to beat.

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Tice, who is no longer at the NSA, says he, along with those still in contact with at the agency, marvel at how easy it is to beat the lie detector.

The federal government currently administers polygraphs to government employees in a number of agencies, including the NSA and CIA. The polygraphs work by measuring and recording a person's physiological responses—changes in a person's pulse, breathing and blood pressure—to lying versus telling the truth.

Tice, who is now working on a Ph.D. in global security studies, says the NSA "routinely uses polygraphs to terrorize the rank and file of NSA employees" and to "gather very personal information on them that they can use to blackmail them into participating in illegal and

unethical conduct."

The whistleblower's view is supported by AntiPolygraph.org, a nonprofit that seeks to abolish polygraphs from the workplace. George Maschke, a U.S. army reserve captain who was rejected from the FBI for failing a polygraph and now runs AntiPolygraph.org, tells Whispers he believes the NSA's polygraph is intended to be a "psychological tool of coercion."

"Polygraphs are detrimental to individuals and to national security," says Maschke, "because federal agencies are relying on technology that is unreliable... that is junk science." A number of studies from the scientific community have also said polygraphs rely on pseudoscience.

AntiPolygraph.org has a number of tips on how to manipulate physiological responses to beat the test. Tice shared some of his own tips on Monday with Whispers.

First, Tice says, a person can trick the tester on "probable-lie" questions. During a polygraph's pre-test interview, the tester usually asks a person to answer questions they are likely to lie about. These include questions like: 'Have you ever stolen money?,' 'Have you ever lied to your parents?,' or 'Have you ever cheated on a test?'. Most people have done these at least once, but lie about it. So the tester uses a person's response to a likely lie as a way to establish how a person physically reacts while lying.

Tice says to trick the tester, a person should lie in response to these questions like most other people would, but also bite their tongue hard while doing so, which will set off other physiological reactions in the body. The tester's "needles will fly everywhere," says Tice, "and he will think, 'This guy is a nervous nelly. He has a strong physical reaction when he's lying.'"

"And you're skewing the test," he says.

Tice says it's also easy to beat a polygraph while telling a real lie by daydreaming to calm the nerves.

"Think of a warm summer night... or drinking a beer, whatever calms you. You're throwing them off," he says. "The needle might nip a little [because you're lying], but not off the charts." And since the person has already convinced the tester that they have off-the-charts physiological reactions while lying, Tice says, a small reaction likely won't tip the tester off.

The tests have also simply gotten easier, with the questions being less likely to shock an individual. "They use to say things like 'I bet you have sex with dogs,' just to initiate a reaction to see how that needle jumps if you've been insulted," Tice says. "[But they] have mellowed down a lot... Polygraphs are easy to beat."

Update, 3:20 p.m.:

NSA spokeswoman Vanee Vines says that the polygraph "is one of the vetting tools" used by the NSA and other federal agencies "to assess an individual's eligibility for access, and continued eligibility access, to highly sensitive intelligence information."




"In making these eligibility determinations, NSA complies with the personnel security investigative standards and procedures as outlined in various Intelligence Community directives and policy guidance memoranda."

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**Dan Mangan**  
Member

 posted 09-26-2012 02:00 PM  

Barry,

What, exactly, is the whistleblower making up? And how do you know it's made up?

Dan

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