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About the Author

**Aldert Vrij** is a Professor of Applied Social Psychology in the Department of Psychology at the University of Portsmouth (UK). He has published more than 300 articles and book chapters to date, mainly on the subjects of nonverbal and verbal cues to deception and lie detection. He also advises the police about conducting interviews with suspects, acts as an Expert Witness in court, and gives invited talks and workshops on lie detection to practitioners and scholars across the world. He is at present Editor of *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, a forensic journal published by the British Psychological Society.
Series Preface

The Wiley Series on the Psychology of Crime, Policing and the Law publishes reviews of important areas of contemporary research. The purpose of the series is not only to present research findings in a clear and readable form, but also to bring out their implications for both policy and practice. In this way, it is hoped that the series will not only be of use to psychologists, but also to all those concerned with crime detection and prevention, policing and judicial processes.

The current volume has a focus on detecting lies and deceit and therefore also on detecting truth. The opening chapter importantly deals with widely held myths concerning detecting deception and the (consequent) errors people make when trying to decide if someone is being deceptive or truthful. The next chapter notes that many people often lie (if only for the best of intentions). Thus, most people may learn how to lie successfully. The third and fourth chapters present knowledgeable, in-depth overviews: (a) of the various psychological theories that have been offered concerning nonverbal and verbal behaviours/cues which may relate to deception/truthfulness and (b) of the cues found by research actually to be related to deception. The fifth chapter reviews the growing body of research on people’s beliefs about which cues they think are indicative of lying and the origins of the many beliefs that the research presented in the previous two chapters reveals to be false beliefs. A comprehensive chapter follows on how good people are at detecting truth/lies, including relevant professionals.

Chapters 7 to 10 examine a variety of procedures/techniques that have been developed to try to determine deception/truthfulness from people’s behaviour and speech. A number of these procedures, including some widely marketed around the world, have not been found by published research to be effective. Indeed, reliance on them could result in the innocent being persecuted and the guilty remaining at large to carry out further wrong-doing.
Chapters 11 to 13 focus on attempts to detect deception from bodily/brain activity. Here, the available research again confirms that many such procedures achieve levels of performance not far from, or close to, chance. These chapters and chapter 14 also seek to explain why catching liars is often so difficult.

The crucial closing chapter focuses on how people might improve their lie detection skills, not in the ill-informed way that many books on catching liars claim, but in an in-depth way informed by a wealth of psychological theory and research.

In this broad and deep second edition (that cites close to 1100 references) Professor Aldert Vrij remarkably has managed to produce a book of even greater quality than his (2000) first edition (which had an impact world-wide). It is an example of scholarship at the highest level. This book will help people realise why it is usually so difficult to discriminate lying from truth-telling – honestly it will!

RAY BULL
and
GRAHAM DAVIES
August 2007
Preface

When I published my *Detecting Lies and Deceit* book in 2000, I did not anticipate publishing a second edition for at least a decade. However, important events have changed my mind. Since 2000, the world has experienced several terror attacks and security threats, and the United States started its “War on terror”. Against this background, the desire to detect lies has become more urgent than ever before and governments are calling upon scholars to design lie detection tools to protect their citizens from attack.

Scientists have responded by conducting research, and at present more than 150 articles on deception and lie detection are published in peer-reviewed journals each year. Several scholars have claimed that they have developed lie detection tools that are highly accurate, and they encourage governments to use their tools. What do they propose? Is it substance, is it spin, or perhaps a mixture of both? My view is that substance and spin are often intertwined. I also believe that the only way to distinguish between the two is by providing a comprehensive overview of facts regarding lying and lie detection. A factual account enables the reader to generate an informed opinion about how accurate these claims are.

This book provides a comprehensive review of deception research published to date. It is different from the previous edition in several aspects. First, the old text is updated and hundreds of new studies have been added. Second, it also contains descriptions of lie detection methods that were not discussed in the 2000 edition, such as the Behaviour Analysis Interview, Scientific Content Analysis (SCAN), Voice Stress Analysis, thermal imaging, P300 brain wave research, and functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI) research. Third, because so much has changed in the world of deception research, it was essentially easier to mostly rewrite my book than try to add in new developments. I therefore rewrote and restructured most of the old text. For example, this book provides overview chapters regarding why professionals often
fail to detect deceit and what they can do to become better lie detectors. Such chapters were not included in the 2000 edition.

The result, I believe, is a book about deception that is better structured and more comprehensive than the 2000 edition. I also realise that this book contains considerably more text than the 2000 edition, and so perhaps readers will prefer to dip into individual chapters rather than read the book from beginning to end. To facilitate this, I have ensured that the chapters can be read independently from each other.
Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to Dr Samantha Mann for her valued comments on previous drafts of this book. I also would like to thank Dr Sharon Leal for her insightful comments on the physiological chapters (Chapters 11 to 13) and Chapter 15, and Professor Pär Anders Granhag for his constructive help with Chapter 15. I also wish to express gratitude to the institutions that have funded my research in the past and at present. These are in alphabetical order: the British Academy, the Dutch Government, the Dutch Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the Leverhulme Trust, the Nuffield Foundation, the UK Government, the US Government and the University of Portsmouth. Without their financial support, I could not have carried out my research and would not have written this book. In many of my studies the participants were police officers from the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. I highly appreciate their willingness to participate, because it gives invaluable insight into the views and skills of people who detect lies on a professional basis. I am also grateful to the police for giving us access to videotapes of police–suspect interviews. This gave us the opportunity to conduct unique research into the behaviour of truth tellers and liars in realistic high-stakes situations. Finally, I am grateful to John Wiley & Sons for publishing a second edition of this book.