



An example of how Forensic Statement Analysis can reveal deception in a written statement:

Important Note: *The following example is designed to illustrate some of the markers of deceptive linguistic strategy. The formal examination of any document would involve an in-depth analysis accompanied by a detailed report.*

Edward Kennedy's Statement following the Chappaquidick Incident (1969)

On July 18, 1969, at approximately 11:15 PM in Chappaquidick, Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts, I was driving my car on Main Street on my way to get the ferry back to Edgartown. I was unfamiliar with the road and turned right onto Dike Road, instead of bearing hard left on Main Street. After proceeding for approximately one-half mile on Dike Road I descended a hill and came upon a narrow bridge. The car went off the side of the bridge. There was one passenger with me, one Miss Mary Kopechne, a former secretary of my brother Sen. Robert Kennedy. The car turned over and sank into the water and landed with the roof resting on the bottom. I attempted to open the door and the window of the car but have no recollection of how I got out of the car. I came to the surface and then repeatedly dove down to the car in an attempt to see if the passenger was still in the car. I was unsuccessful in the attempt. I was exhausted and in a state of shock. I recall walking back to where my friends were eating. There was a car parked in front of the cottage and I climbed into the back seat. I then asked for someone to bring me back to Edgartown. I remember walking around for a period of time and then going back to my hotel room. When I fully realized what had happened this morning, I immediately contacted the police.

The Author includes the use of the 1st Person Singular pronoun 'I' (highlighted in red) in every sentence except for two sentences: 1) the single sentence which describes the accident, where the car is described as being responsible for it, and the author is absent; and 2) the single sentence which introduces for the first time the presence of a passenger. The Author is only present as 'me' (highlighted in yellow), which relegates him to the position of a bystander, and responsible for the situation.

The use of negation (*unfamiliar*, *no recollection*, and *unsuccessful*), telling a story by saying what didn't happen, begs the question what did happen. The use of Verb strings (*attempt to see*, *recall walking*, and *remember walking*) blurs the action, only suggesting rather than explicitly stating what happened.

Collectively, the markers indicate that the Author has adopted a verbose and ambiguous linguistic style characteristic of deception.