



# ICBI Worksheet

Homicide-Specific

## ENGAGE AND EXPLAIN

### PHONE CALL E&E SCRIPT:

*Hello, this is Detective \_\_\_\_\_ with the \_\_\_\_\_ agency.  
Am I speaking with \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Is now an okay time to talk for about two minutes.  
If not, I can call you back at a better time.*

*I am working on a new case, where your name came up.  
I am not calling to try and get a statement from you over the phone, and I cannot go through  
details with you over the phone either.*

*My job is to make sure information is collected accurately and then verified.*

*The best way to do that is a short, structured conversation in person.*

*Here is how I handle these conversations. And it will be a conversation, not an interrogation.*

*You talk first, in your own words.*

*I do not interrupt you or try to control the conversation in any way.*

*After you give your story, I may ask a few follow up questions to make sure I understand what  
you mean, and you have the opportunity to correct me if I get anything wrong.*

*If there is something you do not remember or do not know, it is fine to say that.*

*If you need a break, we take one. You're not going to be forced to do anything or say anything.*

*That's not what I do. I am just interested in getting your side of the story because there are  
always more than one side, and I would be terrible at my job if I didn't ask for yours or consider  
yours to be true.*

*I do also record the conversation so that nobody can misquote you.*

*We meet in a quiet professional interview room at \_\_\_\_\_.*

*It is not a holding area. It's not an "interrogation room". You're not under arrest, you are going  
to be free to get up and leave at any time you wish.*

*It is just a private room set up for us to have a good conversation without any distractions.*

*I want to make sure your perspective is captured correctly, in your words, the way you want  
them to be understood, rather than relying on secondhand descriptions from other people who  
may have completely different objectives than I do.*

*You have two options.*



# ICBI Worksheet

Homicide-Specific

*We can schedule a time to meet and do this in a controlled and straightforward way.*

*Or I continue working the report without your input for now.*

*I prefer the first option because it reduces misunderstandings and uncertainty.*

*What works better for you, \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Morning or afternoon.*

*The time would be \_\_\_\_\_.*

*The location would be \_\_\_\_\_.*

*Plan for about \_\_\_\_\_ minutes.*

*If it needs to go longer, I will tell you before we cross that point.*

*Again, I do not want to go into details over the phone now.*

*It is too easy for things to get misunderstood, and I am sure that you weren't planning on having this conversation right now or over the phone anyways.*

*When we meet, you will have the space, and all the time you want, to explain everything start to finish.*

*If something changes on your end, call me and we will adjust. I always do my best to accommodate witnesses in any case. But do understand that I work normal business hours, so we will have to plan for those times and days for our conversation.*

*I do very much appreciate you being willing to come in.*

## **IN-ROOM E&E SCRIPT:**

*Before we start, I want to explain how this conversation will work so there are no surprises.*

*This is not a debate. This is a conversation.*

*I'm not going to argue with you. I'm not going to accuse you of anything.*

*I'm going to listen to you. I am going to consider everything that you tell me, and I am going to trust you. People do lie to me, but I want you to know that I don't care if they do. I trust what people say, and then I go back and verify what they tell me. Sometimes people think they're telling the truth, but their facts are a little off, and it's just due to the flaws in our memory as human beings. That's completely ok. I have interview techniques we can use to clean up messy memory in a reliable way. So, I see my job as needing to understand what happened as accurately as possible. Then when you and I both get up and walk out of this room, my job is then to go and verify information afterward. I typically have some information before we come in here but not everything. And that is why I need your help.*



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

*Here is the structure. First, I am going to ask you to tell me, in your own words, what happened. You talk. I listen. No interruptions. After that, I may ask some follow-up questions, only to make sure I understand what you mean, not to challenge you.*

*If there is something you do not remember, or you are not sure about, it is okay to say that. We might be able to use some memory enhancing techniques here to get to the answer. But I also want you to know that I would rather you tell me have an honest "I do not know" than for you to hazard a guess.*

*If at any point you need a break, tell me and we will take one. At any time you decide you want to stop talking and leave, you can leave. I don't want you to feel pressured and like you have to be here, because that is not the case. You control whether you answer questions. I am just here to understand.*

*I do record our conversations so I, and nobody else, can misquote you, and so your words are captured accurately.*

*I also want you to know that I am not going to try to work through details with you in a rushed way. We are here as long as you want to be. I want you to have the space to explain things start to finish.*

*My goal is not to put words in your mouth. My goal is to understand what you experienced, what you know to be true, in your own words. This helps me avoid relying on secondhand information and helps prevent misunderstandings later.*

*Do you have any questions about the process before we begin.*

*Tell me everything that happened, starting wherever it makes sense to you to start.*

## **NARRATIVE BASELINE**

- Relationships between adults usually develop through shared history and patterns. Tell me about your relationship with [victim].
- Most relationships settle into predictable routines. Walk me through what a typical day or week between you looked like.
- The places people spend time together tend to stay consistent. Tell me where you and [victim] usually spent time.
- There are usually recurring stress points in close relationships. What were the main sources of tension between you?
- Other people are often aware of relationship dynamics. Who else regularly observed the two of you together?
- In some relationships, others feel the need to intervene during conflict. Has anyone ever stepped in during disagreements between you and [victim]?



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

### CONTEXT, CONFLICT, AND DECISION PROCESSES

- Adults usually have personal rules about how conflict should be handled. How do you decide what is appropriate behavior during an argument?
- Arguments can escalate in stages. How do you recognize when a disagreement is becoming more serious?
- Physical proximity during conflict can change quickly. How do you decide whether to create space or close distance?
- In intense moments, decisions are made rapidly. What guides your behavior when emotions are high?
- People often believe they understand the other person's intent during conflict. What did you believe [victim] was trying to do or communicate?
- Access to weapons or objects can shift the tone of a situation. How were decisions about objects or weapons made in your home?

### EVENT EXPLORATION

- The day of [victim]'s death likely had a certain flow before anything unusual happened. Walk me through that day from the beginning.
- When people move step by step, small details often come back. What happened first that was out of the ordinary?
- Events usually unfold in sequence. What happened next?
- Specific rooms and locations tend to anchor memory. Where exactly were you and [victim] as things escalated?
- Patterns and routines often repeat. Had there been similar conflicts prior to this?
- There is often a point where a situation shifts dramatically. What signaled that shift for you?
- After that moment, what did you do immediately?

### DECISION-MAKING AND COGNITIVE FRAMING

- In any confrontation, we are constantly interpreting what is happening. What did you believe was happening in that moment?
- What someone believes often determines what they do next. How did you decide what to do next?
- People often think they understand the other person's emotional state. What did you believe [victim] was feeling?
- Sometimes actions that feel necessary in the moment look different afterward. How do you see your actions now?
- Our understanding of our role shapes our response. What did you see as your role during that event?



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- Strong emotion can narrow thinking. What were you feeling immediately before the fatal injury occurred?
- When force is used, there is often a point where someone decides to stop. How did you determine when to stop?

## SCENE, MECHANICS, AND TIMELINE

- Serious injuries usually follow a physical sequence. Walk me through the mechanics of how the fatal injury occurred.
- If a weapon or object was involved, describe where it was, how it was accessed, and how it was handled.
- In close-contact situations, positioning matters. Describe where each of you was standing or sitting at each stage.
- Symptoms and physical changes occur over time. When did you first realize [victim] was seriously injured or unresponsive?
- After realizing that, what actions did you take and in what order?
- Other people or devices often capture parts of a timeline. Who else saw either of you in the hours before or after the incident?
- What records would reflect your movements during that period?

## POST-EVENT BEHAVIOR

- Discovering someone unresponsive can be disorienting. Walk me through exactly what you did upon realizing something was wrong.
- People often make quick decisions about whether to call for help. How did you decide when to contact emergency services?
- Scenes can appear differently to responding officers than they felt in the moment. How do you think the scene appeared when they arrived?
- After an intense event, people sometimes communicate with others. Who did you contact and what did you tell them?

## DEFENSE ARGUMENT EXPLORATION

- **Defense Argument: Complete and Unequivocal Denial**
  - Statement: Sometimes people are shocked to find themselves associated with a death.
  - Invitation: Tell me everything you can think of that explains how your name became connected to this.
  - SPECTAR focus: Events prior to death, last contact timeline, relationship history, motive indicators.
- **Defense Argument: Accidental Death**
  - Statement: Some deaths occur during unexpected accidents.



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- Invitation: Walk me step by step through what happened from the beginning.
- SPECTAR focus: Sequence mechanics, object involvement, force application, timeline of collapse.
- **Defense Argument: Self-Defense**
  - Statement: People sometimes use force because they believe they are about to be harmed.
  - Invitation: Describe what you believed was about to happen that caused you to act.
  - SPECTAR focus: Threat indicators, weapon access, injury comparison, proportionality.
- **Defense Argument: Third-Party Responsibility**
  - Statement: In chaotic situations, responsibility is not always clear.
  - Invitation: Who else had contact with the victim during that time frame?
  - SPECTAR focus: Access mapping, last-seen timeline, digital contacts, surveillance.
- **Defense Argument: Alibi**
  - Statement: Timelines either align with records or they do not.
  - Invitation: Walk me through your exact movements during the hours before and after the death.
  - SPECTAR focus: GPS data, phone pings, receipts, witnesses, cameras.
- **Defense Argument: No Intent to Kill**
  - Statement: Sometimes actions have consequences beyond what someone intended.
  - Invitation: Describe what you intended to happen at that moment.
  - SPECTAR focus: Force level, weapon selection, escalation pattern.
- **Defense Argument: Heat of Passion**
  - Statement: Strong emotion can narrow perception and decision-making.
  - Invitation: Describe what you were feeling immediately before the fatal event.
  - SPECTAR focus: Triggering event, argument sequence, prior threats.
- **Defense Argument: Victim Was Aggressor**
  - Statement: In violent encounters, each side often tells a different story about who started it.
  - Invitation: Tell me exactly what the victim did first.
  - SPECTAR focus: Sequence, distance, positioning, defensive wounds.
- **Defense Argument: Weapon Discharged Accidentally**
  - Statement: Firearms and other weapons sometimes discharge unexpectedly.
  - Invitation: Walk me through how the weapon was being handled just before it discharged.
  - SPECTAR focus: Grip, safety status, trigger discipline, trajectory.
- **Defense Argument: Suicide**
  - Statement: Some deaths initially appear suspicious but are self-inflicted.
  - Invitation: Describe the victim's mental and emotional state in the days leading up to this.
  - SPECTAR focus: Behavioral history, communications, scene staging indicators.



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- **Defense Argument: Drug Overdose Without Intent**
  - Statement: Substance use can have unpredictable outcomes.
  - Invitation: Describe what substances were present and how they were used.
  - SPECTAR focus: Access, dosage, timing, procurement records.
- **Defense Argument: Mistaken Identity**
  - Statement: In stressful situations, people sometimes misidentify individuals.
  - Invitation: Who else was present or nearby during that time?
  - SPECTAR focus: Witness vantage points, lighting, surveillance.
- **Defense Argument: No Opportunity**
  - Statement: Opportunity depends on time, access, and proximity.
  - Invitation: Describe every interaction you had with the victim in the 24 hours before death.
  - SPECTAR focus: Timeline compression, last known alive sequence.
- **Defense Argument: Body Was Discovered After the Fact**
  - Statement: Discovering a body can be disorienting.
  - Invitation: Describe exactly what you saw and what you did upon discovery.
  - SPECTAR focus: Scene disturbance, 911 timing, movement of objects.
- **Defense Argument: Injuries Were Pre-Existing**
  - Statement: Not all injuries occur at the moment of death.
  - Invitation: Describe any prior injuries or medical issues the victim had.
  - SPECTAR focus: Autopsy comparison, healing stages.
- **Defense Argument: Coerced Confession**
  - Statement: High-stress interviews can feel overwhelming.
  - Invitation: Tell me what parts of your prior statement you believe were inaccurate.
  - SPECTAR focus: Compare versions, identify narrative drift.
- **Defense Argument: Good Character, No Violent History**
  - Statement: People often describe themselves by their past behavior patterns.
  - Invitation: How would others describe your temperament during conflict?
  - SPECTAR focus: Prior calls for service, threats, digital hostility.
- **Defense Argument: Mental Health Impairment**
  - Statement: Mental health can influence perception and judgment.
  - Invitation: Describe how your mental state influenced your actions that day.
  - SPECTAR focus: Treatment compliance, prior episodes, medication.
- **Defense Argument: Intoxication Impaired Judgment**
  - Statement: Alcohol and drugs can affect awareness and recall.
  - Invitation: What parts of that evening are clear to you, and what parts are not?
  - SPECTAR focus: Toxicology, receipts, bar footage.
- **Defense Argument: Scene Was Misinterpreted by Investigators**
  - Statement: Scenes can appear different depending on perspective.
  - Invitation: Walk me through the scene as you remember it before law enforcement arrived.
  - SPECTAR focus: Blood patterns, object placement, lighting.
- **Defense Argument: Death Occurred During Mutual Fight**



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- Statement: Physical fights can escalate unpredictably.
- Invitation: Describe the physical exchange from the first contact to the last.
- SPECTAR focus: Escalation, weapon introduction, injury symmetry.
- **Defense Argument: Panic After Accidental Death**
  - Statement: People sometimes panic after something unexpected happens.
  - Invitation: Describe what you did in the minutes immediately after realizing the victim was unresponsive.
  - SPECTAR focus: Delay in reporting, concealment behavior, cleanup indicators.
- **Defense Argument: Financial or Inheritance Motive Alleged but Denied**
  - Statement: Financial disputes sometimes complicate investigations.
  - Invitation: Describe the status of any financial matters between you and the victim.
  - SPECTAR focus: Insurance policies, debts, recent disputes.
- **Defense Argument: Relationship Conflict but No Violence**
  - Statement: Many relationships involve arguments without fatal outcomes.
  - Invitation: Describe the most recent argument prior to the death.
  - SPECTAR focus: Threat language, escalation pattern.
- **Defense Argument: Defensive Force Went Too Far**
  - Statement: In rapidly evolving situations, people sometimes misjudge force.
  - Invitation: Describe how you determined when to stop using force.
  - SPECTAR focus: Injury severity, number of blows, duration.

### ELICITATION EXAMPLES (GENERAL):

- *Responsibility Evasion*
  - Statement. – “A lot of people in situations like this feel like events started moving before they could really stop them.”
  - Statement. – “It often feels like once things start, they take on a life of their own.”
  - Statement. – “Most people don’t feel like they were the one steering everything that happened.”
- *Distancing*
  - Statement. – “It sounds like this is something that happened around you more than something you were actively driving.”
  - Statement. – “People often talk about this like they were watching things unfold rather than creating them.”
- *Hedging / Narrative Softening*
  - Statement. – “A lot of people describe what happened in general terms, because the details are harder to pin down.”
  - Statement. – “Most people remember the big picture first, not the exact steps.”
- *Stability and Drift*
  - Statement. – “It usually gets harder to keep all the timelines straight once several people start retelling the same events.”
  - Statement. – “When a lot of people are involved, the story tends to shift a little each time it gets repeated.”



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- *Denial Activation*
  - Statement. – “Most people are surprised by how quickly others decide what kind of person they are after something like this.”
  - Statement. – “It’s frustrating when people hear one version and treat it like it’s the whole truth.”
- *Denial and Impression Management*
  - Statement. – “People usually worry more about how they come across than about the actual situation itself.”
- *Impression Management*
  - Statement. – “It seems like you care a lot about how this reflects on you as a person.”
  - Statement. – “For most people, protecting their reputation becomes just as stressful as dealing with the case itself.”
- *Hero and Victim Role*
  - Statement. – “A lot of people in your position feel like they are the only one who really tried to handle things the right way.”
  - Statement. – “It can feel like you were the one holding things together while everything else was falling apart.”
  - Statement. – “Sometimes it feels like you were trying to do the best you could in a situation that was already broken.”
- *Victim Role Inversion*
  - Statement. – “It sounds like you’ve taken most of the impact from all of this.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people feel like they are the one paying the biggest price here.”
  - Statement. – “It often feels like the consequences hit you harder than anyone else.”
- *Mitigation*
  - Statement. – “Most people in situations like this focus on the parts that were understandable at the time.”
  - Statement. – “People usually explain what they were thinking rather than what others assume they were doing.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people try to make sense of why their choices felt reasonable in the moment.”
- *Minimization*
  - Statement. – “Some people would probably see this as much smaller than how it has been described.”
  - Statement. – “It probably feels like the situation has grown far beyond what actually happened.”
  - Statement. – “Most people are surprised by how serious others make something like this sound.”
- *Rationalization*
  - Statement. – “A lot of people can explain their decisions in a way that makes sense when you understand their situation.”



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- Statement. – “Most people feel there were practical reasons behind the choices they made.”
- *Justification*
  - Statement. – “It often feels like what you did was reasonable given what you were dealing with at the time.”
  - Statement. – “People usually believe they acted in a way that fit the circumstances.”
- *Blame-Shifting*
  - Statement. – “Usually when something reaches this point, more than one person played a role in how it unfolded.”
  - Statement. – “It’s common for people to feel that others could have handled things very differently.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of situations like this only escalate because someone else makes the wrong move.”
- *Victim Denigration*
  - Statement. – “It’s hard when people don’t really understand the other person’s behavior in situations like this.”
  - Statement. – “Most people feel the other person’s actions don’t get examined very closely.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people feel the focus stays on them instead of on what the other person was doing.”
- *Victim Initiation / Provocation Framing*
  - Statement. – “Many people feel the situation really started earlier than what is being talked about now.”
  - Statement. – “It often feels like something set this in motion long before the incident everyone focuses on.”
  - Statement. – “Most people describe a buildup that others never really see.”
- *Revenge and Grievance Motive*
  - Statement. – “It can feel like someone wanted to hurt you back more than they wanted the truth.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people believe this turned into something personal for someone else.”
  - Statement. – “Sometimes it feels less about what happened and more about settling something.”
- *Posturing and Framing*
  - Statement. – “The way this is being described publicly probably feels very different from how you experienced it.”
  - Statement. – “It seems like the wording people use changes how serious everything sounds.”
  - Statement. – “How this is framed probably matters more than most people realize.”
- *Evasiveness / Process Avoidance*
  - Statement. – “Most people talk about outcomes first, not the steps in between.”



# ICBI Worksheet

## Homicide-Specific

- Statement. – “It’s usually easier to describe what it ended up looking like than how it actually unfolded.”
- Statement. – “People often skip over the middle part of the story.”
- *Psychological Distance*
  - Statement. – “It sounds like you’ve had to separate yourself from a lot of this just to get through it.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people talk about this in a very detached way once it’s over.”
  - Statement. – “It’s common to describe things almost like they happened to someone else.”
- *Boundary Reframing*
  - Statement. – “People often describe the boundaries in situations like this as more complicated than outsiders realize.”
- *Consent Ambiguity Framing*
  - Statement. – “A lot of people say what was understood between two people gets oversimplified later.”
- *Escalation Framing*
  - Statement. – “Most violent or sexual situations people talk about don’t start at the point everyone focuses on.”
  - Statement. – “There is usually a long lead-up that never makes it into the reports.”
- *Relationship Reframing*
  - Statement. – “People usually feel the relationship itself gets misunderstood once everything is reduced to an incident.”
- *Authority and System Blame*
  - Statement. – “It’s frustrating when professionals step in after the fact and think they understand everything.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people feel the system already has its own story before they ever speak.”
- *Control Versus Chaos Framing*
  - Statement. – “It sounds like a lot of what happened was shaped by circumstances more than by deliberate choices.”
  - Statement. – “Most people describe the situation as messy rather than intentional.”
- *Identity Protection*
  - Statement. – “It seems important to you that people understand who you really are, not just what they heard.”
  - Statement. – “A lot of people worry that one situation ends up defining their entire life.”

### One operational warning that matters in your environment.

Several of these statements embed psychological direction on purpose. You should only deploy them after the subject has already produced an unprompted baseline narrative. Otherwise you will pollute your own movement analysis.



# ICBI Worksheet

Homicide-Specific

The tactical rule for your system. - Use one elicitation statement. Then go silent. Then move immediately into clean follow-up questions only after the offender has committed language to the record.

## CLOSING WITHOUT CONFRONTATION

- When someone reflects on a fatal event, there is often something they wish had been handled differently. Is there anything you would handle differently now?
- Most people can step outside themselves and consider how events appear to others. How do you think this looks from an outside perspective?
- Small decisions during conflict can accumulate quickly. What decisions of yours during that period stand out to you now?
- Looking back at the pattern of your relationship with [victim], what do you think escalated over time?