Law Enforcement Interview Guide

Preparatory Steps

1. Walk potential participant through the consent form

2. If approval obtained for recording, make sure to state the participant ID#, date, location, and type of interview on the recording before beginning the interview.

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Background/Setting the Stage (10 minutes)

Thank you for your willingness to sit down with me for an interview. To give you a sense of what we will be discussing today, I am interested in learning about how you think about personal data and identity theft in your work, your experiences working with people who report being victims of identity theft, and the policies or practices that guide you in that process. My approach is relatively open-ended. There are no right answers. I am most interested in hearing stories about your experiences. Also, remember that if you feel uncomfortable with a question for any reason you can choose not to answer it or you can ask to end the interview. Before diving into questions about data and identity theft, I'd like to know a little bit more about you and your background.

1. When and how did you come to work for [*insert organization name*]?

2. Can you describe for me a typical day there for you?

3. What are the most rewarding parts of your job?

4. What are the most frustrating parts?

Now I'd like to move to talking specifically about personal data and identity theft.

5. How do you define identity theft in the context of your work?

To clarify, when I refer to identity theft throughout the rest of the interview, I am most interested in financial identity theft, where someone uses someone else's personal data without their permission for financial gain.

6. How does identity theft come into play in your work?
    a. Can you share with me a recent example?

Detection (5-10 minutes)

7. How, if at all, do you or other people in the department proactively identify potential cases of identity theft?
    a. What systems, if any, are in place to detect identity theft?
    b. What tools or resources do you or others employ? *[Prompt regarding technologies/algorithms]*
    c. What sources of data do you or others draw on?
    d. What laws come into play?

8. Can you share with me a recent example of how you or others you worked with were involved in detecting identity theft?

Resolution (20-30 minutes)

9. Can you walk me through the steps you take when someone reaches out to the department claiming to be a victim of identity theft?
    a. What potential issues do you consider?
        i. How do you decide if they are telling the truth?
    b. Do you have any personal techniques or skills you draw on?
    c. What kind of evidence, if any, do you look for in making a decision?
    d. What tools or resources do you employ? *[Prompt regarding technologies/algorithms]*
    e. What sources of data do you draw on?
    f. What parties do you interact with?
    g. What laws come into play?
    h. What steps do you expect the individual to take?
    i. What steps do you and others in the department at [*insert organization name*] take?

10. How do you distinguish between cases of identity theft and other instances of inaccurate personal data?

11. Many organizations, like including some banks and credit bureaus, require a copy of a police report before they will work with a victim. What do you think about that?

12. I have heard that sometimes victims have a difficult time getting police reports to document their case. What is your sense of this?
    [Probe regarding knowledge of laws]
    [Probe regarding impact on crime statistics]
    [Probe regarding additional paperwork]

13. Victims are able to obtain an affidavit from the FTC that serves as a substitute for getting a police report from a local precinct. What do you think about this?
    a. Is it helpful? Harmful?

14. Describe for me what happens once you have determined that identity theft has taken place.
    a. What goals do you and others you work with typically have in mind?
    b. What tools or resources do you employ? *[Prompt regarding technologies/algorithms]*
    c. What sources of data do you draw on?
    d. What parties do you interact with?
    e. What laws come into play?
    f. What steps do you expect the individual to take?
    g. What steps do you and others at [*insert organization name*] take?

15. Tell me about a recent case of identity theft that you were involved in resolving that you found to be particularly simple or straightforward.

16. Tell me about a recent case that you found to be particularly difficult or complex.

17. So that I can better understand the context of everything you've told me so far, what, if anything, do you think was unique about resolving identity theft in [*location of department*] more broadly that might distinguish your experience from people in police departments elsewhere? [*Probe about local or state laws*]

Consequences (10-15 minutes)

18. In your work, what consequences do you see arising from identity theft?
    [Probe about financial and material consequences]
    [Probe about emotional consequences]
    [Probe about legal consequences]
    [Probe about health consequences]
    [Probe about individual, organizational, and societal consequences]

19. How, if at all, does identity theft impact the way [*insert organization name*] interacts with individuals after their case is resolved?
    a. Can the department see which individuals they are serving or interacting with have experienced identity theft?
    b. How, if at all, do you or others in the department take this information into account?
    c. Does it affect how they treat future reports or claims by the individual?

Broader Implications (10-15 minutes)

20. What do you think of the expectations placed on individuals for resolving identity theft?
    a. Are they excessive? Minimal?
    b. Should more or less be expected of them? Why?

21. What roles or responsibilities, if any, do you think businesses or government should take with regards to resolving specific cases of identity theft?

22. What is your impression of the current state of regulation regarding identity theft?

23. Businesses, policymakers, and the media often focus on educating consumers so that they can be responsible for their personal data. To what degree do you think people should be responsible for the data associated with them, and why?

24. If you could give someone one piece of advice about identity theft, what would it be, and why?

25. If you could change one thing about how the system for resolving identity theft works, what would it be, and why?

Final Statement (5 minutes)
Thank you so much for your time. This has been extremely helpful. My main goals for this interview were to understand:

- How you define and think about personal data and identity theft in your work.
- How you and [*insert organization name*] evaluate and resolve possible cases of identity theft.
- What you perceive as the potential impacts of identity theft on those who experience it.
- Your thoughts on how to improve the systems in place for helping victims overcome identity theft.

Is there anything I should have asked you in relationship to these four themes or anything else that I didn't cover that you think is important for me to know?

Finally, can you think of someone else who works or has worked in an area related to identity theft resolution that you think I could benefit from talking to?

Likewise, if you have any questions or if you think of anything else you would like to share with me, don't hesitate to reach out to me:

[*Give them business card*]

Thank you so much!