

This analysis is from the transcript of Bob Costas' interview with Jerry Sandusky, accused of sexual assault on children at Penn State University. We have no preconceived idea going into the analysis that Sandusky is deceptive. In fact, the analyst begins the analysis with a presumption of truthfulness. **The analysis results can be viewed by scrolling to pages 4-9**

1 BC: Mr. Sandusky, there's a 40-count indictment. The grand jury report contains specific  
2 detail. There are multiple accusers, multiple eyewitnesses to various aspects of the abuse.  
3 A reasonable person says where there's this much smoke, there must be plenty of fire.  
4 What do you say?

5 JS: I say that I am innocent of those charges.

6 BC: Innocent? Completely innocent and falsely accused in every aspect?

7 JS: Well I could say that, you know, I have done some of those things. I have horsed  
8 around with kids. I have showered after workouts. I have hugged them and I have touched  
9 their leg. Without intent of sexual contact. But -- so if you look at it that way - there are  
10 things that wouldn't -- you know, would be accurate.

11 BC: Are you denying that you had any inappropriate sexual contact with any of these  
12 underage boys?

13 JS: Yes, I -- yes I am.

14 BC: Never touched their genitals? Never engaged in oral sex?

15 JS: Right.

16 BC: What about Mike McQueary, the grad assistant who in 2002 walked into the shower  
17 where he says in specific detail that you were forcibly raping a boy who appeared to be 10  
18 or 11 years old? That his hands were up against the shower wall and he heard rhythmic  
19 slap, slap, slapping sounds and he described that as a rape?

20 JS: I would say that that's false.

21 BC: What would be his motive to lie?

22 JS: You'd have to ask him that.

23 BC: What did happen in the shower the night that Mike McQueary happened upon you and  
24 the young boy?

25 JS: Okay, we -- we were showering and -- and horsing around. And he actually turned all  
26 the showers on and was -- actually sliding -- across the -- the floor. And we were -- as I  
27 recall possibly like snapping a towel, horseplay.

Abandoned-  
thought  
Abandoned-  
thought  
Conditional "but"  
says there is a  
sexual element

Able to deny b/c  
to him it's not  
inappropriate?

What are the  
"things"?

Weak denial

Not credible

28 BC: In 1998, a mother confronts you about taking a shower with her son and  
29 inappropriately touching him. Two detectives eavesdrop on a conversation with you, and  
30 you admit that maybe your private parts touched her son. What happened there?

31 JS: I can't exactly recall what was said there. In terms of -- what I did say was that if he felt  
32 that way, then I was wrong,

33 BC: During one of those conversations, you said, "I understand, I was wrong, I wish I could  
34 get forgiveness," speaking now with the mother. "I know I won't get it from you. I wish I were  
35 dead." A guy falsely accused or a guy whose actions have been misinterpreted doesn't  
36 respond that way, does he?

37 JS: I don't know. I didn't say, to my recollection that I wish I were dead. I was hopeful that  
38 we could reconcile things.

39 BC: Shortly after that in 2000, a janitor said that he saw you performing oral sex on a  
40 young boy in the showers, in the Penn State locker facility. Did that happen?

41 JS: No.

42 BC: How could somebody think they saw something as extreme and shocking as that when  
43 it hadn't occurred, and what would possibly be their motivation to fabricate it?

44 JS: You'd have to ask them.

45 BC: It seems that if all of these accusations are false, you are the unluckiest and most  
46 persecuted man that any of us has ever heard about.

47 JS: (Laughs) I don't know what you want me to say. I don't think that these have been the  
48 best days of my life.

49 BC: To your knowledge did Joe Paterno at any time ever speak to you directly about your  
50 behavior?

51 JS: No.

52 BC: Never?

53 JS: No.

54 BC: He never asked you about what you might have done? He never asked you if you  
55 needed help? If you needed counseling?

56 JS: No. No.

Passive  
Abandoned-  
thought

Can't agree  
w/BC. No  
affirmation

57 BC: Never? Never expressed disapproval of any kind?

58 JS: No.

59 BC: How do you feel about what has happened to Penn State to Joe Paterno, and to the  
60 Penn State football program and your part in it?

61 JS: How would you think that I would feel about a university that I attended, about people  
62 that I've worked with, about people that I care so much about? And I mean how do you  
63 think I would feel about it? I feel horrible.

64 BC: You feel horrible. Do you feel culpable?

65 JS: I'm not sure I know what you mean.

66 BC: Do you feel guilty? Do you feel as if it's your fault?

67 JS: Guilty?

68 BC: This is your fault?

69 JS: No I don't think it's my fault. I've obviously played a part in this.

70 BC: How would you define the part you played? What are you willing to concede that  
71 you've done that was wrong and you wish you had not done it?

72 JS: Well, in retrospect, I -- you know, I shouldn't have showered with those kids. You know

73 BC: That's it?

74 JS: Well that -- yeah, that's what hits me the most.

75 BC: Are you a pedophile?

76 JS: No.

77 BC: Are you sexually attracted to young boys, to underage boys?

78 JS: Am I sexually attracted to underage boys?

79 BC: Yes.

80 JS: Sexually attracted, you know, I enjoy young people. I love to be around them. But no  
81 I'm not sexually attracted to young boys.

Respond w/?

Changed language; defined

Avoids issue of guilt; responded to issue of fault

Respond w/?

There's more

Firm denial

Ignored issue of "young" boys; Resists answer to "underage" boys

82 BC: Obviously you're entitled to a presumption of innocence and you'll receive a vigorous  
83 defense. On the other hand, there is a tremendous amount of information out there and fair-  
84 minded common sense people have concluded that you are guilty of monstrous acts. And  
85 they are particularly unforgiving with the type of crimes that have been alleged here. And so  
86 millions of Americans who didn't know JS's name until a week ago now regard you not only  
87 as a criminal, but I say this I think in a considered way, but as some sort of monster. How  
88 do you respond to them?

89 JS: And I don't know what I can say or what I could say that would make anybody feel any  
90 different now. I would just say that if somehow people could hang out until my attorney has  
91 a chance to fight, you know, for my innocence. That's about all I could ask right now. And  
92 you know, obviously, it's a huge challenge.

**Below are the observations and conclusions based on the analysis findings above.**

### **Validity Assessments**

1. Responsibility	Fail
2. Pronouns	Pass
3. Terminology	Fail
4. BDA ratios	N/A
5. Perceived time	N/A

**The statement failed 2 of 3 applicable assessments and should be viewed with caution, as DECEPTIVE.**

### **Main Points and Significant Observations**

1. Line 5, "*I say I am innocent of those charges*". "*Innocent*" is a subjective legal standard and is NOT the same as if the subject had claimed, "*I didn't do it*" which is considered a firm denial and would have lent it credibility. Sandusky claiming he is innocent is saying, "*You can't prove it in a court of law*" and has nothing to do with whether he did it or not. This is a common occurrence of a deceptive thought process.

Sandusky also said "*...I am innocent of those charges*". This suggests there may be other things he is aware of that he is not innocent of that the grand jury has not addressed.

2. Sandusky used a classic deceptive strategy by "playing the semantics game". Language analysts know there are no such things as synonyms; two words with the same meaning. Words may seem on the surface to mean the same thing, but are always subject to interpretation. There is always a more detailed, personal definition that is unique to every person and situation. A person thinking deceptively takes advantage of this to sell their deception by using a term that fits their need while creating a different, false impression to the listener.

In other words, “boy” is a gender- specific, sex-based reference. “Kid” is a generic, non-sexual, non-gender reference. In line 8 when Costas referred to the “young boys” or “underage boys”, he was referring to them by their sexual identity. To avoid creating the perception that he viewed them sexually also, Sandusky’s subconscious changed the language to “kids”, the generic term. In other words, if in his mind he relates to a specific situation when he was not interacting with them sexually, he can tell his truth and still mislead the listener. The language change is the clue this has happened.

It happened again in line 80. When Costas used these same terms, Sandusky changed them to “young people”. He offered a “technical truth”. Sandusky allows Costas to believe they are talking about the same thing, but they’re not. Costas is talking apples; Sandusky oranges.

However, in lines 77 – 81, Costas put Sandusky in a difficult situation when he used both terms. Even Costas, without knowing it, has different personal definitions of what “young boys” are and what “underage boys” are. That’s why he included both. Sandusky’s mind knows it has to address both otherwise it creates feelings of suspicion by Costas.

BC: Are you sexually attracted to **young boys**, to **underage boys**?

JS: Am I sexually attracted to **underage boys**?

BC: Yes.

JS: Sexually attracted, you know, I **enjoy** **young people**. I **love** to be around them. But no **I’m not sexually attracted to** **young boys**.

He disregarded Costas’ reference to “young boys” because in his mind he knows “young boys” are not the issue. In fact, in his next comment he “truthfully” denied sexual attraction because by his personal definition, he really isn’t attracted to to “young boys”.

But when it comes to the issue of “underage boys” he shows significant resistance, and stress by answering the question with a question, a common and strong sign of deception. In his mind, “underage boys” are the critical issue (according to whatever his personal definition of them is) and he avoided deny it. Without realizing it, Costas revealed Sandusky’s secret language:

Kids = No sex; “horsing around”; Offered a denial

Young Boys = Not strongly sexual; Offered a denial

Young People = Not sexual; Enjoys being around them

**Underage Boys = Sex; Resistance to answer, Stress, No denial**

**For an interviewer to have success at getting Sandusky’s confession, one MUST adopt his language and use the reference “underage boys” when they are talking about the victims.** If he tries to change the language, the interviewer must “force” him back.

3. "... and I have touched their leg. Without intent of sexual contact. But -- so if you look at it that way - there are things that wouldn't -- you know, would be accurate.

The word "but" always identifies a condition or an exception. When Sandusky used "but" he tells us that even though he did not have the *intent* to touch them with sexual content (consistent with "kids" used here), there was an exception and it likely turned to that.

Also note that Sandusky withheld information he was going to offer, revealed when he used "but" and "wouldn't". Those were the beginnings of comments that Sandusky, at that moment, decided not tell, abandoned it and changed it to something else. The original thoughts and information still exists but he is concealing it. Deception is strongly suspected at these points.

In lines 10, 20, and 63 Sandusky uses "would" in a context that requires commitment. The word "would" is not a firm commitment or denial and represents information that is not reliable and lacks credibility. To say, "I would not steal the money" is not remotely as committed as "I did not steal the money".

4. When he said in line 20 when he was asked to respond to the witness' claim that Sandusky was raping a 10 year old boy in the shower, he said, "I would say that is false". A firmly committed, truthful response is required and expected from a truthful person such as "That is not true" or "That is false". Remember, "would" always has a condition or exception associated with it. Sandusky is, without knowing it, saying, "I would say that is false, but I can't".

In line 63 when Costas asked him about how he felt about the impact of the situation on others, "How do you feel...?", Sandusky responded with "How would you think that I feel...". His response is contingent on what Costas' expectation is. In other words, he is saying he wants to respond with an answer that Costas will accept and understand, not necessarily the truthful one.

5. Costas let deception enter in the conversation by allowing Sandusky to "truthfully" deny when he asked, "Are you denying that you had any inappropriate sexual contact with any of these underage boys?"

First, if Sandusky is a pedophile, he may not feel that what he did was inappropriate. This allows him to be truthful in his denial. Secondly, "sexual contact" is a subjective term and may not have the same meaning to Sandusky as it does to Costas. Sandusky knows this and can, by his personal definition of the phrase, truthfully deny. This is the same concept that occurred with Bill Clinton's denial:

"I did not have sexual relations with that woman, Ms. Lewinski".

But we know now that this is "true" based on his definition of "sexual relations" not including the act of oral sex but is still intended to mislead the listener, making it a "truthful but deceptive comment". Sandusky is attempting the same strategy: *He's giving truthful information based on his personal definitions.*

The key to defeating this strategy is to 1) avoid specific questions, 2) avoid subjective terms that need interpretation, and 3) to adopt the subject's personal language and use it.

6. Lines 25 – 27:

JS: *Okay, we -- we were showering and -- and horsing around. And he actually turned all the showers on and was -- actually sliding -- across the -- the floor. And we were -- as I recall possibly like snapping a towel, horseplay.*

There are significant language occurrences in this piece of information. To understand them, we have to look at how we should expect Sandusky to have described this and compare:

*"We were showering and horsing around and he turned all the showers on and was sliding across the floor. As I recall I was possibly snapping a towel, horseplay".*

By comparing Sandusky's comments with this, we see some deviation from the expected. Sandusky used the word "actually" twice to describe actions when it was not necessary. "Actually" has the significance of identifying information that is a misrepresentation of the facts.

He also described an action "like snapping a towel"; similar but different. Sandusky using "like" tells us that what he was doing was not snapping a towel. In this case any similarity lies in the repeated slapping sounds described by the witness.

Also, the memory reference "as I recall" (which is not necessary to include) tells us that Sandusky is likely not deriving information from memory (truth) but is drawing from other sources (deceptive).

7. Regarding Sandusky's feelings about Penn State, Paterno, and PSU football:

BC: *How do you feel about what has happened to Penn State to Joe Paterno, and to the Penn State football program and your part in it?*

JS: *How would you think that I would feel about a university that I attended, about people that I've worked with, about people that I care so much about?*

Bob Costas used certain word choices to describe these things and people. Sandusky changed the language to suit himself and in the process, offered insight into how he views these things:

*Penn State: A university he attended.* There is a noticeable lack of closeness and emotion attached to this description and is seemingly indifferent to the institution. He mentioned nothing of coaching there, just his student experience.

*Joe Paterno: People he has worked with.* Sandusky referred to Paterno as "people" which is a way of depersonalizing him. It may suggest that their relationship was conflicted to a certain extent. In fact, he does not even describe any kind of personal relationship or connection. He

equates Paterno to work. He even said Paterno was someone “...*he has worked with*” (in the past) as opposed to “...*I work with*” (currently). This suggests there used to be a working relationship there, but not anymore (This could be the result of his current legal status).

*Penn State Football Program: People he cares so much about.* Here we see a distinct perception change on the part of Sandusky when he described the program with emotion and closeness. This is what means the most to him.

8. Regarding his view of his role in the situation:

*BC: Do you feel guilty? Do you feel as if it's your fault?*

*JS: Guilty?*

*BC: This is your fault?*

*JS: No I don't think it's my fault.*

Notice that Costas gave Sandusky two issues to deal with: Guilt and Fault. Sandusky chose to disregard the first-mentioned issue of fault (because he denies fault because it's not an issue for him) and address the guilt issue with sensitivity, resistance and deception by answering the question with a question. Costas detects the resistance and rewords it for him by bringing him back to the issue of fault.

Sandusky offers an easy denial for fault, but avoids the issue of guilt. It is common that such people will point the finger at others, rationalize and otherwise deny responsibility for fault. But regardless of why, if he did it, that equates to guilt and he will know that.

9. Lines 45 – 48 *BC: It seems that if all of these accusations are false, you are the unluckiest and most persecuted man that any of us has ever heard about.*

*JS: (Laughs) I don't know what you want me to say. I don't think that these have been the best days of my life.*

Costas gave Sandusky the opportunity to agree that the accusations are false and that he has been unjustly persecuted because of it, but Sandusky cannot bring himself to agree. In fact, he was at a loss for words: “*I don't know what you want me to say*”. We can be confident that Costas wants him to say either, “*You're absolutely right! The accusations are false!*” or “*No, you're wrong, the accusations are true*”. His conscious mind won't let him agree but his subconscious won't let him deny.

**Conclusion:** Sandusky is deceptive. What he offered is a technical truth by his standards, but is intentionally deceptive. He was trying to create an impression in the listener's eyes that is not accurate, but trying to stay within his technical truth to relieve himself of negative emotions and allow him to rationalize his actions and feelings.

Analyzing transcripts like this one are a challenge because the language and content of the subject's comments are influenced by the interviewer. Much of the content of the interview is “yes” and “no” answers which leaves nothing to be analyzed. Getting the original thoughts and

information generated from the subject's mind is what is most desirable. However, if the subject is intending to be deceptive, it will still be able to be detected.