A. Construction of The Wicklander-Zulawski Method 
(The W-Z Method)

1. Verify suspect’s personal background to establish behavioral norm

   “Are you still living at...?”

2. Develop Rapport

   “I’m going to be telling you a lot about who I am and what I do but before I do, tell me a little about yourself.”

3. Who we are and what we do

4. Types of losses

5. How investigations are conducted

6. Summary of possible rationalizations
   Short discussion of why mistakes are made.
   Impulse, Accidents, Peer Pressure, Financial.
   “You know there are a lot of reasons why people make mistakes. Sometimes...”

7. First Rationalization

   a) **Choose the first rationalization** based either on the background of the subject or behavior observed during the summary.

   b) **State Rationalization** i.e. Peer Pressure,
      “For example, we’ve all had times in our life where peer pressure has influenced us, and we did things we didn’t really want to do.”

   c) **Create a story** or illustration that helps the subject understand peer pressure.
      “I remember one time that...”

   d) **State moral of story**
      “So everyone can be influenced by friends. That’s a lot different than someone who takes a job with the intention of taking things.”

   e) **Link back to the investigation**
      “That’s why we sit down to talk to someone after an investigation, to find out the reasons why.”
8. Change the subject’s perspective

“Let’s say you owned your own company and you had two employees...”

9. Second Rationalization

a) Choose the second rationalization based on the subject’s background or behavior observed during the summary. If personal information is known about the subject that may relate to the reason for the theft, a rationalization that mirrors their personal situation should be used. This rationalization may be the same topic as the one just used.

b) State rationalization i.e., Financial

“For example, we’ve all had times in our life where our money doesn’t go as far as we would like it to go.”

c) Create a story or illustration that helps the subject to understand financial pressure.

d) State moral of story

“If someone takes money to pay for bills or to take care of their family, that’s a lot different than someone who is taking it to go out and buy drugs.”

e) Link to investigation

“The investigation is very clear as to what happened: we just need to understand why things happened.”

10. Address the subject’s hope or their mental state

“Sometimes a person thinks that by saying nothing, the problem will go away and nothing will happen. That’s why we do the investigation up front so the company can still resolve the situation even if the individual decides to say nothing.”

11. Create Urgency

“That’s why it’s important that a person understand that they have the ability to influence the decision making process. That’s why we need to get this resolved today!”
12. Protect Evidence
“Now I know sometimes people wonder why we don’t just show them what we have. I don’t do that for a very specific reason. When I walk out of here I am going to be asked ‘What kind of person is he?’ The only way I know is if you tell me things that I already knew without being prompted.”

13. Test for submission
“The problem is we don’t know what problems you may be facing outside of work.”

14. Assumptive question
Used only if the Interrogator believes the subject is ready to make an admission.
“Bob what’s the most amount of money you took in any single day?”

15. Follow Up Question
Used when the subject gives admission behavior before answering the Assumptive Question.
“It wasn’t $100,000.00, was it?”

16. Support Admission
Lets the subject know he has confessed and supports the admission.
“That’s great. From the investigation I didn’t think it was quite that much. What’s the most you took in any day? Could it have been as much as $9,000.00?”

17. Develop admission
Answering the investigative questions of “who, what, when, where, how and why.”

18. Written Statement
Letter of explanation
B. Sample Wicklander-Zulawski Method

The following pages contain a sample of the Wicklander-Zulawski Method which will provide a structure for those first using the technique. Each interviewer will ultimately individualize the introduction to their own style, however, the purpose of the example is to offer the interviewer a firm foundation upon which to build.

Our suggestions to best learn the technique is to follow the following building process outlined below.

1. Read the following pages aloud several times.

2. Read the following pages aloud into a tape player several times.

3. Review the tape and listen to your voice and word emphasis.

4. Use an outline of the Wicklander-Zulawski Method using headings for the key parts and important phrases.

5. Repeat the Wicklander-Zulawski Method, using only the outline, into the tape player several times and review it.

6. Practice using the outline in a role-play situation using a friend or co-worker.

7. Discuss the content and flow with your friend or co-worker.

8. Practice the soft accusation with a friend or co-worker to develop proper timing for the follow-up question and support the admission.

9. Try the Wicklander-Zulawski Method in a "field" interview when the subject's guilt is certain.
THE WICKLANDER-ZULAWSKI METHOD

Part 1- Establish Behavioral Norm

“Hello, Bob. My name is Shane Sturman. I just need to go over a few things with you. What is the correct spelling of your last name? What is your current address? Your social security number is 555-22-4444? What is your date of hire? Your date of birth is 3/21/75 and your position with the company is P. M. Manager?”

Verify the subject’s background to establish a behavioral norm and let them know you have done a thorough investigation.

Part 2- Develop Rapport

“Bob, I’m going to be telling you a lot about who I am and what I do, but before I do, why don’t you tell me a little about yourself.”

This will allow the interviewer to develop rapport with subjects. Offering subjects a chance to talk about themselves establishes rapport and allows the interviewer to obtain information about which rationalizations might be effective.

Part 3- Who We Are And What We Do

“Like I said, my name is Shane Sturman. I’m with the Loss Prevention Department here at the company. My job is to protect the company’s assets. These assets include the building, the fixtures, the merchandise, the money and the most important asset is the employees who work here.

Like all companies, we have losses and we know these losses come in a variety of different ways. Sometimes it’s employee error where someone in Receiving writes down that they received five boxes, but really only got three. Two boxes are missing but nobody took them, it’s just a paperwork error. Sometimes a customer will come in and take something and leave without paying for it. It’s also employees taking things (pause). The major concern of the company is those employees that would be taking trailer loads of merchandise or tens of thousands of dollars, rather than something of a minor nature.”

Part 4- How Losses Occur

“As I said, employees sometimes take things. There are many ways an employee could take money and merchandise from the company. They could take money by just taking it out of the register or from another employee’s register. They could make up a phony void, (pause and eye contact) or a phony refund. They could take money from a customer short changing them or from another employee. They could take money from lost and found or take it out of the safe.”
The interviewer should pause and make direct eye contact after the explanation, which he/she believes is most likely the method the subject is using to steal. The manner of theft that the subject is involved in should be positioned in the middle of the examples given.

“There are also a lot of ways employees could take merchandise. They could conceal it on their person and leave without paying for it. They could place it in another box and pay a lower price for it. An employee could pass merchandise off to a friend or relative not charging them for it. They could under-ring the merchandise not charging the correct amount. They could also ring all the merchandise up, then void some things out allowing a customer to leave with everything. They could take merchandise out the back door and hide it and come back later that night to get it. They could even take merchandise and later refund it at another store not claiming themselves as an employee. There are a lot of things an employee could do to take money or merchandise.”

Part 5- How Investigations Are Conducted

“When we have losses, we initiate an investigation. I don’t know how familiar you are in the ways in which investigations are conducted, but some of the things we do during an investigation may be using a shopping service in which we have people come in and make controlled purchases from an individual. They will evaluate if correct cash handling procedures are being followed, if the register is being rung properly, if paperwork is filled out or they may even leave a receipt behind to see what happens to it. Is it used later to void a sale or make up a phony refund? They also look at customer service issues, and the general demeanor and courtesy with which the employee is treating the customer.”

Sometimes we use undercover employees who are members of the loss prevention department. They work side by side with other employees to see exactly what’s happening and what’s being said and then report back to us daily. Sometimes we will conduct a surveillance where we conceal ourselves in the area to see what is happening or we might sit outside and see if someone takes merchandise out the back door. We will also see who comes out the front door, what they come out with, if it was rung up, who they come out with or if someone comes back after closing and re-enters the store.

During investigations we may also use video cameras. Now you may have seen cameras in some stores that are in plain view or in a dome. Those are there primarily as a deterrent. I don’t know many employees who would stand right under a camera, wave at it and do something wrong. When we conduct an investigation, we use cameras that cannot be detected by employees. We use cameras that have a pinhole lens the size of the end of this pen. You can put these cameras in a false ceiling or put them in a box in the stock room. If you wanted to you, could video tape any area of the store. Sometimes when we are video taping a register we will also use a register interface, which will overlay the transaction as it is being rung up on the video. Now we can see the customer, the cashier, the merchandise that is being rung up, the price it is rung up at and if items are voided out and the customer is allowed to leave with everything.
There are many other ways in which we get our information and conduct an investigation. These include receiving help from other employees, audits, salting registers, sending out credit and refund letters to determine if the customer actually made the return, to name just a few. The problem with an investigation is as much as it will tell you exactly what is happening and exactly who is responsible. What an investigation doesn’t tell you is the most important thing and that is the reason why.”

This area usually has greater impact on the subject if the interrogator uses examples of investigative techniques which could develop direct, rather than circumstantial evidence, i.e. observation or video tape of theft vs. a pattern that showed the employee present during all the incidents.

Part 6- Summary of Rationalizations

“You know there are a lot of reasons why people make mistakes. It could be peer pressure, where someone has influenced us into doing something we wouldn’t have normally done or where we are trying to help out a friend or relative. Sometimes it’s financial pressures. Our money doesn’t go as far it needs to, so we can pay all the bills or we may have unexpected bills we didn’t count on. Sometimes we just act impulsively and do something without thinking about it.”

As you give a summary of the different reasons people make mistakes, evaluate the subject’s behavior. Often times they will give you behavioral clues as to which rationalization is acceptable to them.

Part 7- First Rationalization

“You know, Bob, I think almost everybody has heard the term peer pressure and understands what it means. There are a lot of situations we’re put into in our lives because of our friends and how they think. We do things that maybe under ordinary circumstances we wouldn’t do. But, because we have our friends, or we have other people who think in a particular way, they tend to force our thinking in a direction that we may not consider as appropriate.

I can give you a perfect example. When I was a kid back in high school, I never smoked, and my friends said, ‘We’re smoking cigarettes, come on and have one.’ I really didn’t want one, but finally I said, ‘Okay’ and I tried one. Today I don’t smoke cigarettes and my parents don’t smoke cigarettes. I was put in a position where everybody was doing it, and it became very difficult for me not to go along with the group.

I think what’s really happening here is just that. When we’re dealing with a situation like this, it’s not the person’s idea, but rather a group idea. You hear ‘We need to keep up with the Jones’, or ‘You gotta wear the right clothes’, (certain types of jeans or jackets or sweaters). They’re popular and if a person doesn’t wear them, then he’s not a good person.
Well, that’s crazy, letting the clothes decide. However, that’s the way people are, especially people who feel that wearing the right clothes or keeping up with the Jones’ is important. If they do that, and if they feel that’s important, then it tends to put pressure on their friends.

There is a big difference between someone that goes out and solicits, rather than having situations brought to them. I think that’s very important to know. In a lot of cases, people or friends of associates will come into the store and say – ‘Listen, give me this at a discount’, or ‘I’m not going to pay for this’, or, you know, ‘Don’t say anything. I’m going to carry this out’.

They really put an individual in an awkward position. They put that person into a position where they either force him not to charge the right amount, or they force him to let them walk, or do something else that under normal circumstances he wouldn’t let anybody do. The key here, I think, is not so much that it’s happened, but rather it’s, did he go out and say to people, ‘It’s okay, come on in, you can take as much as you want’ or did they come to him and say, ‘This is what I’m going to do’, and put an individual on the spot? Because, if that’s what happened, I think it’s important that we understand that. If I thought for a second that he was going out and telling friends, ‘Hey, just come on down, you can take anything when I’m working’, I don’t think I could deal with that, but, I don’t believe that’s the case. In most situations that I deal with, it’s not an associate, but rather those friends coming in and putting them on the spot that causes the biggest problems.”

**Part 8- Changing the Subject Perspective**

“Let’s say you owned your own company and you came in on your day off and saw two of your employees doing something wrong, no ifs, and, or buts about it. You saw it with your own eyes. Both of them have been really good employees and have done a great job for you. Before you make any decisions as to what you are going to do about it, you decide to sit down with them to find out why it happened. You sit down with the first person and he says, ‘You’re crazy, it never happened. I don’t care what you think you saw; it never happened.’ How do you feel about that person when he sat there and looked you in the eye and lied? Let’s say you sit down with the second person and he says ‘I’m really sorry. I know it was wrong.’ Then he walks you through his thought process and the difficulties he was facing at the time that caused him to make the error in judgment. Of the two, which one would you feel better about?”
Part 9- Second Rationalization

“Bob, I think that we set people up for problems simply because of how much they get paid. Probably one of the most difficult things to do, is to work around beautiful items that are real expensive and yet not be paid enough to afford them. Most people make pretty close to minimum wage, I would imagine. The thing is, once a person is around nice things, it’s only natural to want them for himself.

This also happens with friends. I mean, if friends have some money and they’re suddenly wearing fancy jeans that cost $40-$50 a pair, or they’re wearing skirts that may cost $100, you can rest assured they can afford these things. While another person is working hard for the money that he earns, maybe he doesn’t have as much as they do at home. All of a sudden, they’re treating him differently, simply because he doesn’t have the same things they have.

A person wouldn’t be human if he didn’t want them, too. But yet, he’s not making enough to pay for it even though he’s diligently working, doing a good job, but yet, can’t buy those things.

We also expect our employees to look good. I mean, that is the image of the company; the person that the customer sees. Our employee is our representative, and we don’t want him coming in here looking like a slob. We want him to dress nice, look sharp. The company would like the employees to look nice but do we turn around and say, ‘Here’s money for clothes,’ or, ‘Here’s a raise.’ No, we don’t! So we have to recognize that part of the situation is a result of how the company views itself and what it considers important. The thing that I don’t want to see is, somebody put into a position of doing something because of peer pressure, frustration, financial problems, or making an error in judgment that causes them to do something that under normal circumstances they wouldn’t do. I think that’s the key here. A lot of times people do things because they need the money. I think that’s important, because, if there was a need, a legitimate need, that’s something that every one of us can relate to.

We all have bills, whether they’re phones, heating, rent car payment or insurance. We all have things that we have to pay. There are times when we have extra money and there are times when we run short. Sometimes, we’re put in a position where we don’t have an alternative. We do something that maybe we wouldn’t have been raised to do, or we wouldn’t do under normal circumstances at all, however, we’re put into a position where we have a need.

We’re not going out and blowing the money on drugs or booze or good times. We’re using it for the necessities of life, to keep our head above water, and I think that’s important.”
Part 10- Address the Suspect’s Hope

“Sometimes a person thinks that by saying nothing, the problem will go away and nothing will happen. That’s why we do the investigation up front so the company can still resolve the situation even if the individual decides to say nothing.”

Part 11- Create Urgency

“That’s why it’s important that a person understand that they have the ability to influence the company’s decision making process. That’s why we need to get this resolved today.”

Part 12- Protect Evidence

“Now I know sometimes people wonder why we don’t just show them what we have. I don’t do that for a very specific reason. When I walk out of here I am going to be asked ‘What kind of person is he?’ The only way I know is if you tell me things that I already knew without being prompted.”

Part 13- Test For Submission

“Bob the problem is we don’t know what difficulties you may be facing outside work.”

The interviewer should evaluate the subject’s behavior for signs of acceptance while being prepared to handle a possible denial.

“During any investigation, many things are uncovered and known absolutely. But oftentimes, it’s the reason why mistakes are made that doesn’t come out. These things are important to the company to show why things happen and to show also that the employee cares. This is why at the conclusion of every investigation, we sit down with the employee and discuss the results and really assess the attitude of that employee toward the company.”

Part 14- Assumptive Question

Interviewer: “Bob let me ask you this, what’s the most amount of money you took in any single day?”

(If the subject delays or gives admissible behavior, immediately ask a follow up question. If they attempt to deny, stop the denial and return to Part 9.)

Part 15- Follow-up Question

Interviewer: “It wasn’t $1000.00, was it?”

Bob: “Oh, no!”
Part 16- Support the Admission

Interviewer: “That’s great, from the investigation I didn’t think it was quite that much! What’s the most you took in any day? Was it more or less than $900.00?”

Bob: “Less!”

Interviewer: “What would be the most amount of money you took in any one day?”

Bob: “Five dollars.”

Part 17- Develop the Admission

Answer the investigative questions of who, what, when, where, how and why.

What did you need the money for?
When did you take it?
Where did you take it from?
How did you take it?
Who else is taking money?

Part 18- Written Statement

Letter of explanation.

“What we need to do now is get a letter of explanation in your own words so that you have an opportunity to say that you are sorry that this happened. I am sure that you are willing to do that, aren’t you?”