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Resistance Is Futile

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Abstract

Originally published in *Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books*, 2004, Vol 49(5), 521–523. Reviews *The Psychology of Interrogations and Confessions: A Handbook* (see record 2003-04147-000). All in all, it is surprising to see how much can be said about confessions. Of the nearly 700 pages in the book under review, no less than 32 are occupied by the references list, four of which are filled with references to Gudjonsson's work alone. It could be argued that the book provides too much information. Research psychologists may feel that one or two of the many extensive case descriptions of false confessions could have been omitted (see Chapter 18 and subsequent chapters). On the other hand, lawyers may enjoy such descriptions more than they will the reports of methodological issues concerning the measurement of compliance and suggestibility (e.g., Chapter 14). Indeed, the book is very accessible to readers with different educational backgrounds. This accessibility is a major achievement, and a

necessary one, because insight into the development of (false) confessions is important for representatives of various disciplines (e.g., law, psychology, psychiatry, and sociology). In summary, the author has delivered an interdisciplinary handbook, both in content as in accessibility. There is little doubt that the book will spread psychological insights into (false) confessions and that it will generate new scientific research in this area. Once arrived at Chapter 16 (out of 23), few readers will dare to question the reality of false confessions, regardless of how skeptical they might have been before reading this book. The book does not merely spread knowledge, it steamrolls. In that sense, it delivers more than its title promises. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2006 APA, all rights reserved)

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