

THE MAIL

TELLING LIES

Margaret Talbot's article on new technologies in lie detection was thoughtful and well researched ("Duped," July 2nd). As the inventor of brain fingerprinting, I would like to expand on her mention of this technique. Brain fingerprinting detects information stored in the brain, matching the record of a crime stored in the perpetrator's brain to the record of the crime scene. Lying or truth-telling at any point has no effect on the outcome. Talbot states that "researchers have since noted a big drawback: it's impossible to distinguish between . . . actual . . . and imagined memories." This is a well-known factor, and I took it into account when I developed the scientific protocols. In a real-world brain-fingerprinting test, we first find out information about a crime that is known only to investigators and the perpetrator, then confirm in an interview that the suspect denies knowing these details about the crime and has no legitimate way of knowing them. We can then test the subject's brain for this "guilty knowledge." To be useful, of course, brain fingerprinting must be used to detect information regarding actual events, not imaginary ones. But that is what the experimental protocols are designed to do, and they do it quite reliably.

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Talbot, in her discussion of my research on the use of fMRI scans to identify the pattern of brain activity associated with lying, points to a "major flaw" in my studies' design: that increased brain activity could actually be the result "not of deception but of heightened attention." This alleged "flaw" is a known limitation of a common method of asking questions used in lie-detection tests ("the guilty-knowledge test"), which we took painstaking measures to avoid. Furthermore, the "curious" difference between the findings of my and Andrew Kozel's studies is both small and expected from the design differences. In the tangled web of

businessmen, spies, and scientists, neuroscience is not the conspiracy.

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FINLAND'S WAR

Alex Ross draws an interesting portrait of Jean Sibelius and his works ("Apparition in the Woods," July 9th & 16th). However, his statement that Finland went to war against the Soviet Union in 1941 "partly because Fascist elements had infiltrated the government and the Army, and partly because the Nazis would have taken over the country anyway" is misleading. Other than in the early nineteen-thirties, when Fascist elements unsuccessfully challenged our democratic system, Fascism did not play a significant role in Finnish politics. There were never any "Nazi-style race laws" in force in Finland, and the Finnish government's wartime policy of resisting German attempts to inspire anti-Jewish actions in Finland has been publicly appreciated by our Jewish communities. For Finland, the Continuation War of 1941-44, as it is called in our history, had its roots in the Winter War. After having attacked Finland in 1939, the Soviet Union acquired, in the Moscow Peace Treaty, important parts of Finnish territory and the right to establish a military base near Helsinki; the annexation of the Baltic countries, in the summer of 1940, demonstrated the expansive nature of the Soviet policies and left the area vulnerable to further aggression. The Continuation War, then, was a defensive struggle for my country, politically separate from the war of the great powers.

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