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# Working

Researching, Interviewing, Writing



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## Tricks of the Trade

**I**nterviews: silence is the weapon, silence and people's need to fill it—as long as the person isn't you, the interviewer. Two of fiction's greatest interviewers—Georges Simenon's Inspector Maigret and John le Carré's George Smiley—have little devices they use to keep themselves from talking, and let silence do its work. Maigret cleans his ever-present pipe, tapping it gently on his desk and then scraping it out until the witness breaks down and talks. Smiley takes off his eyeglasses and polishes them with the thick end of his necktie. As for myself, I have less class. When I'm waiting for the person I'm interviewing to break a silence by giving me a piece of information I want, I write “SU” (for Shut Up!) in my notebook. If anyone were ever to look through my notebooks, he would find a lot of “SUs” there.