

Ethics  
**ROY PAULSON—PART 5**  
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From the looks of things, Davis had started off with a few drinks before dinner. Still, he seemed friendly and interested in working for Roy. Roy asked him questions about how he'd approach the work, his training experience, and documentation skills, all of which Davis answered well. It turned out that Davis had been a lead trainer for MWD until a few weeks ago when he was let go over a promotion dispute.

“I gave that company nine years of my life, and what did I get to show for it? Nothing. When it came time for promotions, they jumped right over me. They said that my experience wasn't enough; they wanted someone with a college degree. Well, I wasn't going to sit around and let some wet behind the ears college boy step over me and tell me what to do. I quit on the spot. I told 'em they'd be sorry they did this to me, that I'd find a way to see that they get what's coming to them. Seems to me the best way I can do that is to do everything I can to see that NEWCO wipes them off the map! That's what I think.”

Although surprised by Davis' outburst, Roy decided that Tom seemed to have the skills that were needed to bring the NEWCO project in on time. They agreed on a salary well within what NEWCO said they'd support, and Tom said he could start tomorrow if Roy wanted. After some minor discussion over the paperwork, Tom signed an agreement to subcontract to Roy. Roy would pay Tom and charge the work back against his NEWCO contract.

They met the next day to review the list of critical SOPs that needed to be developed. Tom seemed to have a strong background in a couple of the processes and suggested he take those on first. Roy agreed. Tom set up his desk next to Roy's. They wouldn't see each other very much as most of the data collection would be done on the floor. The office would be a common place to write up the data and hold periodic meetings.

Three days later, Tom reported to Roy that he'd completed three of the SOPs. Roy could hardly believe it, but there they were, completely documented, good details, and correct in every way. They agreed that they both would sign off on the SOPs as Roy was the contractor, and Tom was working for him. By the end of the week, they'd completed 10 of the 12 critical SOPs. Roy had to admit that Davis was working out very well.

When Roy reported this to Sandra, she was ecstatic! She called Ken and a few others into her office to hold an impromptu celebration and praised Roy for his diligence and for finding just the right person to complete the project on time. Somewhat embarrassed by the attention, Roy explained that Ken had been the key to finding the right person.

On the scheduled day, the entire team again met with the regulatory group and presented their work. All the required elements were in place. The regulators expressed their surprise at having the results in on time and said that they all had some doubts after the last meeting. But they agreed that it looked as if Sandra and her turnaround team had done it again! Before leaving, they created a timeline to complete the rest of the required documentation and scheduled another review in two months. Sandra decided it was time to celebrate and declared a bonus for everyone on the project! She also gave Roy some extra funding so he could thank Davis.

The next day, Roy and Tom were hard at it. They divided the SOPs to be developed and went to work. In the following couple of weeks, it became clear that Davis was able to complete the SOPs much faster than Roy. He was outworking him almost 3 to 1. When Roy would ask Tom how he was able to work so quickly, Davis would just grin and say that, after a decade or so in the business, you learn how to do things faster, you know what to look for, and how to leverage your time.

On his way to his monthly meeting with Sandra, Roy happened to run into Tom and Ken as the two were leaving Ken's office. Tom seemed a little surprised or embarrassed to see Roy, but Ken explained that they were just catching up on old times.

The meeting with Sandra went well, and the projects were on track. The company wasn't out of the woods yet, but it seemed like the worst part was behind them. NEWCO was starting to dig its way out of a deep financial hole.

That night, back in his office, Roy was cleaning up, putting books away, when he found an unfamiliar 3-ring binder. He opened it and discovered it was a copy of the MWD training manual. It contained all the SOPs and work instructions for the MWD plant across town.

Next morning he confronted Davis. Tom defended his actions: "These are processes and SOPs that *I* developed. They belong to me. Most of the equipment we use is similar to the stuff at MWD so what's wrong with using them? It's not like I'm making copies and stuffing them into the NEWCO process manual. I'm reentering them and making some changes. If I hadn't done it, we'd have never made the deadlines, and you know it."

Roy replied, "I'm not at all comfortable with this. How do we know the processes are really the same if you don't do a full analysis? And isn't this tantamount to stealing from MWD? I won't have any part of it. I'm going to talk with Sandra."

"Fine," said Davis, "you do that. Go have your little talk. But let me remind you that you signed off on all those SOPs, too. Oh, and by the way, I'm *your* employee, not Sandra's."

Before going home, Roy set up a meeting with Sandra for the next day. That night the lead news story was about a quality scandal at MWD that was causing their stock to drop and forcing a major recall of some of their products. It seems that a trade paper had received an anonymous tip about questionable materials being used at MWD. While nothing had been proven, the industry regulatory group felt it had to launch a full-scale investigation. Consequently, NEWCO's fortunes were much brighter. NEWCO was going to turn a tidy profit this year.

The next morning Roy went to meet with Sandra. Rather than discuss the MWD materials he'd discovered and his confrontation with Tom, he reviewed the progress they had made and suggested that he had completed the terms of his contract. It made little sense to keep him on retainer now that things were on track. The floor managers could maintain the training system and keep the SOPs up to date. After a bit more discussion, Sandra reluctantly agreed. She thanked him for all his efforts and, as a bonus, said he could stop coming to the plant as soon as he had the loose ends tied up. She'd pay his retainer through the end of the month.

Roy went back to the office and told Tom that the contract would end as of the end of the month and that he should finish up any projects underway.

"That's just fine with me; old Tom gets screwed again by the college boys. I'll tell you what; you finish up the projects, I'm outta here. You can send my final check, but I promise you, you'll regret using me and then throwing me off." Davis tossed a few things in a box, including his 3-ring binders, and stormed out.

Roy moved on to other projects and, after some time, had pretty much forgotten about Davis. Three or four months later, he saw a news story announcing that Tom Davis had been hired as the new director of training and development for NEWCO, reporting to Ken.

Roy hadn't given it another thought until this morning when he'd received a call from Sandra. She said that there had been a major incident with injuries in the NEWCO electrical distribution center. She was pulling the entire team together to review the events leading up to the incident to be sure "we're all on the same page before the investigation starts. As long as we all agree on the story, we should be fine. After all, it was just an unfortunate accident. Sometimes equipment fails; there's no one to blame. Still, get here as soon as you can. We'll pay your usual hourly rate. OK?"