

## 49. The Termination

*(In an office. #1 is at his/her desk looking at a file. He/she is not very happy with it. #2 knocks on the door and looks in.)*

- #2: Hey, I'm heading out to lunch. Want to go with me?  
#1: I can't, but come on in. I need to talk to you.  
#2: OK. *(Enters and goes to the desk and sits.)* What can I do for you?  
#1: Take a look at this. *(Hands #2 a folder.)*  
#2: *(Flips through it.)* It's my analysis of the proposed buyout of Mitchell Industries.  
#1: I know. Now, check it carefully and see if you see anything wrong.  
#2: I checked this three times before I handed it in.  
#1: Just humor me and check it again.  
#2: *(Starts to look through it again.)* It looks fine.  
#1: OK, now take a look at the report summary sheet. *(Hands #2 another piece of paper.)*  
#2: *(Looks it over, sees something and stops. Quietly)* Oh no.  
#1: You wanna tell me how this happened?  
#2: I...I don't have an answer.  
#1: I'll tell you, you better do better than that. When you analyze a company and figure its purchase price to be seventy million, but in your summary report that figure winds up reading one hundred and seventy million, well, I'm afraid that "I don't have an answer" just won't cut it.  
#2: I obviously added a one. It was an honest mistake.  
#1: Unfortunately the ramifications of a mistake of this caliber, honest or otherwise, can be pretty enormous... and costly.  
#2: OK, I understand that, but...  
#1: But, what?  
#2: Couldn't they have just looked at the full report?

- #1: Let me explain how things work.  
#2: I know how things work.  
#1: Obviously, you don't. When the CEO and his top guys decided they want to buy, they had a list of companies that were ripe for a takeover. They then gave their vice presidents, one of which was Farady, a couple of companies to analyze, Faraday in turn gave me Mitchell Industries, which I turned over to you. When done, the report goes back up the ladder to the top.  
#2: OK, but neither of you looked at the report.  
#1: Oh, come on, you know we didn't have the chance. You sent it right up to the board room.  
#2: Why, because you told me to send it right up when the meeting was pushed to this morning. I rushed to get it done and I guess that's where the mistake happened.  
#1: I know but you shouldn't have been rushed. The report should have been finished days ago. Now, to answer your question as to why the CEO didn't look at the full report, he doesn't have time. They were discussing several companies, and in the preliminary stages they look at the bottom line – the total suggested purchase price. The one at the bottom of the summary sheet. The one in your report that read 170 million!  
#2: What happened?  
#1: Farady made it to the meeting, but late. When he asked about Mitchell Industries, they told him it was a no go because it was too expensive, he looked at the report then pointed out the mistake. To say the very least our CEO was not pleased with the error.  
#2: So what are you saying? He wants my head?  
#1: Actually he wants your head, your feet, and everything in between. And Farady's – going to give it to him.  
#2: *(Is in shock.)* No! You can't let them fire me for a...typing mistake.  
#1: Oh please, we're not talking about not dotting an i or

- crossing a T here. This is major. It's a screw-up that can't be ignored.
- #2: OK, but it's still only one screw-up.
- #1: I wish I could say that were the case.
- #2: What are you saying?
- #1: I'm saying that according to your latest evaluation, your performance has been – borderline at best.
- #2: I haven't been here all that long. I'm still learning the ropes.
- #1: After six months that might be true, but you've been here nine. The ropes should all be familiar by now.
- #2: So, care to tell me about all those other hideous mistakes I've made?
- #1: Now, don't get like that. That's not what I said. What I've been told is that you're generally – sloppy, not exact in your work. There are lots of little things that by themselves are nothing, but together don't paint a very flattering, larger picture.
- #2: Or one of continuing employment.
- #1: I'm afraid not.
- #2: You know what really stinks about all this? I've really been trying. I've never been late, I don't leave early...
- #1: True, you were here exactly at nine and left exactly at six.
- #2: You make that sound like a crime.
- #1: Then you're not hearing me. What I'm saying is you did what was expected. You never put in even a little extra effort. Effort that may have been beneficial.
- #2: How? By giving me more time to brown nose?
- #1: No, by giving you extra time to work on your computer skills, or learn new programs faster. Maybe get a jump on the day's work. Who knows, maybe you wouldn't have been behind on the Mitchell Industries report and made the mistake.
- #2: So you're saying the whole Mitchell Industries thing is my fault?
- #1: Yes, yes I am. And you know it, too.

- #2: What the hell am I supposed to do now? I needed this job. It's not like I had the chance to put any money away. It took me nine months of employment just to get out of debt. And now I have to look for another job?
- #1: You'll get a severance and maybe we can help with a new job...
- #2: How? Are you going to write me a recommendation letter? I can see that now, "I highly recommend Jeff/Jill for your job opening. He/She is inept, sloppy, lazy and his/her only good quality is that he/she is punctual." No thanks. That kind of help I don't need.
- #1: That's not what I meant and you know it. But if you're intent on making me the bad guy – so be it.
- #2: *(Pause)* I'm sorry. I just don't know what to do.
- #1: If I were you, I'd look for a slow moving job. One that allows you the time to learn and the opportunity to screw up without severe consequences.
- #2: An idiot's job.
- #1: No, just more...entry level. You're not at the level you think you are. That could be your biggest problem.
- #2: Look, I appreciate what you're saying, but can't you just give me another chance? I'll do everything you say. I'll come in early, leave late...I'll try harder.
- #1: I wish I could, but in the long run, it wouldn't be good for you, and it's already not good for us.
- #2: You won't even ask?
- #1: No, I won't. I'm sorry. *(Pause)* You're fired! Please be out by the end of the day. *(#2 stands and exits.)*