

BLOWING THE WHISTLE: ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES

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Abstract

What is common between Brigitte Heinisch, a geriatric nurse in Berlin, and Sherron Watkins, the Vice President of Corporate Development at the Enron Corporation? What are the legal and ethical regimes governing whistleblowing? Reporting misconduct in an organization is an act of courage or disloyalty? What goes through an employee's mind when deciding whether and where to report? What separates those who choose to disclose such information from those who turn a blind eye to perceived impropriety in the workplace? The author attempts to address the foregoing questions and gain some insight into the conflicting demands inevitably confronted by those who blow the whistle, having to choose between highly esteemed values, such as loyalty to one's colleagues or serving the public interest.