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BUS 434: Ethical Leadership

Famous Whistleblowers

Nyack College

July 3, 2021

**The Name and Background of the Whistleblower**

The name, "Whistleblower", originates from people who felt compelled voice about any

wrongdoing(s), usually on behalf of an employer against a law or its employees, or any other unethical or illegal act that needs to be brought to light for corrective action. The whistleblower may usually be conflicted to discuss the situation but overcome their fear to speak out against any injustices done to themselves or anyone else, regardless of the consequences, knowing that there may be retaliation against them or others with or without little protection offered to them by common law. (Halbert, et al, 2018, p. 87)

Under federal law, the US Supreme Court recognized an enactment in 1989; the Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act (WPEA); originally for whistleblowers. As of 2012, Congress, passed a subset to cover federal employees who spoke against fraud, waste and abuse. (Halbert, et al, 2018, p. 93) This is the most recent legislative action to protect whistleblowers under federal law. (Exmeyer & Joon, 2020)

### **The Reason for an Individual Being Considered a Whistleblower**

Typically, anyone revealing the secrets that would expose the wrongdoings of another party as it relates to an immoral or illegal act, that may or may not violate a company's policies and procedures and holds an organization legally responsible for violating laws or performing any type of misconduct against their own employees, would be considered a whistleblower for coming forward. Whether the person wrestled with approaching someone in leadership either at their place of work or some other organization or even personally, they were determined to voice what they found, saw or know to be wrong, immoral or illegal. For this, over the years, many have been ostracized for showing their level of bravery against injustice, like the former Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Associate Director, W. Mark Felt, other known as, "Deep Throat" for spying on the former president of the United States of America (USA), Richard M. Nixon. (Von Drehle, 2005)

### **The Outcome of the Whistleblower Report**

The Associate Director, Mark Felt was a pivotal force in assisting two journalist, Bob

Woodward and Carl Bernstein list all of the forms of public official misconduct, that president Nixon to resign from his presidency in 1974. Nixon and his administration abused their power as government officials to infiltrate multiple illegal acts, especially pertaining to the burglary of the White House, during Nixon's presidential re-election campaign. (History, 2021) There was a coerced burglary of the Watergate Complex (Headquarters at the time) in Washington, D.C. (1972), where members of his administration stole top- secret documents, money, bullied and or harassed other leaders in politics, government and of social status, for his pleasure, along with other illegal acts of espionage and coverups that Nixon initiated. All of this lasted for the two dreadful years of which Nixon was in the, "Oval Office". So, Felt, due to his position of being overlooked to run the FBI at the time, was quite eager and had the resources to uncover the secret surveillances and dealings of the Nixon administration to use the Department of Justices' resources to obstruct justice against civil rights leaders, ordering the investigation of activist groups, etc. The fraudulent and vile acts of this political leader were endless. (Von Drehle, 2005) Due to the investigation, he was finally exposed and was being impeached by the House Judiciary Committee. As his impeachment was approved, Nixon resigned on August 9,1974 and his successor, Gerald Ford pardoned him on September 8, 1974. (History, 2021)

This explosive scandal led to the incarceration of 48 people, many of whom were under Nixon's administration. All were held accountable but Nixon and he was the only person to not go to jail, but "*claimed to have used poor judgement*". (History, 2021)

### **Thoughts Regarding the Whistleblower Case**

Due to these occurrences, Felt's name remained anonymous during the investigations and even until 2005 by the workers of the, Post. Felt, now deceased as of 2008, had to still be secretive about his involvement with the unveiling of this type of treason to national security, when our own leadership is the terrorist. Though his family went public and he, after having a stroke in 2005, announced himself as that guy, who sly fully intercepted correspondence between one division of the FBI to White House Officials, he still had to walk circumspectly as the

Director of the FBI out of fear due to what anyone who felt loyalty to the Nixon administration would have done to him over the past 31 years from 1974 to 2005. He was wise with how he handled the situation, because he had to think of his family's safety and his own. However, what stress that must have put on his health and his mind. Moreover, I think even if he like Joyce Meyer's said in one of her latest books, "Do It Afraid", even if it is a great task ahead, we can still be that guy and make the right moral choice to be the whistleblower who will make the difference. It sometimes, works out for in the end.

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