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### The Magical Chemistry of High Ethical Standards, Intrepidity, and a Phone Call

Jeffrey Wigand defines what it means to hold ethics above all else in the film, *The Insider*. Due to the swell timing of Lowell Bergman's phone call to analyze documents on fire safety at Philip Morris, Wigand had direct access to *60 Minutes* from the onset of his conflict with Brown & Williamson. The importance of this opportunity is partially constructed by the accidental nature of careers, should whistle blowing be considered a career move. Early in the film, Thomas Sandefur states that Wigand's level of concentration while playing golf is "spooky." At times, Wigand is shown as irrational, but never unethical. He is shown to have periods of silent, fuming contemplation, but he never loses his concentration. Wigand's ability to focus is strained as he wrestles with outbursts, sometimes irrational, that ultimately contribute to whistle blowing. One aspect, although less apparent, of Wigand's "insider" status is his ability to look inside himself and self-reflect. Wigand did not consider what he was doing "good work" and internalized much of his discontent and frustrations. Wigand throws an axe into the continuity of what George A. Callanan calls "self-monitoring" as he releases the will to "control [his] emotional expressions and alter [his] behaviors based on the potential outcomes... of [his] actions."

Research and creative thinking are seen as Wigand's core career values as a scientist and businessman. According to Callanan, "Past research has also found that such human capital characteristics as the level of education, quality of education, length of job tenure, and breadth of job experiences all had a positive association with career success." Based on Callanan's view of career success, we can assume that up to the B&W vice president position, Wigand was enjoying quite a successful career as a scientist in health-related companies. Wigand's example of Johnson & Johnson CEO, James Burke, highlights the importance of shared responsibility in business and science. Burke's protection of business and public health through his actions of at Tylenol proved that it possible to be both a CEO and a "man of science." Wigand's admiration for the leadership of his former employer is apparent here. This example may also serve as commentary that it is imperative to work for companies with respectable and accountable administration.

Wigand's personal motivation remains static throughout the film. He is consistently motivated to do well and to do better by his family. Nevertheless, he admits to Bergman that he succumbed to the "Faustian Bargain" by joining B&W with the allure of the ultimate combination of his love for science, talent for business, and comfort of a gigantic salary. His wife and children are his motivation to work at B&W, to then fight B&W, and to later become a teacher. Wigand's family's safety is threatened and Liane Wigand (or is it Lucretia? See note at end.) is depicted as an overwhelmed housewife who is unhappy with her husband. When Jeffrey Wigand asks her, "Can you imagine me coming home from some job feeling good at the end of the day?" she is ambiguously silent. This silence can be interpreted in many ways including, "What about the big house? And the nice car? And the big salary? What about what's best for our girls... and me?" Liane Wigand files for divorce for what we can only assume is unmanageable

discontent where what she completely overlooks is Jeffrey Wigand's intention to provide the best path for their daughters by becoming a whistle blower.

Wigand's *60 Minutes* interview reveals how his research findings clashed with B&W's key values and beliefs—delivering nicotine. Wigand's consequent firing is in line with what Callanan writes as, "Individuals who fail to abide by the cultural rules [of an organization] are likely to face a career plateau at best, and outright dismissal at worst." Very little is known about Wigand's objectivity before his firing from B&W. We only know he admired Burke and that he objectively believed that the American public deserved to know about the hazards of smoking cigarettes. Wigand admits to Mike Wallace, "The straw that broke the camel's back for me and really put me in trouble with Sandefur was a compound called coumarin." Despite the influence of an organizational control system, "it is still up to the individual to go along with any unethical or illegal activities of the company" (Callanan). Wigand could not go along.

Faced with the decision to speak or not to speak, Wigand is influenced greatly by Mississippi lawyer, Richard Scruggs. Scruggs sympathizes with Wigand's mental thought process to go forward with his deposition by reminding him that every decision going forward directly affects his family. Here, we imagine the images reeling through Wigand's mind at lightning speed—the most prominent ones being of his eldest daughter's asthma attacks and James Burke's action and commitment to health at Johnson & Johnson. Wigand's decision to violate his agreement by disclosing vital information to the American public, instead of honoring the agreement for his and his family's protection, is extraordinarily bold. According to Colin Grant, "acts of supererogation, praiseworthy for their moral seriousness, but exceeding what can be expected on a rational moral basis. Whistle blowing represents an extreme that defies the reasonable expectation of the most prominent versions of ethics." Wigand's concern for the public was beyond rationality as his whistle blowing was "evoked by serious concern about what a business is doing, and the harm it may cause or be causing consumers, employees, or the wider community" (Grant).

At different stages of his life, Wigand achieves several successes by staying committed to personal integrity, maintaining high ethical standards, and choosing "good work." These factors are critical to Wigand's career development as he subsequently embarks on a career as a teacher, which satisfies his career self-image by "doing something good" with his knowledge. Wigand's knack for creative thinking and proactive, action-oriented personality suit him well as a teacher. Even so, Wigand's unintentional role as a tobacco industry whistle blower is the pinnacle of his remarkable ethics at work.

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Note: It is important to note how different the film and Marie Brenner, in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, depict Mrs. Wigand. Further research confirms that Mrs. Wigand's name was actually Lucretia Wigand. Why did the film change her name? Is it fair to assume that there were vast problems concerning details of her relationship to Jeffrey Wigand far too sensitive and/or political to be included in the film? How does this affect the credibility of the overall story?

Brenner mentions two major factors that were not shown or addressed in the film. There are no scenes of Jeffrey Wigand smoking cigarettes (to better understand the tobacco industry) or of Liane Wigand drinking alcohol (something Brenner suggests was a real problem). Yet, Brenner claims both occurred and are significant factors in the dynamics of Jeffrey Wigand's life choices.