

Corporate Compromise

By

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Theme:

This play conveys how compromise can sneak up on us when we don't realize it. Sometimes we start doing little things that are wrong, not realizing that others are noticing. When there are no consequences for our actions, we begin to add to what we are doing, until we are eventually caught doing things we never would have thought of doing in the first place.

Biblical Reference:

John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy: I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Approximate Running Time:

10 minutes

Props:

Three Briefcases  
A Calculator

Cast of Characters:

Doug: Doug is an every day kind of a guy. He is dressed in casual corporate attire: white shirt, tie, and nice pants.

The Agents, 1 through 4, are dressed in black suit coats, white shirts, and black ties. They are also wearing dark sunglasses. They have black briefcases in their hands. They speak with monotone, intimidating voices. These parts may be played by either male or female actors.

Scene:

Doug is sitting at his cubicle desk in a typical office setting. He is hard at work. Four special agents, dressed as agents from Men in Black would be dressed, approach Doug to confront him.

Doug: Can I help you?

Agent 3: I'm afraid it's too late for that.

Doug: What do you mean?

Agent 4: You can't help us.

Agent 2: And you're way beyond help.

Doug: Hey, that's not nice. Who are you guys? Uh, I mean, what do you guys want? Uh, did I do something wrong?

Agent 1: We're the special task force assigned to investigate company employees for corporate theft.

Doug: I didn't know we had a special force.

Agent 2: Apparently there are many things about this company you don't know about.

Agent 3: We've been investigating your case for ten years now.

Doug: My case?

Agent 4: Yes. It appears as if you have allowed yourself to fall into the trap of corporate compromise. But you're not alone.

Doug: Corporate compromise? What in the world is corporate compromise?

Agent 1: Sir, that is the title we have assigned to describe employees who have compromised themselves by allowing themselves to fall into the trap of stealing from the company.

Doug: Stealing from the company? I haven't stolen anything from the company. You must have the wrong man.

Agent 2: We have the right man all right.

Agent 3: Remember, we've been watching you for a long time.

Doug: But I'm sure I haven't stolen anything from the company.

Agent 1: You have even deceived yourself.

Doug: Do you have any kind of proof of your accusations?

Agent 4: [*Opens his briefcase and pages through a ream of paper.*] According to our records, the corporate compromise began the first day you were on the job and has continued to rise until this very day.

Agent 3: We knew you were a compromiser from the beginning.

Agent 1: But we are not going to tolerate it any more.

Agent 4: The first day you were here we noticed that you took coffee breaks which averaged seventeen point five minutes. From there it went down hill. By the end of the very next month you were averaging sixty-five minutes per lunch hour, on top of the now eighteen point two five minutes for coffee breaks.

Agent 2: [*Reaching for a calculator. Using the calculator to present the figures he's presenting.*] According to our records, in your first year, you were stealing an average of approximately twenty minutes of time each and every day. Without taking into consideration any vacation or sick time you have taken, this amounts to eighty hours of stolen time during the first year alone. At fifteen dollars per hour, that amounts to one thousand two hundred dollars stolen from the company during your first year of employment.

Doug: I can't believe this.

Agent 3: And the amount of time you have stolen from the company has increased since that time, until this past year, you averaged a total of thirty minutes of wasted time each day - you know, from coffee breaks, chats in cubicles, long lunches, early departures, etc.

Agent 1: That was before the pen theft became a problem. During your third year we began to notice that you went home each evening with a pen in your shirt pocket. But [*Emphasize But*] when you returned to work each morning there was no pen in your shirt pocket.

Doug: You've got to be kidding me.

Agent 2: [*While working the figures through a calculator.*] Averaging fifty weeks per year, one pen per day, that's a total of two hundred and fifty pens stolen, at sixty five cents per pen, I am sad to report you have stolen a grand total of one hundred sixty two dollars and fifty cents worth of pens per year.

Agent 4: And I haven't even mentioned the number of unauthorized telephone calls. It appears you were calling your wife an average of three times a day. The time you spent on those calls was included in the above time report, but the cost of those calls has yet to be considered.

Agent 2: [*While working the figures through a calculator.*] Three calls per day, five days per week, fifty weeks per year, an average of seven point five minutes per call, at ten cents per minute, that's a total of five hundred sixty two dollars and fifty cents per year spent on unauthorized calls.

Doug: But I thought it was okay for me to call my wife from time to time.

Agent 3: That's not a part of our corporate policy on appropriate telephone usage.

Agent 1: Who told you that?

Doug: Rick, you know, my boss. I assumed he was telling me the truth. He is my boss, you know.

Agent 4: [*Paging through a notepad.*] Yes. He's on our list too. I wouldn't trust a thing he has to say about corporate policies.

Doug: I can't believe this is happening to me. Are you sure you guys aren't from candid camera or something like that? This has got to be a joke or something.

Agent 1: I wish this was a joke, but it's not.

Agent 2: You're in serious trouble here.

Agent 3: [*While working the figures through a calculator.*] According to my calculations you now owe the company forty two thousand eight hundred dollars for time and resources you have stolen over the past ten years.

Doug: Forty two thousand eight hundred dollars?

Agent 4: I'm afraid so. Are you in a position to reimburse the company?

Doug: Uh, no.

Agent 3: Are you in a position to acquire the funds you owe in say, three business days?

Doug: What are you kidding me? Where am I going to come up with that kind of money?

Agent 1: That's not our responsibility.

Doug: Look, I can't believe this. Don't you think this is a bit unreasonable? I mean, this is all of a sudden, it's a big surprise.

Agent 4: This has been developing over the past ten years - it's not all of a sudden.

Agent 2: If you are unable to compensate the company for the time and resources you have stolen from them then we have no choice but to terminate you.

Doug: Terminate me? You're going to terminate me? I don't think this is something that warrants killing me. I mean, I'll find a way to come up with the money if you're going to terminate me.

Agent 1: Settle down Mr. Smith. We're not going to kill you. We're terminating your job.

Agent 3: [*Reaching into briefcase.*] I have here your final paycheck.

Agent 2: There is the door.

Doug: I can't believe this. I never even saw this coming. What am I going to do now?

Agent 4: That's what they all say. True, corporate compromise begins innocently enough. First you give in a little. It's comfortable to you. You benefit without any kind of investment on your part. You know you're doing something wrong, but you rationalize it and deceive yourself into thinking that you deserve it. After all, it's just a little, nobody will notice. And you're right, you don't get yelled at, you don't get caught. Maybe someone who is above you even encourages you in what you're doing. After all, what do you have to lose? So you decide to stretch the envelope a bit more. Again, you don't get yelled at, you don't get caught. So you continue to stretch the envelope until you're in over your head. You still may not even know that you're in over your head, but others will notice. It's impossible for you to hide corporate compromise; it sticks out like a sore thumb. That's when we come in. You're too far in and you're not prepared to repay those you've wronged. You have no choice, no options, no way to get a second chance. That's why you're terminated. I wish it wasn't the case, but it is. That's our job.

*[Agents 1 & 2 grab Bob by the arms and escort him out of his office. They all begin to exit.]*

Agent 4: That's all I'm going to say. You're on your own now.

Doug: *[As he's being dragged out the door.]* Hey, wait a minute. That's it? But what about my personal stuff?

Agent 3: Your personal items will be boxed and shipped to your house within the next two weeks. I just hope you have learned your lesson and don't compromise yourself at your next job.

Agent 1: And by the way, I wouldn't even think about asking us for a reference.

*[They exit.]*

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