

The First Information Is Almost Always Wrong Introduction

“This is the business we’ve chosen.”

In *The Godfather 2*, Hyman Roth, an aging Jewish gangster patterned after the famous Meyer Lansky, makes the statement quoted above to Michael Corleone, head of the now-powerful Corleone organized-crime family. The two had been discussing the murder of a rival gangster, and Roth understood that the killing was necessary despite his personal affection for the victim. Roth’s point was that their occupation imposed on them certain realities and limitations. Death was an occupational hazard. Killing was part of their business operations.

Well, workplace investigations are the business I have chosen. Perhaps you’ve chosen it too. But it seems that workplace investigations are done often, but not well. Opportunities to make a significant contribution are routinely missed. There are just too many mediocre investigators—like re-purposed human resources managers and all-too-confident lawyers who believe that workplace investigations are so straightforward and simple that their past professional experience instantly prepares them to investigate misconduct. If you want to be one of these people, stop reading now.

People have described me both as an institutional heretic and professionally sarcastic. It wasn’t always this way. When I was hired as a compliance officer and started conducting investigations full time, I naturally thought I would be welcomed into the corporate family and given a seat at the management table. It was not my first job, however, so I expected to encounter the inevitable turf battles and ego-driven manager struggles. But I figured that managers would support me because they needed the information I could develop to enable them to deal with the employee-specific and operational problems investigations usually identify.

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