

Instructor's Notes

CPA

This case is played with minimal preparation for the students assigned to each role. In a class of 42, I would assign the best six students to be JT, the supervisor (JTs numbered one through six), and another strong set of six to be Sandy the accused employee (also numbered one through six). The remaining students were all randomly called Roo and Dana, and assigned to six groups of five persons each to form an unruly "mob." Thus everyone knows with whom they will be playing.

Everyone gets the General Instructions. The JT's prepare together, (they will be pretty concerned) and so also the Sandy's (who are usually rather subdued and troubled).

The Roos and Danas I take away to a private area, to prepare the thirty of them together, clumped in their groups of five. I tell the Roos and Danas that they have an impossible and unreasonable role. In the group of five they are to attach themselves to JT and refuse to be dismissed. They are to ask relentlessly that Sandy be fired. They have virtually no proof of Sandy's guilt. They must simply state they are sure that Sandy is guilty. They are to keep this up-ignoring Sandy, if Sandy tries to speak-for ten minutes if they can do so. (No violence, no pushing and shoving, just "commitment power"). I then, as quickly as possible-so the JTs do not have more than five or ten minutes to prepare-send each group of five back to take on "their" JT. And then I send the Sandy's, each to join to their JT.

The purpose of this case is to help students, at the end of the course, to understand a little about mob behavior in the workplace. Usually the (well-chosen) JTs survive it pretty well but are shaken. Some will have actually managed to keep things under control. The Sandys in the debrief discussions are usually very eloquent about what it means-and feels like-to be wrongly accused and excluded. The Roos and Danas are often very impressed and concerned and troubled about how easy it is to join and be part of a mob. The journals about this case are always very important-and this is one the cases that students remember best, years later.

As the Instructor one must emphasize that the first priority for a manager is to establish and maintain safety and security in the workplace. One must know the available resources and the rules of the organization and be prepared to uphold the principles of workplace justice.

(In this real case, the company went bankrupt after many suits were brought.)