



SABOTEURS AND SCALLYWAGS

Whether you protect the "king" or discover who the rats are, you can learn a lot by keeping your eyes open

by Michael S. Rogers
CEO, Securityhunter

We are a privileged group, us CEOs. We get to lead our businesses and enjoy ourselves in the pursuit of our dreams.

I have been at this for 22 years – leading a one-man alarm company to one that provides electronic security solutions to our government and large businesses. It's a hoot. Over these years, I have had the excitement of catching thieves, saboteurs and scallywags as a private investigator and covert video technician. As the hairline recedes and the waistline advances, I would like to share with my CEO brothers and sisters some of my "archived" cases. We learn so much from others and their stories – here are a few of mine:

CASE 1: THE KING'S LESSON

Early in my career in 1991, a Burger King franchise manager, Ed Bennett, called me in to quote him a closed circuit video surveillance (CCTV) system. He had been robbed recently at the restaurant, and he wanted a deterrent.

I was excited to get his call – our relatively new electronic security company was struggling, and every opportunity felt great. When I met Ed Bennett, I liked him right away. He was thin, quiet, friendly man dedicated to making things go right in his store in working-class Baltimore. Ed looked about 70 years old through my 32-year-old eyes; he smoked a lot, always Marlboro. Funny the things that we remember – in fact, I still wear the Marlboro baseball cap that he gave me.

I installed the four-camera system that he leased for \$199 per month and called him after about three months. When I asked him how it was going, he told me that the CCTV system was working great,

and that we were saving about \$900 per month in food costs while sales were about the same. I asked him that could be and he said something like, "Mike, my employees have been serving free meals to their friends and families for a long time - their free lunch is over"

When Ed moved on to being the general manager of a convenience store chain, we installed CCTV/cash register interface systems to prevent no ring/under-ringing cash register thefts. Ed passed away at his home a few years after that. I think that he would have enjoyed my telling of his story. Your take-away: You may be surprised about what problems you can resolve when you implement management control.

CASE 2: THE PREDATOR

The phone rang. It was one of my private investigator clients calling me about another covert video assignment. I always loved those assignments – I would find myself absentmindedly humming the *Mission: Impossible* tune in wee hours of the night while installing the miniature cameras. The intense pressure to get into a business, install the gear without being discovered was so much fun (except for one time – which I will save to tell another day).

My pal, a private investigator, told me that a woman was having the flower tops cut from their stems in her vase at her workplace and placed perfectly on her desk. This was ominous, and we jumped in to meet the decision maker. It was agreed

that for \$1,500, we would install the system, run it for two weeks and remove it. Our cut was \$1,000 and the PI's was \$500. We arranged to return and install the equipment, and we advised the client to keep the office desk light on because the covert camera needed some light so that we could identify our predator.

Well, there were no hits for 13 days, but on the 14th day (when the desk light was shut off), the flowers were cut! We kept the equipment in for two more weeks for free and then pulled it. For no charge, my pal told them that he would stake out the room from a nearby office along with his police officer pal that he had served with several years prior. They were both armed and ready for that night's surveillance.

I got a call in the morning that right under their noses, the flowers had been cut. "Mike, I checked that office at 5 AM and the flowers were fine. When we checked again at 6AM, they had been cut! I am telling you, nobody was in that room!" I remember saying "Well, if no one was in that room, then something else was in that room. Check for animals."

Sure enough, when moving the furniture away from the wall, he found an opening where an animal had chewed through from the outside. It seems that our adversary really was a rat – one that generated \$1,000 in fees for our small company.

Your take away: You never know what will shake out when you "smell a rat". **CEO**