**Artifact for ORGL 610 – Ethics**

During the ethics class, dialogue ensued to explore ethical dilemmas. The platform used to explore the ethical decision making process was related to publication of highly classified government documents. Specifically, Eric Snowden’s released stolen NSA classified material to the Washington Post and they subsequently decided to publish them.

The ethical issues and dilemmas highlighting the Washington Post’s decision to disclose the NSA’s domestic surveillance program as follows:

1. Disclose or non-disclose of highly classified government documents
2. Full publication of all documents over partial publication
3. Money and prestige, to get “the scoop,” over national security interest
4. In house, legal approval and protection over disclosure of national security documents. Concern for self over concern for the right to know by the paper’s readers.

The documents of disclosure were “special compartmented information,” a category above “top secret.” This case study was obviously chosen to heighten the level of ethical dilemma because of the magnitude of potential consequences. The course sought to challenge students to explore processes for determining ethical decision making and biases held by decision makers during the process. This then translated into evaluating our own personal bias potential.

Ethical dilemmas lead to subsequent ethical decisions. In hypothetically wrestling with these decisions we were to evaluate our own process. Though our final decision was neither “right or wrong” we were tasked with “landing” somewhere on the issue.

I “landed” with the Washington Post be unethical and irresponsible in their decision to publish. Additionally, Snowden was equally unethical and irresponsible in his decision to steal the documents and release them to publication.

However, the highlight, and why this such an important artifact for me is that it “conveys and symbolizes” an important leadership competency; knowing our biases and how they lead to our “standpoint.”

Being a retired Assistant Fire Chief for the Los Angeles County Fire Department nad having served the public for over 40 years I concluded:

“I understand that in these post-9/11 activities I hold a biased reference point. Terrorist activities and the defeat of their goals is at the essence of the secrecy of this information, for national security interests.”

“On September 11, 2001, 343 of my brothers climbed to the stairs of the World Trade Center while everybody else was rushing to get out. They never returned. A month later, standing at the pile in New York City, in deafening silence, at attention, as the remains of ‘one of our own’ was pulled from the pile, I witnessed up close and personal the cowardice of the terrorists who want to destroy us. Having attended multiple wakes and funerals and standing at attention with tears streaming down our checks, with other firefighters from across the nation, we stood at attention at one specific funeral processions. I still can still hear, with perfect clarity, the voice of the daughter of the NYFD Battalion Chief. As the funeral procession ended in front of the church, again at attention with 80 other members from the Los Angeles County Fire Department, and other representatives from fire departments worldwide, her voice, amidst that silence, resonated; ‘I want my Daddy back.’”

“Yes, I have a ‘standpoint,’ and I hold a bias. The debate during the mid 2000’s, over Snowden’s release of his stolen top secret government documents, could be considered a “historical moment of contending goods” (Arnett, R., Fritz, J., Bell, L., (2009), p. 214). As Arnett et al, points out “one has to decide on which side of the argument one intends generally to land.” (Arnett, R., Fritz, J., Bell, L., (2009), p. 93). I stand with National security.”