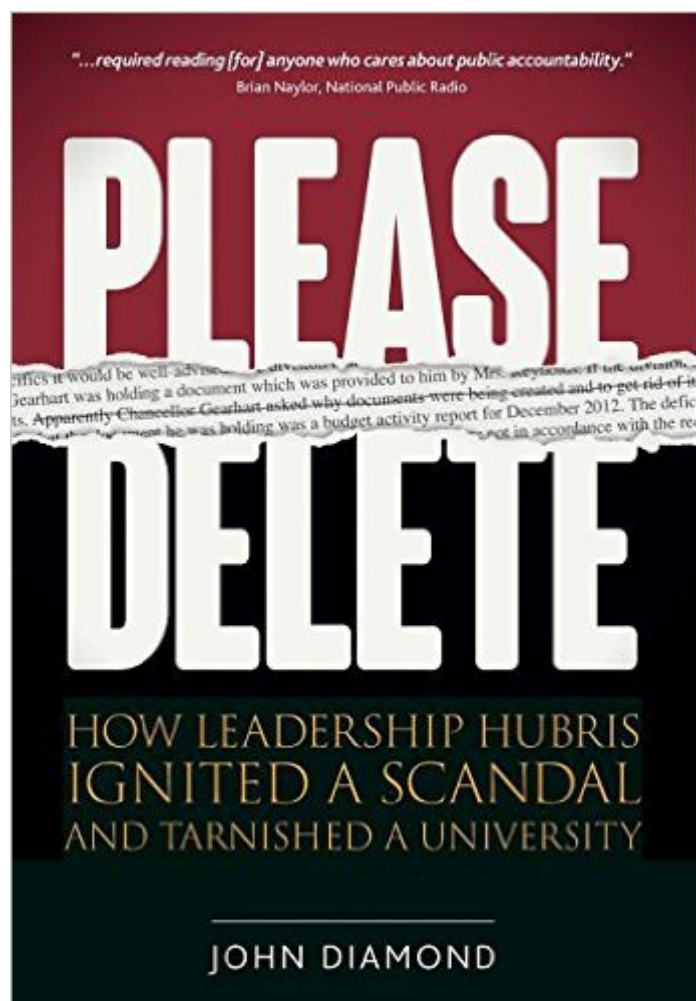


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# Please Delete: How Leadership Hubris Ignited A Scandal And Tarnished A University



## Synopsis

“I’VE MADE A TERRIBLE MISTAKE.” So confessed Joy Sharp, a longtime budget director for the University of Arkansas. Trembling and unsteady, she informed her boss that she had lost control of their division’s finances. It was an understatement. University leaders would soon discover that Sharp had routinely spent millions of dollars beyond what was available, shifting money from one account to another in what the university’s treasurer described as “deliberate efforts to disguise” her division’s true financial condition. In a private email, University Chancellor G. David Gearhart bemoaned that Sharp’s actions had created “a colossal fiscal crisis.” It was a hard admission; ten years earlier, Gearhart himself had promoted Sharp, his former aide, to the budget management position. Most leaders would have responded to the disclosure by immediately commissioning a thorough audit and review of Sharp’s activity. After all, it was possible that fraud occurred and that others were complicit. If nothing else, an audit would demonstrate the university’s commitment to “Transparency and Accountability for the People of Arkansas,” which happened to be the title of the school’s strategic plan. But instead, Gearhart and other university officials quietly engaged in a disturbing series of panic-fueled leadership decisions. The result was a slow-burning scandal, one that involved attempts to deceive investigators, hide and destroy records, and silence witnesses. Those actions soon proved more costly to the university’s reputation and credibility than the unchecked spending that created the deficit. PLEASE DELETE provides a case study of how a large institution, its powerful and overconfident leaders, and their well-placed allies responded to a crisis, and in the process, inflamed it. PLEASE DELETE is a cautionary tale, one that reveals the damage, distrust, and victimization that often result when public officials try to conceal their transgressions.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

Original review: DO NOT BUY THE KINDLE VERSION OF THIS BOOK. The spacing is terrible. If I can manage to read it, I'll update my review based on the book. Don't you guys pay attention to details. Updated review: I finally received a Kindle version that I could read, and then I could not stop reading it. What a story! It took real courage for Mr. Diamond to write about this experience. It saddens me to say I'm not surprised by any of it.

I could not stop reading "Please Delete." And when it was over, I wanted more. John Diamond courageously writes, in great detail and with documentation, about corruption and scandal that is all too common in complex organizations -- not just higher ed, think about the banking industry, Enron, military cover ups and politics at every level. Leaders rise to power out of good-ol'-boy or good-ol'-girl networks, power leads to entitlement and hubris, staff get swept up in sweeping things under the rug. Unfortunately, I've seen this happen first-hand. Maybe you have, too. If so, you'll relate to every page, as the unscrupulous run amok and the voices of ethics and reason get drummed out. "Please Delete" should be required reading in public relations, crisis communication and executive leadership. It's a playbook for what not to do, and it illustrates what every PR professional and leader knows: communications reflects an organization's culture, it doesn't create the culture, and no amount of spin will right a wrong. John goes beyond recounting a scandal; he tells a compelling story. You get to know the players, what motivates them, what leads to their actions -- incompetence, ignorance, blind trust or maliciousness. Some are sympathetic, some make your blood boil, and some make you wonder if they can tie their own shoes. Read "Please Delete." You'll want to recommend it, too.

Excellent book. Well written and documented. Diamond focuses on the evidence, despite the way he was treated. Kudos to him for how he handled a bad situation, and for writing a terrific book. Put this one on your "must read" list.

This reads like a thriller. You can feel the tension building. Will truth triumph over lies? John Diamond takes you on journey that will shine the light on the the big money and big egos that

scandalized a university and shows how easily those who stand for truth are thrown under the bus. Read and be aware.

"The truth will set you free." John Diamond has learned and lived the meaning of this aphorism and he has shared how with his readers in "Please Delete." With tons of humility, and a touch of humor, Diamond describes the consequences of leadership pride, demonstrating the opposite of this aphorism: how falsehood leads to self-imprisonment. Telling the truth is a habit one should never delete.

A powerful insider's view of higher education with a twist of "The Emperor's New Clothes". Diamond has written a thorough and what appears to be a very fair account of an administration that lost track of its professional ethical compass. It took courage to publish this information!

After reloading the updated version of the book (thanks !), I just finished chapter 3 and remembered that I need to update this review. Quite an interesting story so far and awesome job by the author in telling the story. He has a great statement of "Doing the right thing and getting caught doing it." So true. Will complete my review upon finishing the book...Original Comments: This is purely a product (Kindle book) quality issue than book content review. Unfortunately, I purchased the Kindle version before seeing the previous review. I experienced the same issue of words overlapping each other, thus making the book unreadable. It's the first Kindle book where I've experienced this and am hoping it gets fixed ASAP as I am looking forward to reading the book. Let's get with the program !!! Obviously, I will change my rating once I read the book.

Diamond did an excellent job detailing yet another sad tale of the cover-up being much more egregious than the "crime" itself. This is a must-read for every university administrator tempted to do whatever means necessary to CYA -- except the right things. And for those university administrators with integrity, Please Delete is a case study of how NOT to lead in times of crisis. Like George Costanza, true leaders should do everything opposite of what took place at the University of Arkansas.

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