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The Infrastructure of the Con

How do people get away with bad behavior without being held accountable? Often, when we look back at the big stories of misconduct and corruption – be it Silicon Valley, the Catholic Church, government administrations, Wall Street, #MeToo, or sexual misconduct on college campuses – it’s hard to believe that the pattern of unethical or illegal behavior which was exposed could have gone on for as long as it did.

Answering this question requires looking beyond the actions of the few individuals who got caught. Typically, their conduct wasn’t a secret -- and was enabled by a supporting cast of characters who helped perpetuate and shield them from accountability. Who are these people, and how should we think about them?

Asha moves beyond the simplistic “bad vs. good” dichotomy that tends to dominate analysis of these scandals and the people associated with them. Instead, she explores the incentives, fears, and goals of the people surrounding the central bad actors -- those who choose to either actively participate, look the other way, or blow the whistle on the system they are in. Creating a behavioral profile of these individuals provides insight into their motivations and a way to compare them across different environments. It also offers lessons for managers and policymakers to create structures that can prevent these behaviors from taking root and empower those in a position to stop it.

Preserving Democracy in the (Dis)Information Age

The 2016 presidential election highlighted the ability of Russian intelligence to exploit social media to target and manipulate the American public. Former FBI counterintelligence agent Asha Rangappa explains how Russia adapted the KGB’s Cold War tactics to the Information Age and successfully took advantage of an already existing fabric in America’s social fabric. She explains how the intersection of technology, low social trust, and Russian active measures creates an existential danger to democracy – and what American citizens can do to counter it.

Lessons From Quantico

How does a first-generation child of Indian immigrants from southern Virginia end up as a Special Agent for the FBI? Asha Rangappa describes her unique (and often humorous) career path and the personal challenges she encountered along the way, offering inspiring life lessons for anyone who’s considered the road less traveled.