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**New Documentary Explores the Rise and Fall of Enron  
in Series on Corporate Scandal, Fraud and Business  
Ethics**

***PLAYING BY THE RULES: ETHICS AT WORK***  
***Episode Two: “Ask Why”***

***Premieres Wednesday, January 18 at 8 p.m. on WLIW21***  
***Premieres Thursday, January 19 at 8:30 p.m. on THIRTEEN***  
***Premieres Tuesday, January 24 at 10:30 p.m. on NJTV***  
***Streams Online on each station website following the broadcast***

NEW YORK [December 22, 2016] – To this day, the Enron collapse remains a case study in how quickly bad business ethics can bring down a company. Enron's employees and investors lost tens of billions in retirement savings as the company's stock rapidly lost value. The scandal also ruined Enron's accounting firm, and 85,000 Arthur Andersen employees lost their jobs when the firm collapsed and closed. But what really happened? ***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work***, a new three-part documentary series, explores the vital role of ethical decision making in contemporary business practices. In episode two, ***Ask Why***, the series interviews Sherron Watkins and key players close to the events to examine the rise and fall of

the company at the center of one of the most notorious corporate scandals of the twentieth century—and the ethical drift that contributed to the company’s downfall.

***Ask Why***, premieres on Wednesday, January 18 at 8 p.m. on WLIW21; Thursday, January 19 at 8:30 p.m. on THIRTEEN; and on Tuesday, January 24 at 10:30 p.m. on NJTV. The film can be viewed online on all three station sites beginning January 18 at 8 p.m.: at [wliw.org/ethics](http://wliw.org/ethics) and [njtvonline.org/ethics](http://njtvonline.org/ethics) and [thirteen.org/ethics](http://thirteen.org/ethics). Additional options for viewing ***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work*** can be found at [Thirteen.org/anywhere](http://Thirteen.org/anywhere), [WLIW.org/anywhere](http://WLIW.org/anywhere) and [NJTVonline.org/anywhere](http://NJTVonline.org/anywhere).

Why did Enron's collapse take the financial community by complete surprise? Were there any warning signs that Enron was not as financially stable as it appeared? In ***Ask Why***, the series ***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work*** takes a look at the energy company from Houston, which, in just 15 years, had built itself into the seventh largest corporation in America by 2001—and examines the events that led to the company’s collapse, including the corporate environment that inhibited the board of directors from exercising governance and control. The film features candid interviews with Sherron Watkins, then a vice president in corporate development, who sounded the alarm bell at the time, writing a letter to Enron founder and chairman Ken Lay on the serious nature of the accounting fraud hiding the company’s investment losses: “Has Enron become risky place to work?” she asked. “I am incredibly nervous we will implode in a wave of accounting scandals.” Her pleas to the captain to right the corporate ship fell on deaf ears, and some five months later Enron declared bankruptcy.

Viewers will also hear from several other experts and key players relevant to the case—including Sean Berkowitz, who ran the Justice Department’s Enron Task Force in 2005 and 2006; Philip Hilder, former Justice Department official and Watkins’ attorney; energy analyst John Olson, who felt Enron’s wrath after downgrading the energy giant’s rating; Mimi Swartz, executive editor of *Texas Monthly* magazine and author (with Watkins) of *Power Failure: The Inside Story of the Collapse of Enron*; and Henry McGee, a senior lecturer at Harvard Business School, where he teaches the Enron case as part of a leadership and corporate accountability course to help prevent future executives from sliding down the same slippery slope.

Comprised of three 30-minute films, the series ***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work*** focuses on real cases of fraud, whistleblowing and corruption in

corporate America and implicitly asks viewers, “What would *you* do?” Each penetrating documentary draws on business school case studies, original reporting, social psychology and commentary from prominent ethicists in three eye-opening examinations that cover a range of relevant issues involving the energy market, financial institutions, the mortgage crisis, pharmaceuticals, and more.

The series as a whole look at how ethics play a major role in contemporary business practices and challenges viewers to think about what they would do in these situations. From debating whether or not to act on a piece of insider information, choosing between the wellbeing of employees or an obligation to shareholders, or disclosing information about products with potentially harmful effects to consumers—understanding ethical decision making is a critical skill in the modern workplace. Good people usually do the right thing. But as social psychology experiments have shown, even the most moral character can be influenced under certain circumstances. In every business ethics case there are “gray areas” where decision-making can be challenging and complex.

“Public media is uniquely placed to explore challenging topics like business ethics in depth,” says WNET President and CEO Neal Shapiro. “Where other media might dedicate a few minutes to a topic like this, we are able to dig deeper on behalf of our viewers to tell a more nuanced and detailed story.”

Slated to premiere in February 2017, the third story in the ***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work*** series will focus on a pharmaceutical company case.

***Playing By the Rules: Ethics at Work*** is a production of WLIW LLC. WNET is the parent company of New York’s public television stations THIRTEEN and WLIW21 and operator of NJTV. Mary Lockhart is executive producer. Bryan Myers is producer/writer.

Major funding for ***Playing by the Rules: Ethics at Work*** was provided by Ronnie and Lawrence D. Ackman. Additional funding was provided by Betty and John Levin, Lise Strickler and Mark Gallogly, Patricia and Philip Laskawy, and Graves and Colleen Tompkins.

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#### **About WNET**

WNET is America’s flagship PBS station and parent company of [THIRTEEN](#) and [WLIW21](#). WNET also operates [NJTV](#), the statewide public media network in New Jersey. Through its broadcast channels, three cable services (KidsThirteen, Create and World) and online streaming sites, WNET brings quality arts, education and public affairs programming to more than five million viewers each week. WNET produces and presents such acclaimed PBS series as [Nature](#), [Great Performances](#), [American Masters](#), [PBS NewsHour Weekend](#), [Charlie Rose](#) and a range of documentaries, children’s programs, and local news and cultural offerings. WNET’s

groundbreaking series for children and young adults include [Get the Math, Oh Noah!](#) and [Cyberchase](#) as well as [Mission US](#), the award-winning interactive history game. WNET highlights the tri-state's unique culture and diverse communities through [NYC-ARTS](#), [Reel 13](#), [NJTV News with Mary Alice Williams](#) and [MetroFocus](#), the daily multi-platform news magazine focusing on the New York region. In addition, WNET produces online-only programming including the award-winning series about gender identity, [First Person](#), and an intergenerational look at tech and pop culture, [The Chatterbox with Kevin and Grandma Lill](#). In 2015, THIRTEEN launched Passport, an online streaming service which allows members to see new and archival THIRTEEN and PBS programming anytime, anywhere: [www.thirteen.org/passport](http://www.thirteen.org/passport).