Sticky Fingers

Topic: Due Process

Characters: Susan, Human Resources Manager in a large retail store, one year of service
Mike, Loss Prevention/Security Manager in the same store, ten years of
  service
Todd, a salesman in the jewelry department, three years of service

One month has now passed since a diamond-studded watch was noticed missing from the cases in the jewelry department of this retail store. External theft has already been ruled out, and Mike has been studying the videotapes made by closed-circuit TV that day.

Mike comes into Susan's office to report his findings from the investigation of the missing watch. He tells her his department has studied the tapes and cannot determine who stole the watch but that only one employee, Todd, handled the watch that day. Although Mike knows that failing a lie-detector test cannot be used to dismiss Todd, he points out that Todd was the only one to fail the test when asked if he stole the watch. Since Mike cannot close this investigation without a suspect, he proposes that Susan look through Todd's employment file to determine if there are any alternative reasons for firing this employee.

After diligent examination of Todd's file, Susan notices that his application and sworn bonding form do not exactly reflect the same prior information such as previous employment. Under the company's rules, this may be grounds for termination; however, Susan never would have noticed it had it not been for Mike's zeal to pin the theft on Todd. Susan also recognizes that Mike's performance is based on his ability to catch internal thieves. Susan does not think it is fair to let Todd continue working if he did steal the watch; however, she feels that he is also innocent until proven guilty despite the circumstantial evidence.

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