

A stack of white papers or documents, slightly blurred, set against a light purple background.A blurred image of a clock face, showing numbers and hands, set against a pink and purple background.

# Business Bluffing and the Business of Ethics

A stack of white papers or documents, slightly blurred, set against a light green background.A clear image of a yellow clock face with black numbers and hands, set against a yellow and orange background.

A. Carr and N. Gillespie

# Is Business Bluffing Ethical?

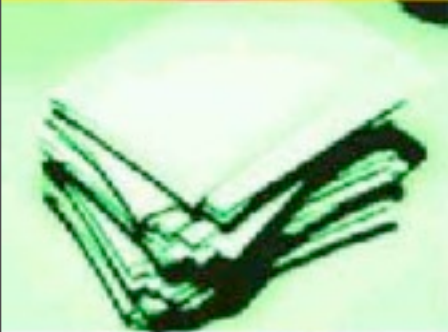
A. Carr

- Corporate interests often compel executives to practice some form of deception.
- Deception in business is justified on the grounds that business has the character of a game.
- Deception in business  $\neq$  Deception in private life



# Poker Analogy

- Element of Chance
- Knowledge of the rules is essential for success
- Knowledge of the psychology of the players is essential
- Bold Front
- Self-discipline



# Discarding the Golden Rule

- Private citizen → Business game player
- Change in Role = Change in ethical standards
- Business standards are markedly different from ordinary moral standards



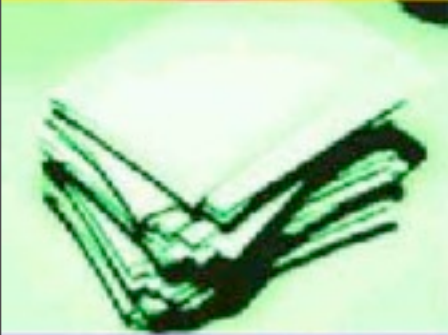


# Business Ethics

- Avoid telling malicious lies
- Following the letter of the law
- Business is not responsible for making the laws
- Business decisions are ultimately *strategic decisions*

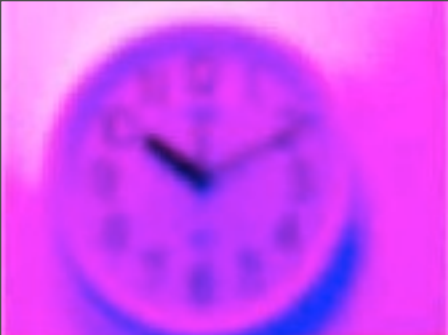
# Conflict between Business and Personal Morality

- “Is” vs. “Ought”
- Lying/Deception
- Political Commitments/Personal Integrity



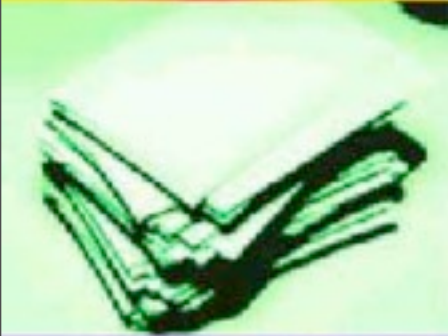
# “The Business of Ethics,” N. Gillespie

- Rejects Carr’s notion of business ethics.
- Offers a critique of Carr’s arguments.
- Argues that the Poker analogy is an inappropriate model for thinking about business ethics.



## 3 Positions of Carr's Article (Acc. to Gillespie)

1. If a business practice is not illegal, then it is morally permissible.
2. If a business does not take advantage of a legal opportunity, then others will.
3. If a practice is so widespread as to constitute the norm, everyone expects conformity.



# Business Is Not a Game

- Poker analogy may well tell us how things are but not how they ought to be.
- More at stake in business than the “pot” of a game.
- People invest a portion of their lives into goods and services and have a right not to be deceived.



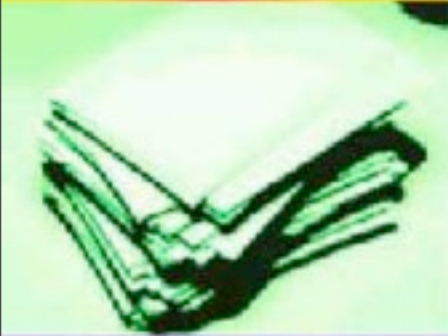
# The Price of Duty

- What are the duties of those working in business?
- Are we obligated to do our duty even if everyone else isn't doing their duty?
- Are there times when we are exempt from doing our duty?



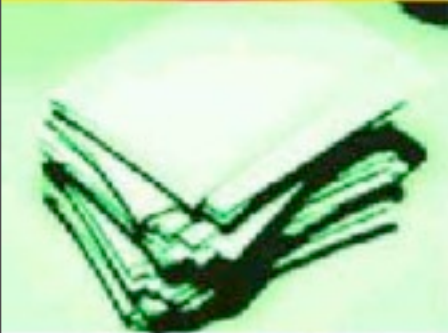
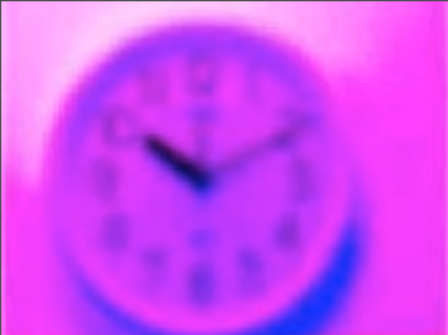
# When it is permissible to not do our duty:

- Moral cost of obeying a standard may be too high
- Cost of fulfilling the duty is too high for the individual
- “Morally desirable state of affairs can be produced only by everyone, or virtually everyone, doing his or her part”(p. 74)



# Exception that Proves the Rule

- The three exceptions to doing one's duty does not entail:
  - Ordinary rules of morality do not apply at all;
  - Business has its own distinctive set of moral rules



# Conclusions

- Duties in business do not constitute a separate form of morality.
- Business executives should not use the excuse that business has its own set of standards to “thwart” reform.
- Certain moral dilemmas in business can be resolved by removing the circumstances that lead to the dilemma.

