**Prof. Zwick Assignment: The Case of the Robo Killer**

The Case of the Killer Robot is a detailed scenario that combines elements of software engineering and computer ethics. The scenario consists of specific issues in software engineering and computer ethics. The articles discuss programs such as programmer psychology, team dynamics, user interfaces, software process models, software testing, the nature of requirements, software theft, and privacy. A major consideration is "when is the software good enough?"

The articles in the scenario begin with the indictment for **manslaughter of a programmer w**ho wrote faulty code that caused the death of a robot operator. Slowly, over the course of **many articles,** students are introduced to **factors within the software company that also** contributed to the accident. They are shown software development as a social process. It is hoped that students will begin to realize the complexity of the task of building real-world software and to see some of the ethical issues intertwined in that complexity. (refer to Reynold’s Chapter 7).

**I. ANSWER ALL** of the following (approximately one page):

(a) Who is responsible for the death of Bart Matthews?

(b) Did Cindy Yardley act ethically?

© Did Ray Johnson act ethically?

**II. In approximately 1 page, what measures, option(s), recommendations, and/or solutions would you provide for the issues raised in the following paragraphs. Is “common morality” the pathway?**

**One issue** that has troubled some teachers about using cases concerns what **moral or ethical framework** to appeal to in analyzing cases and **making recommendations** for action. They find a plurality of religious and other outlooks among people and peoples, between and within countries. Teachers are puzzled about whether there are common standards to which they can legitimately appeal. If there are not, it seems that the effort of teaching cases cannot go forward.

A little reflection reveals that there are common moral standards; maybe **common morality** as, "Those standards of conduct everyone (that is, every reasonable person) wants everyone else to follow even if everyone's following them would mean having to follow them oneself." "Don't kill," "Don't deceive," and "Don't cheat" are among the standards of our common morality.

Different people and groups may have different reasons for acknowledging the same standard, such as self-interest, or a process of reasoning. **What is important is agreement on the standards.** Though we encounter violations and even patterns of violation at some times and places, **these are the standards to which we hold one another**. Violations stand out and command attention against the background of our common standards and expectations.

**Our common morality**, then, provides a fundamental framework of standards to appeal to in reasoning about cases. In teaching professional ethics, we have an additional framework: the codes of ethics promulgated by the professions through their professional associations. These ethical standards are special sets of standards adopted by occupational groups and binding upon the members of the group because they are members of the group

Students generally **do no**t like being told "**this is right and that is wrong**". **But we need in 2020, and the future, to understand the difference between what was right and what was wrong.!!**

The Silicon Techtronics situation is that it is **sometimes difficult to see the boundaries between legal, technical and ethical issues.** Technical issues include computer science and the management issues. This blurring of boundaries results from the fact that the software industry is still in its infancy. T**he ethical issues loom large in part because of the absence of legal and technical guidelines.**