

The Grant

John is a senior student in psychology at a major public university. He serves as a research assistant to Dr. Stallings. John has an excellent academic record and is currently under consideration for admission to the institution's Ph.D. program with a full scholarship. Dr. Stallings is his principal reference for the scholarship.

Currently John has been assisting Dr. Stallings in the preparation of final reports related to a major federal grant. The deadline for completion of the reports and final accounting of funds for the grant is tomorrow. In reviewing the section of the report assigned to him, John notes a minor discrepancy between the observed results and those reflected in the final report as written by Dr. Stallings. Knowing that the report and the results it contains are crucial to Dr. Stallings, John changes the report to reflect the observed results of the project. He returns the report to Dr. Stallings without comment about this change.

Two days later, John receives a copy of the final report as submitted to the grant agency. In the report, the change which John made has been changed again to the original, inaccurate reflection of the observed result. As written, the report changes the observed results and modestly improves the apparent findings of the project. Attached to the report is a handwritten note from Dr. Stallings, thanking John for his work and indicating that John's recommendation is on his desk and will be forwarded to the graduate program shortly.

John takes the report and leaves the office.

Discussion

- Has John done anything wrong?
- Has Dr. Stallings done anything wrong?
- Should John be punished? How?
- Should Dr. Stallings be punished? How?
- What are the implications for John/Dr. Stallings/the institution?
 - personally
 - professionally