

Michael Fiola

Interview



REPORTER

Why did you need a laptop at the Department of Industrial Accidents?

We had a laptop basically to do our reports instantaneously. If I went to a business and found that they were out of compliance, I would log on and type in a report so it could get back to the home office in Boston immediately. We also used it to research businesses.

FIOLA





REPORTER

Had you used a work laptop before?

**Yes, this was a second-generation laptop.
My [first] computer was stolen out of my
vehicle outside of work in Boston in
November 2006.**

FIOLA





REPORTER

How long had you been using a laptop before this one was stolen in November?

About a year and a half.

FIOLA





REPORTER

Did you notice anything strange about this new laptop when you started using it?

Not at all. I'm not that computer-savvy of a person. I'm more of a hunt-and-peck type of guy. I can get in, I can do my e-mail. You tell me to do this form, I can do this form, and that's about it. I typically don't search the Internet, I typically don't go out and browse. I don't play any games. I don't go to chat rooms; never have, never will. I was basically using it for my job.

FIOLA





REPORTER

What happened?

My boss called me into his office at 9 a.m. The director of the Department of Industrial Accidents, my immediate supervisor, and the personnel director were there. They handed me a letter and said, "You are being fired for a violation of the computer usage policy. You have pornography on your computer. You're fired. Clean out your desk. Let's go."

They escorted me to my desk, they watched me clean my personal stuff out of my desk, they escorted me out of the building to my vehicle.

FIOLA





REPORTER

What was your reaction?

Shock. I said, "What are you people talking about? I don't understand?" And they wouldn't talk to me. They said, "We've been advised by our attorney not to talk to you." It felt like the blood drained right from my body. I never expected anything like this to happen.

FIOLA





REPORTER

So what do you think happened?

It was either a rogue hack ... or after my computer was stolen, [the new computer] might have been loaded with the stuff, ready to go. I'm not accusing anybody, but if it was someone in the IT department who was doing this, [maybe they] never had a chance to take it off of there.

FIOLA



References and resources

1. ABC News. 2009. A Misconfigured Laptop, a Wrecked Life. Retrieved January 1, 2022 from <https://abcnews.go.com/Technology/PCWorld/story?id=5188541>