The File Cabinet

by Phillip W. Weiss

Ben Rubin was a Court Street lawyer, meaning he was the kind of lawyer who took no bull and hustled for cases, all to make as much money as possible. For him, the motto time is money, money is time was more than just a platitude; it was a sacred principle and a gospel truth by which to conduct his life. Well, as a panel attorney at the Brooklyn Criminal Court he was always busy, partly because of the huge number of perps who could not afford a defense attorney but mainly because he simply could not say no to the chance to make an extra buck by taking on a case. So, as Ben accepted more cases, his caseload piled up and with that, so did the paperwork. Now, everyone familiar with our judicial system knows that every case generates huge amounts of paperwork. Depositions, motions counter motions, issuing subpoenas, you name it. Every case soon generates enough paper to fill a manila folder three inches thick. At any given time, Ben had at least fifty active cases each with those three-inch-thick files. Soon this proliferation of files created a problem; how to store the files. Normally, files would be stored in metal file cabinets, you know, those ugly gray or green colored monstrosities that are a bureaucrat's delight but a horror to all who value easy access to files. For, as anyone familiar with metal file cabinets knows, those horrible metal monsters do not always cooperate with their users. Those metallic misanthropes often jam and even lock shut, causing its users conniptions and

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rage which in extreme cases can drive someone to the brink of despair and even worse. There was one case in which a certain attorney, desperate to retrieve a file that was stuck in one of those metal file contraptions, attacked the file cabinet with a sledgehammer in a last-ditch effort to get the confounded thing to open; it still would not open. Legend has it that the lawyer, now driven to hysteria, threatened to commit suicide and was prevented from doing so by his partner, who was finally able to pry open the cabinet. Anyway, the last thing Ben wanted or could afford to deal with was a recalcitrant file cabinet. Instead of using a file cabinet, Ben stored his files in large, corrugated boxes. The problem was that whenever Ben needed to get a file, he had to reach inside the box, which proved very awkward and produced lower back strain and Ben did not have the strongest of backs. So, Ben was in a quandary. Either he would have to relent and get a metal file cabinet, an option that he detested, or continue using the box, which was hurting is back. Then, when least expected, something happened that provided the answer to his problem, and which also changed his life. After a busy day in criminal court, Ben returned to his office. As usual his briefcase was crammed with papers. Ben placed the briefcase on his desk and then it happened: the briefcase toppled over and out spilled all the papers onto the floor. Ben looked down mesmerized by the pile of paper on the floor. The proverbial light bulb went on in his head. He had found the solution to his filing problem. Instead of placing the papers in the box, why not just let the papers pile up on the floor? This solution solved all of Ben's filing problems. First, he no longer had to

contort his back to lift papers out of a box and second, he could let the papers just pile up without having to do anymore heavy lifting to retrieve files. Soon after, Ben dumped all his files on the floor and then carefully stacked them into one pile that almost reached the ceiling. Soon, other lawyers learned of Ben's innovative solution to the problem of file storage and retrieval. Ben named his method, the Rubin Innovative Vertical System, or RIVS. Soon, Ben became the most celebrated counselor in the Brooklyn Criminal Courts. Ben proved that an attorney did not need a file cabinet to store files. Lawyers came from all over the world to study his filing system, such as it was. Then Ben took his newly discovered administrative talent to the next level. Drawing on his experience as a public schoolteacher, which required that he devise written lesson plans, Ben developed a legal intake form that allowed him to conduct initial interviews of clients in under sixty seconds. By utilizing this form, Ben was able to double his caseload capacity and thus double his income. In the arraignment part, Ben soon was nicknamed Speedy O'Hara and dazzled his clients with the speed with which he could assess their cases. Soon Ben was pulling in so many cases and making so much money that he caught the attention of the United States Supreme Court which offered him the position of chief clerk for the Supreme Court. Although tempted to accept the position, Ben had to turn down the offer; in his present capacity he was, as the saying goes, raking in the dough. For the first time in his life, Ben was making serious money. But, as with all great accomplishments, Ben's innovative genius came at a price. He incurred the wrath of metal file cabinet industry. What freed lawyers from their dependence om the metal file

cabinet, and which was quickly rendering the metal file cabinet obsolete, threatened to wipe out the entire metal file cabinet industry. The National Association of Metal File Cabinet Manufacturers or NAMFCM filed suit in federal court asking the court to issue an immediate injunction prohibiting Ben from representing RIVS as a bona fide method for managing files. This case drew national attention to the problem of document storage and management with some arguing that Ben's innovation was a sham while others labeled Ben a hero who had finally found a solution to a problem that had been vexing humanity since the beginning of history. Soon the case wound its way to the United States Supreme Court, which in the now famous landmark case, Rubin v. NAMFCM et al, found that the Rubin Innovative Vertical System was in fact a legitimate, method for managing files and confirmed Ben's right to market his system and provide technical support and guidance to other agencies and organizations that wished to adopt RIVS as their model for file management and storage. But this did not end the controversy. In a last-ditch effort to stop Ben's RIVS, the NAMFCM filed suit in the international court of human justice, charging that Ben's filing system was a economic crime against humanity since it would destroy an entire industry resulting in immitigable misery for the millions of people who depended on the manufacture of metal file cabinets for their livelihood, and also filed an appeal with the United Nations asking the General Assembly to issue a resolution declaring Ben's RIVS a threat to world peace and security. and ordering the imposition of sanctions against any nation that provides a haven for Rubin Innovative Vertical System. After fiery debate in the General Assembly, the United

Nations issued a resolution condemning the Rubin Innovative Vertical System and ordering the immediate imposition of sanctions against the United States which was the only country which had voted against the resolution. In response, the United States left the United Nations, ordered the United Nations to leave New York City, revoked the visas that permitted UN diplomats entry to the United States and ordered all UN diplomats and their staff to leave the United States in twenty-four hours or be detained by ICE. As for the case the NAMFCM brought before the International Court of Human Justice, the court recused itself on the grounds that their filing system was in shambles due to serious technical defects in the metal file cabinets used to store their case files and therefore could not consider the case with total impartiality. As for Ben Rubin, he went on to found a company, Rubin Enterprises Inc which today is the largest company in the world and today is credited as the man who saved the world by creating a filing system that freed the human race from dependence on the metal cabinet file and the tyranny of the greedy metal cabinet file manufacturers who put profit ahead of people.

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