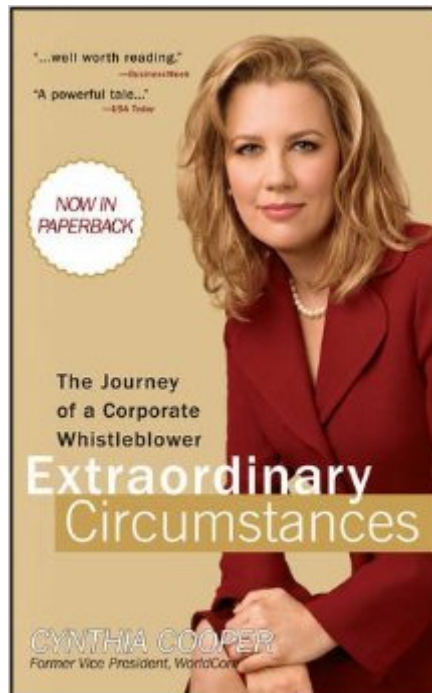


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# Extraordinary Circumstances: The Journey Of A Corporate Whistleblower



## Synopsis

The longer WorldCom Chief Audit Executive Cynthia Cooper stares at the entries in front of her, the more sinister they seem. But the CFO is badgering her to delay her team's audit of the company's books and directing others to block Cooper's efforts. Still, something in the pit of her stomach tells her to keep digging. Cooper takes readers behind the scenes on a riveting, real-time journey as she and her team work at night and behind closed doors to expose the largest fraud in corporate history. Whom can they trust? Could she lose her job? Should she fear for her physical safety? In *Extraordinary Circumstances*, she recounts for the first time her journey from her close family upbringing in a small Mississippi town, to working motherhood and corporate success, to the pressures of becoming a whistleblower, to being named one of Time's 2002 Persons of the Year. She also provides a rare insider's glimpse into the spectacular rise and fall of WorldCom, a telecom titan, the darling of Wall Street, and a Cinderella story for Mississippi. With remarkable candor, Cooper discusses her struggle to overcome these challenges, and how she has found healing through sharing the lessons learned with the next generation. This book reminds us all that ethical decision-making is not forged at the crossroads of major events but starts in childhood, "decision by decision and brick by brick." At a time when corporate dishonesty is dominating public attention, *Extraordinary Circumstances* makes it clear that the tone set at the top is critical to fostering an ethical environment in the work-place. Provocative, moving, and intensely personal, *Extraordinary Circumstances* is a wake-up call to corporate leaders and an intimate glimpse at a scandal that shook the business world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This is the story of a telephone company (variously called Long Distance Discount Services, LDDS WorldCom, and just WorldCom), and its head of internal audit, Cynthia Cooper. In 1999, as the telecom boom began to fizzle, the management of Worldcom began to fiddle the books. This is the story of a crime, and the person who uncovered it. It's a great story, and one that has something to teach us about corporations and corporate crime today, almost ten years later, and will have something to teach us in another ten years. We're lucky to have Cooper, who was there to see it, there to do the right thing, and there to write about it afterwards. Cooper does a good job in telling the story. She makes the accounting issues clear to people like me with no background in accounting, and the importance of internal audit obvious to people like me who have never had one and are not likely to. The book has a very thorough bibliography and index, although no chronology or time line. The book would have been clearer if Cooper had started at the beginning and told the story until she got to the end. The beginning of the book seems particularly clumsy: the narrative bounces backwards and forwards several times as Cooper foreshadows what's going to happen later in the story. As Cooper describes how the fraud at WorldCom was committed and then discovered, she discusses the accounting issues clearly and in what I read as a matter of fact tone. I'm grateful that people like Cooper are focused on accounting and enforcing its rules, and I don't mean to belittle the profession, but I would have taken a different moral tone in telling the story. When you read the book, you have to remember that many of the people described are simply crooks.

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