PROFESSOR JIM GORDON'S WEEK

Jim Gordon was an associate professor of Organizational Behavior at a major business school. He had received his doctorate from another major business school 7 years previously and had taught there before moving to his present institution 4 years ago. He had just learned 4 months earlier that he had been granted tenure at the school. The following is a week-long, self-report diary of his activities during the first week of school in the fall. His school admitted over 200 MBA students each fall to a two-year, residential program.

Mr. Gordon had a wife and three children. He was 6’1”, weighed 205, and considered himself reasonably active, but 20 pounds overweight. A recent physical showed him to be in excellent physical condition, with normal total cholesterol (201), 20% body fat, 131 mg triglycerides, and blood pressure (116/82).

Monday, 9/8

5:30 Wife up, feeds 3-month-old baby.
6:00 Alarm. Up, go to bathroom, then to the weight room; do 40 backs, 40 stomachs, 20 curls, 20 extensors.
6:25 Shower, dress, watch tape of “Sports Machine” taped from 11:30 the night before.
7:07 Collect trash, take it out.
7:15 Breakfast (bowl of cereal), advise kids (two, a boy 7 and a girl 5) to clean basement before school, reread case for 8 a.m. class.
7:30 Kiss kids and wife, leave.
7:45 Arrive school, get mail, check class cards to see who to call on in class.
8:00 Teach first-year Organizational Behavior (FYOB) class: Fred Henderson and Henry Mintzberg’s article on what managers really do. Very active discussion, including how tolerant managers are or should be of incompetence.
9:25  Dismiss class, talk to 8 students who come up.

9:35  Go to coffee, drink orange juice, talk with 4 students.

9:45  Climb stairs to second floor to see if Kathy (a colleague) is prepared to distribute the "Elizabeth Best" B and C cases next Monday. Stick head in to see Bob (visiting faculty) and make appointment to talk about the doctoral program next Thursday.

10:00 Back to the office. First-Year Committee chair comes in to check on assignments for first-year field trips. I compose the assignment and print it out on the spot.

10:25 I compose letter to ABC company (a consulting company I work with on occasion) and print it out.

10:45 My secretary advises me that the FIRO-B tests we'd ordered Federal Express were delivered to the University's counseling center. Great!@#

11:00 Len (a colleague) comes by to ask if I will watch out for an international student in my section. I agree. Doreen (another colleague) comes by to ask why we don't change the criteria for the student academic awards, to check on the schedule for an off-site program we're teaching in, and to ask me to fix her printer.

12:00 I ask my secretary to type an organizational culture bibliography.

12:15 I leave for the gym. Change, play squash, win 6 out of 7 games; in shower, invite partner (a new faculty member) to get acquainted with ABC consultants, to meet my wife, and to meet some East Coast clients.

2:00 Call the office, say I'll be 5 minutes late for my 2:00 appointment.

2:05 Meet daughter of one of the administrative staff; she has worked in Japan, and wants advice on her resume.

3:00 My wife calls to report on her doctor's visit. We conclude that we ought to get a second opinion. They said no surgery, but the lumps under her arm look serious to us. I ask her if she can pick up the FIRO tests, she say's it would be hard with 3 kids. I agree, but she says she'll do it. I eat lunch--crackers, dip, apple.

3:10 Review case for 3:30 elective; try to copy 40 data sheets. Wouldn't you know it, the copier is out of paper! Open the Strong Campbell Interest Inventory packets, collect teaching files. A student stops in to say that he is dropping the course. Get chalk (the school buys cheap, dusty chalk, so I carry my own around). Make 2
transparencies and head for class.

3:30  Walk in classroom.

3:35  Class begins. It's the first day of the elective, and there's an active discussion. We talk about who I am, and the case, "Dan & Mandy." Success.

5:00  Class over.

5:05  Office--mark class participation, file articles from in box, check mail. Len comes by again, will I see the Japanese ambassador? Sure, I'd love to. I try to sort the organizational culture bibliography on my computer and mess it all up.

6:00  Call home.

6:25  Arrive home. Play with kids.

6:40  Eat tacos, salad. Wife tells story of doctor, mother arrives to talk for a few minutes (she and father live next door); watch a short news clip, put baby in bed screaming.

7:15  See end of "Sports Machine" tape; it has a spoof on football, bloopers, nice music, we laugh together as a family.

7:30  Play Bounceback in the yard with the two oldest kids.

8:00  Open FIRO-B box, put the kids in the tub. Take the FIRO-B to see what my scores are and read 2 pages of the manual.

8:15  Pray with kids; mother calls to ask if I've listened to my brother's tape he sent in the mail. No, not yet, Mother.

8:30  Start computer to work on note describing the FIRO-B.

10:00  Edit Figure Test note for the book.

10:30  Start to edit PTO member rolls (I'm the membership vice president). Can't get Lotus 1-2-3 to find data in the PTO file.

11:15  Write in diary.

11:30  Cereal--5 bowls of Rice Krispies. It makes my stomach full and stops its churning.

11:45  Bed.
TUESDAY, 9/9

4:20 Roger, 7-year-old son, wakes up crying that the snake people are trying to get him. He has to go to the bathroom.

6:00 Alarm goes off. Ignore it.

6:20 Up, shower, stretching exercises for bad back; hand the baby to Sally, read a couple of pages from a book on the bed while dressing, pack basketball bag.

7:10 Gone.

7:25 See Neil (colleague) in the parking lot. We talk cars.

7:30 Print FIRO-B and Figure Test notes to send to colleagues. Ask secretary to get system numbers for 4 cases.

8:00 FYOB class: Teach "Renn Zaphiropoulis." We discuss the difference between managers and leaders and the relationship of that topic to our work here.

9:25 Talk to 9 students about the class, with regard to leadership; they ask if LBJ was a leader.

9:35 Go to coffee, drink OJ, and buy a muffin (which I don't need). Say hi to 4 students.

9:45 Secretary left messages on desk. Call Kathy and George to see if they are okay on the FIRO-B note. We'll get back to you, they say (that means they haven't read it yet).

10:00 I redraw the figures in the Figure Test.

10:10 Student comes in to talk about the summer for 10 minutes; he doesn't have an appointment. I call the dean's office to say that Sally and I are coming to the faculty dinner/dance. Finish the Figure Test note.

11:00 Get lunch--apple and veggies. Edit FIRO-B. Call Audio-Visual and check on schedule for "A Tale of 'O'.

11:45 Get FYOB assignments to secretary, typed.

12:00 On the way to play squash, see Larry (chairman of the Research Committee), who wants the OB cases culled out. Uh, oh! That's a lot of work! Take the finished
Figure Test downstairs to Publications to put in the system. Play Hoops til 2:00 with the First Years. My guy beats me bad. Dam! I buy pop and gum.

2:00 Shower. George is in the locker room; ask him about the FIRO-B note. He says it's okay (I wonder if he looked at it). We talk ethics. Go back to the office. Print the FIRO-B note and take it to Publications. Meet Bob and (his wife) Mary. I'm supposed to introduce them at the faculty dinner/dance, so I interview them for a while.

3:25 Rush to class with Figure Test. Good class except that Publications didn't include the sample data case in the students' packets, so we don't have anything to discuss. Great! @#&%$^ We use student data, not the kind of second-day impression I wanted to leave.

5:10 Back to my office, find a note from secretary, "Please see me!" Uh, oh, what's that about? She's not there, of course. It's 5:10.

5:15 Go through the mail and route magazines, crossing off my name with barely a glance at the tables of contents, occasionally leaving a Post-It note on the cover to get a copy of an article I want to read later (like the several thousand unread ones in my topical files!).

5:45 Mail includes a memo to the faculty softball team, a book, magazines, announcement of a new faculty, announcement of the student academic award winners, letter to ABC advisory committee, notice of a former classmate coming to interview at the school, also the typed bibliography, and still 10 items of mail left. Stop to get a chicken sandwich on the way home.

6:00 Pick up my son and his friend at soccer practice.

6:15 They ask if I'd be a soccer coach. I say I'd rather do hoops or baseball, games I know. Would you get someone else for soccer?

6:30 Take Roger straight to piano lesson; he wants me to come in and listen. So, I can't read more of the mail. That's okay, but it's a constant struggle trying to get done at the office and spend time with the kids and do church work and get some time for Sally and myself alone.

7:10 Home, talk with Dad and Sally about houses; we need to move, our place is too small. (We bought a small house when we came, not knowing if we'd get tenure. Now, that that's done, and we've had two more children, we are tripping all over each other.) Maybe we should build?
7:45 Eat salad, 2 slices of bread, juice.

8:00 Kids bathe. Read them the Norwegian Troll book (what a great story, but a bit racy for the young ones), prayer, then put them to bed.

8:30 Jump in the tub.

9:20 In bed. Mom calls on the phone; flip channels 15 minutes, trying to relax.

10:00 Sleep.

3:30 Cathy (the baby) awakes, crying. Read Time while Sally nurses. Sally’s tired, so I rock the baby to sleep. I'm exhausted.

4:30 Back to sleep.

**WEDNESDAY, 9/10**

6:00 Alarm goes off; I'm bone tired, stiff muscles from squash. Can't get up.

7:00 Up at last, shower, eat, watch football bloopers tape again at kids' request. It really is funny.

8:00 Gone. Drop off pictures to be developed.

8:15 My secretary comes in to talk. She's embarrassed because she doesn't know my work life or how my office is organized. So, I spend 20 minutes explaining my filing system to her--pleased that she wants to know, irritated that we have to do this since I rarely ask her to get in the files, anyway. I explain the various projects I'm working on: office coordinator for the three secretaries who serve 16 faculty on this wing, chair of the Placement Committee, co-leader of the University Organizational Behavior Research Interest Group, Partners' Association advisor, editor of a professional group's newsletter, editor of 2 major journals (which takes 10-20 hours a month), FYOB course head responsible for planning, designing, and implementing the course with three other faculty, teaching Career Management, teaching FYOB, teaching doctoral seminar on pedagogy, plus outside consulting and trying to write some articles on my research data base. I don't mention the 5-10 hours a week of church work or the PTO.

8:51 I try to work through the stack of mail/projects on desk. Are all of the student class cards there for Career Management? Once I got halfway through a semester before I realized I didn't have a card for a student who'd been there all along! Ouch!
Prepare Strong Campbell Interest Inventory answer sheets to send off for scoring.

9:15 I haven't been able to pay the bills yet. So, work on those (they're late).

9:45 A woman from the Division of Continuing Education in the state capital comes by to ask about consulting activities with the faculty. She wants to identify our skill areas and then market them to the local business community. We talk about the possibilities.

10:00 Summer research assistant comes in to talk about the work we did this summer on a major case with a $5 billion company involved in a merger.

10:45 Couple of students come by, asking if I mind if 2 managers from their host company come to class today? No, fine. Have to go dig up the assignment for them so they will know what's going on. A colleague comes by to see if I want to play squash again. Sure. Another colleague comes by to see if I want to play basketball. If I can. Another colleague comes by to ask about the consulting schedule for a major client we're working with. Here it is.

11:15 I'm responsible for the FYOB teaching meetings, and I need to set a schedule for them for the year. Work on that for a while.

11:20 Print the JMBR journal review I typed over the weekend. Then go through today's mail. Walk by Executive Programs to check on the case numbers for a program coming up in a couple of weeks that I have to teach in.

11:45 A colleague comes by to say that he has to teach overseas 2 days on a topic I'm interested in. What materials do I have? I tell him about the case we've been working on this summer.

12:00 I dictate 2 letters to colleagues coming up for promotion elsewhere. Another secretary comes in to ask what she can do about working with one of her faculty--apparently he is abrupt with her. She also wants a 2-drawer file cabinet, will I get it for her? Go home to get squash gear.

2:00 First-Year Committee meeting (I'm a member because of being first-year course head for a required course). We talk about study groups, student reports.

2:30 Debbie, colleague working with me on this client program, comes by to ask about the schedule again. Also, she can't get her computer to work again, so I help. Then, I meet with another colleague to describe the First-Year Committee meeting.

3:45 Go through the mail.
4:00 There's a stack of pink slips, telephone messages, I HATE these things, they're like little lemmings constantly screaming "FEED ME, FEED ME!!" One from a student. Call. He complains "poor me" because to support his friends he has to go out drinking when he needs to study. How can he meet his social responsibilities to his friends in need when he needs to study? I tell him to find a balance and not be two-faced, saying that he wants to go when he doesn't. I don't expect much change. This guy comes in a lot to complain about a lot of things. Yet he's had a hard life (haven't we all?), and he needs something. I can't just turn him away.

5:10 Run, change, play squash for 15 minutes. Shower.

6:00 Check disks; I've lost a case file on disk somewhere. Wife calls, complains about my faux pas with the rain gutters. (I bought these "high tech" rain gutters that didn't work, and when I tried to send them back, the company refused to accept them and returned them.) Thanks. I don't need that right now.

6:15 Clean up my computer disks. It's relaxing, yet I feel compulsive.

6:50 Prepare for class to be held that night at 7:00. The Partners' Association asked me, as advisor, to teach a typical class for them so they'd know what it was like for their partners in school.)

7:00 There are 35 partners (33 women and 2 men); there were 70 the week before at orientation. Clearly, they want to socialize more than they want to work. I feel ill prepared, but I have to do this.

8:30 I end class, they liked it, but I feel it was a mediocre performance on my part. Go back to office, pack stuff, head out. Go to the grocery store to get milk and a couple of items on Sally's list.

8:45 Leave Safeway.

9:15 Get home.

9:30 Eat a mound of salad, spaghetti, freezer yogurt, cherry juice. Wife complains about her church job, the kids, that she's having a mental breakdown. She takes a Dimetab.

10:30 Go to the bathroom, while she turns the TV on.

11:05 Sleep.
THURSDAY, 9/11

6:00 Alarm, get up, shower, stretch, gotta save those back muscles (I have a bad back from a teenage accident).

7:00 Eat.

7:30 Need to take the van to work today, but discover its got a dead battery. Now what? We get it jump started.

8:30 Take Callie, five-year-old, to nursery.

9:00 Have to convert the text file for a case I had my secretary type into IBM format to WANG. The school's administrators insist on using WANG dedicated word processors. It's a real pain. They shut the WANG down when it rains, thunders, or need to clean the system disk. There aren't enough terminals, and it's simply an obsolete system. Why not just use personal computers like the rest of the world? Go through the mail. A doctoral student, wife of one of our faculty, comes in to talk about thesis ideas. She wants to work on the stress caused by declining business situations.

10:00 Go see Kathy and Bob to talk about the strategy to get a doctoral program for OB.

10:55 Take a break. Get the schedule out for the OB Research Interest Group which I leave with Kathy; we have to send it to 50 people all over campus.

11:00 Talk more with Bob about doctoral program strategy and how other faculty see the OB effort at getting one.

11:40 Tell my secretary I'm going out, any messages?

12:00 Go play hoops.

2:20 Walk back with 2 colleagues and find my office full of computer types installing a new board in the school's computer assigned to my office. Make some instant lemonade (the Nutrasweetened kind) and sit in the lobby to talk about the First-Year Committee meeting with the 2 colleagues.

3:00 Return to office; they're still in there. Work with the guy to set the software switches. Bob calls to see if I want to play squash. I shouldn't, but I do. I like Bob, and I hope he will stay permanently.

4:00 I leave to go home and watch the kids. Sally says that the gutter company finally accepted the delivery. Hurray!
4:20 Talk with my Dad as he’s coming home from work. Roger is trying to mow the lawn, grunting and groaning the whole time, struggling with the mower that’s a bit big for him, but manageable. It irritates me that he complains so much. Then, he has the nerve to ask if he can go down the street to play street football with the neighborhood kids.

5:00 The baby, Cathy, is crying. Try to get her down to sleep. Read Sports Illustrated; it comes every Thursday. Roger got in a fight at football and comes home crying. Fix dinner--salad, left-over spaghetti.

5:40 Cathy wakes up; rock her on the porch. We see Mom and Dad next door eating out on the deck.

6:30 Sally comes home from piano lessons, takes over. I go start on Parent Teachers Organization computer spreadsheet. Trying to bring the records into the 20th century.

7:30 We have family prayer since Sally won’t be home when the kids go to bed.

7:45 Sally goes off to her church meeting. The baby cries; rock her downstairs in my office while I’m trying to print out the PTO file.

8:15 Carry PTO printout and the baby upstairs. Put her down and begin opening the returning PTO contribution envelopes and recording the amounts while I watch Thursday night edition of pro football. Pleased because the letter we sent out generated lots of dollars back for dues and contributions. Eat an apple and some cookies.

10:00 Sally comes home. I eat a sandwich, we talk, she wants to learn Lotus 1-2-3 for her church job, which is secretary of the youth group.

10:30 Sleep.

1:30 Cathy wakes up; go to lie down with her.

2:30 Back to bed.

FRIDAY, 9/12

5:30 Sally comes back to bed after feeding the baby. She usually walks in the mornings with two neighbors at 5 a.m., but she’s tired, so doesn’t go. She sets the alarm for 6:30. But I’m awake now, so I continue adding data to the PTO file.
6:30 Do weights (backs, stomachs, deltoids, curls), print out another PTO file while I'm in the shower.

7:00 Breakfast, dress for squash since Bob could only find an early hour. That's a bummer because my best work time is in the morning.

8:00 Get to home computer to do book review. Write two sentences when Callie screams, she's pinched her back in the door.

8:30 Bob calls and cancels because he's strained a muscle. Great! Sally getting ready to go buy groceries. I'm stuck with a crying baby. Put her in the crib, feel guilty.

9:00 Sally comes into home office, offers to take baby. Great! Write review of 2 books at authors' requests. They have sent their own copy for the reviews, trying to make it easy for me, but I'm a bit miffed that they want me to sign their words, somehow lending professional credibility. Is that normal? I don't think so. So, I ignore their summaries and write my own reviews, saying it how I see it. Get 12 pages out.

11:15 Sally comes back. Ask her to read a letter to PTO. She says it's too hard to understand, won't okay it. Okay, fine. I change out of squash clothes and drive to office. Get the mail.

12:00 Go to Executive Hall for lunch with OB Research Interest Group. There are 17 there, a good turnout. Conduct the meeting, it goes well. The Publications director has left a message about the cases for my elective. Go see her on the way back.

1:00 Get to office. Continue organizing disks, cleaning up hard disk, which is almost full. Copy files off of secretary's disk.

1:40 On my way out the door, see associate dean, who wants to know if I'm ready to introduce Bob at the faculty dinner/dance. Yes. Drive to golf course, play a round with colleague from economics and a local dentist.

7:30 Finish golfing, didn't do real well, go home. Eat, play with kids.

8:00 Tired, fall on bed, it breaks. (@#$%) Watch TV with family, half of 2 movies.

9:30 Callie falls asleep. She's beautiful, lying there, angelic countenance.

10:00 Sally falls asleep. She looks tired.

10:15 Roger falls asleep. I wish he wouldn't wimp out so much.
11:15 I fall asleep. I've come to learn that I really need that 30-60 minutes alone at night. No talking. No phones. No pressures. No interruptions. Just me, alone, quiet, coming down. Sally wants to talk at night. Doesn't want to get up in the morning. She has kids all day and wants to talk adult at night. I have adults all day and want not to talk at all at night. A dilemma.

SATURDAY, 9/13

7:40 I'm up; kids are watching cartoons, a tradition in my wife's family, rare in mine.

8:30 Run 3.7 miles; Sally went walking. Roger and I wash and wax the 3 cars. Breakfast, waffles. I want to mow the lawn, but the mower won't work, so we take it to the repair shop. Go to office to pick up the file on Bob so I can introduce them. Van still won't start, have to jump start it. Need to go get a new battery. Someone calls while I'm at the office (how did they find me?), wants me to teach a church lesson. Okay.

12:30 Head home for lunch--salad, bagel, lemonade. Clean up the battery; its corroded, take back the old one for a rebate, buy popcorn, and drop off the van for a tune-up. (It's 11 years old, but runs okay, usually. It's definitely been worth the $1,500 investment.)

2:30 Talk with Perry, my best friend, for 30 minutes, then Mom comes over and we talk for a while. Tired already, we get in the hot tub and soak for 30 minutes.

5:00 We take a nap. Kids wake us up twice. I'm tired.

6:30 Shower and race out the door to faculty dinner/dance. Feel clean, but tried and heavy; my jacket is tight.

7:00 Get the baby sitter (she only lives three blocks away, which is great). Come back to get Sally, change jackets, get gas on the way to dance. Meet a colleague in the parking lot; we have two soft drinks and stop by Bob's table for two last bits of information. We are all heading in to the tables; it's the worst time of an otherwise very pleasant evening, everyone jockeying for who's sitting with whom where. It's a good dinner--roast beef, shrimp, cheesecake. When it's my turn, I introduce Bob and his wife; it goes quite well.

11:15 We get ready to leave, talk briefly with the dean and a former colleague who's gone into industry and has come back for the dinner.

11:30 Take the baby sitter home; costs me $10. It's a beautiful night--clear sky, crisp air, full moon. Dreamlike. It reminds me of Idaho.
12:00 Fall asleep.

**SUNDAY**

6:45 Up, shower, dress.

7:25 Leave for church executive meeting.

8:30 Discuss the meeting with the bishop, visit with a member family that we visit regularly, and leave my 2 briefcases on the front pew for the kids to see when they come in. A couple of members come up to talk about things I should take back to the Stake President.

8:45 Leave for home, find that just as Sally was ready to go, the baby threw up, and she wants to know if I think it's okay to take her to church? How should I know?

9:05 We arrive at church late, struggle with the baby's car seat, Sally gets the roll for the youth group, and I am frantically preparing my talk for church. Sally takes the kids home sick, I have Callie. We go to Sunday School. Teach the lesson in Priesthood Meeting. Then, without a car, ride home with Mom and Dad, sitting in the back with Callie. It's good to have one-on-one time with her; it really makes a difference, even though I know this isn't enough of it. We have too few times alone together.

Have been fasting this morning, but am not feeling so well, so change my decision not to eat. Have to set the volleyball standards up for the dinner company. Roger tries to help, but he gets in the way. I feel guilty, I'm too task oriented, I need to include them in my activities more. I wash my face, lie down for 5 minutes, read the case for tomorrow's class. There's also an article, "The Management Theory Jungle." I watch the Bears game for a minute, then get up and go to church leadership meeting.

1:45 My mind is unusually blank, I'm listening to slow music.

2:30 Arrive at church meeting (it's a 50-minute drive from home).

4:15 The meeting carries on. I feel unprepared for the second time in 2 years, I've been too busy. The process observer forgets to mention items from the 7:30 a.m. meeting. I make 7 comments in the meeting.

4:15 The next meeting involves leaders of the various auxiliary programs in the church, Sunday School, women's organization, music, etc. I'm worrying about preparing my PTO poster for membership drive, preparing for class tomorrow morning, preparing my stewardship reports for my church job.
6:00 Meeting ends. I talk a bit with Dan, the first counselor to the stake president. He's an intense, energetic guy.

7:00 Get home, talk with the kids, eat.

8:00 Read cases for tomorrow's class.

9:00 Turn on the computer and edit the book reviews I wrote yesterday.

10:00 Go to bed, tired.