

## GLOBAL MOBILE COMPANY

Scylla Lee flew back to corporate headquarters on a double red-eye flight, west to east, mind and soul in some turmoil.

Lee had graduated two years ago from a widely recognized Management School (MS). She had followed an old friend and MS alumnus, Effiong Etuk, to Global Mobile, a major multinational company with partnerships and investments in dozens of developing countries. Scylla was delighted to interview with Global and to have been offered an unusual job, in a small group reporting directly to a vice president working closely with the COO. This strategic planning group was the brainchild of the COO, also a graduate of MS. "We need to be flexible and nimble," said the COO. "I want a group of analysts I can trust that will keep us on our toes out there. Hire the best, pay them well, keep them travelling, analyzing, and making contacts."

Scylla was returning from a trip to several countries in Africa, where she was looking at Global's interests in mining companies. Labor costs seemed to vary a great deal among the various companies, (especially because of health care, security, housing and food costs); the future of automation had to be analyzed. Global wanted her to compare Global's various mining investments.

Scylla had spent the most time at the most profitable company, looking especially at the costs of security, health care, and housing and food. She became concerned about the low wages, long hours underground, inadequate safety conditions. She was, however, especially troubled about something she had discovered from a statistics analyst attached to the company medical facilities.

Puzzled and upset, she routed herself back through Thailand. She wanted to talk privately with Effiong, now based in Bangkok, on her way home.

"Effiong," she had said, "Do you know what the mining company does? It offers some health care to all workers. Whenever you come in, for any reason, they do a variety of lab tests, no matter what brings you in. They then privately test for TB, hepatitis, and HIV — and heaven knows what else — and then quietly fire you for apparent work-related reasons if you test positive. They don't tell you they are testing and they don't tell you what they find, you just lose your job or don't get re-hired after one of the mine's periodic inspection shutdowns."

"Some of our partners do this kind of thing in various other countries," Effiong replied. "It's not just Africa. And what about blood tests done on you when you joined the company, Scylla? Genetic testing is still legal in our home state. If you are going to get upset, start at home. I heard once that the company freezes some blood, for testing

later on, in case you're up for a major promotion. They'll look for Alzheimer's markers, heart disease, breast cancer or whatever. But look, please also think carefully about this. Are you sure you want to rock the boat? Global competition means cost control. What can any one of us do?"