Iron Chef: Emeril and Ramsay
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2010

This abstract was released in accordance with the abstract timeline in the Constitution.

Introduction:
Wolfgang Puck, Emeril Lagasse, and Mario Batali were all chefs in Gordon Ramsay's cooking class. After a cooking exam, Ramsay was suspicious that some chefs in the class did not follow the instructions regarding the time limit and the procedures outlined for submitting their tests. Ramsay suspected that several chefs submitted their tests to the judges after the specified deadline, and asked Wolfgang, Emeril, and Mario to submit statements to Honor Council. Honor Council consented on a non-suspicion for Mario, though it was decided that a mediation between Mario and Judge Ramsay would be beneficial. The mediation was successful. Honor Council consented on separate suspicions of violation for Wolfgang and Emeril and decided to send the two cases to one academic trial. This was to save Ramsay time and to ensure that the cases would be treated equally and with the same context, as some Council representatives were concerned that having different juries might result in significantly different outcomes. The confronted students would participate in each portion of the trial independently and would not be informed of or interact with the other.

Involved Parties:
Wolfgang Puck: Student 1 (non-violation)
Emeril Lagasse: Student 2 (violation)
Mario Batali: Student 3 (non-suspicion; mediation only)
Judge Ramsay: Professor
Judge Herme: Another Professor
Bobby Flay: A Juror

Fact Finding Student 1 (non-violation): Wolfgang Puck

Judge Ramsay's statement:
Ramsay explained that this test was to be completed during the normal cooking class time. He had to leave before the end of the test and informed the class of this, saying that if they finished after he had gone they should instead submit it to an assistant judge, Pierre Herme. Ramsay wrote this on the board in the kitchen and then verbally added that they must turn it in before Herme's departure at 4:40 (the class officially ended at 4:30). Herme later told Ramsay that a steady stream of chefs brought their tests to him after 4:30, and it was determined that Wolfgang and Emeril must have come well after 4:40.

Chef Wolfgang’s statement:
Wolfgang stated that since chefs may have started cooking at different times, there shouldn't be one end time for the 85 minute exam. He thought that the only real time constraint was to submit his work to Herme by 4:40, and that Ramsay had not been explicit about when to stop working.

Jury Questions:
The jury attempted to establish the timeline of Wolfgang's actions during the competition. Wolfgang said he finished the test around 4:30. He was out of the kitchen before the next class, Desserts 101, started. He then waited to meet a friend and used the restroom, and thinks he submitted his test at 4:50. Wolfgang was aware of the 4:40 deadline but didn't think it was “urgent.” He saw other chefs turn in their tests late. He did not think to ask Ramsay any clarifying questions about the test.

Ramsay added that the judge of Desserts 101 did not think there were any students still cooking when that class began. Ramsay recalled that Wolfgang acknowledged using an extra 3-8 minutes during an initial meeting about this issue. Wolfgang denied saying this and asserted that he did not take extra time. Ramsay thought Wolfgang’s timeline was unlikely but not impossible.

After Chef Wolfgang left, Chef Emeril entered.

Fact Finding Student 2 (Violation): Emeril Lagasse

Judge Ramsay’s statement:
Judge Ramsay said that he had made it clear to the chefs that time was to be a factor. Emeril said that this could have meant many things, but he did not ask Ramsay for clarification. Ramsay doesn’t know how many cooks worked beyond the time limit, and didn't think there was any ambiguity that the test should be completed by 4:40.

Chef Emeril’s statement:
Emeril stated that he started cooking a few minutes after the test had started. After the next class had begun, he saw chefs still cooking, so he did as well. He says he finished between 4:45 and 4:50, no later. He knew that the test was to be finished between 4:35 and 4:40, but he kept working because other chefs were as well. The presence of other chefs made him think the time limit for the test was negotiable. Emeril said there were no explicit instructions about the time given to complete the test, and that
he was confused about how strict the kitchen rules were and how quickly after completion the test had to be presented to the judges. He described working late as a mistake. He did not remember reading about a time limit in the test instructions.

Jury Questions:

The jury tried to establish Emeril’s thought process during the test and his interpretations of Judge Ramsay’s instructions. Emeril presented a list of directions for food preparation in a different class, Rudimentary Soufflés. Emeril said he considered these guidelines for a supervised test appropriate, and that instructions for Ramsay’s test were much less clear. He thinks that Ramsay should have specified that there would be a penalty for turning in the test late. He thought there was often flexibility in completing a test such as this, but he also knew that it could be submitted no later than 4:40.

Jury Deliberation: Wolfgang Puck

After much deliberation, the jury decided that the timeline Wolfgang provided should be considered valid, as there was no way of proving otherwise. There was a question about whether his actions were an Honor Code violation or just a “stupid mistake.” One juror said it was irresponsible to wait for his friend instead of immediately turning in his test but not a violation. Another juror acknowledged that Wolfgang probably did not take extra time for the test and that this was most important, but felt that deadlines are still a serious part of the rules of a test. The rest of the jury did not feel there was enough evidence to suggest a violation so consented – with one juror standing outside – to the following statement of non-violation:

Wolfgang did not violate the Honor Code.

The jury then discussed a series of non-binding resolutions, as allowed by trial procedures, and all consented on the following:

1. We encourage Wolfgang to write a letter to Ramsay addressing his disrespectful choices.
2. We encourage Wolfgang and Ramsay to meet to work towards repairing the breach of trust.

Wolfgang was notified by email and his portion of the trial was concluded.

Jury Deliberation: Emeril Lagasse

The jury discussed Emeril's timeline and his reasons for submitting his test late. One juror felt that Emeril was only rationalizing his actions during the test. Several jurors felt that it was unreasonable to hold Judge Ramsay to the standards of a different kitchen. The jury discussed what a reasonable timeline to complete the test would look like, and concluded that by taking at least 10 minutes beyond the well accepted deadline, Emeril
violated the Honor Code. All members of the jury consented to the following statement of violation:

**By unreasonably exceeding the time allocated for working on the test, Emeril violated the Honor Code.**

**Circumstantial Portion:**

Judge Ramsay elected not to attend any of the remaining meetings of the trial, which is allowed. The jury asked Chef Emeril questions about the circumstances surrounding his violation.

Emeril isn’t majoring in cooking, but would like to minor in it. He is a floral arrangement major but told the jury that cooking is important to him. The week of the exam, Emeril had another dinner to cater and he was having a rough week overall. He said he had no intent to violate the Honor Code during the test.

Emeril said that his relationship with Ramsay is fine, and that he has met with Ramsay to discuss the incident. Emeril says he will accept responsibility for his actions, and that he now knows to follow professors’ instructions even if other people are not doing the same.

Emeril was upset that other people, including Wolfgang, took extra time but he was the only one held accountable. The jury explained that the cases were different, but also told Emeril that they will not disclose details of another chef’s case. Emeril said that he felt sad hearing his actions described as “disrespecting the community.” He stated he didn’t like being labeled with “the cheaters,” because his mistake was unintentional. The jury explained the restorative process of the trial and that there is no record accessible to the community of people who have violated the Honor Code.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

The Chair presented resolutions from Judge Ramsay, which were a deduction on the test and a letter to Honor Council. Emeril did not have any resolutions to suggest, as he thought he would instead talk with the jury. He said he was uncomfortable writing a letter to the community. Emeril did not want the entire community to be aware of the incident and suggested apologizing publicly to the other chefs in the kitchen.

Emeril left and the jury deliberated resolutions. The jury decided to leave the grade on the test up to Judge Ramsay. They then discussed Emeril’s reaction to writing a letter to the community and how Emeril’s actions had affected the entire community, not just the chefs in the specific kitchen in which the challenge took place. Jurors wanted to convey to Emeril that there was a breach of trust between him and the community as a whole, not just with Judge Ramsay and the chefs in his kitchen.
The jury talked about the possibility of a letter or essay for the community. Jurors wanted Emeril to understand that the trial process isn’t supposed to be demeaning or punitive. The jury decided that it was best to have Emeril write a structured essay as an effort to repair the breach of trust with the community.

The jury consented to the following resolutions with no one standing outside:

**Tentative Resolutions:**

1. Emeril’s score on the test will be determined by Judge Ramsay.

2. Emeril will write a reflective essay to be released with the abstract due to Honor Council within three weeks of the trial’s completion, addressing:
   a. Why his actions violated the Honor Code
   b. How his actions affected the community.
   c. Any other topics he feels necessary for his restoration to the community.

**Presenting Resolutions**

The jury met the next day to present the resolutions to Emeril. Before Emeril arrived, the jury discussed the previous resolutions. One jury member, Bobby Flay, was concerned that he had made the wrong decision in the trial. Flay said that although it was abundantly clear that Emeril had violated the letter of the Honor Code, he was not sure Emeril had in fact violated the spirit of the Honor Code. Flay said that during the fact-finding portion Emeril had behaved as though his actions were a mistake, but one that the jury might empathize with. He also said that Emeril is being made an example of and that there is no restorative element in this trial. Flay stated that he regrets not speaking up earlier because at this point there is nothing he can do, and that he now feels that Emeril's mistake did not count as a violation of the Honor Code. Several jurors disagreed, saying they had followed the correct procedure and that it was clear Emeril had taken extra time on the test. Flay understood this but reiterated that he felt the Honor Code was being interpreted too literally. The jury discussed the resolutions, and consented to keep them the same.

Emeril met with the jury, and was given the opportunity to ask questions about the resolutions. He said the resolutions seemed fair and thanked the jury for their time.

Emeril left and the jury consented to the resolutions without any changes. No jurors stood outside of consensus.

**Final Resolutions:**

1. Emeril’s score on the test will be determined by Judge Ramsay.
2. Emeril will write a reflective essay to be released with the abstract due to Honor Council within three weeks of the trial's completion, addressing:

a. Why his actions violated the Honor Code
b. How his actions affected the community.
c. Any other topics he feels necessary for his restoration to the community.

Discussion Questions:

1) To what extent would this case have been resolved differently if separate juries had tried Wolfgang and Emeril?
2) Although professors are not bound by the Honor Code, to what extent is Judge Ramsay responsible for the confusion regarding this incident?
3) Do you think Emeril was unreasonably disciplined given the magnitude of his violation? Was he singled out?
4) How literally should the Honor Code be interpreted in a trial? What is your response to the attached juror’s statement?
The exam began at 3:05, and was suppose to be an 85 minute exam. Judge Ramsay asked the students to finish the test by 4:35, and that his assistant was leaving by 4:40, so we were supposed to try to get it in by then. There were no explicit exam instructions for the exam itself. So I began cooking for the exam, and this was a very long and tedious exam. Judge Ramsay did mention that we would be pressed for time. He was not in the room to answer any questions until the end, thus adding a delay to the exam taking. Anyways, come 4:35, students began filtering out of the kitchen, and as I looked up from my counter I saw other students still working on their tests. So I decided to stay and check my test as well since other students assumed to go on. I finished checking my test about 5 minutes or so after 4:40, and then gave my test to Judge Herme. Another student walked by me, and delivered his test as well. That same day I got an email of concern about the time I handed in the test. So to deal with this matter, it was brought to honor council. Judge Ramsay in class asked every student who wrote after 4:30 to go see him. There were other tests from other students on the assistant’s counter after he left at 4:40. Since there were only two people facing honor council trials, I am assuming that not many people followed through with his request. The other student that handed in his test after me was also taken to honor council, but he did not get the violation because he was doing other things than working on the test itself. I did apologize to the professor for my misjudgement multiple times, and offered to write an apology to the class. I did not have any intention to cheat, or disrespect my classmates. My flaw was that I based my decision on everyone else’s (and my own) misjudgement of the ranged time limit. If the consequences were clear for late hand-ins, or if he was there to collect the test, then there would certainly be no confusion or late-hand ins from anyone in the class. I have never had this problem in any of my cooking or food presentation classes because the professor has either been there to collect and proctor exams, or there has been a sign-in sheet for unproctored exams. So all in all, after being honest to him and the council, and after telling my true intentions, I still managed to be the only one bearing the weight of this issue. This is my side of the story, and I feel that it is relevant for readers like you to understand that I feel very upset from this whole process, especially, as a loyal and dedicated student of Haverford that has contributed so much to this school.

So my actions violated the honor code because I went “exceedingly beyond the limits”, to clarify, I went five minutes after the assistant’s departure. The lesson I learned from all this is that students should not make decisions based on their peers and just plan on sticking to the time-range given by instructors, also if students are not clear on the instructions than they should ask rather than coming up with their own interpretations.
Statement from a juror (not Bobby Flay)

I am proud of the Honor Code and do my best to follow it. When I first agreed to serve on this trial, I felt not only responsible in serving, but also excited that I would see the Code being used in practice. Before this trial, I thought that the Code was one of the defining aspects of Haverford and that it should serve as a document that should be followed very closely in its interpretation.

During the trial process, I felt certain of my thought process. Emeril admitted that he made a mistake, he took extra time, and the Code says, ‘students should not exceed the time limitations specified by the professor’. No one disputed that part, and so from a literal viewpoint of the Code, there was no question about the trial. I did not pre-judge Emeril, but felt sure that he had violated the Code.

After discussion with Flay and my own reflections, I feel that as a juror I may have made the wrong decision. I have doubts that Emeril violated the Honor Code, but instead made an unintentional mistake that I could have easily made myself. Throughout the trial, Emeril repeatedly said that he had made a mistake and that he had not intended to violate the Honor Code. At the time, this sounded like a rationalization of his actions, a plea to community standards as a way to escape his violation. But now I see Emeril’s side: Emeril thought that he had made an honest mistake and that the jury would see this as a mistake, not a violation. We chose not to do so, and I regret that decision.

I still value and respect the Honor Code and its role in how we conduct ourselves at Haverford, but I think that this trial has taught me that while the Code is an integral part of Haverford, it is not a document that can be read verbatim. Rather, I feel as a community we should seek to foster the principles underlined by the Honor Code, not the letter of the Code. This trial reminded me that the Honor Code is not a perfect or divine document but something that was written by students like us and affects students like us. And in that respect I feel I may have made the wrong decision, in that I weighed the literal wording of the Code over Emeril’s intent and the magnitude of the infraction.

It is too late to change the decision we made as a jury, but I still have doubts about this process. Were we too self-righteous as a jury? Did we make an example of Emeril and send the message that living under the Honor Code does not allow for mistakes? The Honor Code isn’t perfect. I do not think we can be irresponsible in upholding the Code, but I think the magnitude of Emeril’s violation is not great, and in some sense we are punishing him unjustly.

Serving on a trial is an intense experience. I have never felt so committed to the principles of the Honor Code and to this community. However, seeing the Code in practice showed me that while we cannot be careless in how we view the Code, we cannot read it word for word either. It is my hope that we may continue to uphold the message of the Code without making it a dogmatic document. I have faith in the Code and in us as a community.