EDDIE

Eddie was confronted for alleged plagiarism by Professor Wood, who brought the matter to Honor Council. Because of extenuating circumstances, the jury was composed of only six students (four Honor Council members and two random community members) rather than the usual twelve.

Professor Wood described his view of the problem. Eddie was required to summarize a history article in his own words. Instead he handed in a paper comprised of sentences that were mostly in the authors' words, without using quotation marks. He did, however, indicate the authors' names and the title of the article at the top of his paper, as was required.

Eddie thought that because the authors used language that could not be improved upon, he would take what they said and incorporate that into his paper. Because he had mentioned the authors at the beginning of the paper, he saw no need to put their ideas into quotation marks. He thought that the object of the paper was to demonstrate an understanding of the article, and that by doing the assignment the way he had, he was fulfilling that assignment.

The jury came to consensus that a violation had occurred. Eddie returned to the room and was presented with the jury's decision. Eddie pointed out that he would abide by whatever the jury decided, but did not think that he had done anything wrong. He did not see the importance of putting work in one's own words, and consequently he did not understand what the jury found wrong with his paper. All the jurors explained to him that a distinction has to be made in a paper between one's own work and that of an outside source. That could be done either by using quotation marks or by paraphrasing with a footnote. Eddie caught on quickly to an understanding of the need for quotation marks, but did not see how paraphrasing reduced plagiarism if the student merely changed the author's words into his/her own. The jury pointed out that paraphrasing must be accompanied by a footnote or a prefatory comment indicating that the idea was not the student's own.

Much of the problems that Eddie faced were as a result of his inexperience in writing papers of the type requested by Professor Wood. He was a transfer and never took Freshman English, the basic writing course for freshmen. The jury took this information as being very important when it formulated the following resolution:

1) Eddie will be tutored by a juror who is a history major. They will work together on a practice article so that Eddie can get a sense of how to paraphrase and use footnotes. This assignment will not be submitted to Wood.

2) Eddie will rewrite the paper in question which will be submitted to both Wood and the juror. Wood will grade it, and the juror will comment on it after it is given to Wood. If there are any problems with his work at this point, the juror will work with Eddie some more.

3) Eddie has another assignment due in December which is similar to the one in question. This next one he will do on his own, and it will be submitted to Wood for a grade. This assignment will be evaluated by Wood, and he will determine whether, based upon his performance on this paper, his course grade will be affected by his plagiarism now. By placing this stipulation in the resolution, the jury acknowledges that Eddie should be on a par with his classmates by the end of the semester, lest his grade be affected.

4) In order to address Eddie's understanding of the Code, one of the jury members will meet with him in the same manner as an HCO would with a freshman.