Joanna
1993 Honor Code Trial Abstract

Colleen contacted Honor Council about a situation involving Joanna, another student. Colleen was on the VAX and had randomly decided to look at her own directory listing. When she did she saw the following message, or "plan", on her screen:

    CBroome

    Plan: To be the world's biggest asshole.

She suspected that Joanna had left the message since there was a history of bad feeling between them and she knew that Joanna was "very into the VAX". Colleen called Joanna and asked her about the message. Colleen was concerned that Joanna had broken into her account since she thought someone could only write onto their own plan.

Joanna told Colleen that she had left the message because she was angry with Joanna but that she hadn't broken into the account. She told Colleen that she hadn't had to break in to do what she did.

Colleen suspected that this was not true. She felt that Colleen had lied to her in past situations and thought she might be doing so now. She decided to ask Honor Council to look into the matter.

Since there was a suspicion of violation Honor Council decided that a trial would be necessary. The Chair also asked the VAX manager to come to the trial to answer technical questions.

The jury convened and asked Joanna what had happened. She told them that she had left the message but, using a computer and blackboard, showed the jury exactly how she had done it without breaking in. The VAX manager agreed that everything she was saying about the VAX was true. Apparently, Colleen's VAX security had been lower than everyone else's. This allowed Joanna to write onto her plan without actually breaking into the account. A check of the records showed that Colleen's security had changed months before the incident.

Colleen told the jury that she didn't think simply leaving the message was a violation. She was more concerned about breaking in and lying. After hearing the whole story the jury agreed that there was not enough evidence to say the Joanna had broken into the account even though it did seem strange that Colleen's security
codes had been changed. Since Colleen didn't think that simply leaving the message was a social violation the jury agreed that it should not find such a violation. It seemed to the jury that a social violation could only be found if the confronting party thought there was one. The trial ended with no violation found.