Lucy

Introduction
Linus approached Honor Council after seven books had disappeared from his library carrel. All seven books related to a final project he was doing for his art history class. Another student, Lucy, was doing her final project on the same topic. Professor Wokwok also approached Honor Council when five of the missing books were in Lucy's final bibliography. Honor Council consensed that a trial was necessary.

Fact-Finding
Linus began by saying that he and Lucy were working together for part of a final project consisting of two parts: an oral group presentation, and a final paper to be done individually. There were no other people in their group. Linus checked out eight books dealing with their topic and put them in his carrel in the library. He told Lucy that she could use these materials, but to tell him when she did and to put them back in the carrel. Linus did not need one book and agreed to Lucy checking out the book in her name, thus leaving 7 books in the carrel.

Sometime later, Linus noticed that some notes he had taken on these seven books and some of these books were missing. Two days later, all seven books were taken from his carrel. However, some books relating to other subjects had not been touched. He talked to Lucy about it and got the impression that she hadn’t used any of the books and didn’t know where they were.

Professor Wokwok then spoke. When she was informed of the missing books, she had a meeting with two deans, the chair of Honor Council, and security. They notified the library of the missing books. The library reported that one of the missing books had been returned, but the remaining six, including an inter-library loan book, hadn’t turn up. Professor Wokwok explained that because Linus had no book with which to do his final paper, he was allowed to give an oral presentation to Professor Wokwok in her office. She also agreed to check for the books in people’s bibliographies at the end of the semester. When the final papers came in, Professor Wokwok noticed five of the missing books were in Lucy’s bibliography, one of which was cited in the paper.

Professor Wokwok called Lucy that summer and asked her about her sources. She said that she had put the five sources on her annotated bibliography and that she had gotten the bibliographic information from Linus’s carrel but had not taken the books. (Note: The annotated bibliographies were due approximately three weeks before the papers, which included the final list of sources used.) She made copies from two of the books from Linus’s carrel but had returned them that same day. Further, she owned one of the books. She used the two copies and the book she owned in her paper, and had just forgotten to take the other two out of her final bibliography. Professor Wokwok continued to say that nothing in Lucy’s paper expressed ideas specific to the missing books or Linus’s missing notes. Lucy could have, Professor Wokwok pointed out, used some general information from these books and notes in her paper. Professor Wokwok dropped the issue until she talked to Linus who said that Lucy had told him that she hadn’t used any of the materials. With two different stories, Linus and Professor Wokwok wanted to clear the confusion.

Next, Lucy spoke. She agreed with Linus and said that she had checked out the first book that Linus did not need. She also took information from five
of the remaining seven books to write her annotated bibliography. She took two books from the carrel to photocopy passages from them, but returned them on the same day.

When Linus asked her if she had taken the books from his carrel, she said no. She also told him that she didn’t know where the books were. When printing her final paper, she didn’t proofread the final bibliography, thus leaving in the two sources she did not use.

Clarifying Questions

The jury asked if the missing sources were found on other students’ papers outside of Professor Wokwok’s class. Professor Wokwok said a thorough search had not been done but none of the sources were found on other people’s bibliographies as far as she knew.

The jury asked if Linus had given out his carrel number to any other people. Linus said another student he was working with on a different project for another class knew where his carrel was. The books for these two classes, he added, were unrelated and were not missing. No other students in the class were working on the same topic as Linus and Lucy.

The remaining six books, by the way, were found in different places in the library in July. The library said that they could have been on the shelf for a few months before they found them, meaning that they were not necessarily returned in July.

Deliberations

As the jury began to wade through the facts, many questions were raised: why would someone want to take these seven books? Why didn’t Lucy offer her photocopies to Linus when she learned that he didn’t have the books? Why were only these books missing from Linus’s carrel? Why were there different conversations between Linus and Lucy and Professor Wokwok and Lucy? How do we know if Lucy’s story is true or not?

The jury did not concentrate on whether Lucy could have plagiarized Linus’s notes, because they contained general information Lucy could easily have gotten from other sources. The jury wondered why Lucy did not offer her photocopies to Linus, or even tell him that she had made photocopies.

The jury agreed that there was a miscommunication between Linus and Lucy. Linus asked “Did you use my books?” but Lucy thought that Linus had asked, “Did you take my books?” The jury felt that Lucy had acted irresponsibly when she did not offer Linus her photocopies. This miscommunication would also account for the different conversations held between Linus and Lucy and Professor Wokwok and Lucy. Some jurors were suspicious of Lucy and the way she was acting throughout the trial, but could not definitively say anything about it. Others felt that Lucy’s story was totally plausible and could not find evidence to disprove it.

The jury concluded that they could not agree beyond a reasonable doubt that a violation of the Honor Code had occurred. The jury also concluded that they could not agree beyond a reasonable doubt that a violation of the Honor Code had not occurred. There was not enough evidence either way. In the end, the jury made this statement:

The jury finds insufficient evidence to indicate that Lucy violated the Honor Code.

Lucy, Linus, and Professor Wokwok were notified of the jury’s decision. The jury also suggested a mediated conversation to take place between the three people involved to clear up any bad feelings generated as a result of the trial.