Mildred

Orville brought to the attention of Honor Council that a friend of his, Mildred, knew of a student, Agnes, who thought she had committed an academic violation of the Honor Code but had not reported this violation to Honor Council. Orville told Honor Council that Mildred would not say who Agnes was, and Honor Council determined that a trial for Mildred was necessary because the code says that all possible violations must be reported to Council.

After the Chairperson explained relevant portions of the Code, the factual portion began as Orville recounted what had happened. He had been discussing the Honor Code with Mildred when she said that she had a good friend who had broken the Code. Mildred was concerned and asked Orville if he would report such a violation. Orville said "yes" because all academic violations must go to trial. They determined that Mildred would speak with Agnes. Mildred and Agnes then agreed that Agnes would talk with the professor, and Mildred reported this to Orville. Orville was not content with this solution and sent to an Honor Council member who said that Agnes must report herself to Council or Mildred would have to tell Honor Council directly about Agnes. Orville said that Mildred said that she would speak with Honor Council but would not mention Agnes' name. It was at this point that the trial was convened.

Mildred proceeded to give her perception of the events. She thought that by confronting Agnes, which she had done, she had fulfilled her responsibility as specified in the Code. She had not known that she had potentially violated the Code until she was informed of her trial. Because Agnes had since reported herself to Honor Council, Mildred did not see the need for her own trial. She stressed that she had confronted Agnes, and she did not think that if Agnes did not report herself that she must, especially because Agnes said that the matter had been resolved with the professor. Mildred did not realize that this was not satisfactory. Orville had stressed that he had said Mildred must go to Council even without a name. Mildred reiterated that she thought she had the choice of confronting the person or going to Honor Council. Because she had done the former, the latter was not necessary. Orville had known that it was a violation not to report to Council someone known to have violated the Code, but he had not said that to Mildred after their initial conversation. It became apparent that there was much confusion and the filtering of information from the Honor Council member to Orville to Mildred to Agnes led to the distortion of the fact. Nonetheless, the jury determined that a violation had occurred.

The circumstantial portion of the trial examined the reasons why Mildred had not reported Agnes to Honor Council. The jury sought to emphasize that a violation of the Code is a violation of our community standards. It represents a break down in trust which must be addressed by the community as represented by a jury. Mildred said that she had intended to tell Council that she knew of a violation but reasserted that she thought she only had to confront
Agnes without getting Honor Council involved. Orville said that he did not think that Mildred really understood the procedure to follow in the event of a possible violation. Mildred was asked if she thought that it was appropriate to resolve a violation with a professor. She replied that it did not compare with an Honor Council resolution but, at least, the matter would be dealt with.

The jury resolved that Mildred would write a letter to the community, to be published in the News and with the abstract (Addendum A). The letter would discuss why student-faculty resolutions of Honor Code violations are not satisfactory and the importance of going to Honor Council with questions about the Code.

**ADDENDUM A**

At the beginning of this semester, one of my close friends told me they were going to submit a paper, parts of which were plagiarized. A few weeks later, I confronted them about what they had done. Out of our discussion came the resolution that they would see their instructor with the intent of retracting the paper and having the credit dropped. Both of us were satisfied that the problem had been taken care of.

I realize now, in the event of a possible Honor Code violation, that one should first consult the Honor Code and/or an Honor Council member to make sure of the precise procedure necessary. I may add that when talking with a member, one has every right to state the case in abstract. In my situation, I mistakenly thought that a resolution between the student and the instructor was acceptable. To the contrary, it is necessary for Honor Council to treat the matter. We are priviledged presently, because students are allowed to administer most of our academic and social "rules" through Council. Without Council, we would have to follow rules set and regulated by the faculty and administration. By permitting the instructor to deal with the situation independently of Council, I was giving the faculty a responsibility that is not theirs.

One of the reasons the Code is still ours to administer is that most of the students of the community take the Code and its implications seriously. Most realize the importance of mutual trust and respect for the rights of others. Yet the Code and its procedures are by no means perfect and there may be many different interpretations of what the Code actually means. Thus, it is important to have continual dialogue about both the spirit and procedures of the Code. For this reason, I would like to bring up the following. When I was first brought to trial, it was because I refused to give the name of my friend involved. My friend came forth themself so this later became unnecessary. Yet the issue of releasing a friend's name is an important example of an area that needs our active discussion. I leave it to you: what is more important, community or personal trust?