Abstract Discussions will be held…

Smokey the Bear and Camper
An Honor Council Social Trial
Released Fall 2011

This abstract was completed in accordance with the timeline in the Constitution. The confronting and confronted parties were given the opportunity to review this abstract prior to its release.
(The addition of this disclaimer began Fall 2010).

Introduction

While cooking in her cabin, Camper fell asleep on the couch. The smoke detector was covered with a plastic bag, so even though the cabin filled with smoke, the alarm did not sound and Camper did not wake up. After another student called Safety and Security, an officer went to Camper’s cabin to investigate and found the cabin filled with smoke. Camper was found asleep in her cabin and was awoken and removed from the room by the officer. The next day, Camper met with Ranger Rick, a Safety and Security officer, to discuss what had happened.

Smokey the Bear, an administrator of the college, confronted Camper for endangering other students in the cabins and for not initially taking responsibility for covering the smoke detector. Camper brought herself to Honor Council. Council was concerned that Smokey, rather than a fellow student, had confronted Camper. However, a student would not have had access to the Safety and Security report, and thus would not have been privy to all of the information about the incident. Honor Council felt that Smokey's initial statement – a redacted version of the Safety and Security report – lacked an explanation of his personal connection to the incident and asked him to send a second statement. After receiving a second statement, which conveyed a personal concern with the situation. Honor Council consented to send the matter to a Social Trial.

Fact-Finding

Smokey’s statement

Because Smokey had not been present at the actual incident, he noted that he would likely be unable to answer factual questions about it. Smokey was able to describe the incident report from Safety and Security, something students would not normally have access to. According to the incident report, a student in the same cabin as Camper called Safety and Security, who then tried to get in touch with Camper. When they were unsuccessful, they entered the cabin and found a smoke-filled room, a pot on the stove, and Camper asleep on a couch. The smoke
detector in the room was covered. According to the Safety and Security report, Camper did not initially admit to covering the detector, but said she had not been aware that it was covered.

Although Smokey was not directly related to incident, he noted that he and the other administrators were concerned with the situation because it had put Camper in danger and he wanted to make sure that Camper took responsibility for her actions. Additionally, Smokey had noticed an increase in the number of covered smoke detectors being discovered that year.

Camper’s statement

Before the incident, Camper had been traveling for several days and had not slept for the previous three nights. The only food that Camper had in her cabin was pasta. She began cooking the pasta, but fell asleep from exhaustion before it finished boiling on the stovetop. The next thing she knew, Safety and Security was in her cabin and the cabin was filled with smoke. She said she was “terrified,” “faint,” and “unaware of what was going on.” Camper emphasized that while she may not have taken responsibility for the covered smoke detector at that moment, she did take responsibility in a later meeting with Ranger Rick.

During the previous semester, Camper and her former roommate (who had since moved to another cabin) had regularly covered the smoke detector when they smoked cigarettes, but they normally uncovered it when they finished. Camper had not smoked in her room on the day of the incident. Camper declined an offer from Safety and Security to visit the hospital the day of the incident, but did end up going the next day. She said she was very sorry this had happened and had since convinced other cabins to stop covering their smoke detectors by explaining that smoking cigarettes, contrary to widespread belief, does not set them off.

A juror asked Smokey why Camper’s former roommate was not involved in the trial, and Smokey said his main reason for confronting Camper was because it was she who had originally misled Safety and Security by telling them she didn’t know the detector was covered. He added, “The issue isn't just covering, but the severity [of the incident] and denial.” He said Camper’s initial statement to the officer could be interpreted as an attempt to place blame on someone else.

Camper clarified that while she did not initially admit to having covered the smoke detector or even knowing it was covered, she took responsibility during a follow-up meeting with Ranger Rick the next day. Camper said she didn't know whether she or her roommate had last put the bag on the smoke detector, and didn't know whether or not they had taken it off before winter break. While Camper had been away, her cabin had been used to house other students. Camper said that those students probably wouldn't have noticed the bag, so it was likely that the bag had been there for the entire time she had been away.

Jury Deliberations

Some facts of the case were still unclear to the jury. In Ranger Rick’s report about the meeting he had with Camper, he made it sound like it had taken some prodding before Camper admitted to knowing about the covered detector and sometimes covering it herself, but Camper insisted that their meeting lasted no more than five minutes and that she took responsibility right away. Jurors wondered whether Camper had been in an altered state due to smoke inhalation when she was first awoken, and that could have muddled her response. The jury was concerned
that she might not have taken responsibility right away the next day, and decided to check with Ranger Rick to try to clear up this discrepancy.

Further, no one could say for sure who had covered the smoke detector leading up to this incident. It could have been Camper, her old roommate, or the residents living in the cabin while Camper was away.

Some jurors were concerned that Camper was being used as a scapegoat for many other students who cover their smoke detectors but are not confronted. Others thought Camper was not being used as a scapegoat because the severity of her case set it apart from others. Some jurors also argued that she had been brought to Council, and thus they couldn't ignore that the issue could constitute an Honor Code violation, even if others did the same thing.

One juror suggested that Camper had not necessarily violated the Honor Code by covering the smoke detector for short periods of time, but by being negligent about uncovering it. Another agreed, saying that it was students' responsibility, with regards to the Honor Code, to be “hyper-vigilant” when doing things that could endanger others, such as lighting candles in their cabins or covering smoke detectors. A juror asked if it was an Honor Code violation that Camper had been negligent about uncovering her smoke detector over the past semester. Another juror said that though many were negligent, Camper was especially at fault given the seriousness of the incident.

The jury was not ready to consent on a statement of violation or non-violation, and decided to meet again once they had more information from Ranger Rick.

**Statement of Violation**

At the beginning of the next meeting, jurors were presented with emails between the Trial Chair, Camper, Smokey, and Ranger Rick. These emails contained several important clarifications. In response to questions surrounding how Safety and Security had been alerted to the smoke incident, Ranger Rick wrote that he wasn't sure what the caller had heard, but it may have been another detector that sounded for a short time. He clarified that smoke detectors in individual rooms would not set off the building's smoke detectors – that would only happen if the smoke spread into the hallway.

Ranger Rick wrote that Camper had seemed “very tired or distracted or upset” when they had spoken initially. He revised his previous statement, where he wrote that “it took a bit of discussion” for Camper to confess to covering the smoke detector. His new statement read, “Camper willingly admitted she covered the smoke detector, however, this admission was delayed to later in the meeting due to me asking several questions at the beginning.” Given this new information, the jury quickly agreed that they were no longer suspicious that Camper had lied to Ranger Rick about covering the smoke detector.

Jurors discussed whether or not Camper had still violated the Honor Code by either covering the smoke detector or creating an environment where the detector could remain covered. Some members of the jury were still concerned that Camper was becoming a scapegoat, as the covering of smoke detectors was not uncommon. One juror reiterated that though lots of people covered smoke detectors and it was impossible to bring everyone to Council, Camper had been brought to Council and the jury couldn’t drop the issue just because everyone else did it.
At this point, the jury felt ready to write a statement of violation. Some jurors felt that covering smoke detectors endangered other community members and thus was a violation in itself. Others felt that while covering smoke detectors was problematic and unnecessary, as long as students were hypervigilant about monitoring the environment and removing the bag once they were done smoking, covering the detector was not necessarily a violation. They felt that Camper had violated the Honor Code by being negligent in uncovering the detector. The jury decided to make the latter sentiment, which all of the jurors could agree on, clear in the statement of violation. The jury unanimously consented to the following statement of violation:

*While we, the jury, strongly discourage the covering of smoke detectors, we feel that if a person or group chooses to cover a detector, they must be hypervigilant about monitoring their surroundings and uncovering it in order to mitigate the risk to the community. Therefore, Camper violated the Honor Code by contributing, through negligence, to an unsafe environment where unforeseen events could have more serious ramifications, putting herself and others in danger.*

**Circumstantial Portion**

Smokey began by reiterating why he felt this incident was worth Honor Council's attention. He said safety was a serious concern, and the administration had “become increasingly distressed that otherwise very intelligent students don't seem to get that [fatal fires happen].” Smokey said he was one of many in the administration who could have brought this case to Council, and the administration was hoping that more attention would be paid to this issue. He said it would be great if more awareness and an educational campaign came out of the trial. He didn't want any punitive resolutions.

Camper said that she believed about 40% of students in cabins covered smoke detectors. She said being singled out was unfair, and that this issue had added stress to her entire semester. She said that since she had learned that cigarettes would not set off smoke detectors, she had been telling people to take their bags off. She said she wanted to help, but didn't understand why she was being picked on. She said her bad luck was that she fell asleep. Camper mentioned that no one monitored covered smoke detectors, so everyone who covered them was negligent.

A juror asked Smokey why, of all the cases where students covered smoke detectors, this was the one brought before Honor Council. Smokey said that it was because of the “severity of the situation,” and “at least the possibility that owning up didn't take place.”

A juror asked Smokey and Camper if they felt now that covering a smoke detector was a violation of the Honor Code. Both said yes.

Camper wanted to clarify that there was no fire, and that she had taken responsibility. A juror responded that the jury understood Camper had taken responsibility, which was why that point was not in the statement of violation. The juror reiterated that no one wanted to punish Camper or make her a scapegoat, and the jury wanted the resolutions to focus on community education. At this point, Camper seemed to accept the jury's decision.

**Proposed Resolutions**
The group agreed to move into proposed resolutions. Smokey proposed the idea of an educational campaign that would dispel the notion that cigarettes could set off smoke detectors and otherwise educate students about the issue. Camper agreed it was important to stress that cigarettes wouldn't set off smoke alarms. She also felt that students needed to know that even if the alarm went off, the people who set it off wouldn't be punished if Safety and Security came. A juror proposed that a message be located right next to smoke detectors. That way, students would see it right before they put a bag on the detector.

Smokey said he would like Camper to be involved in potential resolutions, but understood the need to be realistic with regards to Camper’s time. Camper said she didn't have other ideas about possible resolutions. She said she would help in whatever way she could.

A juror asked who could implement a potential educational campaign. Smokey proposed the Safety and Security Advisory Committee and the Housing Committee, and said they would both appreciate “an infusion of ideas.” A juror said she was uncomfortable telling specific groups what to do. Smokey suggested a wording that called on the “relevant groups on campus” to help with an educational campaign but provided for the specifics to be determined within the groups.

**Tentative Resolutions**

A juror acknowledged that the incident provided an opportunity for a larger educational campaign about covering smoke detectors, but was worried that the resolutions wouldn't focus on Camper or on the issue at hand. A second juror said he felt Camper now understood what had gone wrong and was restored to the community's trust, so nothing more needed to be done regarding her role. Another juror asked if there was a way to get Camper to tell more of her story to the community without violating confidentiality, and a juror proposed that she could release an anonymous letter to the community. The jury unanimously consented on the following tentative resolutions:

1. **Camper will write a letter to the community about her experiences with smoke detectors and what she has learned from these experiences.** Camper should elaborate on the specifics of her situation and its possible ramifications. A version of this letter will be released anonymously to the community immediately after Honor Council receives it.
2. **A version of the letter discussed in Resolution 1 will also appear with the abstract.** Camper may choose to amend this letter to talk about her experience with the trial process.
3. **We suggest that the College put stickers next to all residential smoke detectors with some variation of the following text:**
   - Cigarettes and recreational smoking devices will not set off this detector.
   - Setting off this detector will not get you in trouble.
   - Covering or tampering with this detector will result in immediate loss of College housing for the remainder of the semester.
4. **We suggest that relevant or appropriate groups on campus – such as the Safety and Security Advisory Committee and/or the Housing Committee – conduct an educational**
campaign about smoke detectors and the ramifications of covering them. This could take the form of a poster campaign with slogans such as: “Don't lose your housing over a misunderstanding. Cigarettes don't set off smoke detectors.”

5. As there are no practical benefits to covering smoke detectors, we encourage community members to confront each other when they see covered smoke detectors.

Finalizing Resolutions

The jury first met without Camper to discuss the tentative resolutions. A juror proposed adding a resolution that would explicitly state that jurors would meet with relevant committees to present the educational resolutions to them. The jury agreed this was appropriate and added it as the fifth resolution. The jury also agreed to add a clause saying that Council had to consent to release Camper's letter and unanimously re-consented to the resolutions.

Camper was invited into the room, and said she was comfortable with the resolutions. The jury asked her if she was comfortable with jurors talking to committees about the educational resolutions. She said she was.

Smokey was not present for the meeting but emailed the Chair to say he was okay with the resolutions. He wrote that though he would have liked a more central role for Camper, he understood that this might not be reasonable.

The jury unanimously consented on the following resolutions:

1. Camper will write a letter to the community about her experiences with smoke detectors and what she has learned from these experiences. Camper should elaborate on the specifics of her situation and its possible ramifications. A version of this letter will be released anonymously to the community immediately after Honor Council receives and consents to release it.

2. A version of the letter discussed in Resolution 1 will also appear with the abstract. Camper may choose to amend this letter to talk about her experience with the trial process.

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5. One or more members of the jury will present Resolutions 3 and 4 to the appropriate groups or individuals.

6. As there are no practical benefits to covering smoke detectors, we encourage community members to confront each other when they see covered smoke detectors.
Discussion Questions

1. Is covering a smoke detector a violation of the Honor Code?
2. Was Camper inappropriately made an example of?
3. Should the resolutions have focused more on Camper's specific violation?
4. Did you know that smoking cigarettes would not set off smoke alarms?

Letter to the Community from Camper

Dear Haverford Community,

The purpose of this letter is to tell you about my experience in hopes that you can learn from it and not commit the same mistakes I did. I am not ashamed to admit that I am a cigarette smoker, and due to the comfort and warmth that smoking indoors brought I usually smoked in my room. In light that this smoke might trigger the fire alarm and cause annoyance to other students in the building I usually covered my fire alarm to prevent it. Unfortunately, one of these times I was unable to be hyper vigilant due to physical exhaustion and fell asleep while cooking. The fire alarm was covered during this moment and I am aware that this could have potentially led to a much worse tragedy (since nobody got hurt and nothing burnt this time). However, it was a very traumatizing experience that I really do not recommend, as I woke up to safety and security officers shaking me awake and a room full of black smoke.

After following up on these issues, I grew aware of a couple facts that I wasn't aware of before the incident. The first one is that cigarette smoke (even more than a couple cigarettes) is not likely to trigger the fire alarm--and even if it did, there would be no punishment for it. Conversely, covering the fire alarm is considered to be a violation of the honor code (something I wasn't aware of or hadn't really thought about before) and it is definitely something that needs to be taken seriously, for you are not only putting your own life in danger--but also those around you. Due to the fact that over the years students have not really given this issue the seriousness it deserves, I'm afraid that punishments will be much harsher. So this is just my warning to you fellow smokers and bad cooks: don't lose your housing and/or your life over something that can be so easily prevented!

Sincerely,
Anonymous.