Summary

Thurman was confronted by Professor Zod because Thurman's paper for Professor Zod's Sacred Texts class showed a "sophistication of ideas" which she found surprising. Although Thurman initially denied any wrongdoing, Professor Zod was still suspicious. An Honor Code trial was held, and Thurman was found in violation of the Honor Code for plagiarism.

Introduction

When confronted by Professor Zod, Thurman denied any wrongdoing but said that many of his ideas for the paper had come from his Western Civilization course, and showed professor Zod his notes from that class. Professor Zod remained suspicious of the "sophistication of ideas" in his paper, however, and contacted a Western Civ. professor to ask what source material dealt with the subject of Thurman's paper. The professor recommended a book by Fred Felix, and Professor Zod found that substantial portions of Thurman's paper had been either directly copied or closely paraphrased from this source without citation. Professor Zod sent a note through campus mail to Thurman informing him of these findings. That same afternoon, before receiving Professor Zod's note, Thurman went to see Professor Zod and confessed to plagiarism. The matter was brought before Honor Council, and it was decided that a trial was necessary.

Two of the twelve jurors selected for the trial had served on a trial involving Thurman earlier that semester. In that trial, Thurman had been found in violation of the Honor Code on a homework assignment in the same Sacred Texts class. With both Thurman's and the Dean's approval, these two repeat jurors were allowed to serve in this second case, and the trial was convened.

Fact-Finding

Professor Zod discussed her suspicions of plagiarism and the initial confrontation with Thurman. She showed the jury Thurman's five page paper and a xerox copy of relevant sections from the Felix book. A comparison of the book and the paper showed that substantial copying had occurred.

Thurman then spoke. He said that he had plagiarized the paper and pointed out a plagiarized line which Professor Zod had missed. Thurman estimated that he had directly copied 11 lines and closely paraphrased another 15. He told the jury that he had lied at the initial confrontation because he had been afraid.

Deliberations I

Due to the clarity of the situation, there were few questions. Within 30 minutes, the jury reached consensus on the following statement of violation:

Thurman violated the Honor Code by plagiarizing his Sacred Texts paper.

The jury was then informed of Thurman's previous violation in the course. After talking with the two jurors who had served on Thurman's previous trial, the Chair informed the jury of the nature of the violation and the resolutions in that case. Thurman was then called back for the circumstantial portion of the trial.

Circumstantial

During the circumstantial portion of the trial Thurman spoke of family circumstances which had caused him to be under pressure. In addition, he had been under a great deal of academic pressure...
after his first trial. His homework grade in the course had been lowered by 25% and he felt he had to do well in order to maintain his overall grade in the course. Thurman told the jury that when he had turned in the paper he hadn't been conscious of the fact that it was plagiarized. He had written the paper several times, finally using the Felix book as a source. He told the jury that he hadn't been able to get the paper right and had taken more and more out of the Felix book. At the end he suggested that he re-write the paper and fail the class. He wanted the jury to know that he had not done it intentionally.

**Deliberations II**

The jury quickly consensed that separation was necessary. There were two reasons for this. The first was that the code states, "A gross act of plagiarism...will normally result in separation from the community (III, A, 1)." This case did not seem to warrant an exception from this clause which was added to the code by a plenary vote several years ago.

The second reason for separation was that the stresses Thurman found himself under would continue and almost certainly worsen if he remained at Haverford. The jury saw separation as perhaps the only way to break this cycle. Continued exposure to these stresses, the jury believed, might lead to further violations. Therefore, the jury decided that the separation would begin immediately, but only last for a semester, because Thurman had been so honest and willing to work towards repairing the breach of trust between himself and the community. The jury felt that a longer separation would be strictly punitive.

The jury also felt that Thurman should fail the course, since his integrity with regard to the work in the class was in question, and out of fairness to other members of the class. The jury reached consensus on the following two resolutions:

1) Thurman will be separated from the community immediately, for one semester.
2) The jury suggests that Thurman fail the class.

**Presentation of the Resolutions**

The jury explained the reasons behind the resolutions. Thurman agreed that separation was necessary, but asked that it be delayed in light of his home situation. The jury agreed that they did not have enough information to make this decision, and it was best left up to the discretion of the Deans.

Thurman also said that he wanted to do something for the community. The jury added the following third resolution in response:

3) At Thurman's suggestion, the jury recommends that he participate in some form of community service upon his return.

Professor Zod was also satisfied with the resolutions. Professor Zod and Thurman left, and the jury reached final consensus on the three resolutions.

**Dean's Review**

After reviewing the case, the Dean of the College approved of the jury's decision, however, the Dean felt that in light of Thurman's home circumstances the separation should be delayed until the beginning of the next semester. When the jury members met with the Dean to discuss this decision, they also approved of it.

*If you have any questions or comments please put them in the abstract response box. Thanks.*