HONOR COUNCIL ABSTRACT

"Tom"

Honor Council received two quizzes and a note from a professor. The professor said that these two quizzes were extremely similar to each other and differed markedly from other quizzes in the class. The quizzes had been take home, and the professor believed that these quizzes could only be the result of some form of cheating. When questioning the two students, the professor found that they were suitemates. In separate meetings with the professor Paul said that he had not cheated, while Tom told the professor that he had overheard Paul discussing the answer to the quiz before Tom had taken it. Paul denied having discussed the quiz; Tom later said that he had lied - Paul had not talked about the quiz, and Tom had not cheated. Honor Council felt that two inquiries would be needed to address the situation. Because of the added complexity of Tom's rescinded confession, Council decided to inquire into his case first in the hopes of clarifying the situation. Honor Council also felt that both Tom and Paul would need to be present at the other's inquiry.

MONDAY (Day one: 4 hours): After the Chairperson read the relevant portions of the Code, the factual portion of the inquiry began. The jury received a copy of each of the two quizzes, and Tom explained what he felt had happened. Because of a mix-up he had not received a copy of the quiz until 8:30 of the morning it was due. Tom said that he had taken the quiz in the library and had then returned to his dorm around 10:00am. He had taken a nap before class. Tom said that he had probably left his bookbag with the completed quiz in the living room and was unsure as to whether Paul was still in the suite, but felt that he probably was, since Paul did not have a class until late that morning. Paul then said that he had taken the quiz the night before, and Tom said that he knew that Paul had already taken the quiz. Paul also said that he had left the typed quiz on his desk by the door of his room. Both said that they attended class regularly and had been doing fairly well in the course. The jury asked both Tom and Paul to explain what they felt would be a more correct answer to the quiz question. Paul was able to do this, while Tom could not. Paul felt that his answer had been original thought while Tom thought that he had remembered the answer from the textbook. When asked to find the spot in the book, Tom could not.

At this point, due to the similarity in the two quizzes, the jury consented that a violation had occurred, although it was unable and unwilling to say whether it was Tom or Paul who had committed the violation.

When the jury questioned Tom as to why he had confessed to cheating on the quiz, Tom replied that he had panicked. Tom said that the professor had given him the impression that if someone confessed the matter might be settled without going to Honor Council, a group Tom was very reluctant to
face. Paul said that he felt that the matter would have to come to Honor Council no matter what. At this time the jury decided to end for the night and reconvene the following day. It was hoped that the professor would be present.

**Tuesday (Day two: 3 and 1/2 hours):** The professor was present for the first half of the inquiry. She confirmed Paul's feeling that the problem would have come to Honor Council regardless of Tom's confession. The professor reiterated her feeling that some form of cheating was involved. When the professor left the jury asked both Tom and Paul to leave the room. The jury then discussed what type of questions could be asked to ascertain which of the two was lying. The jury called each of the two into the room separately and asked how well the two got along. Tom replied that although they were suitemates they were no longer good friends, and Paul said that Tom was extremely disrespectful. After several questions the jury began to feel that the cheating was done by one student and that the two had not worked together. The jury ended the inquiry for the night and decided to reconvene two days later, to give everyone a break from the inquiry.

**Thursday (Day three: 6 and 1/2 hours):** By the third day most of the jurors felt that Tom had committed the violation but that all the evidence was circumstantial. Tom, Paul, and the jury all said that they would be dissatisfied without a resolution. Several times Paul proclaimed his innocence and said that if there was anything he knew he would have told the jury. Halfway into the session, the jury decided that Paul had nothing further to add to the proceedings, and that they would continue to question Tom. The jury told Tom that they felt that he had cheated. First, it seemed that nobody would ever admit to having committed a violation when he hadn't. Second, both Paul and Tom acknowledged that Paul had taken the quiz first – the night before as opposed to the next morning. Thus, if Paul had been the one to cheat, he only would have had the hour immediately preceding the class. Third, a discrepancy emerged between the professor's and Tom's accounts of the conversation during which Tom confessed. Tom claimed that he had done so because Paul had refused to attend a three way meeting suggested by Tom to the professor. The professor insisted that when he informed Tom that there was to be no meeting, he made it clear that he himself had decided to cancel the meeting, although he had discussed the possibility of a meeting with Paul. The jury felt that Tom might have confessed in order to save himself from Honor Council, and that he retracted upon finding out that he would have to appear before Honor Council anyway. Finally, Paul was simply more convincing; his understanding of the Honor Code, of the issues of academic integrity, community, and responsibility and of their relation to the inquiry far superseded Tom's understanding. The jury continued discussing the situation among itself. The jury agreed that Tom was becoming uncommunicative and that it was not achieving any conclusive
answers. The jury, however, felt that abandonment of the inquiry would have serious ramifications on academic integrity at Haverford. That such an apparently clear violation of the Honor Code would be left in a hung jury would clearly undermine the trust between professors and students, and among students themselves. Thus the jury agreed to calling an alternative source of guidance and authority - Tom and Paul's dean. The jury decided to meet with the dean without Paul and Tom present the following day.

FRIDAY (Day four: Three and 1/2 hours): The dean agreed with the jury's feelings that it was Tom who had committed the violation and understood that the jury could do nothing because all of the evidence was circumstantial. The jury decided to recommend that Tom go and talk to his dean about what was occurring. In the weekly Honor Council meeting, Honor Council felt that if nothing significant occurred in the meeting with the Dean, then a Dean's Committee would be necessary as an extension of the inquiry procedure. The extraordinary nature of the inquiry, and the importance of immediately reaching a policy decision, necessitated its discussion in the meeting.

WEDNESDAY (Day five: Four hours): Five days later the jury members were informed that Tom had confessed to his dean to having cheated on the quiz. The jury reconvened to hear what had happened.

The jury asked Tom why he had taken so long to confess, and he replied that once having lied, he found it difficult to stop. Tom then explained the circumstances surrounding the violation. Tom said that he had been in Paul's room the night before the quiz was due and had seen Paul's finished quiz on the desk. He had read it quickly and casually, and that the violation was not premeditated. The next day when Tom took the quiz, the contents of Paul's quiz were still in his mind. In checking with Paul, the jury found that there had been a coversheet on Paul's quiz, so that Tom's reading of the quiz had to have been planned - to a certain extent.

Tom had no ideas as to possible resolutions. The jury asked him to leave and began discussing resolutions. The jury felt that he should fail the course and write a personal apology to his professor. The jury then began discussing the idea of separation from the community. They also discussed alternatives to separation. After a great deal of discussion, the jury felt that because of the prolonged lying to the Professor, Paul, and the jury, the spirit of the community had been too greatly violated to justify Tom's return the following semester. They felt that he should be allowed to return without having to reapply at the start of 1986-87 year. The resolution was as follows:

1) Failure of the course
2) Written apology to his professor
3) Separation from the community for one semester with unconditional
readmittance.
4) A letter to the community through Honor Council before his return in 1986
5) The jury reserved the right to implement some sort of educational process
   about the Honor Code based on Tom's need when he returned in the fall.
   The jury tentatively consented to this resolution with two people standing
   outside consensus.

THURSDAY (Day six: three hours): The jury reconvened for a final time to
discuss its resolution with Tom and to make any changes it felt were
necessary. Tom felt that separation from the community would not be
beneficial and that it would be better for him to stay and work with Honor
Council and the Honor Code.
   Tom then left the room, and the jury continued to discuss the tentative
resolution. Some jurors did initially question whether separation was the
most appropriate action, and whether some form of education within the
community might not be a more appropriate response to the violation. As
much as it felt that this educational process might be beneficial, the jury
also felt that if it were implemented next semester, it would serve only to
spoonfeed Tom a series of concepts he presently did not understand. If he
were to spend time away from the community, his decision to return to
Haverford would imply a willingness to reintergrate himself into the
community, and to grow into the responsibilities one is given by the Honor
Code. If he decided not to return, this decision would suggest that he is
unable or unwilling to accept these responsibilities. During the discussion,
Tom compared separation to imprisonment. This analogy alone indicated that
he needed time alone, to individually reconcile himself to a system of life
and conduct that must be internalized rather than forced upon an individual.
Also, the jury felt that community trust had been violated to such a great
degree that it would be inappropriate for Tom to remain in the community.

   The final resolution was as follows.
1) Failure of the course
2) Written apology to his professor and a personal apology to Paul.
3) Separation from the community for one semester with an unconditional
   readmittance to Haverford in the fall.
4) Before his return, Tom must submit a letter to his dean discussing his
   views of the Honor Code. The letter will be forwarded to Honor Council.
   The members of the jury still at Haverford will then reconvene to decide,
   based on this letter, whether or not and to what extent additional
   orientation for Tom about the Honor Code is neccessary

   The entire jury consented to this resolution.

   The case was appealed according to the new procedure, and the jury's
decision was upheld.