Introduction:

Mary, a student T.A., was correcting homework assignments for a mathematics class when she came across striking similarities between Tony and Gino's papers. She presented the papers along with her findings to Professor Marchetti. He examined the papers and concurred with Mary's initial assessment. He then contacted both Tony and Gino separately. Upon speaking with both of them, Professor Marchetti decided Tony may have copied from Gino. At the Professor's behest, Tony contacted an Honor Council Member. Honor Council reached consensus that a trial was necessary.

Fact-Finding:

Professor Marchetti spoke first. He explained that collaboration is allowed on the weekly assignments but answers are to be written out separately. He thought the homework assignments looked too similar to have been written out individually. Professor Marchetti then took out a document comparing Tony's answers to Gino's on four different questions. Professor Marchetti began circulating this document around the room.

Mary spoke next. She explained that she grades the homework assignments one question at a time and noticed both Gino and Tony made a peculiar error on question 6. Instead of the word "differentiate" both wrote "deferential." She then examined the assignments in their entirety and found many other similarities.
Tony said he was working on his homework Friday morning when he received Gino's paper. Tony then took Gino's homework with him into French class to help him work on the assignment. Tony said he would look at the problem in the book, do it in his head and then check the answer with Gino's paper. Tony then wrote the answer out of his head. He said, "My violation is that I had an incomplete homework assignment and looked at Gino's. I didn't do it to copy." He added that the following week they didn't consult each other and their answers were similar.

Gino mentioned that he gave his homework to Tony so that Tony could check his work in French class. "I assumed he had done his homework," said Gino.

The jury then began asking questions. One juror asked if the answers were merely paraphrased from the text. Professor Marchetti responded that the phrasing and order of thoughts would be different. "Answers are not expected to be identical at the phrase for phrase level."

A juror asked Tony if he could clarify the process by which he did the work. Tony said that he had completed three problems when he received Gino's paper. "When I looked at Gino's homework, I saw the question, figured out what I would say and then looked at his answer."

Another juror asked if there were any other obvious similarities between the papers. Professor Marchetti replied that on question 4, Tony had written 'trouble the quotient' where Gino had put "triple the quotient." The Professor thought this mistake was simply an example of careless copying because in this context "trouble" makes no mathematical sense.

A different jury member then asked Tony if he thought he could have unintentionally copied Gino's homework. Tony responded in the affirmative.
The chair asked Professor Marchetti if Tony's explanation of merely using Gino's paper as a check was reasonable. Professor Marchetti responded, "It's entirely unreasonable. I believe that based upon what Tony and Gino have said, Tony took credit for Gino's work. Tony dashed it off on the basis of some conversations with Gino and copying."

Deliberations:

For a variety of reasons, the jury quickly agreed that Tony had copied. First, he admitted that he may have unintentionally copied. Second, the obvious similarities between papers pointed toward copying of some sort. Finally, the mistakes in word choice ("deferential" and "trouble" instead of "differentiate" and "triple") convinced people that Tony used Gino's paper when completing his own.

The next question was whether he copied intentionally or unintentionally. The jury displayed a wide spectrum of opinion from straight copying of the assignment to unintentional copying without malice. In the end, however, the jury did not feel that there was enough evidence to say Tony directly copied or that he in turn lied to the jury. He reasonably could have written "trouble" and duplicated "deferential" because he saw them in Gino's paper not because he was maliciously copying. The jury reached consensus on the following statement of violation:

"Tony violated the Honor Code by copying Gino's homework and using it as his own."

Circumstantial:
Both Tony and Professor Marchetti agreed with the statement of violation. Jurors asked additional questions. One juror inquired about the nature or significance of the violation. Professor Marchetti said an individual homework assignment is worth ~ 2% of the total grade.

Tony added, "This has to be addressed to the community. One person does the work and the other gets credit. That has to be addressed. That's a little thing we forget like jaywalking." When questioned about possible resolution suggestions, Tony responded that he would like to prepare a reminder for the community regarding discussion groups.

The Professor added, "If there is a useful message to the community, it's that you're closer to the line [between cheating and not] when you're working in groups on assignments like this. The line is still clear but you're closer to the line." Professor Marchetti then suggested that he and Tony meet to rebuild the trust in their relationship. Additionally, he reminded Tony that he should have handed in the assignment late and accepted the standard 25% penalty. As both a symbolic and punitive gesture, the Professor suggested Tony have 25% deducted off all his assignments, "to show that there can be real consequences to being grade conscious to the point of cutting corners." With that statement, Tony and Professor Marchetti left.

Deliberations:

The jury came to the first two resolutions fairly quickly:

1) Tony will meet with Professor Marchetti to resolve any lingering issues and restore the trust in their relationship.

2) Tony and Professor Marchetti will also meet to discuss guidelines for collaborative projects. Tony will write a document containing these
guidelines, which will be circulated among the faculty for editing. The jury suggests that professors incorporate the ideas in this document into their class instructions:

The jury then spent a while discussing the appropriate resolution for Tony's grade. Some jurors only wanted to give him no credit for the assignment in question while one juror wanted his final grade to be reduced by a full point. Most of the jury supported Professor Marchetti's recommendation of a 25% reduction on all the homework assignments but it was determined that this penalty would not necessarily affect Tony's final grade. The jurors eventually agreed they needed to insure that Tony's final grade reflected his violation:

3) The jury suggests that Tony's course grade be reduced by 1/3 of a point. This change will be produced by giving Tony no credit for the homework and reducing his overall homework grade by an appropriate percentage.

Presentation of the Resolutions:

The chair read the official presentation of the resolutions to Tony and Professor Marchetti. Both parties seemed content with the Jury's findings. Professor Marchetti added that the second resolution, "can help to educate the community. I think my colleagues in the Math department, along with their graders, need to get the message about discouraging collaboration as well as checking for it." With that declaration, Tony and Professor Marchetti left and the jury reached final consensus on the resolutions.