Tyrone
(a.k.a., the "Warm Fuzzy" Trial)

Introduction:
In order to solve a certain problem on Tyrone's Mathematics take-home exam, he needed a particular constant. Professor Lazio, the instructor of the Math class, had said that all constants would be included on the test. So, when Tyrone could not find this constant, he asked one of his suite mates, Bertha, to go to his book and look up the constant for him. He noted this on his exam.

When Prof. Lazio read the note on Tyrone's exam, he confronted him and the two contacted an Honor Council Member. Honor Council reached consensus that a trial was necessary.

Fact-Finding:
Tyrone began with his account. He was taking a mid-term (which allowed a crib sheet) in Prof. Lazio's Math class. Since Prof. Lazio had indicated that all required constants would be on the exam, Tyrone assumed that Prof. Lazio had simply forgotten to include the "missing" constant. He asked Bertha to look up the constant for him in his text book and made a note of this on his test. Tyrone explained that he "didn't feel proper looking it up and not noting it."

Professor Lazio then spoke, remarking that Tyrone's account was "accurate." The instructions on the exam's cover sheet stated, "this is a closed book exam...you should prepare one sheet...of notes...containing any information of general usefulness... No other written materials are to be used once you start the exam!" When Tyrone took the exam, he used outside written materials. "In that narrow sense," said Lazio, "he didn't follow the instructions." Since the instructions were clear and he signed the pledge, there is a violation of the Code in that narrow sense. Lazio believed that there was "no intent to deceive" and that Tyrone deemed having Bertha find the constant for him "OK." Prof. Lazio then discussed the difficulties professors encounter in foreseeing all possible problems students may have understanding exams. "It often happens that a student thinks he needs
information that wasn't included." In those cases, Prof. Lazlo believes "one should stick with the conditions of the exam and note down the problem, trusting the judgment of the faculty member."

The jury then asked questions of Professor Lazlo and Tyrone. The first question was why did Tyrone have Bertha look it up. He responded, "I didn't want to flip through the book and see something else. I only wanted that specific information." One juror wanted to know what the others in the class had done. Prof. Lazlo answered that "some made a rough estimate, and some left it as a constant" (rather than utilizing a numeric value, some students left it in the abstract alphabetic form). Another juror wondered why Tyrone had not just called the professor and asked him what to do. Tyrone answered "there was a time restraint for the exam and it didn't seem important enough to call him."

Deliberations:

Everyone agreed that Tyrone had violated the exam's instructions, and most felt that this definitely constituted a violation of the Honor Code. No one, however, found Tyrone personally at fault. As Professor Lazlo stated, Tyrone had made a judgment and it was a wrong one, but he had acted with the utmost integrity and character. After some discussion the jury reached consensus on the following statement of violation:

Although he acted with integrity and no deception was involved, Tyrone violated the Honor Code by having his suite mate look up a constant despite the professor's instructions.

Circumstantial:

Tyrone agreed with the statement of violation. Prof. Lazlo said that he did not see this as a serious violation of the Honor Code and was not interested in any punitive action.
Deliberations:

The jury consensed on the following resolution:

The jury suggests that Tyrone and Professor Lazlo write letters to be included with the abstract, if they feel it will increase the abstract's educational value.

Professor Lazlo's Letter:

Recently, I have encountered several instances of students not following precisely the instructions on take-home exams. Most troubling is the rationalization that sometimes accompanies failure to respect explicit prohibitions against using books or materials during the exam. There is only one way to ensure that faculty members can give take-home exams with confidence: students should not allow themselves to deviate even slightly from the instructions without explicit permission, under any circumstances. In the event of an unforeseen difficulty (apparently ambiguous wording of a question, information that you think ought to have been provided, information that you would have had handy if you had only realized it would be needed, etc.), do the best you can and attach a note stating your concern. You can trust faculty members to strive for fairness and equity in evaluating your work.

Respectfully,

Professor Lazlo