Abstract discussion will be Thursday, April 3rd at 8:00 pm in Ryan Gym.

Chip and Dale:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2014

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Key:
Chip - Confronted Student
Dale - Confronted Student
Professor Pluto - Confronting Professor
Nut Cracking 100 - Class
Tree Climbing Team - Athletic team that Chip and Dale were on

Summary:
This case involves two students, Chip and Dale, who were both taking Nut Cracking 100 with Professor Pluto and were both playing for the Tree Climbing team. Chip and Dale had collaborated on homework assignments throughout the semester and had studied for the Nut Cracking final exam a week before taking it. Chip and Dale decided to take the exam together in a rushed decision, since they were confused about some of the material. After the semester had ended, when Professor Pluto went back to reference Chip's exam, he noticed that it had an uncanny resemblance to Dale's. After an initial confrontation over email with Professor Pluto, Chip and Dale contacted Honor Council separately, at first claiming that there had been no violation, but in subsequent emails both apologizing and admitting to their violation of the Honor Code and collaboration on the exam. The jury came to a statement of violation referencing Chip and Dale's intentional collaboration and their initially deceiving Professor Pluto and Honor Council about their actions. The academic trial that ensued resulted in a number of resolutions, including Chip and Dale receiving a 0.0 in Nut Cracking 100, and Chip and Dale creating a peer support group to help students under academic pressure.

Prior to Trial:
Honor Council was first notified of this case on receiving a statement from Chip. He wrote that Professor Pluto had asked him to bring himself to Honor Council for violating the Honor Code on his Nut Cracking final exam. Chip wrote that he had not violated the Honor Code, but that he had collaborated closely with another student throughout the semester. He wrote that the other student's methods of approaching problems might have influenced his own. The next day, the Chairs received a statement from Dale. His statement was similar to Chip’s, and also mentioned that he had helped Chip
with review questions after he had already taken the exam.

Honor Council received a second email from Dale the next day which contradicted his first statement. He wrote that he had indeed violated the Honor Code in Nut Cracking by working on the final exam with Chip, and that he was ashamed of his actions. He proposed possible resolutions and apologized to both Honor Council and Professor Pluto. Several hours later, Honor Council received a second statement from Chip in which he also admitted to cheating on the final exam with Dale.

Honor Council received a statement from Professor Pluto after both of these emails, explaining that he had emailed Chip and Dale to ask them to bring themselves to Honor Council. Professor Pluto explained how he had come to suspect what he saw as an egregious violation of the Honor Code, citing both the fact that the students had cheated and that they had initially lied when confronted. He also wrote that he looked forward to repairing the breach of trust and that he trusted Honor Council's judgment regarding the case.

Honor Council discussed all of the statements and consented to a suspicion of violation, after which the case was sent to an Academic Trial.

Fact-Finding Portion:

Dale spoke first. He said that he and Chip had studied together for the Nut Cracking exam the entire weekend before finals week. On that Monday afternoon, they had made a panicked decision to take the test together. Dale emphasized that they had rushed into the decision. He said they had worked on assignments together for the class the entire semester, and he had thought it would help them to take the exam together as well.

Chip said they had started panicking and were thus “forced” into making the decision to cheat. He explained that Professor Pluto allowed students to use one 8.5” x 11” sheet of notes on the exam, and he had copied down the answers he and Dale had worked out together and used the sheet while taking his test. He confirmed that he had “pretty much” copied down Dale's whole final exam and used it as his note sheet.

Professor Pluto said that when first grading the exams, he hadn’t noticed anything wrong. Over winter break, he received an email from Chip asking about his final course grade. Professor Pluto said that he had looked back at Chip's exam and decided to compare it with Dale's, which was the only exam with the same score as Chip's. Professor Pluto found the two exams were “basically identical.” He said he had contacted both students to confront them and to ask what had happened. He said that he was not satisfied with either explanation. A few days later, the students both admitted that they had taken the exam together.

In response to a question from a juror, Dale said that he and Chip had decided to take the test together on Monday and not before.

A juror asked the pair to talk about their decision to come clean. Dale said that after his first statement, he had “become kind of lost” in himself. A few days later, he sent the email telling the truth. He said that in the days between he did a lot of self-reflection, ultimately feeling he had let his professor down by cheating on the exam. He said he realized that “what he thought human beings should do” and what he was doing were very different. Chip agreed, saying that after he lied to his professor, he had a “bitter taste” in his mouth and “couldn't sleep.” He said the Honor Code was a big reason he had come to Haverford, and he liked the values of trust and respect between individuals on this campus. He apologized for not being immediately forthcoming about the situation. Professor Pluto commented that Chip and Dale both came to talk to him in person before sending their second statements, which he appreciated.

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Dale said that both he and Chip came to the decision to come clean separately. He said that he came to talk to Chip before sending his second statement to Professor Pluto, and Chip told him that he had wanted to talk about the same thing.

Professor Pluto confirmed that the final was a self-scheduled, closed-book exam, and the only notes students were allowed to use had to be on an 8.5” x 11” sheet of paper.

A juror asked why the students hadn't simply studied more and taken the test later in the week. Dale said that he was leaving early to go to a family wedding. Chip said that he had made plans to leave on Thursday, and he had an early train.

A juror asked why Chip and Dale had not simply taken their tests at the same time, instead choosing to stagger their times. Chip said they hadn't put a lot of thought into how they would cheat. Dale said they had decided to collaborate “pretty soon” before he got his test. Chip said that the decision had more to do with his plan for spacing out finals that week and less with the logistics of cheating.

A juror asked about Chip and Dale's previous grades in the course. Professor Pluto responded that they had worked together on homework, and both had high homework scores. However, he said Dale's midterm had a relatively high score, while Chip's had a relatively low one.

A juror asked if the parties had come close to cheating before. Dale said he had a lot going on that finals week, and it was the first time he'd either come close to or gone through with cheating. Chip agreed, saying that a great thing about Haverford was the ability to de-stress and do take-home midterms. He said he had never really felt the need to cheat before.

In response to a juror's question, Dale confirmed that he took the exam in his room, and Chip said that he took it later in a classroom designated for self-scheduled exams. Dale said that he had worked the hardest in this course last semester, and Chip said that it was one of his most helpful classes.

A juror asked Chip and Dale to speak more about the conversation in which they had decided to violate the Honor Code. Dale said that he didn't remember this conversation word for word, as they were panicking through the problems. He said the decision was quick: they had studied from Friday through Monday, and were “freaking out” at the end. Chip said that their biggest trouble was with the concept of walnuts. He said that by Monday, they were both frustrated. Both students confirmed that they had only thought about collaborating as an option on Monday, right before Dale went to get his test.

A juror asked Dale why he had been worried about the exam, given his high grades in the course. Dale said that he didn't do the last homework on walnuts, and was “harping on it” when he was studying. Then, when he tried to do earlier problems that he had been able to solve before, he got the wrong answers.

Jury Deliberations and Statement of Violation:

The jury quickly and unanimously consented that both Chip and Dale had violated the Honor Code. The jury discussed whether the cheating had been premeditated, but decided that they didn't all believe they could call it premeditated given the students' rushed decision to collaborate. The jury agreed that lying to their professor was a violation of the Honor Code and that the lying had been premeditated.

The jury discussed how Chip had gone over the allowed time limit for the exam by effectively taking it twice, and that Dale had violated the instructions by taking the exam in his room. The jury felt that both constituted a further violation of the Honor Code. The jury unanimously consented on the following statement of violation:
Chip and Dale violated the Honor Code by intentionally collaborating on their self-scheduled final exam for Nut Cracking and by consciously disregarding the standards for self-scheduled exams. They further violated the Honor Code by conspiring and attempting to deceive their professor and Honor Council about their actions, before finally admitting to the truth.

**Circumstantial Portion:**

Chip said that he had been sick a lot the previous semester, and thus had been “trying to catch up” for the bulk of it. He said that had “snowballed into the last two weeks.” He also mentioned briefly that he had had an issue with his parents, but he didn't comment further.

Chip said that he was looking into job and internship applications, which placed a high emphasis on GPA. He said that he had gotten caught up in grades and “lost sight of the big picture.” He said that as he and Dale had been working together the entire year, looking back, the decision to cheat didn't seem as drastic. He said that he hadn't brought himself to Council because once the test was over, he “moved on to the next thing, got caught up in doing things at home,” and didn't really think about it.

Chip said that since being confronted, “school has seemed surreal.” He said he wasn't sure of the future, and the process had allowed him to reflect on the situation. He said he felt much better after confessing to Professor Pluto, but it was weird talking to his parents, Tree Climbing teammates, and trying to answer questions. He said it was tough, and he never believed he would be in this situation. Chip said that he was suspended indefinitely from the Tree Climbing team, and it was upsetting for him not to be a part of that. He said that he had come to Haverford because of the academics and the community, and violating those ideas “scare” him. He said that he felt he'd learned a lot from this issue.

Dale said that in general, he tends to be easily frustrated, especially with nut-related classes. He said that he had studied for this exam through the weekend, and “can't get this one concept.” He said his frustration “started to affect how I was thinking,” and he made a rushed decision. He said that he should have stepped back, but didn't. Dale said that he had also been applying to summer jobs, and the first question they asked was about his GPA. He said that he had forgotten why he was here: to learn, build up his character, round himself out, and he had lost track of what was important. He said that he didn't think about much about the violation over break, because there was other stuff he was focusing on. He said that when this came up at the beginning of the new semester was when he stepped back for the first time. Since then, he said he had engaged in more self-reflection and tried to be honest. Dale said it had been a lot easier since he had come clean. He said he was “ashamed, confused, upset,” but it was still easier than lying. He said that being suspended from Tree Climbing was rough, but he came here for academics, and this was something he had brought on himself.

The chair asked the professor to share his thoughts on the situation. He said that he wished the students had come forward over break and when he'd confronted them, but he was grateful that they came forward in the end. He said that he could understand their panic at the time. He said the whole issue was surprising and “a little unsettling, especially given what I'd been told coming in about the Honor Code.” He said that it was particularly disturbing because he had found out about this after the course had finished, and he thought everything was okay. He said it was hard to confront and “put someone through this [process].”

A juror asked about the status of Tree Climbing for Chip and Dale. Dale said that he had told his coach right after he sent his second statement. He said the coach said he would decide what to do after the jury's decision, as academic issues came first. Chip said that their coach had experience with
the Code. He said that the coach had been upset, but was frank with them, saying that he was upset they felt they needed to do this. Chip said that it had been “tough coming forward,” as they “didn't want him to think of us in a negative light.” However, he said that since telling his coach, it has helped to “have someone to lean on.” He said that he and Dale were not allowed to climb trees until this issue was resolved.

In response to a question, Professor Pluto said he was more comfortable with in-class than with take-home exams even if the in-class exams were unproctored, and he couldn't think of what would make him comfortable with self-scheduled finals. He suggested that perhaps students could state where they're taking the exam when they sign it out, as that could offer one last reminder of what the system entailed.

**Proposed Resolutions**

**Immediately following Circumstantial Portion**

The jury then asked the parties to propose resolutions.

Dale proposed the following resolutions:

1. He would accept a 0 on the exam or the class, which ever was chosen. He further said that he would like to retake the test for no credit, because he knew how much this had affected the professor, and wanted to show him how much he did get out of the class.
2. Dale also proposed that tutoring in nut-cracking would be a great way to give back to the community.
3. Dale admitted that this experience had changed his perspective of the Honor Code and Honor Council, and thought that applying to be an HCO and participating in orienting freshmen to the Honor Code would be a really redeeming experience.
4. Dale wanted to meet with the jury at the end of the semester to discuss his progress and development regarding the violation, and receive feedback.
5. Dale did not think separation from the community was necessary, in fact, he thought that remaining at Haverford could help him rebuild his bond with the community.

Chip agreed with Dale’s proposals. Chip worried about his relationship with Professor Pluto. He said he was upset that Professor Pluto was now uncomfortable with take-home exams as a result of Chip and Dale's actions. Chip emphasized that the type of person at Haverford generally handled the Honor Code very well, and he wanted to show Professor Pluto that he had been humbled. Chip also proposed an additional resolution:

6. He would write a letter to the community reminding students that school can be tough, but it is important to accept that. He wanted to emphasize that people shouldn’t be ashamed of being the “best that they can be,” even if they do not get the highest grade possible.

Professor Pluto said he thought Chip and Dale's proposed resolutions were “very good” and that he wanted to defer the decision to the jury. However, he said that he had a “gut feeling” that only a zero on the final was too limited, as that was “equivalent to someone not showing up for the final.” He said that he would be more comfortable with a zero in the course, or a zero on the final and lowering the course grade by a letter grade.

Professor Pluto said he liked the idea of the letter to the community, as an “anonymous apology,” and a community service project. He liked the idea of tutoring or setting up a tutoring program, as a good tutor could make students feel they didn't have to resort to cheating, although setting up such a program would be a very challenging project. He said he was “heartened” by the suggestion to take a retest removed from the notion of a grade. He said that would help him understand where
Chip and Dale actually were in the class. He said he didn't feel comfortable making suggestions about Tree Climbing or separation.

The jury proceeded to ask Chip and Dale questions about their resolutions. A juror asked Chip and Dale what their plans were for majors. They both said they were considering majoring in Wingnuts, for which Nutcracking 100 was required. They said they could either retake this class or take a higher level. A juror asked if their Tree Climbing coach would be receptive to input from the jury about possible ramifications. Dale said that he was sure the coach would be receptive, and he felt that input might help him decide what to do.

A juror asked if Chip and Dale felt they would be tempted in a similar way in the future. Dale said, after this experience, he would take a step back and call his parents for advice. Chip said that this incident has been constantly in his mind, and he had no interest in doing this again.

Professor Pluto said that peer counseling was helpful, especially when it was related to academic stress. He said it would be helpful to advise other students about pressure and for them to have someone to talk to. A juror suggested that Chip and Dale could work to create a peer group for stress support. People rarely talked about grades at Haverford, but this could be an environment to talk about stress. The professor said that he liked the idea of seeing something positive come out of this situation. Chip and Dale both said they supported the idea of forming such a peer group, and felt it was a unique and needed addition to Haverford.

Chip and Dale asked the jury what their thoughts were on them applying to be HCOs. The jurors responded that they would encourage them to do so, but the sense of the jury was that they would be uncomfortable putting it into the resolutions. Chip and Dale felt this was reasonable.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:**

*Immediately after Proposed Resolutions*

The jury first made a list of topics to discuss for tentative resolutions, including the following: final exam and course grade, the professor's trust in students, stress that had led to Chip and Dale's cheating, their desire to share their experience with grades, the possibility of retaking the test, the Tree Climbing team, the HCO program, separation, letters to the community, and peer mentoring.

The jury began by discussing grades. There was a lot of debate regarding proper course of action. Some jurors felt strongly that Chip and Dale should receive a 0 for the class. Others liked the proposal of getting a zero on the final, then lowering the course grade by a full letter grade. A third juror questioned Chip and Dale's behavior, asking if lying should be factored in. Some jurors questioned if the jury should acknowledge that Chip and Dale did not have the same grade before this happened, and should allow their final grades to reflect that. Many members of the jury also felt that Chip and Dale should not receive major credit or divisional credit for the course.

Some jurors also questioned Chip and Dale's honesty. Would they have come forward without the professor's confrontation? Did their responses seem too rehearsed? One juror said he felt uncomfortable talking about intentions, rather than what the students actually said. The jury decided to proceed by thinking about what should be done, rather than questioning Chip and Dale's motives.

The jury discussed separation. The majority of the jury members quickly said they were very opposed to separation. One juror said he felt it would be helpful for Chip and Dale to be on campus. Another juror said they had showed “gestures of remorse and restoration,” and so they should be allowed to stay. The jury agreed that Chip and Dale should be allowed to remain on campus.

The jury discussed the meeting at the end of the semester, proposed by Chip and Dale. Some jurors felt that it was “unnecessary oversight,” while others felt that the responsibility should be on Chip.
and Dale. The jury agreed to a resolution that supported Chip and Dale's desire to meet with the jury, asking them to take initiative.

The jury proceeded to discuss the idea of the peer support group. A juror said he thought setting up a tutoring program, as suggested by Dale, could fall through, but this was “easier and more tangible.” Another juror suggested that Honor Council's Student Outreach Committee should get involved, to help out Chip and Dale and to make sure the project got off the ground, saying it was “important enough that we shouldn't put it all on them.” She suggested that the jury should encourage Chip and Dale to also get involved in tutoring, without mandating it. The jury largely agreed, and drafted two resolutions: one about a peer support group, and another encouraging Chip and Dale to get involved with tutoring.

The jury briefly discussed the students’ idea of retaking the exam for no credit. Jurors largely felt that because Chip and Dale expressed such interest in doing so, and their suggestion seemed to rest well with the professor, they should go ahead and do so.

The jurors moved on to discuss Chip and Dale's participation in Tree Climbing. The jury largely felt that their involvement should not be impacted by the trial, but were unsure of their jurisdiction in the matter. The jurors decided they would write a resolution about speaking to the coach to convey the jury's sentiments, but make sure to discuss it with Chip and Dale during the meeting to finalize resolutions.

The jury discussed if there was anything they could do to make the professor more comfortable with giving take-home or self-scheduled exams. A juror said that since the professor was leaving at the end of the semester, there wasn't much they could do, and the other resolutions generally addressed his comfort already. The jury largely agreed, and moved on.

The jury returned to their discussion of Chip and Dale's grades in the course and on the exam. Although the jury was split over whether or not to give any credit to Chip and Dale, they did agree that Chip and Dale should not receive major and divisional credit. The jury agreed to consent to a tentative resolution of Chip and Dale receiving a zero in the course because that was the “worst case scenario” for Chip and Dale that the jury was considering, so they would not suddenly get something more punitive in the meeting to finalize resolutions.

The jury consented to the following tentative resolutions with no jurors standing outside:

1. Chip and Dale will receive a 0.0 in Nutcracking 100.
2. Chip and Dale will, for no credit, retake the final exam for Nutcracking 100 or an alternative, with form, content, and timeline for completion to be determined by the professor.
3. Chip and Dale will work to create a peer support group to help students who are under academic pressure and/or stressed out about their grades. We encourage them to contact the Honor Council Student Outreach Committee and work with them to set this up. We also encourage Chip and Dale to contact the Dean's Office to get their advice on this project.
4. Two members of the jury will meet with Chip and Dale's Tree Climbing coach to convey the jury’s sentiment that the students’ participation in Tree Climbing should be as unaffected by the trial proceeding as possible. The jury recognizes that the final decision will still be up to the coach.
5. Chip and Dale will each write a letter to the community, reflecting on their experiences, to be released with the abstract.
6. We encourage Chip and Dale to become involved in peer tutoring.
7. We support Chip and Dale's desire to meet with the jury at the end of the semester to discuss how the semester has gone. We encourage them to contact the trial chair to schedule this meeting. We also encourage the professor to be present and share his thoughts at this meeting, if he is so inclined.

Finalizing Resolutions:
The Jury met 24 hours later to finalize resolutions. They discussed the various complexities about major and divisional credit. After much consideration, the jurors came to the conclusion that they were going to give Chip and Dale a 0.0 in the course. The jury felt it would not be useful to haggle over different grade values, considering that an obsession with numbers had played a role in Chip and Dale's violation.

A few minutes later, Chip, Dale, and Professor Pluto entered the room. The parties were given a chance to respond to the resolutions. Chip said he agreed with pretty much all of the resolutions, but asked the jury to talk through their reasoning behind the zero in the course.

A juror responded, saying that the jury had discussed that particular resolution at great length, and eventually decided that they didn't want to nitpick about numbers and felt a zero would be most appropriate. Another juror said that the jury discussed the difference between getting a zero in the course and a zero on the exam, then lowering the course grade by a full letter grade. She said that the jury didn't feel it would be appropriate for Chip and Dale to receive major or departmental credit for the course, and the jury wasn't sure if that could be done with a more complicated grading arrangement.

Dale responded, saying that the jury's reasoning made sense, and he had gone through the process and would take the lessons he could get from it. He seconded Chip's sentiments that he had just wanted to hear the jury's reasoning, and felt that it was thorough and showed that the jury had approached the issue thoughtfully. One juror said that he felt a zero would not ultimately define Chip and Dale's experiences after college or their job qualifications.

Professor Pluto agreed with the tentative resolutions.

A juror asked Chip and Dale if their Tree Climbing coach would actually want to meet with members of the jury, and Dale responded that he would. Chip and Dale also reaffirmed that they would feel comfortable breaking their confidentiality to Honor Council's Student Outreach Committee in order to work on creating the peer support group. The jury also conveyed to Chip and Dale that they liked the idea of a meeting at the end of the semester, but felt that it should come from them, and that the professor should be welcome to join. Professor Pluto seemed to appreciate this sentiment.

Dale said he appreciated the experience, and the process had helped him learn “why the Honor Code is so important to Haverford.” He said that he appreciated that it was not a “backdoor process.” Chip agreed, saying that he respected the process more after this experience.

After the parties left, the juries discussed the resolution one last time, before consenting. All jurors consented, except for one, who stood outside consensus because of mixed feelings about giving Chip and Dale a 0.0.

1. Chip and Dale will receive a 0.0 in Nutcracking 100. (1 juror stood outside of consensus)
2. Chip and Dale will, for no credit, retake the final exam for Nutcracking 100 or an alternative, with form, content, and timeline for completion to be determined by the professor. (All jurors consented.)
3. Chip and Dale will work to create a peer support group to help students who are under academic pressure and/or stressed out about their grades. We encourage them to contact the Honor Council Student Outreach Committee and work with them to set this up. We also encourage Chip and Dale to contact the Dean's Office to get their advice on this project. (All jurors consented.)

4. Two members of the jury will meet with Chip and Dale's Tree Climbing coach to convey the jury's sentiment that the students' participation in Tree Climbing should be as unaffected by this incident as possible. The jury recognizes that the final decision will still be up the coach. (All jurors consented.)

5. Chip and Dale will each write a letter to the community, reflecting on their experiences, to be released with the abstract. (All jurors consented.)

6. We encourage Chip and Dale to become involved in peer tutoring. (All jurors consented.)

7. We support Chip and Dale's desire to meet with the jury at the end of the semester to discuss how the semester has gone. We encourage them to contact the trial chair to schedule this meeting. We also encourage the professor to be present and share his thoughts at this meeting, if he is so inclined. (1 juror stood outside of consensus)

Resolutions as a whole: 1 juror stood outside of consensus.

Post-Trial: We have verified that Chip & Dale completed their resolutions, however due to the long delay between this case and the abstract being written, their letters to the community were inexplicably misplaced.

Discussion questions:
1. How should Honor Council proceedings affect a student’s status on an athletic team? Should Chip and Dale have been indefinitely suspended from the Tree Climbing team as a result of this proceeding?
2. One juror suggested that since Chip and Dale showed "gestures of remorse and restoration," they should not be separated. How should circumstances be weighed against attitudes when juries consider separation?
3. This case represents yet another example of an incident in which academic stress played a major role in the violation. What are healthy ways to think about dealing with academic stress? How can we reach out for help when under stress?