The Invention of Hugo Cabret:  
An Honor Council Academic Trial  
Released Spring 2017

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Key:  
Confronted Party: Hugo Cabret  
Confronting Party: Professor Georges Méliès  
Course: Locomotion 134  
The building where the exams were distributed: The Station  
The room where the blank exams were stored: The Ticketbooth

Summary/Pre-Trial:  
This case involved a student, Hugo Cabret, taking a self-scheduled final exam during an unauthorized time period. Hugo Cabret had showed up to take his final believing there was a testing period, but quickly realized that no tests were being offered that day. However, he found he was able to enter the room, retrieved his exam, took his exam, and slid it under his professor’s door. The jury’s deliberations were characterized by a split between those who wanted more accountability—due largely to the thought that Hugo’s actions threatened the integrity of the self-scheduled exam process—and those who found the violation a problematic but understandable moment of panic and desired more to focus on restoration.

Fact Finding:  
Hugo explained that he had planned to take his Locomotion 134 final exam on a specific day during the self-scheduled exam period displayed on the school’s master calendar (the calendar said exams were being offered in the two-week period, but did not specify which days). On the day he had planned to take the exam, Hugo arrived at the [The Station], the building where the exams are distributed, and found the building dark. He entered, and found the door to the [Ticket Booth] closed, but was able to open it. He told the jury that he proceeded to find his exam and complete it in accordance with the room and time requirements. Upon completion, he slipped the exam under the door of Professor Méliès's vacant, locked office. Hugo explained that
he had a flight home the next morning to return for a family event, so this was the last time he had been able to take the exam. He had decided to take the exam that day, instead of during an earlier exam period, because he wanted to take as much time as possible to study for the exam. Within the next few days, Hugo emailed Professor Méliès, his dean, and the registrar explaining what had happened. Professor Méliès asked Hugo to report himself to Honor Council. Hugo noted that he had been surprised at this, given that Hugo’s dean had responded to his email by saying that the next steps were in the hands of his professor and the Dean of the College, implying to Hugo that Honor Council would not be involved.

Professor Méliès's statement was similar to Hugo’s with regard to the facts of the case. Professor Méliès added that he felt there were at least two violations: 1) violating exam instructions, and 2) entering the [Ticket Booth]. He also mentioned that he had been in communication with the registrar and a dean, who were both deeply upset, just as Méliès was. He mentioned that the registrar was certain the door was locked, which meant that Hugo would have had to break in to access the exams.

When asked if the parties had any questions for each other, Professor Méliès asked Hugo specifically about how much force Hugo had applied in order to open the door. Hugo attempted to answer this question, clarifying that he had not had to exert much force in opening the door. Whether or not the door had been locked became a point of contention between the parties. Although the professor and jury asked many questions attempting to gain clarity, the subject was ultimately dropped, as it was impossible to determine the full circumstances surrounding Hugo opening the door. Later on in deliberations, the jury chose to focus on the fact that entering this room was clearly prohibited, a fact which Hugo admitted to knowing.

The jury spoke to both parties alone. When speaking to professor Méliès, a juror asked if Hugo’s performance on the test indicated that any cheating took place during the test itself; Professor Méliès said that it was hard to know if any cheating had occurred, but that he had no reason to suspect that it had.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**

The jury unanimously believed that a violation had occurred. The jury agreed that they could not know for certain Hugo's compliance with the Honor Code during the exam, but were inclined to believe his account that he had followed the time and allowed-resource instructions. The jury seriously discussed how upset Professor Méliès was, and how concerned he was about the integrity of the self-scheduled exam system. The jury agreed that Hugo had violated the spirit and integrity of the self-scheduled exam system.

The discussion centered around narrowing down the statement of violation into three categories: entering a prohibited room, compromising the integrity of self-scheduled exams, and violating the exam instructions given to Hugo by Professor Méliès. In order to address all three of these areas, the jury came to the following statement of violation.
[Hugo] violated the Honor Code by:

- Entering a room that he knew to be off-limits
- Compromising the integrity of the self-scheduled exam system
- Breaching the trust of his professor and class in violating Professor Méliès's exam instructions

(10 jurors consent)

During these deliberations, the jury discussed a feeling that the first part of the violation was more social than academic in nature. In relation to the second part of the violation, some jurors voiced an amorphous concern that what had happened could have resulted in changing of self-scheduled exam privileges for everyone. The third part of the statement of violation felt most clear to the jury, as it followed directly from the text of the code around following professor’s instructions, and because there was clearly a breach of trust between Professor Méliès and Hugo.

Circumstantial Portion:

Both parties were present for this meeting. Hugo did not have anything to add about the circumstances surrounding the trial. When asked about suggested resolutions, he voiced that a meeting with Professor Méliès would be helpful.

Professor Méliès mentioned that he had thought about the grade change extensively, and was still very split on what grade change there would be. He said he would be uncomfortable with no grade change or with a grade change to 0 on the final exam.

Hugo asserted his interest in retaking the course if the grade change was too low. It was also revealed that this course was a prerequisite for other courses in his major. If he received a 0.0 on the exam, his grade would not be high enough to count towards his major. However, Hugo’s interest in retaking the course was not exclusive to a potential grade change; he said he would likely retake the course regardless, as he felt he could get a higher grade taking the course a second time anyway.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:

Resolution deliberations as a whole were colored by the split between those in the jury who wanted more accountability and those who wanted less. Many jurors were concerned by Hugo’s fixation on his grade, and worried that his insistence on retaking the course was a way to skirt accountability for any potential grade change. However, the jury did not feel they could prohibit Hugo from retaking the course. Partly because of this, the jury struggled to come to consensus on a grade change, as the they were split on the amount of accountability appropriate. One juror proposed the idea of requiring Hugo to pre-schedule his self-scheduled exams for the upcoming semester, effectively making it so he would lose his “self-scheduled exam privileges”. Many jurors agreed that this was a direct form of accountability; Hugo’s actions harmed the
integrity of the self-scheduled exam process, and thus he should lose that privilege as a consequence of his actions. However, some jurors worried that it was too punitive, and that it broadened the impact of the violation to other courses, which they thought was unfair. Another juror edited the proposal to just limit Hugo’s autonomy in the self-scheduled exam process should he take Locomotion 134 again. The jury was divided, but ultimately decided that revoking Hugo's self-scheduled exam privileges in any capacity would be outside of their authority. The juror who had proposed this resolution ended up standing outside of tentative resolutions as a whole, due to a feeling that there was not enough accountability. 

As the jury could not come to consensus on an appropriate grade change, and Professor Méliès had no suggestions, one juror proposed that the jury ask Hugo what he thought an appropriate grade change would be. This juror believed that by giving Hugo this authority and autonomy, he would be forced to reflect on any advantages he might have had during the exam, and produce an answer that was meaningful to him. The jury consented to this as a tentative resolution to be replaced with a grade change in the future.

In order to formulate additional resolutions, the jury reviewed exactly whose trust Hugo had broken, ultimately deciding on the list: the faculty, Professor Méliès, the student body, the registrar. The jury wanted Hugo to address Professor Méliès and the registrar through individual meetings, and address the student body and the faculty through a letter that directly addressed both parties. One juror expressed that they felt letters to the community were pointless, but no one else appeared to agree, so the issue was dropped.

The jury felt that on-campus community service would serve as accountability and help restore Hugo to the community, though one juror questioned whether this resolution was just giving Hugo things to do, rather than actually holding him accountable. This juror ultimately stood outside on resolutions as a whole. Additionally, the jury decided to require that Hugo attended Honor Council events in order to restore him to the community and educate him on the Honor Code and the way that it functions on campus. These two resolutions also helped to address the jury’s concern that Hugo did not have many resources available on campus. The jury was worried that this lack of resources lead, in part, to his violation. If he had been more connected on campus, he would have hopefully realized that no exams were being offered that day.

Although separation was discussed, the jury felt that it was not appropriate in this case.

The jury consented to the following Tentative resolutions:

1. Hugo will write and reflect about what he thinks his final exam grade should be for the jury to consider. The jury will take this reflection into consideration when recommending a grade change. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

2. Professor Méliès and Hugo will meet three times, if Professor Méliès is willing. One of these meetings will occur in the next two weeks, one will occur at the end of the [current semester], and one will occur at the beginning of the [next semester]. If either of the
parties so choose, a member of the jury or of the Honor Council Executive Board will mediate one or both of the first two meetings. (10 jurors consent)

3. The Registrar and Hugo will meet, if the Registrar is willing. This meeting will take place before finals week of [this semester]. (10 jurors consent)

4. Hugo will meet with his dean at least once each semester for the [current] academic year. (10 jurors consent)

5. Hugo will write a letter to the community by the beginning of the [next semester]. Within this letter, there will be a heading specifically addressing the faculty. (10 jurors consent)

6. Hugo will attend four Honor Council events during the [the current academic year], at least one each semester. Hugo will then write a brief reflection on each event. (10 jurors consent)

7. The jury recommends that Hugo attend an OAR Finals Blueprinting session prior to the [next two] finals weeks. (10 jurors consent)

8. Hugo will complete a minimum of 4 hours per week of community service on campus throughout the [next semester] in a minimum of two different programs. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

9. Hugo will rewrite his Honor Code essay during the summer prior to the [next academic year]. Prior to writing this essay, Hugo will reread the Honor Code. (10 jurors consent)

10. The jury reminds UCAs and HCOs to hold a hall meeting prior to finals week to discuss self-scheduled exams. The jury also recommends that UCAs post information about finals week on the hall. The jury invites HCOs to use this abstract as a discussion topic. (10 jurors consent)

On resolutions as a whole: (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

Finalizing Resolutions:

Hugo's response to the first resolution was unhelpful to the jury, as he had no thoughts on what a proper grade-change would be, but rather felt he should retake the course as a form of accountability. The jury was uncomfortable with the idea of Hugo retaking the course, as they felt it was a way of circumventing the violation, rather than seeking restitution.

Professor Méliès was comfortable with the resolutions, but reiterated his request that some grade-change be made, though he still had no concrete thoughts on what a fair change would be.

After the parties left, the jury focussed their discussion on the grade change. More than half of the jury felt that the violation was more social in nature, and therefore no grade change was appropriate. However, the whole jury felt that it was important to honor the professor's request, and so the jury consented to a grade change of some sort. After consulting the professor's grading technique, the jury determined that lowering the grade by one standard deviation would be appropriate. Some members of the jury desired more of a grade change as a
form of accountability, but the weight of the room was for a lesser grade change, and ultimately the jury consented to a grade reduction of one standard deviation.

However, some jurors felt that this grade change did not provide enough accountability, and so the issue of parameters on Hugo's retaking of the course were rehashed. The jury decided that in order to address accountability, they would require Hugo to pre-schedule his exam time if he chose to retake the course.

1. The jury recommends that Hugo receive a grade deduction of one standard deviation on his final exam. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)
2. The jury strongly recommends that Hugo not retake this course. In the event that he does so, Hugo will select a specific testing period in which to take the final exam and then take that final exam during that testing period, unless there are unexpected, severe, and extenuating circumstances. He will decide this by the Friday before that finals week. (8 jurors consent, 2 stand outside)
3. Professor Méliès and Hugo will meet three times, if Professor Méliès is willing. One of these meetings will occur in the next two weeks, one will occur at the end of the [current semester], and one will occur at the beginning of the [next semester]. If either of the parties so choose, a member of the jury or of the Honor Council Executive Board will mediate one or both of the first two meetings. (10 jurors consent)
4. The Registrar and Hugo will meet, if the Registrar is willing. This meeting will take place before finals week of the [current semester]. (10 jurors consent)
5. Hugo will meet with his dean, if (s)he is willing, at least once each semester for the [current academic year]. (10 jurors consent)
6. Hugo will write a letter to the community by the beginning of the [next semester]. Within this letter, there will be a heading specifically addressing the faculty. (10 jurors consent)
7. Hugo will attend four Honor Council events during the [current academic year], at least one each semester. Hugo will then write a brief reflection on each event by the following week. (10 jurors consent)
8. The jury recommends that Hugo attend an OAR Finals Blueprinting session prior to the [next two finals weeks]. (10 jurors consent)
9. Hugo will complete a minimum of 4 hours per week of community service on campus throughout the [next semester] in a minimum of two different programs. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)
10. Hugo will rewrite his Honor Code essay during the summer prior to the [following academic year]. Prior to writing this essay, Hugo will reread the Honor Code. (10 jurors consent)
11. The jury reminds UCAs and HCOs to hold a hall meeting prior to finals week to discuss self-scheduled exams. The jury also recommends that UCAs post information about finals week on the hall. The jury invites HCOs to use this abstract as a discussion topic. (10
On resolutions as a whole:
(9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside)

On reporting this incident to other institutions of higher learning:

The jury unanimously feels that Hugo’s actions would result in a disciplinary proceeding at other institutions of higher learning. However, the majority of the jury does not feel that Hugo's actions would recur or are a reflection of his character.

(10 jurors consent)

Post-Trial:

Hugo did not appeal the resolutions.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can juries restore a professor’s trust in the self-scheduled exam system itself?
2. Do you think that revoking self-scheduled exam privileges would have been appropriate?
3. How should a jury proceed when there is information that they cannot know? (In this case, whether or not the door was locked)
4. Are grade changes appropriate in a case where the jury feels the violation was mostly social? In general, how should juries address social violations that occur under academic contexts?
5. What do letters to the community accomplish?