Lord of the Rings
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Fall 2018

This abstract was not released in accordance to the timeline specified by the Students’ Association Constitution. The confronting party consented to the release of the abstract. The confronted party did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:
Confronted Party: Frodo Baggins
Confronting Party: Gandalf
Course: Ring Making 300, in the Ring Making Department

Summary/Pre-Trial:
This trial concerned Gandalf, a professor of Ring Making 300, and Frodo, a Bryn Mawr student. Students of Ring Making 300 were required to turn in weekly ring formulas over the course of the semester. Gandalf’s teaching aides found that Frodo’s answers on one of these formulas were remarkably similar to the answers provided in the official (but unavailable to students) solutions manual. Gandalf later found that there were other instances of potential plagiarism in other ring formulas. He attempted to get in touch with Frodo over email, but received no reply. When confronted in person, Frodo admitted to using an online tutor who would sometimes give him solutions, and seemed surprised the online tutor was not allowed. Considering the tutor a disallowed resource as specified in the syllabus, Gandalf asked Frodo to report himself to Honor Council and he did.

In his statement, Frodo told Honor Council that he had come to school a week late and therefore missed shopping period, the time during which professors generally go over their syllabi. Although he had missed this discussion of the syllabus, he did not read it when he arrived at school nor did he ask Gandalf to go over it with him. During the course of this trial, the jury discussed engagement with the Honor Code and community in depth.

Fact Finding:
During the meeting, the jury met with Gandalf in person who confirmed the statement he sent to Honor Council and expanded on the expectations set in the syllabus, the difficulty he had in getting in touch with Frodo, and his belief that the grade change for this violation should be more than a zero for each assignment. The jury clarified that there had not been any citations used in the instances where Frodo used an online tutor.
The jury spoke with Frodo over the phone and he had nothing to add to the statement he sent to Honor Council. He mentioned that he had used the online source in other courses.

**Jury Deliberations:**

The jury was confident that a violation had occurred. They thought that it was important to take into account both the failure to cite collaborators as well as the use of disallowed resources. They consented on the following Statement of Violation:

**Statement of Violation:**

*Frodo* violated the Honor Code by consulting disallowed resources such as online solutions. Additionally, he failed to cite these resources. Both of these practices were specifically prohibited by the course syllabus. (9 jurors consent)

**Circumstantial Portion:**

The jury met to discuss circumstantial evidence with both parties. Gandalf skyped in and gave general information about Frodo’s involvement in class. He clarified that the ring formulas where the violations occurred were considered the hardest assignments of the semester. With regards to resolutions, he explained that he was most concerned about Frodo’s engagement with the course material and with the Honor Code. He also stated that because the ring formulas were only a small portion of Frodo’s final grade, he wanted there to be another grade shift out of fairness to the other students in Ring Making 300.

Frodo was out of town, so the jury had confirmed a meeting over phone. However, Frodo did not reply to phone calls or texts. Because the jury did not have the opportunity to hear circumstantial evidence from Frodo, they felt unable to move on to resolutions. Frodo had already gone home for break, so the trial was postponed to the next semester.

In the second circumstantial meeting, the jury and a Bi-Co liaison spoke with Frodo over Skype. He reiterated that he had said all that he felt was necessary to say in the statement originally sent to Honor Council. The jury asked about his use of the online source in different courses, where he said professors had previously recommended the online source used. He also said that this violation occurred because he had not read the syllabus. When asked why he had not responded to Gandalf’s earlier attempts to contact him, Frodo claimed that he had never received emails from Gandalf and did not know there was an issue until he came up to him in class. He had no suggestions on possible resolutions.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:**

The jurors discussed the meeting with Frodo and the trial goals of accountability, educations, and restoration. Jurors felt very strongly that accountability needed to play a large role in this set of resolutions. Many jurors felt that Frodo did not recognize or understand the impact of his violation on the professor and the community as a whole. They recommended that
Frodo read the Honor Code in order to actually understand the extent of his violation. They felt that it would be educational and restorative for him to meet with a member of the jury. The jury did not want to lower his grade to the point that it would mean not receiving credit for the course, but also felt that there needed to be a full letter deduction from his final course grade. Thus, the jury added the caveat that if after the grade deduction Frodo would be in danger of not receiving credit, he would instead receive a 2.0 for the course. During this deliberation, the jury also discussed whether or not they believed this incident should be reported to graduate schools, and whether they believed it was a case of plagiarism. The jury was mixed on the subject, and came to a statement that reflected this divide.

With the trial goals of education, accountability, and restoration in mind, the jury came up with a set of tentative resolutions. Resolutions were sent to the parties for feedback.

**Tentative Resolutions**

1. *The Jury Recommends that [Frodo] receive a grade deduction of 1 letter grade, but not to go below a 2.0, in order that credit will be received for [his] major.* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

2. *[Frodo] will read the Haverford Honor Code within one week of the conclusion of the trial* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

3. *[Frodo] will review the syllabi for all of the classes he is taking during the [redacted] Semester and highlight all information related to citation practices, collaboration, and allowed resources, and submit the syllabi to the Honor Council Staff Support Person within one week of the conclusion of the trial.* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

4. *[Frodo] will meet with a juror to clarify and discuss the impacts of [his] violations on the Bi-Co Community by [date].* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

5. *Within two weeks of meeting with a juror, [Frodo] will write a letter to the Bi-Co Community regarding how [his] violation has impacted the community and what it means to study at these institutions. This letter will contain direct references and citations to the Haverford Honor Code.* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

6. *[Frodo] will consult with [Gandalf] to create a resource guide for the Bryn Mawr and Haverford [Ring Making] Departments. The guide will clearly and concisely explain the differences in the two departments' policies on collaboration, citation, and allowed resources. This guide will be completed by [date] and promptly shared with both [Ring Making] Departments for their use.* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

*On the resolutions as a whole* (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

**Statement on Reporting:**

*Some jurors feel that this case should be reported because they believe this is a case of*
plagiarism, and could be unfair to other applicants if not reported.

Other jurors felt that this should not be reported because at other institutions of higher learning this would not constitute a disciplinary hearing, that the case was not true plagiarism, or that reporting could potentially harm the restorative process. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

Finalizing Resolutions:
Frodo had no feedback other than he felt the trial had gone on longer than necessary, which one juror pointed out had been due to his lack of communication and cooperation. Upon further questioning it became clear that Frodo did not fully understand the tentative resolutions, so the jury discussed their expectations for them with him. Gandalf had a question about what the grade change entailed that was clarified by the Honor Council Executive Board. The jury felt comfortable with the resolutions and changed minor wording. While they expressed some dissatisfaction with Frodo’s engagement with the process, they praised Gandalf’s engagement.

Finalized Resolutions:
1. The Jury Recommends that [Frodo] receive a grade deduction of 1 letter grade, but not to go below a 2.0, in order that credit will be received for [his] major. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
2. [Frodo] will read the Haverford Honor Code by [date]. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
3. [Frodo] will review the syllabi for all of the classes [he] is taking during the [redacted] Semester and highlight all information related to citation practices, collaboration, and allowed resources, by [date] and notify the Honor Council Staff Support Person upon completion. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
4. [Frodo] will meet with a juror to clarify and discuss the impacts of [his] violations on the Bi-Co Community by [date] (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
5. Within two weeks of meeting with a juror, [Frodo] will write a letter to the Bi-Co Community regarding how [his] violation has impacted the community and what it means to study at these institutions. This letter will contain direct references and citations to the Haverford Honor Code. This letter will be appended to the abstract. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
6. [Frodo] will consult with [Gandalf], if [he] is willing, to create a resource guide for the Bryn Mawr and Haverford [Ring Making] Departments. The guide will clearly and concisely explain the differences in the two departments' policies on collaboration, citation, and allowed resources. This guide will be completed by [date] and promptly shared with both [Ring Making] Departments for their use. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)
7. [Frodo] will read the Guidelines for A Trial Party Not Completing a Resolution within the Specified Timeline
(http://honorcouncil.haverford.edu/guidelines/guidelines-for-a-party-breaking-or-not-completing-resolutions/) upon reading these resolutions. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

On the resolutions as a whole (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

**Statement on Reporting:**
Some jurors feel that this case should be reported because they believe this is a case of plagiarism, and could be unfair to other applicants if not reported.

Other jurors felt that this should not be reported because at other institutions of higher learning this would not constitute a disciplinary hearing, that the case was not true plagiarism, or that reporting could potentially harm the restorative process. (9 Jurors consent, Bi-co Liaison Approves)

**Post-Trial:**
The resolutions were not appealed.

**Discussion Questions:**
1. How should a confronted party’s engagement with the process of their Honor Council trial be taken into consideration?
2. What should be considered when deciding if the violation should be reported to institutions of higher learning?