iCarly:
An Honor Council Social Trial
Released Spring 2019

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Key:
Confronted Party: Carly Shay
Confronting Parties: Freddie Benson and Sam Puckett

Summary/Pre-Trial:
This case involved Carly Shay, who had been involved in a previous Honor Council trial. In one of the resolutions for the previous trial, she was supposed to write a letter to the community. She consulted with the Honor Council Librarian at the time, Freddie Benson, for examples of past letters to the community, and asked Freddie to read her letter. When Freddie read Carly’s letter to the community, he saw that Carly’s letter contained a few sentences copied verbatim from one of the example letters to the community that had been shared with Carly (from the abstract Good Will Hunting). Freddie brought this up with Honor Council’s Staff Support Person, Sam, since the role of Staff Support is to monitor resolution completion. Coincidentally, Sam had been a juror on Carly’s previous trial, and so she felt very hurt by the fact that Carly had plagiarized in her letter. Freddie and Sam then decided to co-confront Carly. Honor Council reviewed statements from all three parties and consented to send this case to a social trial.

Since Carly had requested that questions be sent to her ahead of time to allow her time to think in advance, the jury prepared questions beforehand based on the information from the parties’ statements. The jury noted that Carly had suggested that she could write a new letter in this trial, but felt concerned since the letter had been where she had struggled in the past trial. As a result, the jury decided to ask her how writing a letter this time would be different (Question A) See questions below. Since Carly had mentioned that the previous Honor Council trial had been very difficult for her, the jury wanted to respect her wishes by not talking too much about the previous trial. However, the jury was unsure how to navigate the current process without ever mentioning the previous trial, so they wrote a question asking Carly to elaborate on how the jury could address the past trial in the way that would be most comfortable for her (Question B). Finally, Carly had mentioned that she felt that family pressure and stress to complete the last trial’s
resolutions as quickly as possible had contributed to her plagiarizing the letter to the community. The jury was concerned about this family pressure negatively affecting Carly in this trial as well. Though the jury recognized that they might not be able to change this, the jury wrote a question asking Carly if she felt that family stress might impact her during this trial as well and if there were any ways she felt that the jury could help her (Question C). After finishing their discussion, the jury sent the following questions to Carly before the Fact-Finding meeting:

Questions
A. On the suggestion of rewriting the letter, what personal adjustments or strategies are you using that will make writing this letter different?
B. What are you comfortable with in terms of mentioning the previous Honor Council trial? How can we navigate restoration while considering negative connotations of the past trial?
C. Do you foresee family circumstances and/or pressure coming into this trial? Are there ways we can help work around that with you?

Fact Finding & Circumstantial:
Given that this was a social trial, the Fact-Finding and Circumstantial meetings were combined. All 3 parties and 8 of 9 jurors were present for this meeting. Carly began by answering the pre-prepared questions from the jury. In response to Question A, Carly stated that she had read a lot of abstracts and she felt that now she needed to put time and effort into the process in order to do an honest and clear reflection using her better understanding of Honor Council processes. For Question B, Carly expressed that she wanted to stick with the past resolutions from the previous trial, emphasizing that she felt that restoration comes from the processes from the previous trial. Finally, Carly answered Question C by letting the jury know that she didn’t think that there should be any family circumstances in the future that might affect her as they had in the previous trial.

The jury then discussed which trial goals that they and the parties felt needed to be met still. Education was emphasized, including the education of the parties as well as the community. Next, the parties talked about how they felt the confrontation had gone. Both Sam and Freddie described feeling that the confrontation went well and felt good about how Carly was very responsive and upfront about owning up to the plagiarism. The jury then spoke to Carly alone while Freddie and Sam temporarily left the room. Carly expressed that she was sorry she plagiarized, explaining that it had come from feeling pressured with a need to use the letter to convince others to not make similar mistakes. She also said that the process of writing the letter made her revisit the past trial, which brought her back to a bad place; she felt that her writing wasn’t good enough and that one of the letters to the community she had read expressed what she wanted to say in a better way than she felt she could write. She was thanked and left the room, after which Freddie and Sam re-entered.
The jury asked a few questions about the resolution from the previous trial involving the letter, including whether the previous jury had had doubts about it specifically being completed and if there had been an atypical time period between the trial and the letter. Sam said there hadn’t been doubts about this specific resolution and that the time period between the previous trial and when Carly wrote the letter was typical. The jury then asked how Sam had felt about the previous trial overall, to which she expressed that the trial had been tiring, but she felt optimistic about the way it had concluded and that Carly would return to the Bi-Co restored. She and Freddie also discussed the fact that one difficult aspect of the previous trial had been that Carly had changed small details of her story throughout the process, which made the jury confused and concerned that they were being deceived in some way. The jury then considered the idea of deception more broadly, such as how that might factor into the current case, and discussed how a jury can work with what is given. Sam added that something the previous jury focused on had been thinking about why Carly seemed to be telling them what they wanted to hear, and that the previous jury had not felt that this behavior stemmed from a malicious place. Sam and Freddie were both thanked and then left the room.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**

The jury started by briefly discussing how thoughts shared by parties are influenced by their experiences and perceptions and therefore should be valued while kept in the context of who had expressed them. While there was some concern about the possibility of deception, overall the jury agreed that all three parties believed that a violation of the Code had occurred. The jury then moved on to discuss the nature of the violation. One juror expressed that they felt Carly had broken the trust of others both in using someone else’s words and in claiming to fulfill the resolution. Another juror added that they felt that plagiarism doesn’t only apply to strictly academic settings, which other jurors agreed with. Additionally, the jury felt it was important to emphasize the fact that they felt Carly had broken the trust of the community and the previous jury. With those things in mind, the jury consented to the following statement of violation:

**Statement of Violation:**

*In plagiarising a portion of her letter to the community, [Carly] violated the Honor Code by breaching the trust of the previous jury and the community as a whole. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)*

**Tentative Resolutions Discussion Part 1:**

All 3 parties and 6 of 9 jurors were present for this meeting. Carly began by expressing that she wanted to clarify that she had used another letter to the community as a template when writing her own letter. She said that she still felt this was an Honor Code violation, but that it hadn’t really been intentional. The room then started discussing tentative resolutions.

One idea discussed was the possibility of Carly creating some sort of educational
resource about mental health and the Honor Code, which could be put on Honor Council’s website or suggested for use by HCOs. The idea of an audio project, like a podcast, was briefly discussed. The jury then discussed what the specific purpose of this resource would be. Carly suggested that it could address people getting swept up in the moment and potentially not realizing they had done something wrong. One juror stated that they thought this might be a good idea, but it also seemed to just be making a lot of work; they said they were more in favor of a reflection on specifically what had happened with Carly, and that they were unsure how realistic or helpful the podcast idea would be. Others emphasized that the most important part of this would be for Carly to personally reflect on her own situation, and that they didn’t expect Carly to take on the job of trying to fix the issue of Honor Code violations overall. Additionally, everyone agreed that this should be carefully framed in how it was presented to others, especially so that it did not appear to inherently link mental health struggles and Honor Code violations.

The jury also discussed a resolution to address the previous jury. Sam expressed that she wanted to see restoration with the previous jury, to which Carly replied that she would be open to meeting with the previous jury or writing a letter to them. Freddie, Sam, and Carly all stated that they felt restoration had mostly been achieved between the three of them, but Sam felt strongly that restoration between Carly and the other jurors was still lacking. Due to outside obligations, the parties and jury adjourned with the intent to continue the discussion later.

**Tentative Resolutions Discussion Part 2:**

All 3 parties and 9 jurors were present for this meeting. The room considered what accountability resolutions might look like in this case, especially given that this was a social trial. Accountability to the past jury as well as to the community was discussed, but there was concern about breaking confidentiality to the greater community. Sam added that something she’d seen with accountability in plagiarism cases was contacting the person who wrote the work that had been plagiarized from. Though there was some concern about dual confidentiality of both Carly and the confronted party who had written the letter she plagiarized from, it was agreed that Carly could write a letter to that individual where both her and their confidentiality would be preserved.

One juror asked Carly to clarify what she meant in her statement at the beginning of the previous meeting because the juror perceived that Carly had said the violation was intentional at the first meeting, but her statement at the second meeting regarding the template use seemed to contradict that. Carly responded by saying that she had laid out her letter side-by-side with the other letter and really felt that the other writer had expressed themselves well, emphasizing that she took accountability for plagiarizing, but that it wasn’t intentional. However, Freddie asked that the room discuss this further because she felt that before Carly had said she had taken a few lines from the other letter because she wanted to write a letter that would convince people not to plagiarize, whereas now Freddie perceived that Carly was saying she had not known she plagiarized. Carly responded that she didn’t feel as though the two were mutually exclusive,
emphasizing that she had seen something she thought was good, modeled hers after it and accidentally left some lines in. The room then discussed the fact that many people felt that Carly knowingly putting the plagiarized lines in felt very different from using the other letter as a template and accidentally leaving some lines in. The jury considered how each situation might indicate a certain degree of violation and corresponding degree of resolutions, especially accountability.

Next, the room discussed the breaches of trust involved in the situation, especially related to how the parties were feeling about one another. Sam expressed that she had felt that her trust was broken when she learned about the plagiarism, felt better after the confrontation, but now felt as though she’d stepped back based on her confusion about the changing story she perceived Carly was presenting. The room then turned back to the question of how the plagiarism occurred. While Carly believed that the sentences had been copied verbatim, Sam and Freddie thought that Carly had altered some minor words or sentence structures. Given the disagreement, the discussion shifted to how resolutions might address both possibilities. However, Carly’s letter and the letter she had plagiarized were pulled up and compared side-by-side, which showed that a few minor words had been changed. Carly recognized this and said that she must have changed parts deliberately with the end goal being to take them out later after figuring out what she wanted to say. She emphasized that she felt she made a mistake and wanted to be held accountable, but said that she thought that in trying to explain herself she had gone too far.

The room then discussed restoration with the previous jury. While some felt that a letter might be more practical, Carly expressed that she would rather meet with the previous jury in person so that they could all react to one another and be more of a conversation. The room acknowledged that scheduling the entire previous jury might pose difficulties, but agreed that the meeting should at least be offered to all previous jurors, so that jurors could attend depending on availability and willingness. Additionally, notes could be taken at the meeting and sent to jurors who were unable to attend. Sam stated that she wanted herself and the chair of the previous trial to be present at minimum. One juror also added that they wanted Carly to write a statement beforehand about what happened and to bring that statement to the meeting. Carly agreed that she felt comfortable preparing a statement for the meeting. Additionally, Sam expressed concern about Carly only apologizing at the meeting and emphasized that she wanted Carly to have space to talk about what happened without feeling pressure to just apologize.

Next, Freddie stated that she thought it might be helpful for Carly to create a guide for people writing letters to the community. Carly agreed that would be a great resource. Freddie and Sam emphasized that the intent of the guide would be more about principles to guide the letter writing, and not to focus on how to structure the letter because that might cause letters to the community to just become form letters. Additionally, Sam added that she felt the resource could address attentiveness, since avoiding plagiarism involves pro-active awareness and goes beyond intention. Freddie asked whether a letter to the community would be included in this case and Carly asked if it would include this trial or both this one and the previous. The jury expressed
that they felt that a new letter to the community would be good restoration for the community and would be different this time since Carly said she had grown. Some individuals needed to leave, but since the letter to the community hadn’t been discussed thoroughly, the parties and jury agreed to adjourn and meet again to wrap up the discussion.

Tentative Resolutions Discussion Part 3 / Tentative Resolutions:

All 3 parties and 8 of 9 jurors were present for this meeting. The room started off by discussing how the letter to the community should be different from the last time. Freddie shared some thoughts about giving Carly the power to create the letter how she wants, and the jury agreed. Additionally, the room agreed with Freddie that the letter should be completed after the finishing the guide. Next, the discussion moved to the logistics of resolution completions, including the ordering of resolutions as well as the fact that Carly was set to graduate in the next three weeks. Carly said that she should be able to complete the previously discussed resolution ideas within the next three weeks. Freddie, Sam, and Carly were all thanked and left the room.

The jury discussed that they wanted the letter to cover this trial and at least briefly touch on the previous trial. Next, the jury moved on to the statement on reporting. Some jurors stated that they wanted to read the whole abstract from Carly’s previous trial, but others felt that reading too much into the previous case might unfairly influence the current decision making. While there was not a strong weight toward recommending reporting this trial, some jurors expressed concerns that if the last trial was recommended to be reported, they would be uncomfortable not also recommending this trial to be reported. However, the jury did learn that the previous jury had recommended that the previous trial not be reported to other institutions of higher learning, which made most jurors feel comfortable recommending that this trial also not be reported. One juror stated that they felt that this incident would still constitute academic dishonesty to those outside of Haverford. They understood that the statement on reporting doesn’t need to be binary, but felt that they didn’t want to include their perspective in the statement necessarily, and would instead stand outside on the statement recommending it not be reported. The jury then consented to the following set of tentative resolutions:

1. [Carly] will meet with available members of the past jury (with [Sam] and the former trial chair present) in order to restore trust. She will prepare a statement before-hand providing a clear narrative of the events that occurred. Notes from this meeting will be shared with jurors who could not be present. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

2. [Carly] will work with [Freddie] to create a resource to aid those writing letters to the community in the future. Because she faced unique challenges last time, she will be able to offer a valuable perspective on writing letters to the community. (8 jurors consent, 1
stands outside in absentia)

3. After completing Resolution 2, [Carly] will write a letter to the community addressing the breaches of trust that occurred in both trials with the goal of full restoration. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

4. [Carly] will write an anonymous letter to the confronted party in Good Will Hunting with the goal of taking full accountability for her actions and acknowledging that plagiarism affects the party being plagiarized from. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

5. All of the above resolutions will be completed before graduation. (8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Resolutions as a whole: 8 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia

Statement on reporting:
The jury recommends that this incident not be reported to institutions of higher learning. (7 jurors consent, 1 stands outside, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Finalizing Resolutions Meeting:
All 3 parties and 9 jurors were present for this meeting. Overall, Carly, Sam, and Freddie felt good about the tentative resolutions. Freddie was curious about why 7 jurors consented and one stood outside on the statement on reporting, to which a juror answered that they had felt torn because this was a case of plagiarism and they were thinking about how they could explain this situation to someone outside Haverford. Sam then asked the jury to elaborate on why the letter to the community would talk about breaches in both this trial and the previous one. One juror expressed that they felt it would be hard to address this trial in isolation and felt it would be important to give background while not asking for a full explanation from Carly, especially since the plagiarized letter from the first trial would not be published to the community. Carly agreed that writing a letter including both would help more thoroughly address the two situations. After addressing a few logistical questions concerning the meeting with the previous jury, Carly, Sam, and Freddie were thanked and left the room.

One juror suggested adding the phrase “and her statement” to “Notes from this meeting” in Resolution 1 so that the jurors who could not make the meeting would be able to view Carly’s prepared statement in addition to the meeting notes. The jury agreed that this was important and added in the phrase. No juror had any further changes they wanted from any resolution, including the statement on reporting, so the jury consented to the following final resolutions:

Finalizing Resolutions:
1. [Carly] will meet with available members of the past jury (with [Sam] and the former
trial chair present) in order to restore trust. She will prepare a statement before-hand providing a clear narrative of the events that occurred. Notes from this meeting and her statement will be shared with jurors who could not be present. (9 jurors consent)

2. [Carly] will work with [Freddie] to create a resource to aid those writing letters to the community in the future. Because she faced unique challenges last time, she will be able to offer a valuable perspective on writing letters to the community. (9 jurors consent)

3. After completing Resolution 2, [Carly] will write a letter to the community addressing the breaches of trust that occurred in both trials with the goal of full restoration. (9 jurors consent)

4. [Carly] will write an anonymous letter to the confronted party in Good Will Hunting with the goal of taking full accountability for her actions and acknowledging that plagiarism affects the party being plagiarized from. (9 jurors consent)

5. All of the above resolutions will be completed before graduation. (9 jurors consent)

Resolutions as a whole: (9 jurors consent)

Statement on reporting:
The jury recommends that this incident not be reported to institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent)

Post-Trial:
The trial was not appealed by any of the three parties.

Discussion Questions:

1. How should Honor Council trials approach accountability when a confronted party has a hard time talking about a violation?
2. How should jury members account for when the stories of the confronted (or confronting) party changes?