Ocean’s 8:  
An Honor Council Academic Trial  
Released Spring 2019

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Key:  
Confronted party: Debbie Ocean  
Confronting party: Professor John Frazier  
Course: Heist 250

Summary/Pre-Trial:  
Debbie Ocean, a Bryn Mawr student, contacted Honor Council two weeks after the end of the semester to report a potential violation from her final exam in her Heist 250 course with Professor John Frazier. Professor Frazier reviewed the timestamps for all of the finals. He noticed Debbie had exceeded the three hour time limit and asked her to report herself to Honor Council. The initial confrontation took place via email over the break. A Bi-Co liaison was present throughout the trial.

Fact Finding:  
Debbie recounted the exam and explained the exceeded time limit. She said she wrote the entirety of her exam within the three hours but left the document open so she could submit all of her finals at once. Before submitting the exam, Debbie said she made a few minor revisions for grammar and clarity. Initially, she felt that she hadn’t been in violation of the Code. However, after receiving Professor Frazier’s confrontation and reflecting over the break, Debbie agreed her actions were a violation of the Code and were unfair to her peers. She asked to apologize to Professor Frazier directly. Debbie told the jury that she had meant no disrespect with her actions. She also wanted the jury to know that she understood that what she did was wrong and was willing to accept the consequences as the jury saw appropriate.

Professor Frazier repeated his side of the story, noting that Debbie’s revisions after the allotted time were indeed stylistic. He felt the trial was necessary for education and fairness to the community. Professor Frazier described the Honor Code and the privileges that come with it, particularly for final exams, as being “sacred” in the Bi-Co. He assured Debbie that he did not
feel disrespected but hoped that the trial would be an opportunity for growth. He was confident that Debbie had not intended to violate the Code and was not suspicious that she would do it again.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**
The jury unanimously agreed with both parties that a violation had occurred. They decided the violation was best described as “exam misconduct” and came to a statement of violation to reflect this.

**Statement of Violation:**
[Debbie] violated the Honor Code by making edits to her exam outside of the time allotted. (10 jurors consent; Bi-Co liaison approves)

**Circumstantial Portion:**
Debbie agreed with the statement of violation and emphasised that she did not want to make any excuses for her actions but hoped to give the jury some context. During finals week, she had worked several overnight shifts and was concerned for a sick relative. She expressed that these stressors did not impair her judgment and her violation was an unrelated accident. The jury asked if she had any suggestions for resolutions. She asked to write a formal letter of apology to Professor Frazier and understood that a grade change would be appropriate. She was comfortable with “whatever Professor [Frazier] thinks is fair” for the grade change.

Professor Frazier was unable to attend the meeting but emailed the trial chair to express a desire for a grade change on the exam.

**Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:**
The jury agreed that a letter of apology and a grade reduction on the exam would be appropriate resolutions. A letter of apology would seek to restore trust between Debbie and Professor Frazier and a grade reduction would accomplish the trial goal of accountability. The jury was uncertain as to how significant of a grade reduction would be appropriate based on Professor Frazier’s grading style, among other factors. Some members of the jury were concerned that too large of a reduction would cause Debbie to fail the class which they thought was too harsh. Others felt that limiting the exam grade reduction based on Debbie’s overall grade in the class was unfair. Ultimately, the jury decided to allow Professor Frazier to propose a grade reduction and revisit whether his number was appropriate before finalizing the resolutions. The wording for that resolution was left intentionally vague to reflect the jury’s uncertainty.

While the jury accepted Debbie’s proposed resolution of a letter to her professor, they also felt it was important that Debbie write a letter to the wider college community to address the breach of
trust with her peers in the course and not just the individual professor. The jury felt the first three resolutions covered the trial goals of restoration and accountability. To accomplish the trial goal of education, they wrote a resolution encouraging Debbie to utilize Bryn Mawr’s Office of Academic Success during the semester and beyond if she found it helpful.

For the statement on reporting, the jury felt that this was an isolated and minor incident of exam misconduct that would not happen again, and drafted a statement that reflected these sentiments.

**Tentative Resolutions:**
1. The jury recommends that [Debbie] receive a grade reduction on the exam of the amount suggested by Professor [Frazier]. This suggestion will be weighed in the set of final resolutions (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves)
2. The jury supports [Debbie] in writing a letter of apology to Professor [Frazier] (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves)
3. [Debbie] will write a letter to the community. In this letter, she will reflect on what she has learned from the process (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves)
4. [Debbie] will use Academic Support Services at least once before finals week of the [redacted] semester. The jury encourages [Debbie] to revisit Academic Support Services during the following semester if she finds it helpful (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves)

**Resolutions as a Whole:** 9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves

**Statement on Reporting:**
The jury does not feel that this should be reported to other institutions of higher learning (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves)

**Finalizing Resolutions:**
Professor Frazier suggested a 40% grade reduction on the exam. Both Debbie and the jury agreed this was fair and the jury reworded the first resolution to reflect this. Deadlines were added to the other three resolutions to establish a timeline. No further changes were proposed.

**Finalized Resolutions:**
1. The jury recommends that [Debbie] receive a 40% grade reduction on the exam. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)
2. The jury supports [Debbie] in writing a letter of apology to Professor [Frazier] before the start of the [redacted] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)
3. [Debbie] will write a letter to the community. In this letter she will reflect on what she has learned from the process. This letter will be completed by the start of the [redacted] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)

4. [Debbie] will use Academic Support Services at least once before finals week of the [redacted] semester. The jury encourages [Debbie] to revisit Academic Support Services if she finds it helpful. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)

Resolutions as a Whole: 9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia; Bi-Co liaison approves

Statement on Reporting:
The jury does not feel that this should be reported to other institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)

Post-Trial:
The resolutions of this trial were not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. How should juries determine an appropriate grade change?
2. How can a jury fulfill the goal of education besides meetings with the OAR or any of the equivalent programs within the Tri-Co?
Letter to Community:
Dear Bico Community,

These past few months I have been able to fully reflect on the meaning of the Honor Code and the impact that it has on our community. I have learnt that to see the Honor Code as a set of rules that we simply must follow does not do it justice. The Honor Code is a moral and ethical framework that we have taken on, as members of the community, and is a guide to how we can live respectfully and cohesively as scholars and friends. It is a standard to which we choose to live by and should impact all of our interactions within this community.

However, sometimes we fall short of this standard and must be held accountable for our actions. Regrettably, I fell short of this standard last semester when I submitted an exam which I had edited outside of the allotted exam time. Changing the exam script on a written exam after the exam is over would obviously be wrong, and this is the same for exams typed on a computer. I now recognize the error of my ways and how it was disrespectful and harmful to my Professor, the other members of the class, and the community as a whole. I wholeheartedly apologize for my actions. They were wrong, and this will not happen again.

The trial process helped me to reflect on another function of the Honor Code – Growth. As we hold ourselves to higher standards we leave room for growth and repairing negative situations. However, this can only being done through understanding, apology, and a commitment to change for the better. I have been trying to embody this spirit since the end of the trial, and as I move into this next semester. I would like to thank my Professor and the members of the Honor Council for giving me the opportunity to self-reflect, evaluate, and change my academic behavior for the better.

This community has taught me so much about trust, accountability, and forgiveness and I am grateful to be part of community where people truly care about others, even those who have made mistakes. Once again, I would like to apologize for my actions and hope that I can be accepted back into this community where we can learn and grow together. Thank you for reading.