NCIS: An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Spring 2019

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.

Content Warning: This abstract includes mention of abortion, sexual assault, and suicide.

Letter from Honor Council on our decision to release this abstract:
Honor Council wants to inform the community that this abstract is released without the consent of the confronted party. This is not unusual—parties often do not respond to our request for release—but because of the circumstances surrounding this trial, we thought it was important to provide more context regarding our decision to release this abstract. Honor Council has had serious discussions on how to release NCIS over the past academic year, and eventually decided to release the abstract to the community with the following information.

In the circumstantial portion of the trial, the confronted party discussed some events that are content warned. We removed details of these difficult circumstances because we do not want to exploit the traumas of the confronted party or risk breaking their confidentiality. However, we chose to keep a general summary of this material in the abstract. Even though we do not have the consent of the confronted party, we believe it is important for the community to be aware of the existence of these issues on campus. Even in the case of what we may consider a substantial academic violation, there are things bigger than council and more important than any trial process.

Key:
Confronted Party: Abby
Confronting Party: Professor Caitlin
Course: Crime Solving 190

Summary/Pre-Trial:
This case involved a student, Abby, who was supposed to submit a 10-12 page long final Crime Solving 190 paper. The paper was assigned to be a final review of the entire course and it was meant to be a final assessment to show the knowledge that had been built up throughout the
course. Abby plagiarised the paper by copying entire blocks of texts from the internet without properly citing or paraphrasing them. In the meeting with the professor, Abby immediately confessed about the act of plagiarism and explained the extreme circumstances under which it had happened. The professor did not think this plagiarism instance was meant to be deceiving and seemed to be on the same page as Abby in regards to what happened. The jury, the professor and the student all agreed that the violation was not something meant to deceive but in fact a bad decision made under very difficult life circumstances. The jury decided to specifically focus on meeting the trial goals of accountability and restoration.

**Fact Finding:**
Abby explained that she had been going through a very tough time and found herself ten minutes before the paper deadline with a paper to still write and submit. At the time she did not think about asking for an extension as she only wanted to be done with the paper and proceed to leave the college. Finding herself short of time she just Googled what the paper was about and directly included entire paragraphs of text from the internet in the document with very little referencing. The professor immediately noticed that in the essay Abby was talking about things that hadn’t been talked about in class. Abby was very honest with Professor Caitlin in the conversation they had the day after submission of the paper and Professor Caitlin seemed very understanding of the delicate circumstances and of what had led to such decisions. Both the professor and the student seemed to be on the same page on the case and their relationship did not seem to be ruined, as Professor Caitlin would feel comfortable having Abby in one of her classes and Abby would feel comfortable being in one with Professor Caitlin.

**Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:**
Because of the clear instance of plagiarism, the jury came to the following statement of violation.

**Statement of Violation:**
*Abby* violated the Honor Code by copying others’ work without credit as her final paper.

**Circumstantial Portion:**
The professor did not attend the circumstantial meeting. Abby was present on the phone for this part of the trial but requested that the Co-Chair read a statement about the circumstances under which the violation had occurred. This statement revealed that Abby had been going through extreme circumstances involving suicide, sexual assault, and an abortion. Abby spent the last weeks of the semester unable to work or attend classes and made the decision to take time off from college right after the end of the semester. At the time of submission Abby only wanted to turn in all the assessments and leave campus as soon as she could.
Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:
Jury deliberations mainly focused on meeting the restoration and accountability goals as the jury felt the trial goal of education had already been met.

In terms of restoration the jury felt that their resolutions should focus on restoring Abby to the community in terms of supporting her in her decision to take time off as well as try to restore her within the community by suggesting a possible meeting with her dean and her professor to make her feel more included and supported. The letter to the community was a way to reflect on the trial process and what happened. The re-signing of the Honor Code was meant to be a tool for the community to be restored with Abby’s return.

The other main discussion was about grade change and the jury unanimously felt that a zero on the assignment would be an appropriate compromise between giving Abby an opportunity to move on from this chapter of her life and holding her accountable for her actions. Moreover, the jury felt that a drop by ⅔ of a letter grade would be beneficial in that it would ensure that Abby would be held accountable for her actions more than if she hadn’t simply submitted the assignment. The jury then consented to the following resolutions:

Tentative Resolutions:
1. The Jury recommends that [Abby] receive a 0.0 on the paper. Additionally, the jury recommends that her final class grade be dropped by ⅔ of a point. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
2. The Jury supports [Abby's] decision to take time away and encourages her to continue using whatever support resources she needs. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
3. [Abby] will meet with Professor [Caitlin] (if the professor is willing) upon her return to Haverford. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
4. The jury recommends that [Abby] meet with her Dean upon her return to Haverford, and if and when she feels she needs resources or help. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
5. [Abby] will write a letter to the community to be appended to the abstract. This letter will be completed by the end of her first quarter of her return to Haverford. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
6. When she returns to Haverford, [Abby] will re-sign the Honor Pledge in order to reaffirm her commitment to and membership in the community. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)

On Resolutions as a Whole (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
The jury also discussed a statement on reporting. Most jurors felt that although this would have been a clear case of academic dishonesty at other institutions of higher learning, it still should not be reported due to the extremity of the circumstances surrounding the violation. The jury therefore consented to the following statement:

**Statement on Reporting:**
The jury recognizes that this would be considered a disciplinary proceeding at other institutions of higher learning but believe the extreme circumstances should be taken into account. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

**Finalizing Resolutions:**
After talking to the party via phone call there were no changes in the jury’s mind so the jury proceeded to consent to the finalized resolutions without making any changes to the tentative resolutions. The jury consented to the following:

**Finalized Resolutions:**
1. The Jury recommends that [Abby] receive a 0.0 on the paper. Additionally, the jury recommends that her final class grade be dropped by ⅔ of a point. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
2. The Jury supports [Abby’s] decision to take time away and encourages her to continue using whatever support resources she needs. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
3. [Abby] will meet with Professor [Caitlin] (if the professor is willing) upon her return to Haverford. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
4. The jury recommends that [Abby] meet with her Dean upon her return to Haverford, and if and when she feels she needs resources or help. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
5. [Abby] will write a letter to the community to be appended to the abstract. This letter will be completed by the end of her first quarter of her return to Haverford. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)
6. When she returns to Haverford, [Abby] will re-sign the Honor Pledge in order to reaffirm her commitment to and membership in the community. (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)

On the resolutions as a whole: (9 jurors consent, 1 juror stands outside in absentia)

The chair proceeded to open the ground for discussion on the graduate school reporting statement but the weight of the room was consistent to what had been consented during the tentative so the jury re-consented to the following statement:
Statement on Reporting:
The jury recognizes that this would be considered a disciplinary proceeding at other institutions of higher learning but believe the extreme circumstances should be taken into account. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Post-Trial:
The resolutions were not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. What does it mean for Honor Council to consent to release an abstract that deals with extreme and difficult circumstances when the confronted party cannot be reached to consent on the abstract?
2. What are the implications of the resolutions given the context of this specific case?