

Lady Bird

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 did not consent to the release of the abstract. The confronted party did not consent to the release of the abstract.

Key:

Confronted Party: Lady Bird

Confronting Party: Father Leviatch

Course: Acting 300

Expert Witness: Sister Sarah Joan

Author off of whom Lady Bird based her work: Mr. Bruno

Summary:

This trial involved a student, Lady Bird, plagiarizing a draft of her senior thesis for Acting 300. This was Lady Bird's third Honor Council trial; the previous two were *Apples* and *Shutter Island*. One of Lady Bird's previous trials regarded plagiarism in the fall semester of her senior thesis seminar, the other had involved using disallowed resources on an exam. The extensiveness of plagiarism on a capstone assignment and the fact that Lady Bird had already undergone two trials signified to the jury that stronger resolutions were needed for the trial goals of education, restoration, and accountability to be met. This trial resulted in a two-year separation and a mandatory additional year of classes in the BiCo, among other resolutions.

Fact Finding:

Lady Bird expressed in her statement and when meeting the jury that she was surprised when Father Leviatch informed her that he did not believe her thesis was her own work. She stressed that she worked hard on her thesis, but when he asked her to explain her methodology, she was unable to do so. Father Leviatch emphasized in his statement and in a phone call with the jury that he did not believe her thesis was her own work. He pointed to her inability to explain her methodology, which was already of a much higher level than what he would expect of an undergraduate. He also mentioned that her bibliography was much longer than would make sense, and that the primary author she cited had never appeared in the bibliography at all.

Deliberations and Statement of Violation:

The jury consulted with an expert witness, Sister Sarah Joan. She highlighted all of the sections of the draft which had either inadequately paraphrased or copied verbatim from the text of another paper without attribution. The jury agreed that the majority of the draft was improperly paraphrased and without sufficient attribution. The jury noted that the copies of emails between Lady Bird and Mr. Bruno demonstrated that there had been some correspondence between the two. After reading this correspondence, the jury was not confident beyond a reasonable doubt that her methodology was plagiarized, so it did not consent to a statement of violation for this portion.

Statement of Violation:

[Lady Bird] violated the academic Honor Code by plagiarizing significant portions of her thesis draft.

The jury shares the suspicions of [Father Leviatch] and [Sister Sarah Joan] that [Lady Bird] plagiarized the [methodology] used in her thesis, though could not determine beyond a reasonable doubt that plagiarism occurred in the creation of [that methodology]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)

Circumstantial:

From this point forward, Lady Bird acknowledged that she improperly cited in her thesis, but stated that it was her work—she had planned to cite everything in a later draft. Meanwhile, she felt that her advisor did not support her throughout the process, and that all of this concern about her work could have been resolved together in a meeting about the drafting process. Lady Bird enumerated the following circumstances that would make not being able to graduate especially difficult for her: she was an international student, so if she were not permitted to graduate, it would be difficult to re-obtain a visa; she had accepted a job offer, which she would not be permitted to take were she not to graduate; her family had already purchased expensive flight tickets to see her graduate, and one of her parents had a medical condition that would preclude later international trips to see another college graduation.

Past Violations:

At the end of the circumstantial portion, Lady Bird told the jury that she had been involved in two other Honor Council cases. She did not originally wish to share this information, but the Honor Council librarian said that the jury should have this important context, given that this was her third violation of the Honor Code. Lady Bird did not further discuss these two cases with the jury.

Reviewing the two other cases substantially changed the jury's feelings about the case, since this is one of the few cases of a third violation in recent Haverford history. The other case, *The Tempest*, involved a student who was permanently separated. These violations illustrated a

pattern of academic dishonesty. At this point, the Honor Council staff support person explained that Lady Bird had not followed through on many resolutions from her previous two trials. Knowing this made the jury feel less sympathetic.

Tentative Resolutions:

One juror removed herself from the trial, since she was on Honor Council and needed to take part in another case. The jury spent several meetings deliberating over the resolutions, given their length.

Tentative Resolutions

1. *The jury recommends that [Lady Bird] receive a 0.0 in [Acting 300]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
2. *[Lady Bird] will be separated from Haverford College [for four semesters]. The jury recommends that [Lady Bird] be separated from Bryn Mawr College [for four semesters]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
3. *[Lady Bird] will complete bi-weekly private reflections between [date] and [date]. During this reflection process, she will submit monthly summaries to the Honor Council Staff Support Person. In addition, [Lady Bird] will compose private reflections in [month], [month], [month], and [month] and notify the Honor Council Staff Support Person upon their completion.*
 - a. *Three of these reflections will be responses to abstracts selected by the Honor Council librarian. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
4. *[Lady Bird] will meet with the Honor Council librarian, if the librarian is willing, each month of [year]. If the librarian is not willing, another member of the Honor Council Executive Board will meet with [Lady Bird]. The person who meets with [Lady Bird] should read the chair's reports of [Lady Bird]'s past three Honor Council cases. These meetings will be held via Skype until [month], and the remainder will be held in person. The goal of these meetings will be to assist in [Lady Bird]'s transition back to the Bi-Co Community.*
 - a. *The [first] meeting between [Lady Bird] and the librarian will focus on building their relationship, and need not discuss her previous violations, unless [Lady Bird] would like to.*
 - b. *The [second], [third], [fourth], and [fifth] meetings will include discussion of proper paraphrasing and citation. Prior to the [second] meeting, [Lady Bird] will write a summary of Maud McInerney's essay Plagiarism and How to Avoid It which she and the librarian will go over to ensure that it is properly paraphrased and cited. Prior to each of the other meetings discussing paraphrasing, [Lady Bird] will choose a paragraph from an article and*

summarize that paragraph for her and the librarian to go over. If [Lady Bird] intends to continue a major in [Acting], these articles will be [dramaturgically focused].

- c. At least two of her meetings with the librarian will discuss all three of [Lady Bird]'s previous breaches of the Honor Code.
 - i. One of these meetings will occur in [month].**
- d. The topics of other meetings will be developed in cooperation between [Lady Bird] and the Honor Council librarian. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 5. [Lady Bird] will write a letter of apology to [Mr. Bruno] by [date], following her meeting with the Honor Council librarian that month. This letter should outline the nature of her violation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 6. [Lady Bird] will write a letter to the Haverford [Acting] department head prior to her return to Bryn Mawr. If [Lady Bird] wishes to continue her major in the Haverford [Acting] Department, the jury encourages the department head to weigh this letter when considering her re-admittance to the major. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 7. The jury recommends that Bryn Mawr require [Lady Bird] to complete at least one year of college within the Bi-Co after her return, taking a minimum of three credits each semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 8. The jury recommends that Bryn Mawr not allow [Lady Bird] to re-enroll in the college if she has not been completing resolutions 3 to 6 in a timely fashion. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 9. [Lady Bird] will take at least two writing-intensive courses upon her return as approved by her dean. At least one must be taken during the first semester of her return. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 10. The jury will write a letter to [Lady Bird] that will be delivered to her in [month] affirming her return to the Bi-Co, if applicable. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 11. [Lady Bird] will meet at least once with her dean during [month]. The jury encourages her continued communication with her dean during her remaining time in the Bi-Co. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- 12. [Lady Bird] will meet with [Father Leviatch], if he is willing, in the [date] semester. If she is taking a class with him, this meeting will take place within the first week of the semester. This meeting will be mediated by a member of the Honor Council Executive Board. If [Father Leviatch] is not able or willing to meet, [Lady Bird] will write a letter to [Father Leviatch] in the [date] semester. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*

13. *[Lady Bird] will have a writing partner through the Bryn Mawr Writing Center throughout her return to the Bi-Co, with a minimum of one meeting per week. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 14. *[Lady Bird] will complete a senior thesis as part of her major. If her major does not require a thesis, she will complete an independent study of similar magnitude to a senior thesis. This thesis will discuss a different topic, even if within the same discipline, than the topic she chose for her [date] thesis. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 15. *[Lady Bird] will attend the Bryn Mawr Fall [date] and Spring [date] plenaries and the Bryn Mawr Spring [date] Community Day of Learning. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 16. *[Lady Bird] will write a letter to the Bi-Co community in [month] if she is graduating in [month]. If she is graduating at a later point, [Lady Bird] will write this letter in the month prior to her graduation. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 17. *The jury recommends that the names of [Lady Bird]'s past trials' abstracts be included in the abstract for this trial. If this is deemed not possible, the abstract will contain in-depth summaries of [Lady Bird]'s past trials, including descriptions of past resolutions. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 18. *Jurors and the Bi-Co Liaison will have the option to append letters to the abstract. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
 19. *The jury recommends that Honor Council and Honor Board hold a joint abstract discussion about this case upon its release. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*
- On resolutions as whole: (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)*

Statement on Reporting:

The jury recommends that this be reported as a disciplinary proceeding to other institutions of higher learning. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co liaison approves)

Finalizing Resolutions:

Lady Bird advocated strongly for only one year of separation and a lesser grade change, and the jury discussed in more detail their thoughts on the resolutions. With regard to Lady Bird's comments that the assignment was only a draft, the jury contended that Lady Bird should have still cited her sources, or even referenced them informally, since she was turning the draft in for review. Furthermore, when the jury asked Lady Bird what her final draft might look like, especially had Father Leviatch not brought up that the draft was plagiarized, she could not provide an answer. Although the jury felt that Father Leviatch could have been more involved,

avoiding plagiarism was ultimately Lady Bird's responsibility. Many jurors believed that she intentionally plagiarized in this draft of her thesis, which they felt was a particularly grave violation of the Honor Code, given that this is the capstone of her academic career.

The jury discussed separation over several meetings. Because she had shown little growth or responsibility in learning about academic honesty since the first trial, many members of the jury felt uncomfortable about her graduating from a school which values its Honor Code so strongly. As the jury drafted other resolutions, people became more comfortable with temporary separation, provided that the other resolutions were met. Ultimately, every single member of the jury felt that two years of separation was the right decision.

After hearing Lady Bird's thoughts, the jury still believed overwhelmingly that one year would not be enough to restore her to the community. The jury believed that Lady Bird had not taken proper responsibility for her actions, but sympathized with her particularly difficult circumstances. However, there are consequences for violating the Honor Code, and the jury believed that she must be held responsible for her violations, despite the difficulty of the resolutions.

The jury discussed the past abstract *Amelia Earhart* and expressed the desire to avoid a series of resolutions so difficult to follow that it would be virtually impossible for Lady Bird to return. In contrast, they wanted her to be able to return after her temporary separation; it would only happen, however, after she had taken the time to seriously reflect on the gravity of her case. Were Lady Bird to follow through with all of the resolutions, the jury believed that she would be wholly qualified to return to the community. The primary change between the tentative and final resolutions was the addition of Resolution 3, so that Lady Bird would adequately understand the trial goals.

The jury further recommended that the other abstracts be considered in the discussion for this trial, given how much of an impact they maintained throughout the trial process.

Final Resolutions:

1. *The jury recommends that [Lady Bird] receive a 0.0 in [Acting 300]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison approves)*
2. *[Lady Bird] will be separated from Haverford College [for four semesters]. The jury recommends that [Lady Bird] be separated from Bryn Mawr College [for four semesters]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison approves)*
3. *[Lady Bird] will meet with the Honor Council librarian to discuss the trial goals, and [Lady Bird] will re-read the Haverford and Bryn Mawr Honor Codes prior to this*

- meeting. This meeting will occur between [date] and [date]. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia, Bi-Co Liaison approves)*
4. *[Lady Bird] will complete bi-weekly private reflections between [date] and [date]. During this reflection process, she will submit monthly summaries to the Honor Council Staff Support Person. In addition, [Lady Bird] will compose private reflections in [month], [month], [month], and [month] and notify the Honor Council Staff Support Person upon their completion.*
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Post-Trial:

Lady Bird appealed the resolutions, which the president of the college upheld. The president expressed concern that the requirement of additional class time was an attempt to hold Lady Bird accountable for her other violations or other potential moments of academic dishonesty that had not gone to trial. However, the jury felt that an additional year of classes was necessary to fully restore Lady Bird to the community. The president ultimately upheld the resolutions.

Discussion Questions:

1. At what point should juries seriously consider permanent separation? How many resolutions are “too many” before permanent separation is worthwhile? Is there a certain number of academic violations before permanent separation is ultimately necessary?
2. To what extent should the status of international students be considered when temporary separation entails a uniquely difficult process to re-obtain a visa?