Riverdale:
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released Fall 2020

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Key:
Confronted party: Betty Cooper
Confronting party: Professor Veronica Lodge
Course: Newspapers 200

Summary/Pre-Trial:
This trial concerned a potential violation on a final exam in Newspapers 200. It was an in-class, unproctored exam. Professor Lodge gave the students their exam, but had to return to the classroom to give an exam to a student who had overslept. Upon leaving the classroom a second time, she noticed Betty leaving the bathroom using her phone. Professor Lodge was concerned about Betty using her phone, so she checked on Moodle (which lists students’ most recent access times) and saw that Betty had accessed Moodle during the exam. Professor Lodge confronted Betty, and they had a conversation about what had happened during the exam. At first, Betty said she had accessed the internet to calm down during the exam but had not accessed the Moodle website. When Professor Lodge told her about the Moodle timestamps, Betty clarified that Moodle had been up on her phone (she was studying before the exam), and she had downloaded a lecture slide in the bathroom, but she didn’t look at it. After their conversation, Professor Lodge asked Betty to report to Honor Council, which consented to send this case to an academic trial.

Fact Finding:
During the fact finding meeting, the parties began by discussing the contents of their statements in greater detail. The jury was particularly curious about what Betty had accessed in the bathroom. Betty said that she had an anxiety attack during the exam, so she went to the bathroom to look at memes (which helped her calm down). When she opened her phone, the first page that came up was the Moodle page for the course, since she had been studying just before the exam. Upon seeing the Moodle page, Betty thought about accessing course materials to refresh her memory, and downloaded one of the lecture slides. However, once it downloaded,
she decided not to look at it, since she knew that would be cheating.

The jury was concerned about whether or not Betty had actually read the slides. They asked Professor Lodge whether or not she thought Betty had read the slides, and Professor Lodge said she couldn’t be sure. There was nothing on the exam that made it obvious Betty had copied from the slides, but there also wasn’t anything that made it clear she didn’t. The jury then asked Betty to leave the room, so they could speak with Professor Lodge in private. Professor Lodge told the jury she thought there were two violations: using the phone in the first place and accessing course materials. Professor Lodge also expressed disappointment that Betty had not immediately admitted to accessing course materials in their first meeting and only saying she had after seeing the Moodle timestamps. Professor Lodge also talked about how cheating negatively impacts an entire class, especially one graded on a curve. She also was unsure what to do moving forward, since she wanted to prevent violations in the future.

The jury also asked Professor Lodge about her relationship with Betty. Because of the nature of Professor Lodge’s and Betty’s schedules, it was unlikely Betty would ever take another class with Professor Lodge, so she didn’t feel their relationship was particularly at stake. She also said that she believed Betty’s account of choosing not to look at the slides, but she thought Betty’s actions were more intentional in the moment than Betty was making them sound. She also hoped Betty would feel more comfortable approaching services like ADS in the future.

The jury then spoke with Betty alone. The jury also asked Betty about her relationship with Professor Lodge, and Betty also said she was unlikely to ever take a class with her again. Betty also clarified more of what happened in the bathroom; she explained that she intentionally downloaded the slides while in the bathroom, but chose not to look at them. She also discussed how she was stressed throughout the entire class. The class structure required lots of memorization in a short amount of time, and Betty was stressed by the structure of the class and was worried going into the exam.

Jury Deliberations/Statement of Violation:

All members of the jury agreed that there was a violation. However, they were unclear about the specifics. Professor Lodge had stated there were two violations, but the jury was unsure as to how connected the violations were. They agreed that accessing the phone and downloading the slides were both in violation of the exam instructions, but the jury felt that these were part of one whole violation, rather than being separate ones. However, there were some members of the jury who wanted a statement to reflect the reasoning of the professor and say that there were two violations. In the end, the jury decided their statement did not need to say “one violation” or “two violations,” but rather just that Betty had violated the Honor Code. Therefore, they consented to the following statement of violation.

Statement of Violation:

[Betty] violated the Honor Code by electronically accessing unauthorized resources during her
Circumstantial Portion:

Betty began by explaining what was going on in her life leading up to and during the exam. As she had mentioned previously, she used her phone because she was having a panic attack due to her anxiety. Betty discussed her struggles dealing with mental health: her family did not take mental health seriously, and due to financial issues, she had difficulty going to someone on her own. Therefore, Betty had decided to handle her anxiety on her own with coping mechanisms like using her phone for memes or games. She agreed that it was a violation to use her phone without an accommodation, but because of her difficulties getting help for her mental health, she had not sought out accommodations from ADS.

The jury asked Betty if she was now seeing a therapist. Betty explained that between the violation and the trial, she had started seeing one. She had been benefiting from this, and she appreciated the jury’s concern that she was getting proper help. The jury also asked about how Betty viewed the violation. Betty talked about how she had essentially taken an accommodation for herself without going through ADS. Although she agreed going through ADS was not easy or accessible for many people, she knew that others had gone through that process for their accommodations and she agreed it was wrong to just use her phone without communicating with her professor or seeking accommodations. Betty also discussed downloading the lecture slides. She believed this was also a breach of trust, even though she claimed she hadn’t looked at the slides directly.

The jury then discussed potential resolutions. They asked Betty if going to academic management resources, like the OAR, would be helpful for her. Betty said she hadn’t considered that before, and while she wasn’t sure how helpful it would be, she didn’t think it would hurt. The jury also discussed writing an open letter to future Newspaper 200 classes about the violation, which was suggested by Professor Lodge. Betty said she thought that was a great idea. Betty understood that the jury would probably recommend a grade change, but she hoped to still be able to get credit for this class since it was necessary for her major. With that, the jury thanked Betty for her time and then began deliberating tentative resolutions.

Jury Deliberations and Tentative Resolutions:

Since both Professor Lodge and Betty liked the idea of an open letter to future Newspaper 200 classes, the jury decided to include that in their list of tentative resolutions. They also included two resolutions aimed at Professor Lodge (since she had expressed worry about what to do in future sections of this class) and Honor Council about accessibility and accommodations for mental health. Regarding the grade change, the jury felt that, since they believed Betty had not read the slides, a grade change was warranted but did not need to be so harsh that Betty would lose credit for the class. Therefore, the jury decided to lower the grade of her final exam by 30%. The jury also wanted to make sure Betty understood the full weight of 3.

[Newspapers] exam. (9 jurors consent, 1 stands outside in absentia)
her violation, so they decided to recommend a meeting between her and Professor Lodge. The jury then consented to the following set of tentative resolutions.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

1. [Betty] will receive a 30% grade deduction on Exam 3 of [Newspapers 200]. (10 jurors consent)

2. [Betty] will write an open letter to future [Newspapers 200] classes. This letter must:  
   a. Reflect on the nature and significance of her violation;  
   b. Give advice to future students to prevent similar situations; and  
   c. Address the two aspects above by referring to the specific structure of the class  
      [Betty] will write this letter before the beginning of the [redacted] semester. (10 jurors consent)  

3. [Betty] will have a one-on-one meeting with the OAR about time management during finals two weeks before finals weeks in [time period] and [time period]. (10 jurors consent)  

4. [Betty] will have a conversation with [Professor Lodge] about the nature of her violation. If [Betty] is comfortable with it, this conversation should take the form of a face to face conversation facilitated by an Honor Council juror or someone on Honor Council executive board. Otherwise, [Betty] may have this conversation over email with [Prof. Lodge]. This conversation must address her action of downloading the lecture slides and how this action plays into her violation. [Betty] will have this conversation by the end of the [redacted] semester. (10 jurors consent)  

5. The jury recommends that [Professor Lodge] expands the accessibility section of her syllabus, explaining how to get accommodations and encouraging students who need these services to utilize them. The jury recommends that [Professor Lodge] do this before the [redacted] semester. (10 jurors consent)  

6. Honor Council will send an email to all faculty asking them to expand the accessibility sections of their syllabi, explaining how to get accommodations and encouraging students who need these services to utilize them. Honor Council should send out this email by the end of the [redacted] semester. (10 jurors consent)

On resolutions as a whole: 10 jurors consent

**Statement on Reporting:**  
The jury recommends that this case not to be reported to other institutions of higher learning (10 jurors consent)

**Finalizing Resolutions:**  
Between tentative and finalizing, Professor Lodge emailed the trial chair with her
thoughts on the resolutions. She appreciated many of them, but she felt that the grade change was too low for the nature of the violation. At the finalizing meeting, the jury asked Betty how she would feel about a higher grade change. Betty reiterated what she stated before; she wanted to still receive credit for the course, and otherwise understood that a grade change was necessary. The jury also asked Betty how she felt about the other resolutions, and Betty said that she agreed with them.

For final resolutions, the jury decided to increase the grade deduction from 30% to 50%, provided that it would not cause Betty to fail the course. The jury also decided to combine resolutions 5 and 6, since they felt the problem with access was not necessarily caused by professors in general or Professor Lodge in particular but rather with the structure of ADS and the process of getting accommodations.

**Final Resolutions:**

1. *The jury recommends that [Betty] will receive a 50% grade deduction on Exam 3 of [Newspapers 200] if this doesn’t result in her failing to receive credit for the course as part of her major. Otherwise, she will receive the greatest grade deduction that allows her to still receive credit for the course as part of her major.* (10 jurors consent)

2. *[Betty] will write an open letter to future [Newspapers 200] classes. This letter must:*
   a. *Reflect on the nature and significance of her violation;*
   b. *Give advice to future students to prevent similar situations, especially emphasizing the importance of communication with the professor; and*
   c. *Address the two aspects above by referring to the specific structure of the class.*

   *[Betty] will write this letter before the beginning of the [redacted] semester.* (10 jurors consent)

3. *[Betty] will have a one-on-one meeting with the OAR about time management during finals two weeks before finals weeks in [time period] and [time period].* (10 jurors consent)

4. *[Betty] will have a conversation with [Professor Lodge] about the nature of her violation over email. This conversation must address her action of downloading the lecture slides and how this action plays into her violation. [Betty] will have this conversation by the end of the [redacted] semester.* (10 jurors consent)

5. *Honor Council will continuously work with Access and Disability Services to make the process of getting accommodations more accessible to all groups of students on campus.* (10 jurors consent)

On resolutions as a whole: 10 jurors consent

**Statement on Reporting:** The jury recommends that this case not to be reported to other institutions of higher learning. (10 jurors consent)
Post-Trial:
The trial resolutions were not appealed.

Discussion Questions:
1. How do we open conversation about making the process of getting accommodations more accessible?
2. In this case, Betty described her actions as using accommodations without going through ADS. What does that mean both for students who have acquired accommodations through ADS and other students?