Incredibles II: An Honor Council Academic Trial Released Fall 2020

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Key:
Confronting Party: Professor Edna Mode
Confronted Party: Mirage (thought by confronting party to be Elastigirl from Incredibles I)
Other Student Involved: Mr. Incredible
Course: Super Suit Making 225
Confronted Party’s School: Nomanisan Island
Other Tri-Co School: Metroville

Summary/Pre-Trial:
Mirage, a student, was confronted for potentially collaborating with another student (Mr. Incredible) on a midterm in their Super Suit Making 225 class. Honor Council first became aware of the case when the other confronted party, Mr. Incredible, self-reported to Honor Council about the incident. Mirage did not self-report to Council, and only submitted her statement when contacted by one of the co-chairs. This caused the trial to be run significantly after the violation was committed, separating the trial processes for Incredibles I and Incredibles II. The jury was concerned about the timeline of the trial, which factored into Incredibles I and II being run separately and on condensed time frames.

In her statement to Council, Professor Mode said that she and the confronted party were not on the same page. She explained that she was highly suspicious because during Incredibles I, the other student, Mr. Incredible, admitted to receiving help during the exam. Mr. Incredible had not revealed the name of the student who provided this help, but, given that Professor Mode initially flagged Mr. Incredible and Mirage’s exams, Professor Mode felt it very likely that Mirage was the student who collaborated with Mr. Incredible (referred to as Elastigirl in Incredibles I). The chair of this trial and one other Honor Council juror were the only jurors who served on both Incredibles I and II. They, in conjunction with the confronting party were the only members aware of the details of that trial, as much of the information from Incredibles I had to be withheld from the jury of Incredibles II to preserve the confidentiality of Mr. Incredible. This lack of information prevented the jury from achieving any sort of clarity on the nature of the
incident and on Mirage’s involvement, leading to a statement of non-violation for this trial.

Fact Finding:

One juror dropped out of the jury before the preliminary meeting due to time constraints, so this trial was run with nine jurors. The first meeting was conducted via Skype with seven out of nine jurors, the confronted party, and the confronting party. Professor Mode explained that the exam in question was a take-home midterm. Students were expected to pick up the exam, take it home, and complete it within three to four days. They were not permitted to collaborate with anybody on the exam. She noted that she first became suspicious of a violation of the Honor Code when she noticed a diagram of a cape on both Mirage and Mr. Incredible’s exams. This was suspicious to her because she did not believe in putting capes on super suits, as they get caught in turbines and thus do not exist in the field, and she had never seen it on a student’s exam before. Upon noticing more similarities between the exams, she contacted both of the students separately and asked them to clarify what happened. The first student, Mr. Incredible, self-reported to Honor Council, resulting in Incredibles I. Mirage, however, did not respond to the initial email. Professor Mode did not reach out to her to follow up, and marked her grade for the course as “incomplete.” Mirage did not respond to her email for another eight months. When Mirage finally responded to Professor Mode, Incredibles I was already underway. Therefore, by the time Incredibles II started, it had been over a year since the exam.

The jury then asked Mirage to give her account of what happened. Mirage reiterated what she said in her statement, asserting that she did not give or receive any assistance on the exam. She said that she picked the exam up in class, took the exam alone in a private carrel at Nomanisan Island within the allotted time frame, and returned it the next day in class. The chair mentioned that while a trial had been run regarding the other student’s exam, culminating in a statement of violation, the details of that trial, Incredibles I, would not be provided to preserve confidentiality. When asked about the time frame of her response to Professor Mode and Honor Council, Mirage explained that she had been locked out of her email because of technological difficulties. By the time she was able to access her email again, it was the summer, and she was not regularly checking her email. She stated that the email from Professor Mode must have gotten lost in the backlog of emails created during this time. A semester later, she noticed an “Incomplete” from Professor Mode’s class on her transcript later in the next semester, at which point she discovered, and replied to, the initial email.

The jury then continued to ask Mirage about potential collaboration throughout the course with other students. Mirage explained that she would often study for the class with a group of Nomanisan Island students who were taking the course as well. Nomanisan Island students frequently commute to Haverford for the same Super Suit Making 225 class, as well as collaborate on practice problems and practice exams. When asked about the specific cape design, Mirage explained that she struggled with that topic and was only able to produce a partial answer that may have had significant errors. Another juror asked if super suit diagrams could be drawn
in a similarly unique way between students who had studied together. Mirage responded that she wasn’t sure, but it was possible given they had similar interactions with the material and had taken previous classes together.

A juror then asked if Mirage knew any of the other Nomanisan Island students in the class personally. She responded that Nomanisan Island is a small campus, so she ran into people frequently, but she only really interacted with one student out of class, and not that frequently. Another juror asked if Mirage could think of any way the similarities on the exam could’ve happened. She replied that the only thing she could think of was that their responses were similar because of the immense amount of studying they did together in preparation for the exam. She reiterated that she took the exam alone in a personal carrel with no one else around. Professor Mode noted that she had never included the name of the other student in any of her communications with Mirage, nor Mirage’s name in her communications with Mr. Incredible.

The jury asked Professor Mode alone whether she felt as though Mirage, as well as the other student in question, had consistent performances between the third midterm and the course final. Professor Mode explained that she felt Mirage’s performance between midterm and final was consistent, whereas the other student performed worse on the final and was not doing as well in the class overall. She believed that the other student had copied off of Mirage’s exam but did not have that opportunity during the self-scheduled final. One juror expressed frustration with not having information from Incredibles I, which would have been provided had these cases been run together. The jury speculated about whether it seemed likely that one student had copied off of another from comparing the cape diagrams. One juror asked if the other student, Mr. Incredible, had been forthcoming about his improper conduct on the exam. The trial chair answered yes, he had been entirely transparent throughout the trial, but explicitly stated that he did not want to involve the student he admitted to receiving help from.

Professor Mode noted that Mirage’s response was also a factor in why the timelines for these cases were so different. Despite seeing the incomplete on her transcript and eventually finding Professor Mode’s initial email, Mirage never reached out, forcing this trial to be run incredibly close to her anticipated graduation. The jury considered the possibility of Mirage intentionally delaying, as well as whether or not this trial would at all impact her ability to graduate on time. The trial chair explained that that was unlikely, unless the jury decided to bring her GPA below a 2.0 and she did not have enough credits for her major or for general distribution requirements. With no more questions, the jury ended their call with Professor Mode. The jury briefly discussed what kinds of questions they had for Mirage and then called her.

The jury asked Mirage a few questions about the email timeline, which she answered. Having no more questions at this point, the trial chair asked if Mirage had any questions for the jury. She expressed confusion over the specifics of the trial process, especially with regard to the timeline and how long it would last. The chair clarified that the trial would end before the end of the semester and finals period. With that, the jury concluded the call.

The jury generally felt it was extremely likely that Mirage collaborated with the other
student in some capacity. Her lack of communication with Professor Mode for several months forced the trials to be run separately, which made it impossible to directly ask Mr. Incredible, the confronted party from *Incredibles 1*, if Mirage was the student he openly admitted to working with. Despite feeling that this delay was likely intentional, especially given that Mr. Incredible was adamant about not naming his collaborator, the jury also felt that there was not enough concrete evidence in the exams to know that Mirage was that student. Many jurors expressed feeling uncomfortable with either a statement of violation or non-violation and felt hamstrung by the timing of the trial relative to graduation and the end of the year.

The trial chair suggested the possibility of emailing Mirage explaining why the jury was having difficulty accepting her account of things to try to ascertain more information. The jury wondered how Mirage’s timeline when she took the exam compared with Mr. Incredible; the chair answered that Mr. Incredible took the exam at Nomanisan Island in an undisclosed location, which the jury felt cast even more suspicion onto Mirage. Ultimately, however, the jury was conflicted. They decided to send Mirage an email explaining their confusion and asking if there was anything she could re-explain to address their concerns. Not wanting to discourage honesty, the jury emphasized that they would not hold any changes or new information against her and that they were simply trying to run the trial with as much clarity as possible.

**Jury Deliberations 1**

The jury met five days after Fact-Finding to begin deliberations and come to a statement of violation or non-violation. 7 out of 9 jurors were present for this meeting. The trial chair began by reading Mirage’s response to the jury’s previous email aloud. Mirage wrote in her email that she had nothing to add to what she said during the Fact-Finding meeting.

The jury discussed the most appropriate way to move forward and was ultimately divided on whether or not Mirage was telling the truth. The jury deliberated for a considerable amount of time about the possibility of continuing to run the trial into the summer, which would consequently force a change of jury due to the difficulty of the decision at hand. Another juror mentioned the possibility of declaring that the case could not be run on usual Honor Council procedural grounds, due to its unusual circumstances, which would then refuse a decision on a statement of violation or non-violation. Several jurors felt that both of these proposed options would ultimately be counterproductive, especially because there was very little set precedent for either of them. Another juror pointed out that if they were to come to a statement of violation, it would be incredibly difficult to pinpoint how Mirage violated the Honor Code because they couldn’t be completely certain she did. The jury also discussed a general concern that there may be a lack of clarity between Haverford students and students from the Nomanisan Island or Metrowville regarding the Honor Council process. One juror suggested crafting a resolution that would address this discrepancy (non-mandatory, given that mandatory resolutions can not be crafted for anyone but the confronted party).

To try to move in a more concrete direction, the jury created a list of concerns they
wanted the given statement to address and discussed which type of statement (violation or non-violation) would most effectively reflect and address those concerns. One juror mentioned that even if the jury came to a statement of violation, the statement would not be able to serve much function beyond accountability given that education and restoration would be extremely difficult to achieve with Mirage graduating soon. With this in mind, a few of the jurors who had been leaning toward a statement of violation expressed feeling more comfortable with a statement of non-violation. Many jurors agreed that a statement of non-violation acknowledging their remaining suspicions was more appropriate than an unsure or tentative statement of violation. One juror who felt more torn stated that better understanding the timeline of exam day would sway them one way or the other. The trial chair offered to email Professor Mode to ask if she had any record of when the students turned in the exams. The jury drafted a statement of non-violation but wanted to hear back from Professor Mode before going any further.

**Jury Deliberations II:**

9 out of 9 jurors were present for this meeting. The trial chair told the jury that Professor Mode had replied to the jury’s email but did not have any record of when the students checked out or returned their exams. Professor Mode remembered that almost all the students took the exam on the first day it was available, which aligned with Mirage’s account. With this information, the jurors felt that the statement of non-violation was the best course of action, although the weight of the room felt unsatisfied with this conclusion. The jury again discussed different actions that could be taken to further address their concerns, including confronting Mirage on procedural grounds for not responding to Professor Mode’s email in a timely fashion. The jury ultimately decided to write a non-mandatory resolution to be passed on to Professor Mode, and potentially the department more broadly, that addressed the lack of information non-Haverford students receive about the Honor Code and Honor Council when they take Haverford classes. The chair then asked if the jury would feel comfortable moving toward the consensus process. The jury consented to the following statement of non-violation.

**Statement of Non-Violation**

*Although the jury remains suspicious based on the evidence provided, the jury does not believe beyond a reasonable doubt that [Mirage] violated the Honor Code. The similarity between [Mirage’s] exam and the other student’s exam was striking, but was not substantial enough to completely negate [Mirage’s] account of what happened. The jury continues to be alarmed by the result of Incredibles I, in which the confronted party admitted to receiving help on this exam. However the jury could not definitively prove that [Mirage] was the student who provided that aid. The jury would also like to note that some jurors ultimately believe that [Mirage] was the other student involved, and that she may have lied by omission, but that the evidence provided was not sufficient to come to a Statement of Violation. (8 consent, 1 stands outside)*
Non-Mandatory Resolution for the Confronting Party

The jury would like to encourage the [Superpowers] department to remind Nomanisan Island students to read the Haverford Honor Code and to potentially use Incredibles I, when published, for non-Haverford students to refer to in the future.

Discussion Questions:

1. How can Honor Council and academic departments at Haverford ensure that non-Haverford students are properly acquainted with the Honor Code and trial processes?
2. Should a jury come to a statement of non-violation when they feel that the confronted party is not being honest?
3. Should the impending graduation of a party be considered by a jury (in coming to a statement of non-violation or extending the trial process to come to a statement of violation)? If so, what should measures to address education and restoration look like with such a limited time frame?
4. How should trial chairs and juries handle connected cases that are run separately? Should the jury have been provided with more information about the violation discussed in Incredibles I, or was it more important in this case to restrict access to this information to protect confidentiality?
5. How can students, professors, and the Haverford administration better prevent long lapses in time between initial confrontation and Honor Council trials? What responsibility does each party hold in making sure potential violations are addressed in a timely manner?