Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince
An Honor Council Academic Trial
Released SEMESTER

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Key:

Confronted Party: Harry Potter

Confronting Party: Professor Bellatrix Lestrange

Course: Defense Against the Dark Arts 100

Summary/Pre-Trial:

This trial involved Harry Potter, a student who plagiarized the final paper for his class. The student was adamant about taking accountability and was insistent on getting a grade better than a 0 for his final paper. The case was first reported to Honor Council by the professor since, although the professor had asked him to, the student didn’t report it himself. On one hand, the student blamed the professor for the plagiarism that occurred and thought he was being punished too harshly. On the other hand, the professor expressed concern and discomfort regarding the student’s hyper-focus on grades.

Fact Finding:

Professor Lestrange and Harry Potter were given the opportunity to give a summary of what happened in their own words. Professor Lestrange started off by saying Defense Against the Dark Arts 100 was taught by another professor in the first half of the semester. For the course, the final was a paper. The rough draft of said paper was due in April. The assignment had a five page maximum. Harry’s paper was ten pages long and Professor Lestrange only gave feedback to half of it, even though Harry asked her to edit the second half of the rough draft as well.

Professor Lestrange said she had a Zoom meeting with Harry because she was confused by part of the paper’s introduction and had noticed the language in the draft was too close to some of the cited sources that Harry used. Later on in the semester, when Professor Lestrange
was grading Harry’s final paper, she noticed a lot of plagiarism, both from the sources noted previously and others. She wrote an email to him letting him know that his paper was severely plagiarized and that she would give him a 0 on the paper. Professor Lestrange said that with the 0 on the paper, Harry’s final grade would’ve been a 3.0. Professor Lestrange said Harry responded to her email only about a week and a half after she sent it. After reading Harry’s email response, she thought he did not take any responsibility for the plagiarism. Professor Lestrange said that in the email response, Harry had blamed her for not pointing out plagiarism in the rough draft. She said it seemed from his email that Harry wanted to initiate a formal grade dispute. Moreover, Professor Lestrange thought she and Harry were not on the same page, so she told Harry to email Honor Council to report the case. Seven days later, Professor Lestrange then emailed Honor Council, since Harry hadn’t yet emailed Honor Council.

Professor Lestrange stated that she had met with Harry’s dean in June but did not come to any understanding. The dean asked her if she would have a conversation with Harry without going though Honor Council but Professor Lestrange stated she did not want to at that point. Professor Lestrange was concerned about why Harry didn’t want to go to Honor Council. After Professor Lestrange finished her side, Harry gave his summary of what happened.

Harry said he’s majoring in Defense Against the Dark Arts and remembered going into the summer thinking the school year went awesomely. He said he then received a shocking email from Professor Lestrange saying he plagiarized the final paper. Harry expressed he was shocked because he had communicated with Professor Lestrange multiple times before submitting the final paper for the class. After receiving the email, Harry met with his dean and asked the dean if he could have a conversation with Professor Lestrange. However, this did not happen because Professor Lestrange wanted the case to go to Council.

Harry said he then talked to an Honor Council representative over the summer and learned that the case would not start until the fall. He said having to wait until the fall caused him stress. Harry decided to accept the 0 on the paper and, despite previously sending his statement to Honor Council, decided not to go through with the case. At this point, Professor Lestrange said that she was not made aware of Harry’s decision to drop the case and was very confused by the trial process. Then, Harry clarified he received a 0 for the paper but still hadn’t received a final grade for the class itself, so he wanted to go through the trial now to sort out the grade, which is why Harry recontacted Honor Council early the following semester. He ended his statement saying that he was very shocked when Professor Lestrange had initially emailed him, as he thought that he was a very good student in the course and was open to any feedback from Professor Lestrange.

A juror then asked where the plagiarism was, considering that Harry had in-text citations and a works cited page in his final paper. Professor Lestrange clarified Harry did not put writing
in his own words and didn’t cite certain things. Harry responded by saying he cited every source he used. Professor Lestrange then said there were things from darkarts.org that were not cited. Harry responded that he’d never heard of that website and that he didn’t use that website for the paper. He then asked Professor Lestrange why she thought he used that website as a source. Professor Lestrange said she pasted sentences from his final paper in Google and got direct matches for that website. She added it could be on other websites too. The point was that the wording in Harry’s paper was too similar to the wording of the website. A juror asked if the content was able to be paraphrased considering that Defense Against the Dark Arts had a fair amount of calculation usually involved. Professor Lestrange stated that [Defense Against the Dark Arts 100 was an introductory fact-oriented class so there were very few specific calculations involved], meaning it was possible to put the processes into one’s own words.

The final paper had been provided to jurors so they could see the nature of the plagiarism and comments given by Professor Lestrange. A juror noticed that multiple times in the paper, Harry only had one citation at the end of an entire paragraph. Harry said that he learned to cite that way, putting the in-text citation after the information at the end of the paragraph. Professor Lestrange then clarified that there wasn’t a problem with the citations themselves, but rather the problem was that Harry did not paraphrase. Harry said he thought there was nothing wrong with his citation formatting.

A juror asked if Harry had ever been to the writing center. Harry did not directly answer, instead saying that he was confused as to what part of his paper was plagiarism, attributing this confusion to not being able to meet with Professor Lestrange. However, Professor Lestrange said she disagreed because she spent a lot of time meeting with Harry about his paper. Lestrange said she explained to Harry that he needed to put content into his own words and that it was not her responsibility to review every sentence for plagiarism. Professor Lestrange also gave the jury concrete examples of sentences where Harry should’ve paraphrased but didn’t. She stated it would’ve been better for Harry to not turn in the paper at all rather than turn in a plagiarized paper.

A juror asked Professor Lestrange why she didn’t meet with Harry a second time over Zoom after returning his rough draft. She explained that she was not comfortable meeting one-on-one with him again and she didn’t believe the conversation would be productive, which is why she wanted other people mediating the conversation. Another juror asked what both parties wanted to gain from the Fact Finding meeting. Harry said he wanted a grade change because he didn’t think he plagiarized. Professor Lestrange said she wanted Harry to understand what plagiarism was and for him to acknowledge that his final paper was plagiarized. She said she also wanted to see restoration, education, and accountability, considering how severe the plagiarism was.
Harry was then asked if he’d done anything since the violation to make sure he didn’t plagiarize again. Harry responded he’d written many essays before and only gotten positive feedback on them, and that he didn’t know what was going on in Professor Lestrange’s head when she was reading the paper. After another juror asked him about the writing center, he added that he had never gone to the writing center for help. Professor Lestrange then asked Harry if he could step outside the room for a minute, which he agreed to.

Professor Lestrange then told the jury she chose not to meet a second time with him one-on-one because she didn’t feel comfortable doing so. Before noticing Harry’s plagiarism, Professor Lestrange had already emailed the professor who taught the first half of the class because Harry was making her feel uneasy and uncomfortable given his hyper-focus on grades.

She went on to explain that Harry had repeatedly argued with her about grades after class. For example, after his group ran out of time for a group presentation, Harry had argued with her about the group’s grade not being an accurate reflection of their work and that his group did not have enough time to finish the presentation. Additionally, Professor Lestrange said she’d been concerned that Harry was going to turn his dean against her. She said that Harry’s dean had asked Professor Lestrange to be more lenient with him. Professor Lestrange added that she thought it was inappropriate for deans to try and get students to change grades. She said that if a student is unhappy with his grade, that student can go through a trial process via Honor Council.

Before Harry was asked to come back in, a juror asked Professor Lestrange if she’d be fine with a resolution stating that Harry should write another paper. Professor Lestrange said she didn’t know if that’d be a good resolution but that she wouldn’t rule it out.

Following this, Harry came back in. The jury decided there was nothing else to be added so the two parties left.
Jury Deliberations:

After the fact-finding meeting, a juror said Harry should have taken the 0 on his paper with no questions asked because a 3.0 grade for the class was generous, given that he had plagiarized. Another juror thought Harry shouldn’t get the chance to revise the paper or write a new one. Another juror said resolutions should focus on education and accountability because Harry seemed unwilling to acknowledge he plagiarized. Lastly, a juror stated that it wouldn’t be fair for the rest of the class if Harry was allowed to rewrite a paper. The jury consented on the following statement of violation:

Statement of Violation:

[Harry] violated the Honor Code through an act of academic dishonesty. He plagiarized by failing to properly paraphrase/cite other authors and represented others’ ideas as his own.

9 consent, 1 stands outside in absentia

Circumstantial Portion:

In this meeting, Harry was given the chance to explain the circumstances behind the Code violation. He said that the difference between his case and other Honor Council cases in abstracts he read was that he had no intent to plagiarize because he started the paper far in advance. Therefore, he said, his infraction did not seem as severe as other cases where students started the assignment the day before it’s due. Harry said he had no other extenuating circumstances, such as stress, before reiterating that in other cases students put themselves in positions where they were likely to violate the Code. Harry said his case was different because he took the right steps to write a good essay.

Furthermore, Harry said he still wanted a grade change for the final paper because he felt his case was less severe than others. A juror asked if he’d be willing to write another paper to earn a higher grade instead of a 0. Harry said he didn’t have time to write another paper because of an already busy schedule. But he said he’d be open to going to the writing center because he loves writing and would take any opportunity to improve his writing.

Overall, Harry expressed that there was merit in his essay despite the mistake he made. A juror then asked if Harry thought that he plagiarized or not. Harry said that he accepted that he plagiarized.

Jury Deliberations II:
The jury discussed various resolution options. A juror thought the jury should let Harry go through a formal grade dispute through the Provost. A juror also said the best option was to not make Harry rewrite the paper, while another said he should go to the writing center before his next finals come up. Another juror said the parties didn’t seem very committed to restoring the relationship between them, so having Harry write a letter to Professor Lestrange would be performative.

**Tentative Resolutions:**

*The jury recommends that [Harry] has the option of writing a new paper on one of the other prompt topics for up to half credit. If [Harry] chooses not to write a new paper, his grade will remain as a 0. (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)*

*The jury recommends that Harry go to the writing center at least two times before the end of [the next semester] for education on proper citation and paraphrasing, as well as identifying plagiarism. (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)*

Tentative resolutions as a whole (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

**Finalizing Resolutions:**

While Harry was fine with the second tentative resolution stating he should go to the writing center, he was not satisfied with the first resolution. Harry said he was not willing to rewrite the paper. He thought that getting a 0 or having to rewrite a new paper was not fair, as other plagiarism cases in the past had been more severe than his and had similar resolutions. Harry added that he did not see any compromise between both parties; he thought Professor Lestrange was getting everything in her favor while he was in the same place that he was before the trial. Jury members then told him that the norm is for students to not receive any credit for plagiarized work and that Honor Council was making the space for him to be able to receive a higher grade if he chose to write another paper. Harry insisted that there was a lack of empathy in the decision to give him a 0 on the paper. A juror added that, in other institutions, students who plagiarize often have their permanent record impacted or get expelled in some cases of severe plagiarism, so only getting a 0 on the paper and maintaining a 3.0 grade in the course was a mild punishment compared to other common scenarios.

Harry said he didn’t want other students in the future to plagiarize unintentionally and get harshly punished. A juror responded that the Haverford community will have the chance to discuss the abstract of this case and the concept of accidental vs. intentional plagiarism. Another juror told Harry that he could bring a plenary resolution regarding the distinction between the two types of plagiarism if he wanted to as well. Harry said he thought students had more of a say in how to interpret plagiarism. A juror mentioned that, in the case of grades, professors have the
say because Honor Council only makes recommendations, not mandatory demands.

Harry said he would appreciate getting any grade above a 0 for his paper. A juror said that if he was still unhappy with the resolutions after the trial process, he could then appeal the resolutions to the President of the College. This was an option in addition to the grade appeal Harry could make to the Provost.

When Harry left, the jury talked about a part of the faculty handbook saying professors should treat accidental and intentional plagiarism the same way. A juror also felt that Professor Lestrange had been generous with the options she provided for Harry. The jury talked a bit more about the writing center and time limits for the option of writing an additional essay.

Final Resolutions:

The jury recommends that [Harry] has the option of writing a new paper on one of the other prompt topics for up to half credit before the end of [the following semester]. If [Harry] chooses not to write a new paper, his grade will remain as a 0. (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

The jury recommends that [Harry] go to the writing center at least two times before the end of [the following semester] for education on proper citation and paraphrasing, as well as identifying plagiarism. (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Resolutions as a whole (8 consent, 2 stand outside in absentia)

Discussion Questions:

1. What role should students’ deans have in the mediation process between students and a professor?

2. Do you think Honor Council should have paid more attention to the fact that Professor Lestrange said she felt uncomfortable with Harry approaching her about grades after class? How could they have addressed this harm?

3. How do you think Honor Council should have approached restoration in this case?

4. How can there be improved education at Haverford about the (ir)relevance of intention in plagiarism?

5. What could Honor Council have done to provide Harry with education on plagiarism in addition to sending him to the writing center?