THE ILLUSTRATED GUIDE TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

"Episode 5"

by

DMP
Sanford, Jared and Allison are sitting in the living room. Sanford is eating a sandwich while watching Jared and Allison play Jenga. It’s Jared’s turn and he’s carefully pulling a block from the tower. Allison watches in anticipation – if he gets this block he may win. Suddenly the sound of the front door startles Jared. The table shakes and the tower comes crashing down. Nikki has just come home.

NIKKI
Anyone home?

Jared sits, staring at the fallen blocks. Thanks to Nikki, Allison wins again. Sanford tries to laugh but chokes a little on his mouth-full.

JARED
Wait... wait a minute that’s not fair.

NIKKI
Hello? ...Jared

ALLISON
Yeah Nikki, we’re here – in the living room.

Jared accepts his loss as Nikki enters the room. Sanford swallows his last bite.

SANFORD
Hey Nikki, you just missed the funniest thing...

ALLISON
Yeah, I just beat Jared at Jenga for the 4th time tonight!

Jared jokingly turns to Nikki.

JARED
Yeah, I have you to thank for that...

NIKKI
What? What are you talking
about? Jared I’m really not in the mood.

JARED
Uh-oh...

ALLISON
Jared, be quiet! What’s the matter Nikki?

NIKKI
Oh it’s nothing… I don’t want to talk about it...

SANFORD
Aww, are you sure?

JARED
Yeah, I sure hope there’s a good reason you stormed in like that...

ALLISON
Jared!

JARED
Sorry, sorry! Really, I was just kidding. Are you sure we can’t help with anything?

NIKKI
Oh guys… I’m… I’m just having trouble with my lab partners...

Nikki pauses for a moment.

NIKKI
I just don’t know what to tell them.

SANFORD
About what? What do you mean?

NIKKI
It’s kind of hard to explain… It’s just that we have so much work right now and one
my lab partners has this idea that could help ease our workload.

JARED
What’s wrong with that? You have been working really hard lately…

NIKKI
Well it’s not that simple Jared. This is what I mean… it’s hard to explain.

SANFORD
No, no, it’s okay Nikki – I get ya.

NIKKI
See, its not that I don’t want to lighten my workload; it’s the way they’re suggesting we do it.

ALLISON
Wait a minute... I think I know what you’re getting at. They aren’t trying to get a different person to write the lab each week, and then the rest just copy from each other are they?

NIKKI
Well... kind of.

SANFORD
Well is it, or isn’t it?

Nikki looks a little embarrassed, but continues to justify her concerns.

NIKKI
Auuuh, I guess... yeah that’s pretty much it. But it’s mostly just one of them... and he’s doing a really good job of convincing the others. And maybe he has a point... we would all be
doing the same report... should we all write our own version of it?

Jared briefly interrupts Nikki.

JARED
Yeah? I’m still not seeing the down-side to this? You’d still be doing the lab as a group, right?

NIKKI
-- But we would be copying each others’ reports...

JARED
Hmm. But you just said they’d be the same? Besides, it sounds like you’re not getting along too well with the group... If they can’t manage their time well enough why should you have to work with them?

Sanford is surprised with Jared’s ignorance.

SANFORD
Whoa man, remind me not to work with you on any projects...

Jared sports an innocent smile.

ALLISON
Hey! Jared’s knows his stuff - we’ve been working together for a while now...

SANFORD
Fine. I take it back. -for now!

But seriously Nikki, don’t think this’d be a one-time deal...

NIKKI
I know, I know... But I’m not the one that needs a lesson in academic integrity...
SANFORD
-Well then you really don’t have a problem, do you?

Allison notices the escalating argument and interrupts with her sentiments.

ALLISON
Easy guys!
Nikki, I understand where you’re coming from. And Sanford, you’re right; these things have a way of perpetuating themselves if you don’t deal with them right away.

Allison pauses for a moment.

ALLISON
Yunno, I dealt with a similar situation in my program last year.

JARED
You did?

Allison jokingly remarks,

ALLISON
Yes Jared – there was life before you...

Nikki is eager to hear Allison’s story.

NIKKI
What happened? What did you do?

ALLISON
Well, it didn’t start the same... but we were all really busy and this one girl kept missing our group meetings. But then one day She finally shows up with a finished copy of our report...

NIKKI
Hmm... that’s suspicious?
ALLISON
Yeah, that’s right.
Turns out this was a report from a previous year.
She claimed it got an A.

SANFORD
Whoa… serious stuff.

ALLISON
Tell me about it...
Anyway, the group didn’t seem too opposed to the idea… we were all really stressed – I think it was exam time or something.

SANFORD
Well, that really isn’t an excuse…

NIKKI
Yeah, I mean, we all have to manage our time… and there are tons of Ryerson resources that can help. But go on… what happened?

ALLISON
Well, I think I felt the same way you do now: a little uncomfortable… You know the right thing to do, but you’re not sure how to approach the situation…

Nikki feels a little relief through Allison’s experience – she relaxes a little more.

NIKKI
That pretty much covers it…

JARED
But what did you do…

ALLISON
Actually nothing...

SANFORD
What? You went along with it...

ALLISON
No, no! Of course not! Fortunately another group was caught doing the same thing just as I was going to confront our group.

JARED
(half laughing)
... fortunately for you... not for them.

ALLISON
Well... yeah...
Anyway, it turned out that not only did the group get a zero, but they also had a disciplinary notice added to their transcript.

JARED
Wow... that IS serious.

NIKKI
Yeah, try applying to grad school with that on your transcript!

Jared jokingly responds,

JARED
Oh I got it... but do you?

Not amused, Nikki responds to Jared,

NIKKI
Obviously! But I still have a group to convince...

SANFORD
Well... the punishment shouldn’t be the only reason not to try something like that... I actually want to get something
out of my program... even when I’m maxed out. I mean, to me, I don’t see it like I’d be saving time, or doing a quarter of the work; I see it as I’d be missing out on three quarters of the education... or only getting 25% of the stuff I need to know for the final exam.

JARED
Good call Sanford...
Makes sense to me; school isn’t just about the grades – it’s about cramming your head with knowledge and useful skills for the future!

SANFORD
... Plus, I’m sure there’s another person in your group who feels the same as you.

ALLISON
Hey, yeah! That reminds me... after that other group got caught this guy in my group mentioned how relieved he was that he didn’t have to go along with that scam in our group.

SANFORD
Yeah, see what I mean?
Don’t stress it Nikki. Just be honest about your feelings. Everyone is responsible for their own actions, even when working in groups...

NIKKI
You’re right, that makes a lot of sense. Thanks guys. I’m glad we talked about this. I know what I have to do.

SANFORD
Hey no problem! At the very least, I’m sure they’re willing to hear you out - after all, I’m sure your
program has just as much, if not more, academic integrity as mine does.

ALLISON
Hey, since that incident, the students in our program have really turned things around - we pride ourselves on having the most academic integrity.

JARED
That’s only because the business program could populate a city block...

NIKKI
Speaking of blocks...

Nikki sits down next to Jared, in front of the Jenga game.

NIKKI
... how many business students would it take get the tower this tall...

ALLISON
Hey, we don’t build the towers... How many of you engineering kids would it take?

NIKKI
Well if you accept my challenge, we can find out!

Jared laughs.

SANFORD
Hey, this is getting good! Jared, you might want to give them some room...

ALLISON
Oh no, we’re all in this together.

JARED
Alright then, lets do this!