

87th Meeting of the Society for American Archaeology

CASE STUDIES IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ETHICS

*for the Seventeenth Annual Intercollegiate
Ethics Bowl Competition
March 31, 2022*



PREPARED BY

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SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

THURSDAY, MARCH 31



FIRST ROUND

7:45-9:00 AM

First Round A

Conference Room 4E

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign vs. Northern Illinois University

First Round B

Conference Room 4F

University of Tennessee vs. Binghamton University

9:15-10:30 AM

First Round C

Conference Room 4E

Indiana University of Pennsylvania vs. Ball State University



SEMI-FINAL (10:45 AM-12:00 PM)

Semi-Final A

Conference Room 4E

Winner of First Round A vs. Winner of First Round B

Semi-Final B

Conference Room 4F

Winner of First Round C vs. North Carolina State University



FINAL (1:00-3:00 PM)

Waldorf Room

Winner of Semi-Final A vs. Winner of Semi-Final B

CASE 1



Amos Tim is an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at LeMay University. Entering into his fourth year on the tenure track, Amos is hyper-aware of the need to be well-liked and supported by his colleagues. In particular, Amos wants to establish a positive rapport and collaborative relationship with Prof. Byron Samuelson, the ranking member of the department.

Byron, a full professor and the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUGS), is a well-known scholar with an extensive following on social media, due largely in part to his science communication skills and expert understanding of meme culture. In contrast with his colleagues, Byron has made concerted efforts to mentor undergraduates in his role as DUGS, ensuring that they obtained coveted research opportunities and spots in top-tier graduate programs through his networks. A popular professor, Byron has been highly effective in recruiting undergraduate students, increasing the number of anthropology majors and minors by 200% during his five-year tenure as DUGS—a feat that has not gone unnoticed by administrators, including the president and provost.

Byron is also the Principal Investigator of an exciting and highly visible research project that will also involve Amos, departmental colleague Janice Short, and several anthropology students. Troubled by some of the plans at the first organizational meeting, Amos decides to offer Byron a friendly word of caution, saying, “Byron, I’m not entirely comfortable with working on a paper involving artifacts from the 1995 LeMay University survey. I’m not trying to step on any toes, but those artifacts are from the Logan Zone which you know is culturally disputed between three Indigenous groups. The memorandum of understanding from that survey, signed by all involved parties including LeMay University, specifies that the express consent from all three Indigenous groups needs to be obtained before any images or data are publicly disseminated.”

Clearly annoyed by his colleague over 20 years his junior, Byron responds, “Yes, I am well-aware. In fact, you probably know that I was instrumental in the signing of the agreement which doesn’t have the binding power of a contract anyway. Honestly, I don’t personally see any need to consult with those groups. I’m not performing destructive analyses or touching anything from a burial with a ten-foot pole. Any dialogue will simply slow down science. Besides, my previous consultations have involved hang-ups on silly cultural and religious beliefs that can’t be tested or verified. I understand that we are expected to be culturally sensitive, but it really has gone too far in recent years. We are either scientists or we aren’t. Anyways, you’ll have to excuse me. I’ve got to run to a meeting.”

Surprised and dismayed by Byron’s response, Amos finds himself conflicted on multiple fronts. Aware of the close and long-standing relationship between Byron, departmental colleagues, and administrators, Amos is hesitant to complain, especially about a strong recruiter for LeMay University amidst a historic drop in enrollment. Moreover, Amos is about to get his fourth-year review and does not want to find himself in a precarious position in the department. With these considerations in mind, Amos is unsure how to proceed in handling the MOU and what he perceives of as a violation of both the agreement and disciplinary ethics.

CASE 2



Will Darnell, a second-year Ph.D. student at Edgewood University, has finally settled on a potential dissertation research topic after months of background reading and discussions with his advisor Dr. George Thompson. Will has always wanted to conduct collections-based research tracking stylistic continuity and change over time in Tapavi lithics and ceramics. Fortunately, due to Will's newfound knowledge of Tapavi collections housed at Jordan College, this project is now possible. The Jordan College collections are particularly valuable because Tapavi artifact types are rare in the Three Rivers region, and new fieldwork is unlikely to add anything to the knowledgebase due to significant site destruction through looting and land development.

The Charles S. Gallagher Antiquities Society, a defunct archaeology club, originally excavated these artifacts from several mid-Holocene Tapavi sites during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although club members were seemingly interested in the lives of ancient Native peoples including the Tapavi in the past, they lacked formal training and excavated without taking notes or systematically cataloging artifacts. In fact, written accounts indicate that members treated the excavations as opportunities to picnic and party rather than scientific expeditions. As such, the detail and quality of site documentation varies considerably.

Given his training in archaeological ethics, Will believes in good faith consultation and collaboration with Indigenous stakeholders. In this case, however, there are no clear cultural affiliations tying artifacts to contemporary Native communities. To further add to the confusion, some of the Tapavi assemblages were recovered from sites that definitely contained human remains. Given that the archaeological context of these artifacts cannot be established aside from which site they are from, Will wonders if it is truly ethical to examine these collections knowing that some of the artifacts may have been originally deposited as grave goods.

It is worth noting that these sites are now destroyed, and the people who collected the artifacts have long since passed. When Will brings up this potential snag in his plans with his advisor George Thompson, George replies, "C'mon Will, you're really overthinking things. Now granted, the circumstances surrounding how these artifacts were collected are unfortunate, I'll give you that—but the fact remains that those graves were disturbed. What's done is done. Nothing can change the past. Besides, do you really want to complicate everything and potentially derail your dissertation project? Don't forget, funding is tight around here and you have to finish in five years. There's really no time to waste!"

Feeling conflicted, Will wonders if some good could come from analyzing these materials knowing that they may (or may not) have been removed from mortuary contexts. After all, given the lack of provenience, there's no way to say for sure. Putting his head in his hands, Will sighs and racks his brain, unsure how he should move forward and who he can turn to for advice.

CASE 3



Alicia Daniels is a part of an archaeological survey crew conducting a corridor survey for a new expressway funded through the recent National Interstate Highway Act. The expressway will extend at least 30 miles over very rugged terrain. Because of the project's timeline (at least one year) and the inevitable disruption to daily life, many of the residents in the area are upset and very critical of the project. Some residents have even become confrontational when approached by construction crews and Ministry of Transportation (MOT) personnel during the course of their work.

As a freshly minted Certified Archaeology Professional (CAP) taking on her first big supervisory role on the MOT team, Alicia brings new skills and areas of expertise to the job. Her drone and geospatial tech skills are particularly welcome and enable the team to survey and map the corridor at an unprecedented rate. Overall, Alicia is feeling very confident about the project and anticipates comfortably meeting the timeline for survey completion. Everything seems to be going swimmingly until the team encounters a hitch—the owner of the next property lined up to be surveyed does not want the “government” on his land.

Alicia is reasonably confident that the small Area of Potential Effect (APE) running through the property will mostly be written-off because of steep slopes, exposed bedrock, and standing water. In other words, the shovel crew may not have to test that parcel because of the survey protocol. To make that determination, she just needs to see the parcel for herself and confirm her suspicions. Worried about her safety and the risk of a confrontation with the unhappy landowner, Elizabeth Calzado, one of the crew members, suggests that Alicia send the drone over to capture aerial video and imagery instead of walking the property herself.

The airspace in which Alicia needs to fly is fully visible from her current position. Furthermore, there are no identifiable airspace or weather concerns, so there are no National Aviation and Aerospace Administration (NAAA) issues with flying over the APE. Alicia also has the MOT right-of-way to carry out her work as needed. Nevertheless, Alicia wonders if it is ethical to collect data over the property without telling the residents that she will be flying. The house, swimming pool, and anyone outside on the property will be captured in the hi-resolution video and imagery.

Alicia wonders if she and her crew should just go ahead and fly the mission and avoid the potential confrontation altogether. After all, the residents might not even be home to notice the drone flying overhead, especially if she flies during work hours. "On the other hand..." she thinks to herself, "perhaps the principle of informed consent applies here? I know many people would be very unhappy with a drone recording them in areas where privacy is generally expected." Alicia does not want to potentially infringe on anyone's privacy, but she also does not want an earful from a potentially irate property owner who is already upset with the project. Moreover, she's not even entirely sure that the video and imagery constitute an acceptable proxy for putting boots on the ground to assess the APE.

CASE 4



June Carter was recently hired as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Anthropology at Ka'eo Nani University. Shortly after beginning her new position, June learned that the department houses and curates a small number of legacy archaeology collections that were excavated by a senior archaeologist in the department, Nancy Bridges. One day, while striking up a conversation by the copy machine in the main office, June asked Nancy about the collections and whether they are subject to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA). Clearly annoyed, Nancy abruptly answers, "Of course not!" before grabbing her mail and leaving the office.

June later becomes aware through the grapevine that the collections include Native ancestral remains which were never reported to National NAGPRA as required by law. Moreover, the collections were amassed from excavations conducted as part of Nancy Bridges' contract work. As such, Ka'eo Nani University does not legally control the collections that they are curating with their resources. To make matters even worse, most of the paperwork associated with the collection is nowhere to be found.

After learning about the uncomfortable situation and finding that no faculty member in the department seems inclined to talk about it— June decides that it is an ethical imperative to document and report the collections and takes it upon herself to do so. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Nancy proves to be extremely uncooperative when June approaches her for more information, seeing June as a potential threat stirring up unnecessary trouble. Nancy refuses to provide June with any remaining documentation or paperwork related to the collection—including site information, excavation notes, and artifact logs—claiming that they are her intellectual property. "Don't forget, June," she adds, "your position in the department is already precarious. Don't go digging around where you're not wanted. That never ends well."

June soon finds out that the legal controller, the U.S. Forest Service, will not accept the collections without documentation that everything which was initially loaned is being transferred. As June begins to investigate the collections, the extreme difficulty of successfully identifying and documenting the collection without access to Nancy's excavation and curation data becomes increasingly apparent. June also knows that Nancy is beloved and respected by the other faculty in the department and is beginning to feel that she might be quickly derailing her chances at tenure in her first year of employment at Ka'eo Nani University.

When June approaches department chair, Roger Bridges about the issue, she is met with extreme indifference. "Listen, June, I don't really want to touch this 'hot potato' of an issue. Besides, Nancy has been faculty here for so long, you know, and it would be such a shame for her to go out this way. And you know with today's cancel culture, this kind of stuff—if it gets out—will just paint us in a bad light. Just wait for her to retire and we can take care of things properly afterwards."

June is very frustrated and dejected and is not sure how to move forward. She remembers recently seeing another university's NAGPRA case in the media, and that the repatriation effort received lots of support after the issue was made public. She wonders if exposing the problem via the press would make a bigger difference than going to the administration.

CASE 5



Kayla Lukich is given the highly coveted opportunity to serve as a guest curator at the Mile High Museum of Art. She was invited by museum personnel to design an exhibit reinstallation for one of the museum's most captivating and popular collections—a selection of artifacts from the elaborate royal tombs of the Carapan Empire. The collection is comprised of several hundred intricately crafted objects made of gold, silver, textiles, and other fine materials. Most of the accessions are funerary offerings from several archaeological sites located in the modern-day country of Topaguay.

Excited to dive into work on day one of her curatorship, Kayla starts things off by reviewing information about the collection's history and acquisition. As she skims the pages, she sees a note in the documents stating that the artifacts in the collection were originally looted from Topaguay in the early 20th century before being sold to a series of collectors—the most recent of which donated the priceless items to the museum. Concerned about the artifacts' dubious past, she approaches the permanent curator, Scott Brooks, with her concerns about the ethics of exhibiting looted material. Scott laughs and replies, "Relax, Kayla! Our team has spent a lot of time working with several reputable Topaguayan researchers on the exhibit's interpretation. They're all very supportive of the project, so while your concerns are duly noted, they're completely unfounded!"

Kayla has worked in Topaguay for years and knows that the Ministry of Culture has, in recent years, been very active in seeking the repatriation of looted antiquities. When she asks Scott whether the museum has ever contacted Topaguayan officials about the Carapan artifacts, Scott rolls his eyes and says, "The government in Topaguay is unstable, and they don't have the facilities or resources to take the collection back and curate it properly. The project has broad support from Topaguayan researchers anyway. Also, trying to get a response back from the government would inevitably put the project on hold. And... you know as well as I that reaching out to the Ministry of Culture would waste our precious time and money because we would never get a response. Bureaucracy moves at a snail's pace there!"

Kayla acknowledges that Scott is right about one thing—initiating consultation with Topaguay would put the project on hold indefinitely. The museum has already received several hundred thousand dollars in grant funding for the reinstallation, and the museum's board of directors is eagerly awaiting the reopening. Furthermore, this may be Kayla's only guest curation opportunity, especially if she causes a fuss. For her career's sake, she doesn't want to ruin her relationship with the museum.

Nevertheless, Kayla also knows that there is a sizeable population of Udrana people—the descendants of the ancient Carapans—in Fort St. Margaret, the town where the museum is located; several of them, in fact, frequent the museum. She is concerned what might happen if the museum takes no action regarding the collection, and the Udrana locals find out that the materials are looted from Topaguay. She does not want to upset the museum's patrons but she recognizes at the same time that this might be a sensitive and potentially hurtful issue for the Udrana.

CASE 6



David Allerton has spent the last few years working as the Tribal Archaeologist for the Kaya Tribe. Through this job, he has become very familiar with the community's cultural and religious beliefs as well as the ins and outs of the Kaya governmental system. Much of his time involved working with the Tribal Council on the approval or denial of requests for proposed archaeological projects on the Tribe's land.

Recently, David has decided to gain more academic training by enrolling in a Ph.D. program at Bayshore University, a nearby institution. His plan is to work closely with Tribal members to develop and execute a dissertation project that will directly benefit the Tribe. At his first meeting with Prof. Patricia LaGrange, his advisor, he presents some general thoughts about his research directions. David is relieved to learn that his advisor is not only supportive about his collaborative ideas, but she is also enthusiastic about the prospect of guiding David through the process of designing community-based participatory research under the umbrella of her own project.

With Matthew LaGrange's help and input from the Tribal Council, David develops a dissertation prospectus in his third year that involves the use of ancient DNA analysis of Kaya ancestral remains. The Ancestors were repatriated to the Kaya Tribe two years prior and are being curated at Bayshore University. Doing his due diligence, David contacts the Tribal Research Review Board and receives permission to carry out the project. The Tribal Council and several Tribal citizens that David has spoken with are all enthusiastic about the work and its potential contributions.

After three years of intensive and exhaustive research, David's project nears completion. When he starts writing up the results, he realizes that he neglected to include any specific language about data curation or data access in his memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Tribe. He approaches Patricia for her thoughts on how to move forward. She says, "Well, open access really is the standard these days. Besides, the Federal Academy of Sciences funded this project through the Doctoral Research Grant, and they require that data be made publicly available. We are ethically obligated to share it."

David immediately contacts the Kaya Tribe to let them know about the situation and oversight. A few days later, the Tribal Council responds by saying that they are extremely upset and disturbed—their Ancestors' genetic data should be considered sensitive information that is never shared without the Tribe's consent. Since the Kaya legally control the Ancestors, David feels that they probably control the DNA samples as well and should have the right to decide what happens to the genetic information.

David is uncomfortable with the conflict between his advisor's perspective and the Tribe's wishes. If he publishes the data, he will certainly harm and even lose his relationship with his Tribal partners; on the other hand, if he upsets Patricia, he is afraid he will experience retaliation and be removed from the project and/or from his advisor altogether. He doesn't want the potential benefits of this project to be lost to the Kaya Tribe if Patricia reacts badly.

CASE 7



Dara Nguyen, a geographer by training and the project manager for the Archaeological Research Center of Southeastern Asia, has been assigned by the firm's principal investigator Timothy Pham to manage a large contract with the Dorado Group, a multinational company that will develop the northern end of Keroppi Island as part of a commercial expansion program. To prepare for the survey portion of the work, Dara initiates a site record search within the development zone which only yields six identified sites. Despite being surprised by the small number, she figures that other sites and features will be located during the upcoming pedestrian survey, especially given that the team will be working on areas that have not been previously investigated.

Upon arriving on Keroppi Island with Timothy and a crew of field techs for a three-week survey, the group settles in and systematically traverses through the hilly and lush region. After confirming and recording the six previously-identified sites, the survey crew fails to find any additional sites. On the final day of survey, as the crew packs up gear and begins heading back to the base camp, a young man from the nearby community of Maru approaches Dara saying, "I couldn't help but notice that you foreigners are walking throughout this area. What are you doing here?"

Dara explains that the team is on Keroppi Island to assess the impacts of development on the archaeological record. Perturbed by the group's presence, Naboda Jaru, the young man, asks Dara what she has learned through her research. "Well, radiocarbon dates from sites here tell us that people occupied this area as far back as 500 years ago. We also know that past people lived in small settlements—that is, we know of six settlements so far" answered Dara. "Six areas, that's all!?" exclaims Naboda. "My ancestors lived throughout this entire area. I saw you and your team walk over 10 settlements, including two sacred areas yesterday. You archaeologists only know things from books, but we know the spirits and ancestors of this place."

Feeling mortified, Dara listens as Naboda explains that Keroppi Island history is passed down through oral tradition. Dara attempts to salvage the reputation of the crew by stating that the team is there to ensure that important cultural heritage is not destroyed by commercial development.

Growing even more irate, Naboda asks, "What do you mean development? That hill and the adjacent land are where our ancestors' spirits reside!" Perturbed by the interaction, Dara heads back to the base camp to relay the new information to Timothy, telling him that the local community has no knowledge of the project and the potential harm it presents to their sacred places. She asks Timothy, "Shouldn't we have done some consultation with the community?"

"Dara," Timothy replies, "leave the anthropology to me. You're basically here to manage the crew and make maps. Trust me, if you didn't find new sites then they are likely not there. Besides, we are on a tight deadline with the Dorado Group and they are our biggest client in seven years. We can't waste any more time on this phase. So, let's just write up the report and submit our findings, okay?"

Understanding the pressure of working with a high-profile client and worrying that she could potentially hurt her standing with the firm, Dara is not sure what her next move should be.

CASE 8



After successfully defending her dissertation prospectus, Jennifer McEnaney, a fifth-year Ph.D. student at Summit University, is organizing her data collection visits to an archaeological repository at Eastern State University (ESU), her alma mater. Before leaving ESU, Jennifer's M.A. advisor, Dr. William Garrett, assured her that she could analyze ESU's bioarchaeology collections as part of her dissertation research.

To request access, Jennifer sends Dr. Garrett a cordial email. After waiting a week without a response, Jennifer sends a follow-up message. After two more weeks without hearing from Dr. Garrett, Jennifer grows increasingly anxious. Confused by Dr. Garrett's uncharacteristic lack of responsiveness, Jennifer expresses her concerns to her dissertation advisor, Dr. Hannah Masterson.

After listening to Jennifer's concern, Dr. Masterson simply tells her, "I don't know what to say. He's probably really busy. Perhaps you can try getting a hold of him by phone?" Knowing that Dr. Garrett never answers his office phone and not having his cell phone number, Jennifer decides to pay him a visit in person. ESU, after all, is located in her hometown; since she is already planning on visiting family next month, Jennifer decides to try catching Dr. Garrett in his office.

Upon arriving at ESU, Jennifer finds Dr. Garrett in his office. Since he is in the midst of talking with his sole advisee, Jennifer waits down the hall for the meeting to conclude. Seeing his graduate student leave, Jennifer knocks on Dr. Garrett's office door. After apologizing for the drop-in visit, Jennifer proceeds to politely ask Dr. Garrett if he received her prior emails regarding her dissertation research and the ESU bioarchaeology collections. Acknowledging receipt, Dr. Garrett tells Jennifer, "I understand you want to use our collections for your dissertation, but you're going to have to wait until my current M.A. student finishes his thesis work on a portion of the material."

Knowing that Dr. Garrett's current M.A. student is only in his first semester and has no intention of completing the program within ESU's conventional two-year time frame, Jennifer quickly realizes that she won't have access to the collections for at least another two years. She replies, "But, you told me previously that I would be able use those collections for my dissertation research, and I defended my dissertation prospectus a few weeks ago. I have a data collection plan in place and would only need to access the collections for about a three-month period."

Irritated by her insistence, Dr. Garrett retorts, "That's nice, but you have to understand that these are my human remains and my student gets priority." Bewildered by Dr. Garrett's response and casual disregard for her research plan, Jennifer returns to Summit University the following week and explains the response she received to Dr. Masterson.

"That sounds odd, but you need to figure out what you're going to do," Dr. Masterson says, coming across as slightly annoyed and unsympathetic to her student's plight. "And, don't forget, the clock is ticking"—a reference to the firm six-year program time limit.

Stressed by the prospect of timing out, Dr. Masterson's lack of willingness to help, and Dr. Garrett's stonewalling, Jennifer is not sure where to turn next.

CASE 9



Edward Edu, a junior anthropology major at Buchanan College, is eager to participate in his first archaeological fieldwork experience by enrolling in a large international field school project run by Buchanan College. Along with excitement, Edward feels nervous about the upcoming summer. Despite his outgoing nature and closeness with several of the college's anthropology faculty, Edward has yet to take a class with Dr. Sheryl Mathews, the field school's principal investigator.

Dr. Mathews, a distinguished and prolific scholar in the Department of Anthropology, is an immensely popular professor who can also come across as intimidating to both colleagues and students alike. Daunted by the prospect of a six-week field season with such an eminent archaeologist, Edward reaches out to friends who have taken classes with Dr. Mathews for insights into her personality and teaching style. His anthropology peers maintain that Sheryl is only intense because she expects a lot out of her students. They insist that she can also be laid back and likes to help students succeed.

Once the spring semester ends, Edward leaves with a dozen other Buchanan College undergrads for their long-awaited field school. After arriving at the field camp's living quarters, all project staff and participants attend an orientation meeting that includes personnel from various countries. Edward's worries quickly subside when he finds himself gelling with the other students and project staff.

Halfway through the season, Edward and the other students are notified that the work schedule is changing from Monday-Friday to Wednesday-Sunday. Noticing Edward's absence from the site on the following Saturday, Dr. Mathews asks Max Jones, the field supervisor, if he's okay.

Upon learning that Edward abstains from work on Saturday for religious reasons and incensed by what she sees as a blatant disregard for field school rules, Dr. Mathews privately approaches Edward and demands to know why he didn't go to the site. After hearing his explanation, Dr. Mathews responds, "I've never even heard of that! Seriously? Look, I get that everyone has beliefs, but this is an expensive field program. We can't just have people staying back unless they are sick or injured. I'm going to need you to be out there each Saturday, okay?" After Edward gently protests by insisting on his obligation to follow tradition, she retorts, "Fine, stay here at camp on Saturdays. I don't care!"

Despite his unease, Edward continues to work the other four work days with the same enthusiasm and intensity he had at the beginning of the season. Intermittently throughout the remainder of the season, however, Dr. Mathews—as well as staff members who are encouraged by her behavior—taunt him in both subtle and haranguing ways about his religious beliefs. Hurt by the unwanted verbal assaults, Edward appeals to Max for sympathy. Max responds, "Hey, that's the way it is in archaeology. You just have to understand that Dr. Mathews doesn't care for that mumbo jumbo."

Disheartened by his treatment and worried about Dr. Mathews' ability to derail his desired career path, Edward wonders if he should just pack up and return home.

CASE 10



Kayla Moore, a senior undergraduate in anthropology at Middle State University, is planning to attend a Ph.D. program after graduation. Despite her strong academic and service record, Kayla is anxious about getting accepted to graduate school. Knowing that potential advisors are attending the upcoming Association of Archaeological Researchers conference in Brighton City, she convinces several friends to carpool and share a room in the student hotel.

Excited to experience her first national conference, Kayla's senses are overloaded when she steps into the bustling conference venue. Kayla decides that the best course of action is to search through the program for the sessions involving potential advisors. During one session, Kayla receives an email notification on her phone from Highwater University, her top choice. Excited and terrified at the same time, she opens the attached document which reads "Thank you for your interest in our archaeology Ph.D. program. We regret to inform you...." Not too long after, another email arrives in her inbox with unfortunate news. Devastated by both rejection letters, Kayla panics as she realizes that she is waiting to hear back from only one more program.

On the final day of the conference, Kayla sits in on a presentation by Dr. Caroline Greer of Coastal State University, the school she is desperately pinning her hopes and dreams on. Following the end of the session, Kayla wades through exiting attendees to introduce herself to Dr. Greer. "Excuse me, Dr. Greer," she says, "Hi, I'm Kayla Moore. I enjoyed your paper. In fact, I recently applied to work with you this Fall and would like to talk with about my interests and..."

"Oh, hi—thank you. That's right!" Dr. Greer interjects. "I do recall seeing your name in the application pool. You never reached out to me though. In fact, I have to run to a meeting now but would you like to meet later today to talk at say 5:00 PM?" "Uh, yeah, yeah... 5:00 PM sounds great!" replies Kayla. Dr. Greer smiles and says, "Okay, great. We can meet in hotel lobby then."

During their meeting, after listening to Kayla describe her academic and career interests, Dr. Greer expresses great interest in Kayla as a potential advisee, even going as far as to say "Your application is really competitive and I think you're a shoo-in." Pivoting, she says "Hold on, I'm going to order a drink. What would like?," passing the alcoholic beverage menu to Kayla.

Kayla politely declines. Flummoxed, Dr. Greer says "Are you a teetotaler or something?" Before giving Kayla the opportunity to speak, she says in a matter-of-fact manner, "Listen, you need to know that there is a certain culture among my students and I'm not sure if you'd fit in."

Dr. Greer's cell phone begins to ring and she abruptly ends the meeting to answer the call. Two weeks later, Kayla receives a letter from Coastal State University—her application was rejected.

Despondent and confused, Kayla can't help but feel that she was denied admission on the basis of her abstention from drinking culture. Knowing she is a competitive and qualified, Kayla is not sure what steps to take regarding her rejections and wonders if she's even cut out to be an archaeologist.