

Concerns from the Academic Record of Mr. Tango Tek

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Concerns from the Academic Record of Mr. Tango Tek

by [Sixteenthdays](#)

Summary

[GRIAN]

It looks like this next statement wasn't originally given as an interview with us, but instead found its way to the Institute attached to a bundle of blueprints deemed anomalous. The blueprints, as best as I can tell, are down in Artifact Storage now, but the attached letter got sent to us for archival.

It's fairly long, and appears to have been written in 2010 by an unnamed professor of architectural design at an unspecified university- probably in America, judging by the spellings- regarding concerns about a student named Tango Tek.

Notes

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Statement:



[Click]

[GRIAN]

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[GRIAN (STATEMENT)]

Dean—

I know this is abnormal, but my own experiences as well as others that have been shared with me have brought my concerns to the point that I feel compelled to break protocol and reach out to you directly, for the sake of the safety of our students, which I know we both value above all else.

Specifically, this is regarding the submitted projects of Tango Tek, who I know is known among the faculty as an exemplary student, if somewhat eccentric. To be clear, much of my experience with Mr. Tek in my class this past year has indeed been positive. He's clearly deeply passionate about the fields of engineering and design and completed all assignments and tests in a timely manner. However, it's about the contents of those assignments that I have... concerns.

As you may recall, my upper-level design course, in which Mr. Tek has been a student for the past semester, functions on a project-focused basis. Students design a series of building proposals over the course of several weeks and several stages of peer and professional review, with the goal of developing their own artistic eye and reaching a balance between realistic engineering and visual innovation.

Now, I am a firm believer in creative freedom, and I always encourage my students to disregard convention and try out new and unusual ideas. I believe this is how the best new architects of each generation are shaped. However, I believe Mr. Tek's concepts move far past 'unconventional' into areas I can only describe as bizarre, and dangerous.

I know that is a hefty claim to make, and a difficult one to justify, but I will do my best.

My attention was first drawn when a student, Mr. Tek's assigned partner for the second round of peer review for our first class project, came to me with her own concerns. His draft designs were for a library. She told me the blueprints made her feel dizzy to look at; as such she hadn't been able to complete her review of the designs and was worried about losing marks. I took the plans to look them over myself, and that night I sat down to review them.

I hope you trust I'm not one inclined to dramatics. I've been employed at this university for nearly three decades now, and have always been known to be professional. So I pray you will believe me when I say: *those blueprints were too big for the paper they were printed on.*

I don't know how else to explain it. I looked down at the paper and it seemed to fall into three dimensions, or more- like the diagrammed walls of the library were gateways to some endless space, expanding far behind the confines of the desk they rested on. I've never experienced vertigo before, but I felt it then. I actually braced my hands against the corners of my desk, just because some hysterical corner of my brain feared I might pitch forward in my dizziness and simply keep falling forever.

As soon as I felt I could do so safely, I rolled the blueprints up again. I felt better as soon as my eyes were off them. I actually had an impulse to burn them- they were that *wrong*. Never in my career, either as a practicing architect or a professor, had I ever seen a plan I felt so strongly should never be built. When I tried to picture how it would look like as a standing building, all I could see were empty walls that never ended.

I arranged for Mr. Tek to meet me during my office hours. He really is a remarkably bright young

man. When I told him I had concerns regarding his design, he seemed confused at first, but willing to listen. I assumed he had just made some mathematical error which had thrown the scale of his blueprints out of order and somehow produced the disorienting effect. I explained my concerns as well as I could, and although he still seemed rather confused, he agreed to redo them.

His final submission was perfectly normal- and quite elegantly designed, at that- so I figured that the initial design had indeed just suffered from some strange perspective error and that would be the end of it.

As you may have already guessed from the length of this letter, though, it wasn't.

The second problem arose with our fall mid-semester project, which involved design of a specific type of building- in this case, an apartment building- on a limited timeframe. It was only a small percentage of the students' grades, but I wanted to see how they performed when working on a deadline and with little time for advance research: what they prioritized, how much they were able to do from memory, and so forth.

It's always a difficult assignment, and only a few students finished entirely within the time limit. Mr. Tek was one of them, and I was quite impressed- it's really no small feat. However, when I checked his blueprints, I was... unnerved.

It wasn't... the *same* disorienting effect as the first project, but something about it *bothered* my eyes. The design itself was disconcertingly asymmetrical and lopsided, but despite being made entirely of strange, off-kilter shapes, all the math and measurements seemed done perfectly. I had no idea how he'd done it. More disturbingly, though, when I looked at them out of the corner of my eye, the lines almost looked like they were *moving*, swaying back and forth, shifting colors at the edges like an old television set.

I don't know if it was some quality of the ink and paper he printed them on or, somehow, of the diagrams themselves, but I suspect the latter. Those buildings...

I gave him high marks; technically, he had completed the assignment with flying colors, even... unconventionally. But I worried.

And I was right to worry.

It all came to a head with our final project. Students had more or less complete free reign and several weeks to pitch proposals to me, get approval, and then develop them into full designs. These were intended to be the centerpieces of their portfolios for any internships they intended to apply to in the coming summer. I'll admit I was... a bit nervous when Mr. Tek came to my office for his proposal meeting, but I was also... honestly very interested to see what he'd come up with.

To be clear- despite everything, despite the fact that I'm writing this letter now, he's one of the best and brightest students I've ever had, and it pains me to recommend any action against him, but I genuinely feel that to allow whatever is happening here to continue unchecked would be legitimately dangerous.

His final project proposal was, quite unsurprisingly, unconventional. It took the form of an escape-room style building- he described it to me as something to be placed in an amusement park or some other sort of entertainment complex. Unusual, surely, but there was nothing wrong with it on its face, so I gave him my approval to proceed.

I will confess, I was apprehensive, but I was also terribly curious what he would end up creating, with his levels of skill and creativity. I was sure it would be memorable. And it certainly was that.

It... certainly was.

I left it to grade for last, even though it was one of the first of the final projects submitted. I felt distinctly nervous as I unfolded the blueprints.

At first, they seemed almost normal. The building structure was more or less how he'd described it in his proposal. My immediate impulse was honestly to be relieved at how normal everything looked, compared against his past projects. For a moment, it really did seem like the problems had been left behind us, and Mr. Tek had merely turned in an excellent piece of work.

Then... I noticed there was a room labeled as *kennels*.

I was confused; I had to take a closer look. I couldn't imagine any reason why this structure would need to house animals; it was mostly an escape-style maze with a few interesting structural flairs, like angling floors and strategically-placed ladders, to keep things interesting. No place for... dogs, or whatever sort of creature would be kept in kennels. I couldn't seem to take my eyes off it; I just kept leaning closer and closer to the paper, and thought I could just begin to make out a few small, sketchy shapes-

And then I was somewhere else.

It was dim, with cramped walls and low ceilings, passages zigzagging out in every direction. There was a faint sound of grinding stone, as though some ancient mechanism was moving somewhere below me. There was straw scattered across the floor, and it smelled... dank, like a barn.

Somewhere in the distance, something... roared. Or bellowed. I don't know how to describe it. It was no animal I'd ever heard before, but it was definitely an animal. A very, very large animal.

I started running.

I wasn't thinking. It was something deeper than that; something more primal, more terrified, more absolutely certain I could not get caught by whatever hungry *thing* was wandering through this warren. I could hear it behind me, heavy steps echoing off the crooked walls. It picked up speed as I did, drew closer every time I turned a corner. I never dared to look back over my shoulder to see exactly what it was. I was afraid that if I did, I would never get the image out of my head.

It drew closer and closer behind me until I could feel hot breath on the back of my neck, and then even closer than that, until I was sure I would be trampled beneath its hooves, and then-

Then I realized, or remembered, that I was back in my office, staring down at the blueprints. Of course I was back in my office. I'd never left. I was still on the edge of hyperventilating. I folded the blueprints up so fast they tore, and had to spend a very, very long time calming down.

I can't rationally explain what happened. I can't even prove that it was Mr. Tek's doing. And that is the reason why he's going to pass my class with flying colors- despite everything I've detailed here, I can't point to anything he's actually done wrong, academically or otherwise. By all rational evidence, Mr. Tek is a stellar student bound for a bright career in the field of architectural design.

Nonetheless, I feel I would be remiss if I did not express, as thoroughly as I could, my fears. I do not think Tango Tek should be allowed to pursue a career in architecture without intervention. If any of his buildings are constructed, nothing good will come of it. Of this I am certain. Given that the plans alone had the effects on me that they did... it is my formal recommendation that Mr. Tek's removal from the architecture course be at least considered, and an investigation into his work thus far be conducted.

I apologize. I know this isn't much tangible information to take such serious action on. I hope you trust that I would not send a message like this if I did not feel it was absolutely necessary. And I do feel it is absolutely necessary.

Those buildings cannot be built.

I thank you for your time.

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[GRIAN]

Well, this is interesting. Tango Tek is very much a real architect, and from what I can find, rather acclaimed, though a bit enigmatic. Not much information about him is publically available, but he does have a few famous buildings, including... a library here in London, funnily enough.

Apparently it's quite well known for the slightly transfixing effect of its walls. I do have to wonder if it might be a much later draft of the first project described in this statement, the one that induced vertigo.

Unfortunately, I wasn't able to find any contact information for him besides a business email which provided no response, and the fact that the original name attached to the letter has apparently been lost makes followup through any other avenue exceedingly difficult.

I did go down to Storage to have a look at the blueprints myself... or those of them that actually made it to us intact, at least. The apartment complex blueprints did have a distinctly... strange effect similar to what the professor discussed, particularly in the coloring of the lines, though I didn't experience any disorientation. Only a page of the library designs were left, and the escape room plans were missing entirely, so while it's impossible to verify past that point- I feel fairly comfortable taking our statement-giver at his word.

I do wonder about that library.

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Supplemental:

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[GRIAN]

So I decided to do a little more digging on that library. I know, I know, I should be sorting for new points of interest in Etho's mess—which, Mumbo's started complaining that it's as much my mess as Etho's these days, but if he's that upset about it he should just volunteer to do more sorting. I know he likes that kind of thing.

But reading the statement just brought back so many memories of uni I couldn't help myself. I haven't really thought about it much since I was hired as Head Archivist, not like I used to, but now I've been kinda missing it. Don't get me wrong! I wouldn't give up *this* job for the world. But I have to wonder, sometimes- If I hadn't had to drop out, if I'd managed to get through school without becoming a convicted murderer and become an architect, would I have gotten to meet Tango Tek? Learn his secrets?

I found this building he designed, for a themed amusement park? Might even be some later version of that final project mentioned in the statement, I'm not sure. But it has this one tower that's always looking at you, no matter the angle, and it's not been opened to the public yet. According to some very angry comment sections the beta testers are *very* tight-lipped about what feedback they've given that's caused the multiple delays. I can only imagine what's inside.

Agh!

I wish I had anything more *substantial*. The more I think about what he's done with his designs the more *fascinated* I am. His work is beautiful, and more than that, it's *functional* in a way I can barely even grasp.

I need to find time to visit that library he designed, is what I need to do. It's just, I don't like leaving the Archives.

And if I go without telling anyone, Pearl and the rest will pester me until the end of time. But if I do tell them, they'll want to come. And I think I'd rather go alone. I really do.

Uugghhhhhh....

[Click]

End Notes

this statement was tremendously fun to write. probably one of my favorites so far. also i don't know anything about architecture programs i'm an english student please don't call me out

in case it's not obvious, the builds referenced here are season 9's astral library, and season 7's toon towers and, of course, decked out. can you figure out which is which entity?

if u enjoyed, please let me know!! and you can always chat with me on tumblr at

@sixteenth-days. and, since i don't think i've said it on any of the fics themselves yet- if you are inspired to draw or write anything by my work, *please* show me. i absolutely love seeing art.

Please [drop by the archive and comment](#) to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!