

THE SPELUNCEAN CASE Harvard Case Solution & Analysis

Spelunker
= A Spelunker is a caver,
or cave explorer.

What happened?

5 cave explorers are caved in after a landslide

They have limited food supplies and no sources of nutrition in caves

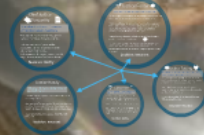
Rescue efforts



Once rescued, the surviving cave explorers re-enter society with their account of what happened

The jury seeks a special verdict, so that they can make limited findings of fact without having to return a verdict on whether it constitutes murder. The cavers are ultimately convicted of murder.

5 Judges give their own verdicts:



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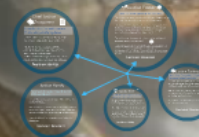


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A photograph of a spelunker in a cave. The person is wearing a yellow jacket, a red helmet with a headlamp, and a harness. They are holding a camera and looking towards the right. The cave walls are dark and textured.

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Rescue efforts

Substantial resources are spent to undertake a rescue, 10 workmen killed in subsequent landslides near the blocked entrance



On Day 23 Roger Whetmore was cannibalized by his cave-exploring colleagues

According to the survivors:

It had been Whetmore's request to be buried in the cave.

They had no food to cook.



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Communication

Radio contact is eventually established with the cavers on the 20th day of the cave-in,

The cavers learn that another 10 days would be required in order to free them.

Radio contact lost again after speaking to Medical Experts



Chances of survival

Medical experts say they are unlikely to survive until the rescue due to starvation

Roger Whetmore, one of the spelunkers, asks how their chances will improve if they were to:

"consume the flesh of one of their number"

Medical experts reluctantly confirm that, in that case, their survival could be extended by 10 days.

Whetmore then asks if they should draw lots to select a person to be killed and eaten. **No one outside the cave is willing to answer this question.**

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