LIMITATION GAME 2: LIMIT HARDER

Last month we broke *Puzzler* history by testing public servants against one of the most mind-bending logic-and-ethics puzzles the world had ever seen; using nothing more than a razor-sharp comprehension of Chapter 68 of the New York City Charter and what

"If this doesn't work we're doing Limitation Game 3: Limit Hard with a Vengeance" — The Computer Guy from Last Month
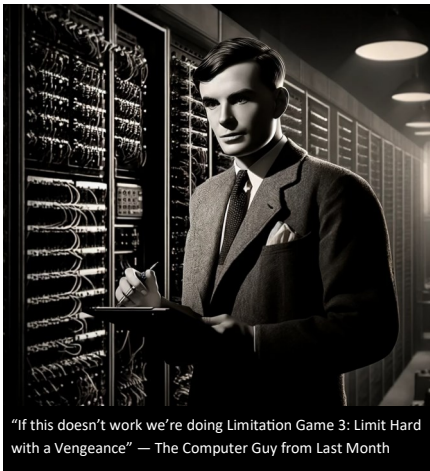
most educators call "an intermediate exercise of informal logic," a not-insignificant number of readers was able to write in and provide the correct answer! So much so, in fact, that we have our first-ever Puzzler *double winner*!

Our first winner is [Shivajeet Chakraborty](#), a Prosecuting Attorney Interne at the NYC Taxi and Limousine Commission, whose extremely in-depth, multi-paragraph solution to the canoe problem not only won him this month's Puzzler but also made me think hard about the labor issues behind forcing maritime service from municipal employees who may not have the civil service title or Naval Ethics training required to jump into a seafaring role. Mr. Chakraborty's solution to the canoe puzzle was an ethical answer that raised more ethical questions, and, for that, he has truly earned his place in the winner's circle.

Our second winner also and *fully* earned her victory with an answer that — inarguably — *got me*. And got me good. [Rolanda Osbourne](#), a Principal Administrative Associate at the NYC Department of Finance, sent in an answer that indicated she simply wouldn't ever be in this situation. From Ms. Osbourne's perspective, she doesn't have to do any of this ethical conundrum stuff with the canoes and the supervisor because she nipped that

issue in the bud earlier — by setting a personal standard of never accepting gifts. I can not, as an Ethicist or Puzzlemaster, bring myself to call that an incorrect answer. So congratulations to both of our winners and to *almost* everyone else who submitted.

Congratulations to *almost* everyone else, I say, because I did detect, among some of the correct answers placed into the random drawing, a certain *municipal hubris*. There were some

A group of NYC public servants demanding more challenging puzzles from the *Public Service Puzzler*.

postscripts along the lines of "this puzzle's too easy, ethics-man" and "as a public servant I do not feel suitably puzzled" and "I've been to your live training and it was only partially as delightful as I was led to believe." Providing puzzles and government ethics instruction at an elite level has always been foundational to my sense of self, and with so many people calling that into question, something needed to be done. And something, my friends, was done.

On May 28, 2024, the COIB's Puzzle/Archeology Unit completed its excavation of an ancient puzzle vault buried deep beneath the streets and subways of Lower Manhattan. While I cannot tell you the precise location of this vault because of security, I have been authorized to say that inside that vault was one of the most difficult municipal ethics puzzles the World and/or *Public Service Puzzler* has ever seen. And after a battery of tests, we now believe the puzzle is safe to present to you, dear reader, as this month's *suitably difficult* Puzzler challenge. Without further adieu:

You clock in at your usual work location and find an email from your supervisor informing you that today is the mandatory, one-hour Chapter 68: Conflicts of Interest training you and your coworkers are required to attend every couple of years. But it isn't online this time: you must travel to the location of the in-person training, and, for reasons unknown, this year they are hosting it at a small office in the heart of the jungle, accessible only at night, by torchlight, and across the lengthiest and most tenuous rope-bridge you have ever seen in your life.

"If I'm being honest, I prefer this over Microsoft Teams" - Dave, the guy who takes 8 minutes to cross.

The bridge is clearly capable of carrying only two people at once, and the COIB training starts in 15 minutes. You — overachiever — think you can get across the bridge in **one minute**, but not everyone is so optimistic: Barry thinks it'll take him **two minutes** to cross, Carla is sure she'll take **five minutes** to walk across, and Dave says he can't get across that bridge in under **eight minutes**. When two coworkers cross together, they obviously have to move at the slower-moving employee's speed. So, the question is: can all four employees make it to the other side of the bridge in time for their COIB training? And if so, how?

As always, send your solutions to the **Public Service Puzzler** and we'll choose a winner at random from the correct entries each month; it has to be someone — why not you?