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### *Manning Up* at DePauw: Performing Fraternal Masculinity on a Liberal Arts Campus

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*DePauw University*

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*Manning Up* at DePauw  
Performing Fraternal Masculinity on a Liberal Arts Campus

*Author*

Rachel Higson

*Sponsor*

Dr. Tamara Beauboeuf

*Committee*

Professor Samuel Autman

Dr. Andrew Cullison

Class of 2018  
DePauw University  
Honor Scholar Program



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Thank you to *my brother, mother, and father* who have taught me that being a supportive, strong, ambitious, and caring person does not know the bounds of gender. I am grateful to *my boyfriend* who constantly kindles my faith in the rise of a rebranded image of the DePauw man as respectful, involved, responsible, and compassionate.



*This thesis is dedicated to the DePauw men who uphold expressions of their masculinities that value all identities.*

*It is dedicated to the women of DePauw who shouldn't have to change the way that they look, act, or feel in order to stay safe or feel as though they belong.*

*It is dedicated to the DePauw women who have soldiered on with or without justice.*



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## CHAPTER 1

### A Critical Look at the DePauw Masculinity:

#### College as a “Guyland”

##### They’ve Always Said

There were solo cups  
at my first party, just  
like they all said  
there’d be. Beer, shots,  
yelling, and learning  
only-to-forget names.  
It’s just some fun, a good  
party, easy-to-teach  
drinking games: if you win,  
you get to point to which  
rosy cheeks or which  
slumped shoulders  
need to take a drink.

I had a post-party walk  
home friend, just like they  
all said I should — the  
*they* that has been telling  
girls what to do since  
childhood — wear skirts  
that cover your thighs  
because boys will be boys  
with a sexual appetite  
that girls can’t have or at  
least can’t show. Don’t  
drink too much, don’t lose  
sight of the people you know  
at bars, don’t dance like that,  
don’t set down your solo cup,  
don’t have *that* kind of fun,  
and definitely don’t listen  
to music while you run.  
Hold your keys in between  
your clenched fingers, fists

turned into claws of a wolverine  
as you walk home at night.  
Most importantly, *be polite*,  
but not so nice that you  
get raped.

*Their* voices have rattled  
around my mind so often,  
so loudly that they've  
started to sound like my  
own. I knew all their rules.  
I'd been listening to them  
my whole life. I heeded  
all of their strict advice.

But it didn't stop him from  
touching, stroking, and  
grabbing with his pale  
white hand. It didn't stop him  
from following me home or  
refusing to leave or wrapping  
his arms around me — not letting  
me go back to my room alone.

Wriggling an arm free from his  
tight lassoed hold, I had to text a  
friend for help, embarrassed that  
I couldn't take care of myself.  
The next day, the morning after  
my first college party I cried  
because I felt like  
I'd let *them* down.

I always knew what the big  
*they* says to women. But at my  
first party, I learned all about  
what they haven't said — or  
worse yet, what they've taken  
the time to tell certain men.

## **The Unexpected and Unsolicited Lessons of a College Curriculum**

Over my time at DePauw University, I have had the opportunity to take eye-opening courses, develop marketable skills, and received constructive feedback from professors. But for the beneficial education that I have acquired within the classroom, I have also learned lessons outside the classroom that I did not expect to encounter.

I have learned that men in the largest fraternities on campus can touch, kiss, and grab women without any recourse. Sexual assault and rape becomes a part of far too many women's curriculums at DePauw. I have learned from too many friends that they think that they had been drugged, on different nights, by the same fraternity men. I have learned that these men can burn couches mere yards away from our oldest building on campus and that they can break into other people's homes without getting in any real trouble. I have learned that they can broadcast a podcast in which they name and shame women with whom they have hooked up, blur the lines between a hook up and rape, and pass their sexual aggression off as typical frat guy behavior. They can serve up their predatory hunting of DePauw women as comedy.

My inspiration for this project originated from a place of anguish, frustration, and desperation. I hold a deep remorse for my friends' pain — their sexual assaults and rapes, the stories that I will never tell because they are not mine to tell. Those are the stories that I keep catalogued in my brain that I think about every once in awhile because who else is going to think about them? They should not have to be forgotten because no one ever knew about what they went through. Or did but didn't care.

This thesis also began from a frustration that I could not understand or process. I could not explain why, how, or which DePauw men felt that they could harass, sexually assault, or rape

a woman. I just knew that I was disheartened that it kept happening — that men could get away with it.

While the inspiration came from an obscure, distressing, and raw place of pain and sympathy, with the generous weekly guidance of my thesis sponsor, Dr. Tamara Beauboeuf, this project quickly found its shape, direction, and purpose. This project aims to change rape culture — not by analyzing the experiences of survivors of rape, but by directing its attention to the men committing the crime. Instead of looking at the lessons that DePauw women have learned, I analyze the lessons of entitlement and invincibility that these men learn. We almost always talk about rape in passive voice, whether referring to the survivor — she was raped — or the rapist — he was accused of rape. As an English major, I believe that language compacts so much meaning. We cannot solve the problem of rape without knowing Adjusting the syntax of the sentences that we use to talk about crimes of fraternity men on campus, this thesis aims to change the conversation from a passive to an active construction, highlighting the perpetrator and not leaving the victim alone in the spotlight. My argument is that the masculine ideals that maintain rape culture on campus also contribute to other problems: racial inequality, homophobia, social exclusion, alcohol and drug abuse, and hazing.

## **Methods**

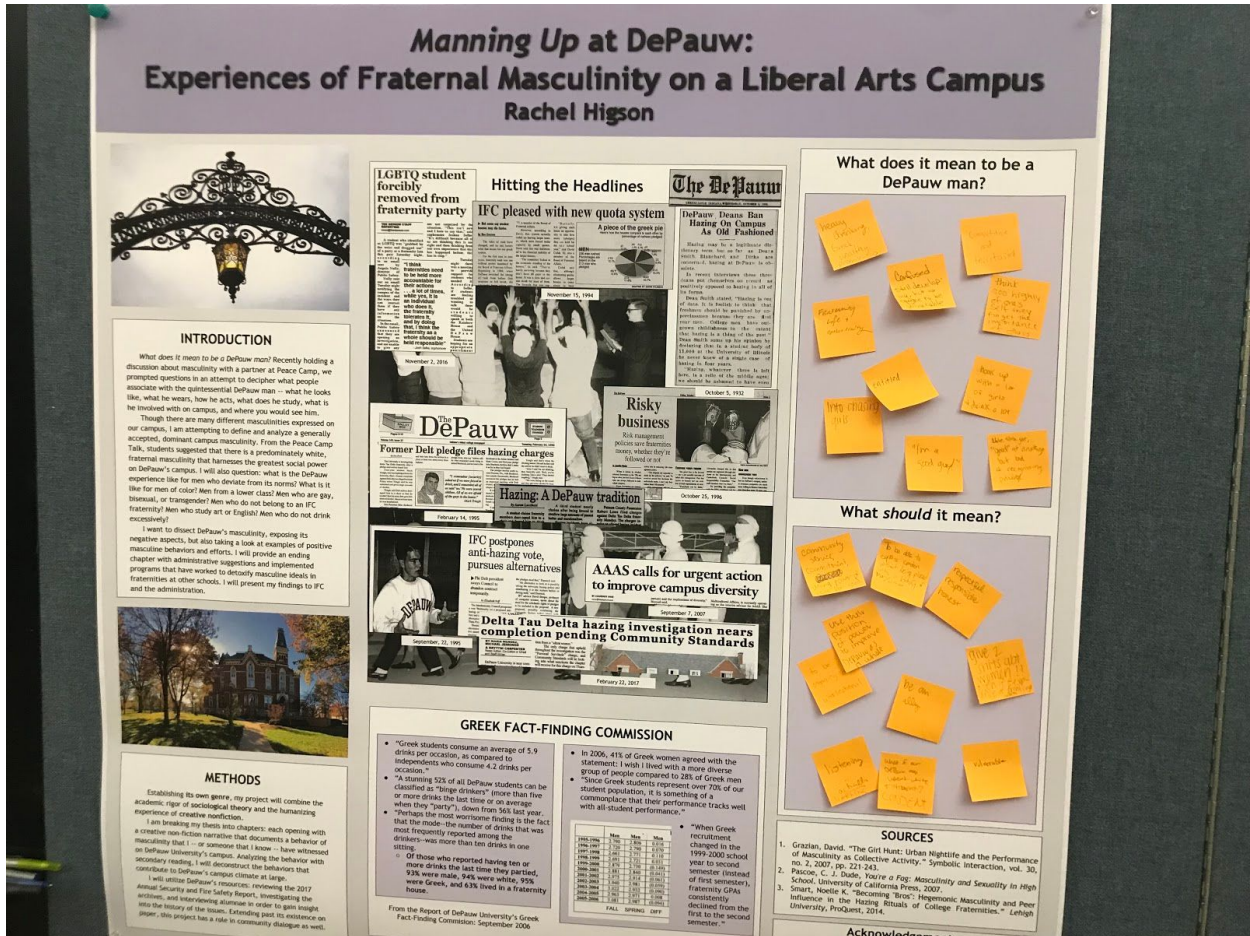
This thesis takes a critical look at performances of hegemonic masculinity at DePauw: “hegemonic masculinity is the form that has social dominance, achieved through cultural practices, discursive centrality, and marginalization of alternatives” (Finley 2010:360). Essentially, hegemonic masculinity is the dominant masculinity that holds the most social,

historical, and institutional, power. It stands in a position of superiority to other subordinated or marginalized masculinities (Pascoe 2007), as well as to the femininities of a social context.

In turning the lens on men's behaviors, I began my research for this project by using my resources on campus in order to better understand how my peers perceived masculinity at DePauw. I hoped to determine whether an image of "the DePauw man" existed, adding to the aspects that I have not considered since they are outside my experience as a heterosexual white woman in a Panhellenic — large, predominantly white — sorority on campus. To this end, I hosted a discussion October 5, 2017 during Peace Camp that revolved around the question: what does it mean to be a DePauw man? The discussion attracted a diverse group of people: fraternity men, sorority women, and unaffiliated men and women. Both men and women contributed frequently to the conversation.

When I posed the question: What do you picture when you think of the quintessential DePauw man? A woman of color answered: white, in a fraternity, economics major, Vineyard Vines, blonde, ready to hand you drink. No one in the circle of approximately 25 people objected or disagreed. A few people nodded along with her description.

Just over a month later, in November, I introduced my thesis to a wider audience through the Honor's Scholar poster presentations for all of the program's thesis projects. Students and faculty from a wide range of disciplines attend the event.



As students walked by my poster, I gave them sticky notes in order to place their answers to the question — “What does it mean to be a DePauw man?” — on the poster. Here are the responses:

- “heavy drinking, Greek, wealthy, promiscuous”
- “Entitled”
- “competitive and territorial”
- “think so highly of one’s self they forget the importance of others”
- “confused: still developing, but no space to be vulnerable”
- “Fraternity Life + masculinity”

“hook up with a lot of girls + drink a lot”

“Into chasing girls”

“‘I’m a good guy!’” [in quotation marks]

“white, straight, ‘good’ at drinking but bad at recognizing privilege”

This collection certainly does not indicate that all DePauw men share these qualities. Not all DePauw men are white, heterosexual, binge-drinking, girl-chasing, territorial, affluent fraternity men. Far from it. There is a wide variety of masculine identities and expressions: men of color, men who are not associated with the predominantly white fraternities, men with with different sexual orientations, men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds,<sup>1</sup> and men who respect women.

However, the consistent qualities expressed in the students’ responses construct DePauw’s hegemonic masculinity: they paint a picture of the idealized DePauw man that men on campus may seek to live up to, fall short of, resist, fight, or become. It is a masculine ideal that excludes men whose identities differ and can dissuade men from individualistic thinking and expression of their own values. This hegemonic masculinity may not only distance men from their relationships with women, but also foster a dangerous environment for women and men who do not or cannot fit its mold of prescribed heteronormative gender relations.

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<sup>1</sup> Socioeconomic status defines the DePauw man as well. Since IFC fraternity participation is crucial to the performance of hegemonic DePauw masculinity, men who cannot afford to join do not have access to the stage. Frequent drinking, hooking up with women, and socializing are also pivotal to the performance, and so men who do not have the time to attend parties frequently because they work or who cannot afford to buy alcohol every weekend are disqualified from the DePauw male ideal image. For first-generation college men and men hailing from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the party scene presents a challenge to upward mobility — raising their economic station through education — because they have to choose whether to sacrifice their studies or the social connections that could potentially tap into alumni networks.



Over my time at this university, I had developed the same image of the quintessential DePauw man: a white, heterosexual, affluent, promiscuous, binge-drinking, entitled, competitive, apathetic, and territorial fraternity man. Yet it had not occurred to me — before making masculinity the topic of conversation with other students — that this image was not just constructed from my individual experiences. If such a negative representation of a DePauw student acts as the stereotype for almost half the university’s student population, then this kind of man has affected so many people on campus that his qualities prevail, dominating other students’ experiences with DePauw men. While there are plenty of men who express different masculinities that do not align with this disheartening portrayal, the hegemonic masculinity dominates their expressions of masculinity as well, and unfortunately they do not become the quintessential image of the DePauw man.

Using an interdisciplinary approach, I frame the thesis’ chapters with nonfiction narratives that I analyze with sociological sources, explaining the meaning and reason behind bros’ behavior that we often may dismiss with the classic refrain of *boys will be boys*. I used much more than just my observations and experiences on DePauw’s campus as data for my analysis. In addition to hosting events in which I facilitated discussions about hegemonic masculinity at DePauw, I enrolled in a sociology course, titled “Masculinities,” in which we often discussed masculinity at DePauw. From September 2017 to April 2018, I participated in a thesis workshop for projects relating to women’s issues, receiving feedback so as to incorporate other DePauw students’ perspectives on the material.

The nonfiction narratives ground the sociology in DePauw’s campus so that this thesis’ audience — liberal arts students, faculty, and administrators — cannot distance the issues from

their institutions and interactions. I use pseudonyms for all of the names throughout the narratives, including people and fraternities. Although I utilize nonfiction writing in order to evoke familiarity, perspective, voice, and connection between the reader and the narrative, I did not compromise accuracy in the creative process. Crafting the narratives, I meticulously reviewed emails, text messages, and newspaper articles about the events that I discuss so as not to rely on my memory alone. Oftentimes, I interviewed other people involved in the narrative for further clarity. While the sociology is necessary to unpacking the men's behavior, the narratives provide a relatable, digestible, and interesting form for the data to take.

In compiling my thesis committee, I considered each of the members' academic expertise before approaching them with my thesis proposal. Bringing knowledge of ethics and philosophy, Dr. Andrew Cullison, the Director of the Janet Prindle Institute for Ethics, contributed to my thesis as a second reader. As a writer for the Prindle Post, an online ethics magazine, since my sophomore year, I applied my experience in addressing controversial and challenging topics to my project.

Professor Samuel Autman, a creative writing professor who specializes in nonfiction and journalism, provided feedback as I shaped my narratives. As an English writing major, who has taken a course with Professor Autman in the past, I decided to use the power of nonfiction narrative in order to participate in an academic dialogue with the published sociological scholars, whose papers and books I have been reading so much of this past school year.

Dr. Tamara Beauboeuf, a Professor of Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies as well as the Dean of Faculty, has contributed to this project weekly. Although I have taken multiple sociology courses, my academic focus is writing. Supplementing her sociological expertise in

areas of my thesis in which I had less experience and suggesting sources for applicable research, Dr. Beauboeuf's guidance made this thesis possible.

The ethical, creative writing, and sociological perspectives, which have contributed to *Manning Up at DePauw*, create a well-rounded and thoroughly considered interdisciplinary approach to understanding DePauw masculinity.

### **Who Are These Bros?**

Michael Kimmel coined the term "Guyland" in order to describe a very specific developmental moment between boyhood and manhood (Kimmel 2008:4). Not every man has the time, money, or desire to inhabit Kimmel's Guyland where young men are "unhassled by the demands of parents, girlfriends, jobs, kids, and the other nuances of adult life" and live with a "topsy-turvy, Peter Pan mindset" (4). These "guys," as Kimmel calls them, have the luxury to perform acts that they believe assert their manhood without incurring the responsibilities of real, adult men: "[t]he guys who populate Guyland are mostly white, middle-class kids; they are college-bound, in college, or have recently graduated; they're unmarried. They live communally with other guys, in dorms, apartments, or fraternities" (8).

Kimmel's description of these "guys" resonates with the picture of the quintessential DePauw man, painted by various students' input at my poster presentation. Their answers to the question — What does it mean to be a DePauw man? — that they placed on my poster included: white, straight, wealthy, promiscuous, heavy drinkers, Greek life participants, territorial, competitive, and entitled. Since the hegemonic masculinity, the one with the most power on campus, necessitates involvement in an IFC fraternity — the largest, predominantly white

fraternities on campus that belong to the national Interfraternity Council — I will refer to the men who ascribe to hegemonic masculinity within these organizations as “bros,” instead of Kimmel’s term, “guys.”

There is a saying that goes around DePauw: “You’re not an alcoholic until you graduate.” Bros often apply the same mentality of invincibility and lack of culpability for their actions to harassment, property damage, and sexual assault. In *Guyland*, Kimmel interviewed a young man who explained the excitement that he felt as soon as he accepted his bid to his fraternity, Beta, in terms of power: “It was a really special feeling. Like I could do anything, because the other guys would always have my back. And *we* could do anything because, well, because we were Betas, and on this campus, Betas rule. No one—and I mean Greek types, administrators, other guys, and . . . professors—would ever be able to touch us” (116). Fraternity men know that they have the power on campus, and universities confirm this feeling of invincibility when they do not police the large private houses as strictly as university-owned property or fail to punish fraternity men for their transgressions.

For the heterosexual, affluent, white men to capture the elusive DePauw masculinity, that goal requires a constant successful negotiation of interactions that constitute a successful performance. Masculinity is a kind of currency: “masculine acts” — which reaffirm strength, stoicism, assertiveness, apathy, innate knowledge, competitive spirit, etc. — accumulate social wealth while “feminine characteristics” — weakness, overbrimming emotions, passivity, superficiality, etc. — tax and deplete that social wealth. Masculinity and femininity are societally constructed as diametrically and hierarchically opposed: each one defines and shapes the other. Most people would agree that level-headedness and compassion are positive characteristics; yet,

they are also associated with femininity, and for young college men who are attempting to navigate the brutal world of becoming adults or “guyland,” as Kimmel terms it, those characteristics drift them too close to the dreaded feminine. As a result, one man can steal social wealth simply by calling another a “little bitch,” “pussy,” or “fag.”

### **Housing a Guyland: The Prevalence and Protection of Fraternity Culture**

Fraternity life is deeply embedded in DePauw University’s history. DePauw’s first fraternity chapter on campus opened up less than 20 years after the all-male university was founded; a woman would not graduate DePauw until 1871. Seven of the 10 IFC fraternities that are still on campus would have chapters open at DePauw before the first African-American man graduated the university in 1888.

With almost 70 percent of students participating in Greek life, DePauw Greek affiliation is an important, normalized part of the DePauw student experience. Even the students who are not involved in IFC or Panhellenic — majority white — Greek life are greatly affected by its presence. IFC fraternities, especially the fraternities with the highest social power on campus, shape the party scene.

Unaffiliated students — who did not want to participate in Greek life, could not afford to, or were not extended a bid from any organization — do not adopt the social status tied to a sorority or fraternity, and they become invisible at DePauw. People who join sororities or fraternities belonging to the Multicultural Greek Council (MGC) or the National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC), which is made up of historically Black organizations, are often excluded from the large, dominating, white-majority, IFC and Panhellenic-centric social scene and pairings.

Members of MGC and NPHC organizations live in university-owned houses and thus do not have the autonomy and protection associated with a large privately owned space.

In their support of Greek life, universities like DePauw “provide a way for affluent, white, socially oriented students to isolate themselves from their less privileged peers” (Armstrong and Hamilton 15-16). In order to “generate fun” and attract affluent students, universities permit fraternities and sororities on campus, and they “can further support these organizations by allowing them to operate on campus, facilitating the purchase of property on university grounds, and exempting them from rigorous policing” (Armstrong and Hamilton 2015:15). The only non-university, private housing that can have alcohol and host large parties are IFC fraternities, which the university does not police as strictly as the housing properties it owns.

As I have explained, fraternities — who possess the physical, economic, and social infrastructure for the party scene — refuse access to some students based on their membership in a lower-tier fraternity or sorority, their lack of affiliation with Greek life, their less-than-affluent social class, or their minority race. For the mostly white and affluent men and women who qualify to rise to a higher social status at DePauw, social value on campus can be acquired through appropriate navigating of party behaviors in social scenes — a process that can be particularly dangerous for women.

Through Greek life, “[universities] ensure that such students have the organizational infrastructure necessary for their sexual and romantic projects—fraternities and sponsor an erotic marketplace in which students gain status and make connections through ‘hooking up’” (Armstrong and Hamilton 2014:16). Fraternities set the terms of the social scene, and since bros

often value hookups — engaging in sexual activity with no intention of pursuing further romantic connection with the other person in the future — over friendships or relationships with women, the social and party scene becomes highly sexualized. Besides class though, parties are often the only place that women interact with bros who tend to spend the most of their social time within their own fraternities.<sup>2</sup> While women are nomadic, having to leave their sororities in order to participate in the party scene, bros do not often attend other fraternity’s parties because they know that they will most likely be turned away at the door.

Performances of fraternal masculinity can be costly not only to men’s relationships with women, but also to their physical health, self-esteem, and grades. The Panhellenic sorority with the lowest GPA average still has a higher average than the highest IFC fraternity GPA. But the men reclaim that deficiency of power on campus by telling those women to turn around and go home at the door of a party.

With the 27 hospitalizations (Schabes 2018) during just the fall semester of DePauw’s 2017-18 academic year, DePauw administrators have acknowledged and attempted to counter the drinking culture with alcohol awareness programing and lessening the number of registered parties that fraternities may host, driving the parties to become underground, unregistered events. When we say that DePauw has an alcohol problem, which students are we really talking about? Kimmel analyzes binge drinking and who is really participating: “[t]hree-fourths of all Greeks

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<sup>2</sup> In my “What does it mean to be a DePauw man?” discussion, a white IFC fraternity member mentioned that their parties create a community for DePauw students. One woman of color replied, expressing a sentiment that many DePauw students share: white fraternity men seem to stay in their fraternities. Where else are they on campus? Other students have to attend their parties, on their turf, if they want to share that idealistic community feeling.

are binge drinkers (80 percent of males and 69 percent of females). It's also a white thing: The vast majority of black, Hispanic, and Asian students do not binge drink" (Kimmel 2008:104).

With a heavily Greek, historically white university like DePauw, it makes sense that binge drinking rates are higher. But why does Greek life have such an effect on alcohol consumption even though sororities cannot have alcohol on their properties? The IFC men with the privately owned houses large enough to host the parties determine the social scene: who gets in, what music is played, which drinks are served, when the parties occur, and how people should dress if the party has a theme. Thus, the estimated 69 percent of sorority women are almost certainly doing their binge drinking at the fraternities with which their sorority often pairs. The men saturate their IFC parties with beer and liquor, creating arenas conducive to sexual pursuits, group assessing of women's desirability, and hooking up: "alcohol abuse appears to be so embedded in the white fraternity culture that both males and females are harassed and insulted for not taking part. In contrast, neither the black women nor the black men reported anyone being pressured to drink alcohol" in Black fraternities (406).

On top of drinking, the drug scene is widespread in fraternities as well: "[a]lthough alcohol and marijuana appear to be the most common 'drugs of choice' in the black fraternities, alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine are the most common drugs of choice reported in the white fraternities" (405). At DePauw IFC parties, I have been offered all the "drugs of choice," including cocaine, by white fraternity men. White men can sell drugs from within their fraternities — most oftenly — with complete privacy and immunity.

Despite all of the negative aspects of bro culture — binge drinking, drug use, sexual assault, and rape — the university still exempts a good deal of fraternity men from punishment



for their actions. Dismissing their vandalisms, violations, disturbances, and violences as typical and natural *frat bros will be frat bros* behavior, DePauw allows these men the privilege — not only of the benefit of the doubt, but also — of unfair exemption from blame, compromising the safety and wellbeing of other students in the process.

### **From Wingmen to Burning Couches: Navigating the Narratives**

Each chapter, opening with a nonfiction narrative, builds on the previous and provides a clearer understanding of the fraternal masculinity at DePauw. Taking a critical look at the bro behavior that many students may expect and witness each weekend, this chapter analyzes how fraternity men participate in group bonding through hunting women at their parties. The next chapter analyzes bros' entitlement and territorial behavior that constitutes a kind of violence that people — even Public Safety officers — often dismiss depending on the men perpetrating the crime. The third chapter complicates the predatory or criminal behavior explored in the first chapter by looking through an intersectional lens at which men have the institutional and social leniency to participate in these rituals. I conclude this paper by analyzing who the DePauw man should be once we leave the bros far behind.

## CHAPTER 2

### Just a Kiss:

#### Girl Hunting on a Friday Night

The pitch-black dance floor rumbled with the music's bass while blinding colors spotlighted people just frequently enough so that I could recognize the silhouettes of each member in my friend group. If I thought that I lost track of my group for a moment, the occasional flash of my friends — Jess's long hair and Emma's broad shoulders — brought me right back to them. Our feet occasionally stuck to the dried up spilled drinks coating the basement floor, and the fraternity smelled of humid sweat, marijuana, sharp perfume, and stale beer.

A tall white guy, who I didn't know, came up to me. His name was Aaron. I turned to him when he signaled for me to lean in.

Aaron said, "I just wanted to say that you're a really great dancer."

He also told me that he went to another school. But I had a hard time believing it because fraternities didn't usually let guys from other frats into their parties, let alone other schools.

"What's your name?" he asked, leaning in and reaching for a handshake.

"Rachel," I replied asking for his name too, treating this unwanted interaction with all the usual social conventions. I didn't go out looking to meet guys that night. I was just out with my girlfriends, but I'd rather waste my time stuck in a conversation than seem rude.

As soon as there was a natural break in the small talk, I told him, “I’m going to go catch up with my friends.” I glanced around for Emma’s shoulders.

“Not before you kiss me,” Aaron said.

I laughed because what else do you do as a self-conscious single sophomore who is making a mental pros and cons list in order to gauge whether she’d rather refuse or accept his proposition. I could refuse and have him be mad at me. Maybe he’d tell his friends that I was a prude or a bitch or whatever he could come up with to repair his ego. Or I could kiss him and kick myself for doing something that I didn’t want by giving in to a stranger. That would have felt like I’d lost to him. And being an athlete of fifteen years, I hated losing.

“Kiss me,” he said.

“I’ve got to go find my friends,” I said with a smile trying to stay light-hearted. I decided that he could hate me all he wanted — hell, all his friends could hate me too — but he wasn’t going to get even one bit of what he wanted.

“Come on,” he pleaded leaning in.

“I don’t think so, sorry.”

“Why not?”

“Sorry,” I said as the smile faded from my face.

I couldn’t find Jess. I felt claustrophobic, the basement shrinking; the bodies around us were becoming just useless matter that wasn’t going to help but rather just close me in like the shrinking walls of an immobile elevator.

Another guy separated us, pulling his arm in front of Aaron. I thought that anyone who had been watching from the sidelines and felt troubled by the interaction should have intervened sooner, but I was grateful nonetheless.

“I’ve known Aaron since we were kids. He’s a good guy,” his friend said looking into my eyes and locking one arm on Aaron’s shoulder and the other one on mine like a soccer referee separating a fight. “You should kiss him.”

I began to feel dizzy with the kind of nauseous discomfort that tells you that you’re losing control.

“Why won’t you just kiss him?” This time Aaron’s friend was the one who got real close, and I turned my cheek — lips away — because I didn’t want them to take what they wanted. He was getting angry now. “He’s a really good guy,” he insisted.

“No thanks, sorry.”

Aaron lingered right next to us. His friend was too close, hand on my side. I stepped backwards, but they moved toward me together. As I retreated, still facing them, my back ended up against a pillar in the middle of the basement dance floor.

“Come on. It’s *just* a kiss,” Aaron repeated with an impatient exasperation.

Through a break in the crowd, I could see my friend group, and I finally made eye contact with Jess near the DJ stand. She was facing me, and I immediately darted through the parted sea of people. By the time that I reached her, I was crying.

## **Turning the Lens**

Although I narrate my encounter with Aaron from a first-person perspective, I will be spotlighting the other characters involved. My own response to the situation is its own goldmine for analysis; yet, more often in instances of harassment and especially in cases of sexual assault and rape, people analyze the women's clothing, response, lack of response, and behavior while they often dismiss men's behavior under the cover of *boys will be boys*. However, we should not be focusing on how a woman could have better navigated this kind of behavior.

We often treat harassment, sexual assault, and rape as an unfortunate natural phenomenon. For every 1,000 rapes, only 6 rapists will be incarcerated. We say, "she was raped" in passive voice, and our language dismisses the crime of a perpetrator before the judge even has a chance to in court. Rape is not a random phenomenon. It is a crime of power that a perpetrator commits. I want to turn the lens of our societal attention away from analyzing the victim's behavior and onto the perpetrator's and the culture that develops, protects, and can even encourage that individual.

Though this incident with Aaron is a minor example of harassment, I argue that damaging and violating acts could be — and are — perpetrated with the same performance of masculinity, raising the stakes of the potential consequences to much greater than *just a kiss*.

### **A Girl Hunt**

Aaron and his bro operated as a team with coordinated roles. I became the target — or rather, their prey — in a ritual of performative masculinity that David Grazian, a sociology professor at the University of Pennsylvania, labels *the girl hunt*.

Aaron's friend's behavior displays a curious personal investment in a kind of intimacy between his bro and a stranger. One of the most basic questions about his friend's behavior arises: what would he get out of a stranger kissing his friend? In *The Girl Hunt: Urban Nightlife and the Performance of Masculinity as Collective Activity*, Grazian assesses the public collective performance of masculinity through heterosexual pursuits of women.

Grazian defines "girl hunting" as "a practice whereby adolescent heterosexual men aggressively seek out female sexual partners in nightclubs, bars, and other public arenas of commercialized entertainment" (Grazian 2007:222). These stimulating public spaces usually include alcohol, an area for dancing, and stools and booths for conversing: they are much like the fraternity where my interaction with Aaron occurred. The term "hunting" is a particularly poignant, troubling, and accurate description of the interactions that Grazian witnessed and that women often experience in such social spaces.

Relevant to the public sphere of a fraternity's open undergraduate party, Grazian studied college men specifically in an urban nightlife setting in order to "understand how young heterosexual men socially construct masculinity through gendered interaction rituals in the context of everyday life" (226). Analyzing the interaction between Aaron, his friend, and me in a fraternity context can help to understand and identify the orchestrated ritual of girl hunting, which occurs at DePauw and beyond.

### **Hunting Partners**

In their approach, Aaron relied on his friend's compliance in the situation in order to engage in a group performance. While the term "wingman" originated as a term from the Air

Force for “a pilot who flies behind and outside the leader of a flying formation” (Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary), popular culture and girl hunters have “appropriated [the term] to refer to an accomplice who assists a designated leading man in meeting eligible single women” (Grazian 2007:233). The wingman refers to a man who aids his male friend in securing a woman’s attention and compliance in a sexual encounter. Grazian claims that the wingman in the girl hunt and nightlife scene “serves multiple purposes” (234), just like the wingman pilots in the term’s original context.

The qualities of a good wingman in the Air Force — “[m]utual support,” “situational awareness — not just of one’s own situation, but that faced by teammates,” and “individual reliability” (“The Real Meaning of ‘Wingman’”) — are very similar to the expected roles of a girl-hunting wingman, making him a mock soldier fighting for heterosexual and thus making women the enemy to defeat. Segregating these armies based on gender echos the *boys versus girls* rivalry that children learn to enact on playgrounds all over the nation before there are significant physical and hormonal differences between the genders.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the pilots who risk their lives, these girl-hunters risk a failed performance of masculinity, but they both present their wingmen with similar importance and responsibilities.

Grazian asserts that the wingman “provides validation of a leading man’s trustworthiness” (Grazian 2007:234). Pressuring physical contact between two other people, Aaron’s wingman intervened in his friend’s attempt to secure a kiss. He did so by assuring me of his friend’s long-term reliability and “good guy” status, attempting to make me feel safer.

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<sup>3</sup> Parents often begin gendering their children even before they are born: painting the walls a shade of blue/green or pink/purple, stockpiling trucks or dolls, and buying hero or princess books/bedding/clothes. Analyzing 42 interviews of parents with preschoolers, Emily Kane evaluates how parents gender their children, especially their sons (Kane 2006).

According to Grazian's definition, the wingman "can be called on to confirm the wild (and frequently misleading) claims of his partner" (234). Aaron set the condition that I could not return to my friends without giving him a kiss. His wingman reaffirmed the legitimacy of that request, justifying Aaron's right to a woman's body.

Grazian identifies "perhaps most important" role of the wingman as his duty to "motivate his friends by building up their confidence" (234). By vouching for him, the wingman bolstered his friend's ego and justified Aaron's demand to engage with me physically. Also, by the wingman inserting himself into the situation, he raised the social stake of my refusal. By not kissing Aaron, I would be disappointing his bro as well. The girl-hunters — Aaron, the "good guy," and his friend, "the wingman" — outnumbered their prey; thus, they harness not only social, but physical power in the situation by flanking me and backing me against a pillar.

### **Masculinity Requires a Public Performance**

Hyper-heterosexual performance can be achieved through persuasion and group coercion, as demonstrated by Aaron and his friend; yet, masculinity can also be attained through what C. J. Pascoe terms hyperbolic "ritualistic sex talk" and "rituals of eroticized dominance" (Pascoe 2007:87), often dismissed as locker room talk. In the Spring of 2017, girl-hunters of a top tier fraternity at DePauw University that I will refer to as Beta. Beta members broadcasted their sex talk, bragging about their sexual exploits on a podcast created with DePauw's facilities and equipment. They classified themselves and their girl-hunting fraternity brothers as "hounds," a direct reference to a literal hunt. The podcast, called "The House of Scaife," revolved around their invented term, "scaife," which the hosts would use "[m]ost commonly, . . . as a stand-in for



‘women’” (Kobe and Burton 2017). The word “house” refers to their fraternity house: Beta. From listening to a couple episodes online before they were removed, one DePauw professor discerned that “‘scaife’ is a euphemism for sex. I suspect the podcast hosts would define scaife as consensual sex, but since at no time is consent ever mentioned in their podcast, I interpret it to really mean rape” (Harms 2017). The term, “scaife,” could also readily be replaced with girl-hunting, given the episode titles, including “Scaife at Themed Parties” and “The Science of Scaife” (Harms).

In one of Pascoe’s interviews, a junior high school boy suggested a message similar to Beta’s podcast about how “sex was important to maintain one’s image” (Pascoe 2007:88). Another high schooler reported that classmates were so desperate to pursue sex — to “scaife” in the podcasters’ words or “girl hunt” to use Grazian’s — that they resorted to drugging girls or hiring prostitutes (88). The high schooler witnessed the desperate measures that boys and girl hunters go to in order to participate in the hunt or post-hunt sex talk.

From one of the shows, the DePauw professor transcribed “one of the milder exchanges from ‘Scaife at Big Events.’”

Host 1: Tell us what you were doing [while you were taking a hiatus from the show]. What new role did you fill in? No pun intended.

Host 2: I really soul searched a little bit and I took on a new role within my life and within the [name redacted] fraternity. I decided to be more of a recruitment, you know, recruit fellow scaife hounds. It was a fulfilling experience for me because, you

know, I had my time and I truly love to scaife, but now it's time to give back to the community, so for the past six months I've been really just recruiting young scaife hounds (Harms)

The hosts were self-proclaimed “scaife hounds” — or synonymously: sexual predators. Other hunting terms readily apply to the methodical tactics that girl hunters, like Beta's podcasters and Aaron and his bro, exhibit. For example in fox hunting, the “master” of the hunt is “[t]he person in command” (“A Glossary of Fox Hunting Terms”); Aaron — or Beta's hound recruiter — would be the master in the girl hunt.

Host 2 referred to his efforts to recruit more members in his fraternity by finding men who are willing and adamant to participate in girl hunting, without even superficially covering his performative motives: when Host 1 asked him the question — “Is there anything you really specifically look for in a scaife hound that morally makes you look like a better person?” Host 2 replied, “To be honest with you, no.” This podcast was a collective performance of masculinity just like Aaron and his friend's.

This collaborative performance of masculinity reasserts heterosexuality while achieving a calculated dissociation between men's heterosexual pursuits and any suggestion of emotional connection. Aaron and his bro could qualify as “scaife hounds” in action, while Beta's podcasters participated in the post-hunt sex talk that Aaron and his bro could have engaged in if Aaron had been successful in coercing a kiss and further sexual activity from me. Although Beta's podcast was more obviously and quite literally a broadcasted performance of masculinity, Aaron and his bro still achieved the public performance through their collective hunt.

In *Dude You're a Fag*, C. J. Pascoe identifies two high school boys' repetitive harassment of women as "behaviors [that] show how heterosexuality is normalized as a sort of 'predatory' social relation in which boys try and try and try to 'get' a girl until one finally gives in" (Pascoe 2007:95). Pascoe gives an example of a high school boy — whom she calls Heath — who dressed up as an elf for Halloween (93). Asserting his heterosexuality, Heath offered kisses to girls passing by the boys' water polo team's fundraising table in exchange for a donation. One of the boys, Graham, "challenged Heath's kissing strategy, saying that [his] mistletoe . . . wouldn't work because it wasn't Christmas" (93). However when Heath was able to get a group of girls to each kiss him on the cheek, he returned and "victoriously shook hands with all the boys. . . . Graham then congratulated Heath on his ability to overcome the girls' resistance to his overtures" (94).

In Heath's solo venture, another boy challenged him. The other boys would perform their masculinity whether he was successful or not — through mockery at Heath's defeat or celebration of his success. Grazian provides a male observer's account of a group's response to their friend's rejection in the nightlife scene: "So as I walked past one of the guys, I heard him ask a girl for her number. But she just laughed and walked away. That was real funny especially since his friends saw what happened and proceeded to laugh as well" (Grazian 2007:235). Distinguishing themselves from their friend's failure, the group members raise their own performative statuses: "one participant's botched attempt at an ill-conceived pickup can solidify the male group's bonds as much as a successful one" (236). Grazian claims that for the man whose unwanted advances were rejected, "his performance of masculinity is bruised but intact" (236) because he still engaged in girl-hunting behavior despite the woman's rejection.

Since Aaron's wingman became just as invested as he in coercing a kiss, Aaron did not bear the failure alone. Aaron did not risk mockery or social recourse for his failure. He even had the support and active participation of his peer, connecting the singular interaction of a kiss to their shared performances of masculinity.

### **Taking One for the Team: Group Ownership over the Trophies**

Wandering through the fraternity's confusing hallways, I was looking for my friend, Kim. We were in Gamma, which has the reputation of being the football fraternity since so many players join the house. Kim was a year younger than me, a first year at the time, and I knew that she had had too much to drink. I caught a glimpse of her down a hallway as tall, bulky guy, who I'll call Neal, had his arm wrapped around her, holding her upright. Neal was walking her down the hall into a private room that either belonged to him and a couple of his roommates or just any of his fraternity brothers.

I picked up my pace, calling out her name in order to get her attention. I had just about reached her when a hefty guy stepped in front of me blocking my way.

"Excuse me," I said, looking past him to keep my eyes on Kim.

He didn't move, but he asked, "Where are you going?"

"To check in with my friend, Kim," I replied, sidestepping so as to see around him.

"They're fine," he said. "Just let them be."

I furrowed my brow and looked up into his eyes.

“No, I need to take her home,” I replied. “She’s too drunk.” I tried to walk around him, but he stepped in front of me, so that I walked right into him.

“Come on,” he said. Walking toward me with an arm extended out so that I could not sneak by him because of how crowded the narrow hallway was.

“Let me by,” I said.

“Just let them have fun,” he said getting more frustrated now.

I saw Kim being dragged along under Neal’s big arm. They were practically to the door.

“Kim,” I yelled over. She didn’t hear me.

“Let me go by,” I said loud enough that a couple people turned around.

“Whatever,” the guy in front of me said, letting me slide past him.

I made it to Kim as she and Neal were walking through the door. Leaning on the doorframe, Kim listened as I talked to Neal.

“Hey, I’m sorry, she’s too drunk,” I told him.

Neal glanced at her and replied, “Oh, you’re right,” as if he had just noticed. He let me have her, and I wrapped an arm around Kim as I took her home.

Taking their tactics of deflection, blocking, and defense straight from the football field into their fraternity parties, the man who blocked me, made Kim the target of the girl hunting game. Enacting their masculinity in an all male space — their fraternity — and paralleling their tactics to hook up with women to their strategies on the field of their all-male sport, amplifies the

two teams that these bros perceive: men versus women — or rather — hegemonic masculinity versus femininity.

As women gain more and more access to spaces that men used to dominate — professionally and socially — guys, hoping to hold onto their traditional notions of masculinity, retreat further into their male-dominated spaces as places that they can create gendered teams and perform their masculinity with other men. Mariah Nelson, a former Stanford basketball player, captured this trend in the title of her book, *The Stronger Women Get, the More Men Love Football* (Kimmel 2008:138). As a Division III cross country and track runner at DePauw, my team is practically coed: we practice, travel, and attend most team-related events together.

Yet the women's team is constantly reminded that Wabash College is our school's main rival. Wabash is an all men's university. Even though women may participate in sports, DePauw institutionally delineates the men's sports as the real competition due to traditions' sake. The biggest sporting event of the year at DePauw is the Monon Bell Game in which DePauw's football team attempts to defeat Wabash each year in a longstanding rivalry so as to see who can keep or take back the 300-pound bell that we pass between our schools. In the rivalry, women's sports become invisible and unnotable. In terms of athletic achievement, we as a university have decided to uphold the rivalry and deem the ultimate competition for DePauw to be: playing an all-male school in an all-male sport.

### **Hunting for Sport**

In “Caveman Masculinity: Finding an Ethnicity in Evolutionary Science,” Martha McCaughey analyzes a wave in popular culture that seeks to explain masculinity by harkening

back to caveman times and behaviors: “the invocation of evolutionary theory to explain human male behaviors, particularly deplorable behaviors such as sexual harassment, rape, and aggression more generally” (McCaughey 2008:3). The more that women become sexually liberated, work their way into previously male-dominated careers, and become financially independent, the more that men upholding traditional masculinities lose sight of their identity. Thus, the explanation that their beliefs and behaviors originate in an evolutionary and biological significance appeals to them: “men today have been offered a way to think of their masculinity as powerful, productive, even aggressive—in a new economic and political climate where real opportunities to be rewarded for such traits have slipped away” (4).

Instead of fighting for survival these men can live out their masculinity through their own rituals, such as fighting with other men. I know of a couple fraternities that host boxing matches for their members. Fights also break out sometimes at parties amongst men from different fraternities. Instead of hunting for food, they hunt for women. They can justify sexually aggressive behavior towards women as the results of a biological urge for sex and reproduction. Citing multiple magazines, such as *Men’s Health*, that capture the caveman mentality, McCaughey relays an article that explains “why men feel the way they do when they notice a beautiful woman walking down the street” in terms of “signals of fertility that attract young men: youth, beauty, big breasts, and a small waistline” (6). Another one explains “why most women won’t sleep with you,” using the argument that men’s countless sperm in comparison to women’s limited number of eggs explains women’s greater valuing of her reproductive prospects; this theory does not consider modern advancements of birth control, but most importantly it explains sex with biology. In “Caveman Masculinity,” McCaughey gives many

examples of articles, explaining and excusing a range of men's behaviors — girl watching, weight lifting circuits, pornography viewing, parenting involvement, and violence against women — that are meant to tell men what they want to hear. These caveman and biological arguments fit into the “boys will be boys” justification for young white men's problematic behavior.

### **What is the thrill of the hunt?**

In the girl hunting game, fraternity men, like Aaron and his wingman, claim the offensive side with their targeting and persistence; they separate the competition into gendered binaries. The girl hunt itself and its performance of masculinity are more important than potential sexual satisfaction. Although a successful hunt creates the illusion of heterosexual desirability — a woman reciprocating a kiss or sexual attention or actions — the considerable lengths of persuasion, including acts of violence that men will go to in order to achieve such sexual responsiveness reveals the true motives of the pursuit. Pascoe cites an example of a boy, Chad, who claimed that he did not have to exaggerate or lie about his sexual encounters or commit rape like others, implying that he was desirable to girls. But when he explained his his sexual exploits to Pascoe, they “sounded scarily close to date rape” as he described inviting girls — whom he described as naive and “just stupid” — over late at night and getting them drunk (Pascoe 2007:88). Chad still bragged about and conflated a heterosexual desirability with — most likely — illegal methods of sexualized coercion.

Even though he did not achieve the kiss, Aaron — along with his bro — engaged in a successful performance of heterosexuality. Aaron's attempt to receive a kiss from me — and



even more so his friend's ability to convince me to kiss Aaron — is not necessarily grounded in any sort of romantic or sexual pleasure. Their masculine excitement comes from the hunt. Although they did not end up procuring a kiss, Aaron and his bro still achieved their goal because “the performance of masculinity does not necessarily require *success* at picking up women, just so long as one participates in the endeavor enthusiastically in the company of men” (Grazian 2007:235).

In their theory of emotion, Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer claim that “[a] perception of emotion is composed of two parts, psychological arousal, and an emotional label for that arousal” (Cotton 1981:366). In other words, arousals energize and justify the emotional responses. If people have an increased heart rate, sweating, or heavier breathing, they may discern an emotional situation without actually feeling an emotional response (366). So in environments that could simulate an arousal — exercising, riding a roller coaster, watching a scary movie, crossing a busy intersection, etc. — people can confuse experience heightened emotional responses with legitimate emotional stimuli or potentially mislabel their psychological responses as emotional.

Schachter and Singer's theory of emotion led to development of the misattribution paradigm (365). Researchers could introduce a stimulating, heightened excitement that the subject often misinterpreted and miscategorized as a certain emotion: “the misattribution paradigm has been shown to be remarkably effective. *Misattribution effects have been found in regards to fear, aggression, attraction, sexual responses, guilt, discomfort, and humour*” (390). With regards to the stimulating environment in a fraternity — the loud music, dancing, and

flashing lights — as well as the thrill of the girl hunt generated a certain kind of arousal that Aaron and his bro may have labeled as sexual — due to the apparent nature of their hunt.

Aaron and his bro engaged in a homosocial activity of investing in each others' sexual lives. Grazian describes a young man in his study, Lawrence, who achieves a similar sense of satisfaction from introducing a group of women at a bar to his group of male friends: "Lawrence seems to gain almost as much pleasure from his *friends*' excitement as from his own exploits, just as they are 'loving' the vicarious thrill of watching their comrade succeed in commanding the young woman's attention, as if their own masculinity is validated by his success. In this instance, arousal is not merely individual but represents a collectively shared experience as well" (Grazian 2007:232).

Cotton cites a couple of studies that demonstrate "how arousal could be misattributed as romantic feelings and lead to greater attraction" (Cotton 1981:384). In a stimulating environment like a bar or fraternity, this phenomenon could not only contribute to the man's mislabeling of his arousal as a sexual response, but also to the woman's potential mislabeling of her arousal as attraction rather than as discomfort or fear. I do not intend for the mislabeling of arousals to excuse men's potential predatory actions or blame women's responses, but rather just the opposite: if the environment itself is arousing to men and women, then why do only certain individuals act on this arousal? This discrepancy recalls the purpose of the girl hunt: calculated group male bonding — dismissed as uncontrollable male sexual libido — enacted through sexual coercion, heterosexual domination, and teamwork.

Referring to Heath's attempt to obtain kisses from girls at his high school, Pascoe claims that "[t]his sort of coercion, even when seemingly harmless, embeds a sense of masculinity

predicated upon an overcoming of girls' resistance to boys' desire" (Pascoe 2007:94). This phenomenon not only affects boys' perceptions of girls, but also girls' perceptions of themselves.

I framed my interaction with Aaron in terms of winning and losing. I was so resolute in my resistance because I had lost earlier that year.

I was at an annual jungle-themed fraternity party. I was dancing with some shirtless guy with neon face paint smeared under his eyes. He kept egging me on to kiss him. I shook my head. But I danced with him instead because the two girls that I came with were both dancing with guys. And the dancing felt like it was on my own terms. I had pulled away from him a few times when he leaned in to kiss me.

*Why won't you kiss me?* he kept asking. *Come on.*

I kept refusing until he said, *Bet you won't kiss me.*

Again, I'm competitive. And I gave in. I was drunk, but I'll never forget how he used his tongue like a cat licking out of a bowl. I began to feel nauseous. We kissed as he leaned me against the wall because I'd had too much to drink and when I closed my eyes, I got dizzy and had trouble standing. I stepped forward and looked back and forth. *Do you want to go upstairs?* he asked as I said, *I can't find my friends.* I told him *no, I'm going home* and he walked me back to my sorority.

I threw up when I got back. I'd had too much of the punch at the party. I cried to my friend because I realized that I had heard of Billy before. And he was definitely not someone who I wanted to lose to.

I felt guilty and defeated for giving in to Billy when I kissed him. Although I did not “lose” to Aaron, I did not feel victorious as they would have if I kissed Aaron.

The difference between competition and conquest contributes to this sense of frustration. Although I treated these interactions as a competition of will versus desire — my effort to resist versus their effort to overcome — the hunter and prey relationship establishes an unequal playing field. Their arousal and performance are fed by the hunt whereas I — the prey — gain no pleasure from my resistance and feel discomfort in the overwhelming persistence of strangers. The prey cannot “win” the hunt; the prey can only not lose through an escape. The discomfort that women feel can escalate to violation depending on what the men seek and the severity of the tactics of persuasion. This goal of coordinated male coercion to undermine female resistance establishes a skewed notion of sex and consent.

### **The “Wild” Parties**

Fraternity’s power on campus becomes particularly important and apparent when they host themed parties: Ceos and Office Hoes, Champagne and Shackles, Bros and Hoes, Settler Joes and Nava-Hoes, Around the World, Wine and Cheese, Country Club, Jungle, and Fifts and Friends. All these theme examples from DePauw have specific goals to attract a specific kind of woman to the parties and emphasize the importance of alcohol at these events. Some themes, such as Around the World, exoticize other nations for the purpose of fostering a joking environment and costume party while others are blatantly racist, such as Settler Joes and Nava-Hoes.

Although “[r]ape was once extremely rare in tribal communities,” Native women today face “the highest per capita rates of sexual violence in the United States” (Deer 2009:150). Stigmatizing Native American women as “hoes” — an abasement frequently used in order to victim blame women and justify sexual violence — surfaces a poignant racist, colonialist, and misogynistic rape myth that appropriates, minimizes, and even mocks Native women’s particular oppressions.<sup>4</sup> The fact that (predominantly white) fraternity men, who “are three times more likely to commit rape than other college men” (Mora and Christianakis 2018:447), set the party theme heightens the elements of sexualized, racial violence, especially because “statistics indicate that most perpetrators of rape against Native women are white” (Deer 2009:150). This kind of party theme is not for Native women by any means, but rather it is meant to appropriate stereotypes about Native women in order to host a party for white women.

All the themes have a specific audience in mind: Country Club or CEOs and Office Hoes are not meant to attract men or women of color, people who identify with the LBGTQ<sup>5</sup> community, or people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. These party themes target white, heterosexual, affluent women. Yet not all fraternities have such purposefully narrowed themes: “[w]hereas the white fraternity party names often refer to alcohol or sex, the black party names tend to reflect campus events: Ice-Breaker for the beginning-of-the-year party, Graduation, and Back to School” (Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg 2012:407).

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<sup>4</sup> Historically, Native American women have not only been sexualized, but also victims of racialized violence: “Sexual assault mimics the worst traits of colonization in its attack on the body, invasion of physical boundaries, and disregard for humanity. A survivor of sexual assault may experience many of the same symptoms - self-blame, loss of identity, and long-term depression and despair - as a people surviving colonization. The perpetrators of sexual assault and colonization thrive on power and control over their victims. The U.S. government, as a perpetrator of colonization, has attempted to assert long-lasting control over land and people - usurping governments, spirituality, and identity” (Deer 2009:150).

<sup>5</sup> Lesbian, Bisexual, Gay, Transgender, Queer

During the jungle party that I mentioned. Billy was dressed in a cheetah print loincloth with face paint under his eyes and on his chest. Some of the men go barefoot. The men decorate the fraternity with palm and tree branches and vines hung up through the hallways. They provide coolers full of their party's "jungle juice." Although the fraternity may argue that a jungle is simply a climate and geography detached of cultural meaning, the theme allows fraternity members to harness a wildness and savagery that they seek to mimic with a night of excessive drinking and potentially sexual exploits. Thus, the jungle becomes the backdrop to their party, masculine performance, and girl hunt.

The idea of costumes and appropriation recalls how Kevin Powell, a media critic and journalist, described hip-hop music, a historically Black genre, as "just a cultural safari for white people" (Kimmel 2008). Walking into a fraternity party on any weekend, you are bound to here a great deal of hip-hop and rap echoing through the halls.

Originally a genre that minorities used as an outlet in response to oppressions,<sup>6</sup> hip-hop/rap increased in popularity throughout the 1990s among white teenagers in suburban areas: "as the music became more commercially viable, it also became more misogynistic, homophobic, and violent, spinning 'ghetto' tales of drive-by shootings and exhibiting antipathy toward women and gay individuals, a theme pushed and promoted by major record companies" (Oware 2015:273). In "'We Stick Out Like a Sore Thumb . . .': Underground White Rappers' Hegemonic Masculinity and Racial Evasion," Matthew Oware argues that white rappers emphasize hip-hop's misogyny while ignoring the genre's "racially political and social themes

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<sup>6</sup> In response to the shifting economy from an industrial to service industry in the 1970s that displaced many minorities, they developed rap music in the Bronx "as an outlet to express their joys and frustrations." (Oware 2015:373)

(e.g., racial profiling, police brutality, racist policies)” in a process that he terms racial evasion (372).

Since “Hip Hop is by and large performed by black people selling product to an audience of mostly white people between the ages of 18 and 34” (Burgess 2012), the most popular music in the genre — even though they are produced by mostly Black rappers — seems to emulate this racial evasion in its listenership: the heavily misogynistic songs are more popular nationally and in DePauw’s party scene versus the songs with racial messages.

“Rockstar” by Post Malone spent weeks on the top of the charts. Its opening line is “Ayy, I’ve been fuckin’ hoes and poppin’ pillies.” Another popular song, “Gummo” by 6IX9INE has the lines: “your girl on my phone. She wanna fuck but keep her clothes on. I only want the jaw, man that’s really all I use her for, I kick her out the door, I don’t want her, you can keep the whore.” In “Plain Jane,” A\$AP Ferg says, “I fuck yo bitch for the irony. I’ll send Meechy at yo hoe if yo bitch keep eyeing me.”

There is nothing wrong with listening to hip-hop music. But we should scrutinize our song selections and put forward an effort to avoid the most misogynistic songs in the genre especially in masculine, white, and class-advantaged spaces of privilege. Cultural appreciation of hip-hop music crosses into appropriation when the racial messages of the genre are forgotten, distorted, or exploited. After attending DePauw for four years, I can say with certainty that every weekend in IFC fraternities, white men are singing along to songs and using the N-word.<sup>7</sup> I have

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<sup>7</sup> (Higson, 2017) In “Considering the N-Word: To Reject or Reclaim?” I discuss the ethics of using the N-word and its historical weight. While white people should never use the word, I analyze the idea behind Black people — particularly Black rappers — attempting to reclaim the word.

also seen white men on campus use that term outside of singing along to a rap song as well. A Black rapper using the term does not give the white audience permission to use it as well.

With the jungle party theme, the fraternity members are able to put on their costumes and act wild for the night, but just like with hip-hop, “[i]t’s safe because you ‘can take it off. White hip-hop kids can turn their caps around, put a belt in their pants, and go to the mall without being followed” (Kimmel 2008:164). They can sing along to rap songs, but they may not be pinned as gangsters or predators. They can attribute the misogyny in the lyrics to the rappers while allowing the music genre to “[confirm] every vile serotype of African-Americans—violent, out-of-control, sexual predators—that racists have long held” (163). Although fraternal masculinity encourages heavy drinking and reckless behavior, the same fraternity system protects its members from culpability for their actions; it even guarantees its members a vast alumni network upon graduation. The bros performing hegemonic masculinity at DePauw can steal what they think is Black culture with complete immunity and without facing the oppressions that Black people face.

While DePauw’s hegemonic fraternal masculinity presents Black students with the potential to gain “status,” a harsh “stigma” is attached to that performance (Wilkins 2012). Black students who adopt a “player masculinity,” like some of their white peers, will often be deemed “as predatory, promiscuous, uncontrolled, and dangerous justifying greater institutional control and persistent racial inequality” (274).

In her observations of high school teachers’ surveillance of students, Pascoe noticed, “When white boys danced sexually with (usually white) girls, the administration didn’t take note of it, possibly regarding it as a normal teenage behavior. It is likely that . . . the administrators . . .



. saw African American boys' sexual behavior as adult and intentional" (Pascoe 2007:49). White men do not face such stigmatization for their heterosexual pursuits and conquests because they are simply white men being white men with free will and natural urges. Aware of this double standard, men of color often alter their behavior. Brian Sweeney explains this phenomenon:

Young people who are privileged by race and class also have more latitude in how others view their behavior, whereas less privileged youth face more scrutiny, surveillance, and less forgiving interpretations of their behavior . . . . Some Black male college students, for example, may distance themselves from predatory types of masculine sexuality, either by emphasizing academics . . . or by emphasizing romance over sexual conquest (Sweeney 372).

White bros can bolster their social status and performance of fraternal masculinity through "manhood acts"<sup>8</sup> for which a Black man would be criminalized. Thus, white men who appropriate the hypersexuality that they attribute to Black men — through clothing styles, hood talk,<sup>9</sup> rap music, etc. — benefit socially from the performance without considering or experiencing the cost of perpetuating stereotypes about Black culture. Though all men benefit from patriarchal performances of masculinity, non-white men do not reap as many of the rewards that have been geared toward white men.

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<sup>8</sup> (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009) "All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation. . . . [B]ody types are irrelevant, except inasmuch as a male body is a symbolic asset and a female body a liability, when trying to signify possession of a masculine self and put on a convincing manhood act.

<sup>9</sup> I use the term "hood talk" in order to refer to white middle class or affluent men's fascination with gang lifestyle and idealization of violence.

## **Gendered Social Consequences of the Hunt**

The consequences of girls' and women's refusals vary, but in her high school analysis, Pascoe found that "[b]oys . . . who can't 'get' a girl often respond with anger or frustration because of their presumed rights to girls' bodies" (Pascoe 2007:95). Although I walked away too quickly to gauge their responses, I only faced social awkwardness and direct criticism during the interaction. I will provide another instance at DePauw in which I faced other social consequences more closely aligned with Pascoe's findings.

It was a Monday night, and a couple of my girlfriends were hanging out with their friend Jase at his fraternity. His frat wasn't having a party or anything, but they wanted me to stop by on my way back from the library to say hello. I had my skateboard so I swung by. The four of them were chatting, listening to music, and dancing. A couple of them were drinking, including Jase. He had always been friendly towards me during parties. He and I were talking in our group. During a song in which the singer asks a woman out on a date, Jase kept joking about wanting to take me out. When I was facing the other way, he pulled me by my hips back against his crotch, saying *yeah* once he had me in place. I pulled his hands off the front of my hips and stepped away from him. He yelled over the music, loud enough for the other three to hear: *fuck you*.

After I refused Jase's advances, he responded with a frustration similar to the kind that Pascoe witnessed: after a girl ignored a boy's catcalling as she walked out a classroom, he "deflected

blame onto her” by calling her a “whore” (95). Unlike the rejected high schooler in the example, Jase did not have a male audience to perform for in the moment, yet he still expressed his frustration at my refusal to reciprocate — or allow — his advances.

In reviewing Schachter’s theory of misattribution of arousal, Cotton also references studies that have suggested that “[a]rousing stimuli presented before an angry event (e.g. an insult) will likely have that arousal misattributed as anger and so increase aggression” (Cotton 1981:388). Applying the intensity of his preexisting arousal that elicited a sexual response to his anger at my rejection, Jase expressed considerable frustration, interrupting his performance and causing him to break his “good guy” character. By rejecting *his* advances in *his* room at *his* fraternity, my refusal challenged his heterosexual desirability in front of other women on his territory. I unmasked Jase who broke his suave and flirtatious facade, and in that moment, he lashed out exposing his anger.

Performances — like Heath’s elf costume with his mistletoe, a group of college men “girl hunting” at the bar, Aaron’s, Billy’s, or Jase’s attempts to coerce me — have specific goals: “All manhood acts, as we define them, are aimed at claiming privilege, eliciting deference, and resisting exploitation” (Schrock and Schwalbe 2009:281).

### **Same Hunt, Different Forest**

Even as a senior in a committed relationship, I’m still not good at not being hunted. Because I’m twenty-one, I went to the bar last night for a friend’s birthday. Someone with blonde hair and a young face, who was probably in his late twenties, started up a conversation. I

had refused his offer to sit next to him earlier. But as soon as the seat opened up next to me, he occupied the chair separating me from the rest of my friend group.

He kept spreading his legs wide enough to touch my leg with his knee as I squeezed my thighs closer and closer together, just like girls who want to give off a good girl vibe have always been told to do. I avoided eye contact — because somehow that often translates to interest and permission — as he tried his jokes out on me, telling me when I supposed to laugh because I didn't even grin at his punchlines. Laughing can be considered flirting. I should have just said "I have a boyfriend." But I never do because then I'd have to acknowledge that he was hitting on me. I'd have to suggest that he was not allowed to hunt me just because I'd already been caught.

At one point, some other regular bar-goers shouted over to him, interrupting one of his "best" jokes. They all raised their glasses to him in a sort of toast to his ability to talk to the young woman with red lipstick and a tight black dress with laced long sleeves — the one that I wore to a wedding with my family. I just stared them down with a smile-less face because jokes get less funny the more and more that you hear them.

The girl hunter sat there talking to me for ten minutes until he got up from his chair. I slid into his chair so that I could sit next to my friends.

He told me, "I can tell you're not interested in our conversation at all."

That was true, and I wasn't going to apologize for it, so I raised my eyebrows in a — *it happens, what can ya do* — kind of expression.

"But I really enjoyed it," he said smiling and walking back over to his group of guys.

## CHAPTER 3

This Is Our House:

“Bros will be bros”

With two suitcases, a duffle bag, and backpack, I flew back to Indiana a month before school started in order to work for DePauw’s Summer Institute for International Students. My parents offered for one of them to come with me, but after freshman year, I made the move on my own because it wasn’t worth the cost of a flight out from our home in California. At least one of them visits DePauw once every school year, and I preferred to save my mom’s for a later point in the semester so that she could see one of my college cross country races.

The DePauw housing office gave me two keys for 426 Anderson Street, the university-owned house that I was moving into that semester: one key for the front door and one for my room that I would be sharing with a friend. I was the first to move into the house out of the seven total women — five other junior women and one senior. All of us were active members of the sorority, Chi, apart from one woman who had resigned her membership from Chi before the start of the year.

Members of the IFC fraternity, Zeta, had lived in the house the semester before. Their fraternity house was just down the street from our house that everyone called 426 for its address. Over the Zeta’s semester in the house, people shuffled in and out of 426 parties almost every

weekend, garnering a reputation for 426 as a party house. The university determines housing selections based on the group size and number of seniors. The Zetas were ahead of our group of Chis with more seniors in their group, but they chose to live in a different university-owned house, turning 426 over to our group.

As I moved into 426, I noticed old Hamm's beer cans in the bushes out front. A few of the showers and sinks, clogged with hair and black gunk, did not drain. The large laundry room — equipped with a washer, dryer, couch, and table — was at the back of the house, and if you dropped a marble on the floor, it would roll because the house was on uneven ground. All the appliances were relatively new, but the worn and stained carpet had begun to lift off the wooden steps around halfway up the main staircase, making it very easy to mistake the rolls of carpet pouring over a stair for an actual step. The lock on my the bedroom door had been broken so my room's key was useless in trying to latch it.

The house had an expansive layout, creating an echo effect between different rooms. However, the common room had a barren feel to it with its minimal furnishings. It only had one couch because the rest of the furniture had been dragged into the dining area to make room for a dance floor for Zeta parties the year before. None of the lamps had lamp shades. The wooden floors were sticky and stained.

Throughout the semester, whenever we reported concerns about the physical condition of 426, DePauw housing and facilities were quick to respond, sending someone to fix the sinks and stairs. But I had accepted — and I think we all did — that the house was always going to have the morning-after-a-party feeling to it — stained floors and the smell of stale alcohol. The couch would always have dirt sunken into its upholstery from all the shoes that had walked over it and

jumped and danced on its cushions during parties. We'd be constantly reminded of who lived there before us, and I never felt completely comfortable walking barefoot or sleeping in my bed.

That first summer night that I slept alone in 426, I didn't sleep very well. I was swaying in and out of thinking about how my mom told me to lock my bedroom door, because she was a bit worried about me being in the house alone on such a deserted summer college campus. I didn't want to tell her that I couldn't with my door's busted latch. Blustering in the wind, the branches of the trees near 426 tapped the many windows that wrapped around the whole first floor, and my wandering mind imagined those tree taps as door knob twists and footsteps on the wooden floors.

\* \* \*

It must have been late August or early September because it was still warm out at night. It was a Monday evening, and one of my housemates, Anna was sitting at the kitchen table in the dining room, completing her homework.

A group of Zetas spotted her from the large front window that faced the sidewalk.

"Get out of our house!" they yelled at her. They were stumbling along the sidewalk and sounded drunk.

"426 isn't for studying!" She heard them yelling all the way down the street, "That's our house!"

\* \* \*

One night I peeked outside the front windows at two people, a young man and woman, lingering on our porch. They were just chatting and looking at their phones. By their slouched

postures and wobbly pacing, they seemed intoxicated, and so I assumed that they thought that 426 was still a Zeta party house. I snuck up to the door and locked it.

By the beginning of October, we started locking our doors consistently. We had been locking them most of the time, but I suggested that we do so at night and whenever we weren't there. My housemates agreed in light of the traffic and attention that 426 had been receiving.

\* \* \*

In November, the night that the Chicago Cubs won the World Series, we were upstairs in 426 sleeping while a few others slept at their boyfriends' houses. It was a Wednesday night that had just turned into a Thursday morning. At practically 2:00 in the morning, most of the women woke up to a crashing sound echoing throughout 426. It sounded like a shelf getting pushed over again and again, rattling our house's pitch-black sleepy silence.

I am a very deep sleeper, but the noise woke my housemates up immediately, even the one whose room was farthest from the front. No one knew what was going on.

There was a man yelling, "Fuck 426!" loudly enough that my housemates were not sure whether he was inside the house.

"Fuck you!" he screamed again and again. The loud booms sounded like a car had kept driving into the side of 426, echoing throughout the house.

After shouting "Fuck 426!" five times, the man left, yelling, "Go Cubs!" down the street toward the Zeta house. Everything fell silent. Everyone remained in their beds stunned. One woman stayed in her room with her boyfriend.

*Is everyone okay?* The texts started pouring in from my housemates.



*I think it was a drunk [Zeta], Melissa replied. He screamed fuck 426 like 5 times and slammed our door multiple times. Like so loud it woke me and [my boyfriend] up.*

*I got up and checked the doors that's how much it spooked me,* Ellie reported. She had gained the courage to do a quick sweep of the front and back doors downstairs.

*Were they locked? [Because] it sounded like they opened it and closed it multiple times,* another woman asked in our group.

*They were, I think whoever it was opened and closed that glass door not the main one,* Ellie assured her.

*I wish they'd stop harassing this house,* Melissa said.

We were all mad. I think that we talked about how angry we were with the Zetas so much with each other because it was easier to talk about instead of admitting that we were scared about what they would do if they were able to actually break in. We weren't weak women. We weren't cowardly, just smart enough to not trust these guys. We knew that the Zetas were bragging about harassing our house, and we knew that that would just rile up other Zetas, making them want to stop by 426 in the night, during their parties or on their way home from the bar.

The day after the Zeta had been shouting outside our door, we called Public Safety, but their officer said that they could not do anything about the incident because the man hadn't gotten inside our house. We reported to them that with the past incidents, we were almost positive that the man was a Zeta, especially since he called the house 426.

We found out what the loud sound in the night had been through. The man had slammed our heavy wooden-framed, cheap glass-paned storm door into our locked front door, so hard and

so many times that the metal handle broke off. It stayed broken for the rest of the year, and we would have to pinch the nub where the handle used to be to get into our house.

\* \* \*

On November 11, 2016, we hosted a Chi party at 426 starting around 9:00 p.m.. Earlier in the day, DePauw had won its big Monon football game against its all-male rival school, Wabash, sending the DePauw football men and partiers at the school into a frenzy. Everyone left the 426 around 10:30 to go to a fraternity, but Anna had decided to stay in that night. Five minutes after we all left 426, we received a text in our 426 group chat.

*Someone just ran through our house yelling, Anna said. I was just sitting in the living room and he [came] in through the front and ran out the back just screeching.*

Anna described his scream as so loud and so high pitched that at first she had found it hard to believe that a guy could make his voice that shrill. By the time that Anna had made it to the back of the house to check, the man had escaped out the back door.

Women replied in our group chat immediately.

*Lock doors now, Chloe said.*

*He? another asked.*

When Anna didn't answer, Chloe asked, *Wait is anyone home?*

*Call public safety, Melissa said. She reiterated when Anna still hadn't answered, Literally call public safety. This is so fucked up.*

Chloe went back home to make sure that Anna was okay, reporting to our group, *She's on the phone with them now.*

*Keep us updated, one woman replied, offering, We can come too if you don't feel safe.*

Chloe texted us all as soon as the officer arrived. We encouraged her to mention past incidents. Anna told the officer that the man had entered through the front door, turned left at the stairs, went into the dining room, and ran through the kitchen into the laundry room, and out the back door so quickly that it had to be a Zeta that knew the layout. The officer walked through the house and agreed that the floorplan would be far too confusing to navigate for someone who was unfamiliar with it.

*He said they'll patrol around, Chloe said. He also said that if we ever have another incident, to call public safety immediately and keep reporting things.*

After one of the Zetas finally got into the house, we locked the doors even when people were home. We used to make jokes with each other about the Zetas' harassment, trying to blow it off. No one in the house ever really made any jokes once they had broken in.

I remember turning around and keeping an eye out when I would walk home from the library at night. Our house was elevated a few steps up to a concrete porch that was surrounded by bushes, plenty of places to hide. I didn't know what I would do if a drunk Zeta popped out when I walked up to the door. Sometimes my heart would beat quicker at the door when I couldn't find my key or fit it in the lock right away.

\* \* \*

We woke up the morning after the man had gotten into our house, realizing that someone had come back after we had all returned home and gone to sleep. We had a red-colored liquid splattered across our glass storm door and part of the yellow outside wall of our house. It looked as though someone had loaded up a paintbrush with a dull rusty brownish red and heaved their arm so hard that they flicked paint into big dots from high up on the glass door down and over to

the yellow wall where the spatters shrank into smaller spots. But the liquid looked more like a thick soup or ketchup than paint.

We contacted Public Safety to make another report.

\* \* \*

November 22 at 1:41 a.m., Melissa sent a message to our 426 group, *A man just walked into our house.*

A man, who we later found out was a Zeta, walked in as if he owned the place. The door was unlocked because one of our housemates had just left for a few minutes in order to return something to a friend who lived close by. The Zeta made his way through the dining room and kitchen into the large laundry room with a table in the middle, startling Melissa's boyfriend, David, who was the only one studying downstairs.

The man approached David, who stood up and told him to leave. Another man came back into the laundry room. When he saw David, who is an almost 6'5" football player, he grabbed his friend, saying, "We gotta get out, come on." They went out the back door, unlocking it to get out.

*I thought I heard a voice,* another woman replied in the group.

*All the doors are locked now,* Melissa said.

*Why are they coming into our house* Chloe said. *Call pub safe.*

*We are,* Melissa replied. *This is so fucked up. I'm so over this.*

*Sorry guys, Ellie. That was all me I forgot to lock the door on my way out. I'm so sorry. But still that's so ridiculously fucked up [though]. Leave us alone. Like at what point are they going to get it.*

The women in the group assured her that it was not her fault.

*Public safety said they can't do anything [because] we have no proof, Melissa reported to our group just before 2:00 a.m.. I just want this to stop.*

*No wonder no one calls public safety, another woman replied. Honestly call the police, it's harassment.*

Some women threw around the names of the Zetas who had lived in 426 last year, hoping that Chris could identify the two men. He eventually was able to name one of them within the next few days.

*This is so fucked up y'all, one woman said. I'm going to put a can of pepper spray downstairs. Like what if [David] wasn't down there? What were they going to do?*

I don't know what they would have done and that thought sent me far into my covers when I slept in my bed the following weeks. Especially to women on campus, fraternity men are dangerous in a way that Public Safety didn't want to see or admit. Sure, with one of us downstairs, the situation could have played out in the exact same way with a Zeta walking towards one of us, as he did with David, before his friend pulled him back and they both left. But my imagination tired the possible scenarios.

When David had talked with Public Safety, the responding officer said, "Those girls should've locked their doors." That night, David emailed the head of Public Safety, complaining about the repeated offenses and the officer's nonchalance. Melissa texted her friend in Zeta, begging for his help in bringing this all to an end.

We had reached the point of becoming desperate. And I held onto my anger — because it was so much easier to admit to myself than embarrassment and anguish — that we had to be afraid — that the Zetas treated us like trespassers in their house — on their campus. That we

didn't deserve be comfortable in our own rooms, our own parties, our own space independent from their loud music, dim halls, doors guarded by their fraternity members who could tell us whether or not we could enter, their alcohol, their rules. And our fear, our locked doors, and our complaints were just something to brag about — all a part of some big joke that Public Safety might as well have been in on.

\* \* \*

The Head of Public Safety apologized to Chris. Zeta's president reached out to Melissa and said sorry to her for the Zetas' behavior over the semester. With less than a month left in the school semester, the director of Public Safety brought over a pasta and salad peace offering one evening, saying that she must have missed all the reports somehow.

At first she downplayed the events, saying that people drunkenly break into the apartments by Indiana Street all of the time. But we were adamant about these break-ins coming to an end. We told her that the harassment was well-known throughout Zeta. They all knew about it, and so it wasn't even the same Zetas each time. Once Public Safety was involved, Briana — a white woman who lived with us and had been defending the Zetas — admitted to hearing the Zetas joke about harassing and breaking into our house frequently. They claimed to have run through naked once.

The Head of Public Safety apologized for the officer's misunderstanding of the situation when he told us that we should have locked our doors, acknowledging the fact that the Zetas shouldn't be breaking in even if our door was wide open. She said that there was really only one thing that she could do that would ensure that we could capture evidence of future break-ins if they were to occur.

“You could have a camera installed by the front door,” the director suggested. “But most college kids don’t want that right out in front of their houses,” she continued with a laugh, suggesting that we could be caught on camera intoxicated as underage women walking into our house. A few of us let out some nervous laughs with her. We knew that her suggestion was not earnest. It wasn’t meant for us to accept, because her camera offer was undermined by the implication that we could be setting ourselves up with evidence of underage drinking. All our housemates agreed that that step wouldn’t be necessary especially because we knew the fraternity as well as specific people who were breaking in.

The director said that she talked with Zeta’s president, asking him if he had been discouraging the Zetas from harassing 426. She expressed that the president should be threatening to kick out members who broke in again. She also questioned one of the Zetas whom David was able to identify.

It all sounded good, but I thought about our conversation with the director later, and it seemed like she was giving the Zetas an easy way out. By talking to their president and giving them another chance after all they had put us through, I felt like she was tipping them off, as if saying *alright, you had a good run, but stop with the pranks now before these girls get you in any real trouble.*

Briana gave us a few names of the Zetas who had bragged about breaking in earlier in the semester. We passed along those names to Public Safety. While following up, the director interviewed a Zeta who eventually confessed to being the one who broke in when Anna was home alone. Even though he had not reached out to us the whole semester since breaking in, the head of Public Safety relayed his apology to us that came out of his interrogation. The Zeta said

that it wouldn't happen again, and hoped this incident wouldn't cause a rift between the women of 426 and the fraternity.

This wasn't preschool. The teacher cannot just make the boy say sorry for hitting down the girls' building blocks, and everyone forgets the incident within five minutes. It couldn't be. Sorry wasn't going to fix how degraded and out of control we felt and how unsafe we realized we really were in our own house.

\* \* \*

I didn't tell my parents about the break-ins — as I'm sure my housemates didn't — until after the semester was over and we had moved out of 426.

### **Marking Their Territory**

Men from Alpha, a top-tier fraternity, moved into 426 Anderson Street after our lease for the semester ended. When one of the women gave the Alphas a tour of the house, she told them about how the Zetas had been breaking in all semester. An Alpha responded that if the Zetas try to pull that on them, they'll "beat their asses." The Alphas did not have any problems when they moved in. The next year, a top tier Panhellenic sorority moved in, and the Zetas did not break into 426 over that semester either.

In a patriarchal Greek system, the rankings of sorority status generally depend on the IFC fraternities with which they frequently couple for social events: "[b]y pairing opposite-sex houses for events, Greek organizations . . . effectively [create] what demographers call 'endogamy' or 'homogamy'—pairing like with like or, in this case affluent white women with affluent white men" (Armstrong and Hamilton 2015:6). The top-tier fraternities prefer to pair



with high-status sororities to cultivate their shared social capital. The top tier sororities adopt a liability along with their social status, having to be more likely to perform an emphasized femininity to compliment the top tier fraternity men's hegemonic masculinity. High status sorority women may experience more pressure to engage in hookup culture. In top-tier fraternities, "where women run higher risks of being raped, men are more likely to be single, interact with women for the sole purpose of sex, and be athletes" (Mora and Christianakis 2018: 446-47). From my experience, I suspect that high-status sororities are more likely to believe in rape myths themselves in order to accommodate the ideologies of the bros with whom they often associate. Also they may normalize the fraternity environment through internalizing rape myths so as to accept the men's behavior.

Mid- to low-tier sororities prefer not to engage in the high status fraternities' party spaces that tend to be more dangerous in terms of sexual assault, binge drinking, and physical safety. Also, events with a top-tier fraternity do not guarantee an upward status shift for sororities while it could lure women into a potentially unfamiliar or dangerous environment. The varying statuses end up mutually excluding each other from interacting frequently in the same social circle.

Zeta, a mid-tier fraternity, frequently paired with Chi, a mid-tier sorority, for social events. Although it would be reasonable to assume that an apparent close social tie between a sorority and fraternity would prevent aggression and disrespect between the groups, the Zeta bros proved that they viewed this relationship as their fraternity's ownership over Chi women instead of an equal partnership. Briana, one of the white women in 426, had worked hard in order to establish social connections with the bros in Zeta; thus, throughout our semester-long struggle with the Zetas breaking in, she remained quiet and did not reveal the names of the Zetas involved

in order to maintain her social position with the fraternity. The bros joked about their 426 escapades in front of Briana, expecting her to laugh along and keep their confidence. Unfortunately, Briana's divided loyalty caused a strain on her relationships with the rest of the women in 426.

When I lived in 426, five of the seven women were dating someone: two of my housemates at the time were dating men in Gamma, a top-tier fraternity on campus that is often deemed "the football house" because so many DePauw players join the house. One of my housemate's boyfriends, Charlie, who was in a low-tier fraternity, joked that we should put a sign outside of 426, saying, "Two Gamma girlfriends live here." Touching on each of the three levels of fraternity, Charlie suggested that in order to stop the harassment of the mid-tier fraternity men, the women of 426 should make the Zetas aware that two of their women belong to bros of top-tier fraternity. Although none of the boyfriends condoned the Zetas' behaviors, they had more weight as players on the gendered field of harassment and retaliation than the women of 426 were. In Charlie's considerations, all of the varying tiers of fraternities still outranked the free will of the seven women living in the house, who were mere pawns in this men's game of claiming territory and women.

### **That's My Girl: Women Navigating "Guyland" and Guys' Responses**

Through their territorial performance, the Zetas turn DePauw into Kimmel's Guyland, the limbo that privileged guys can occupy in between boyhood and adulthood. Kimmel attributes the outlandish Guylandish behavior — brutal hazing in sports teams and fraternities, an abundance of fraternity pledges' deaths, violence toward women, and frequent high risk drinking (Kimmel

2008:17) — to a desperate attempt to hold onto the male power that bros feel is unfairly escaping them. Although the rates of college attendance are increasing for both genders, women's rates are increasing faster; thus, there are more women than men filling colleges these days. Thus, these bros police not only other men's expressions of masculinity to fit their own hegemonic model, but also women's as well.

The Zetas continually intimidated all of us who lived in 426 — through verbal harassment, property damage, and unsolicited entry — to the point of causing panic at times for the women living in the house. One woman could not see at all without her glasses, and so she woke up in a terror to a Zeta's scream one night, unable to see around her room, let alone determine whether men were in the house. Their continual harassment repeated to the point of constituting a kind of violence. But why this need to punish the seven women living in 426?

Not all women threaten Guyland; some kinds of women are essential to Guyland. Hegemonic femininity complements hegemonic masculinity, fulfilling the patriarchal gender roles that present women as the beautiful, compliant, sexually active but not too available counterpart to the tough, assertive, and promiscuous man. By reporting the Zetas continually to Public Safety, the women of 426 detached ourselves from the submissive obedience. We did not accept their behavior.

Like hegemonic masculinity, hegemonic femininity is not available to every woman, but rather race- and class- privileged heterosexual women. Just as there are multiple masculinities, Mimi Schippers argues that “[h]egemonic femininity is ascendant in relation to, what I suggest we call *pariah femininities*. I propose calling this set of characteristics *pariah femininities* instead

of subordinate femininities because they are deemed, not so much inferior, as contaminating to the relationship” (Schippers 2007).

The women who frighten the bros of Guyland are not the ones who comply with hegemonic femininity. It is the women who challenge that femininity who challenge the bros’ authority and their own expressions of masculinity. The women of 426 did not fit the ideal hegemonic feminine model at DePauw. Not relying on fraternities as the only place that we could socialize and drink alcohol, we lived outside of our sorority house, in our own space. We were also a diverse group — I lived with three other white women and three women of color: one Asian-American, another Black, and a third Latina. By harassing our house and invading our space, the Zetas put the women of 426 back — not only into a gendered order — but also a racial order as well, reminding the women of their power and place higher up on the institutional hierarchies.

If we had been all been women from a top-tier sorority or a racially homogenous group of women, I argue that the Zetas may not have risked their social ties with the women and with the fraternity men ‘above’ them through harassing them. After a group of top-tier fraternity men lived in 426 for a semester, a racially homogenous group of top-tier white sorority women moved in. Though the lack of harassment could have come from the fact that some of the culpable Zetas had graduated, I argue that the top-tier sorority women posed as less of a threat to the Zetas’ perceptions of how gender roles should be at DePauw.

Women are working their way into male-dominated occupations and sports: “Where once there were so many places where bros could validate their masculinity, proving it in the eyes of other men, there are fewer and fewer places where they aren’t also competing with women”

(Kimmel 2008:18). Women are even creating their own spaces. Not only was 426 once a men's house, but it was also a white space until it became a women's multicultural space. As the women renting the space from the university, we could have boyfriends or other men stay the night if we wanted, host parties when we wanted to, kick people out of our parties if they disrespected the house or the people in it, or store alcohol in our fridges, which sorority houses prohibit. Kimmel describes the women who are necessary to Guyland as the ones "who enable guys, legitimate guys' behavior, normalize it, and make it seem natural and inevitable" (245). We deviated from the patriarchal femininity that the Zetas could benefit from and control.

The more that women's femininities deviate from the hegemonic norms — by failing to be passive, admiring, or complicit or having intersectional components of their identities: not being heterosexual or race- or class-privileged — the more that they challenge hegemonic masculinity. For DePauw bros who seek to control women's bodies or access to spaces, the women who occupy the spaces, which they want to, threaten the hegemonic-expressing man's entitlement.

Nancy Finley analyzes the gender expressions of women who participate in roller derby, which "is arguably the most violent sport organized and owned by women" (Finley 2010:369). Women who do not conform to hegemonic femininity, such as roller derby women, receive backlash, often in the form of insults that are aimed at corralling them back into a more traditional gender role.

For example, a woman exhibiting defiance, physical violence, or authority in a patriarchy is destabilizing for male dominance unless the exhibit can be stigmatized and feminized.

Once feminized, people perceive the masculine content as another type of femininity such as a “bitch” (authority), a “slut” (sexually noncompliant), or a “bad-ass girl” (physically violent) (Finley 2010).

The more that the women of 426 resisted the harassment, locking our doors consistently and calling Public Safety each time the Zetas returned, the more brazen their break-ins and harassment became. Attempting to mark their territory and assert their entitlement, the Zetas became frustrated by our resistance. When the Zeta could not get into our house, he slammed our storm door so hard that the handle broke off while yelling, “Fuck you.” After a night celebrating the Chicago Cubs’ baseball victory — with sports as a poignant element to male bonding — the Zeta decided to run through our house. Yet our locked door interrupted his performance of male dominance, inciting his anger and violence.

### **“Get out of our house”**

On a show called, “A Black Woman Stole My Job,” “three ‘angry white males’” about how they felt cheated in the workplace, blaming an unfair war against white men as the reason that they were not advancing in their careers (Kimmel 2008:60). Instead of reasoning that a more qualified candidate received the job, the men felt cheated: “[t]hese men felt the job was ‘theirs’ because they felt entitled to it, and when some ‘other’ person—black, female—got the job, that person was really taking what was ‘rightfully’ theirs” (60). Revealing their privilege by believing that the job had been theirs to claim, these white men present the world as theirs for the taking.

Bros feel as though their generation is being cheated. Not only do they have more competition in traditionally male-exclusive or male-dominated career fields, but they also have fewer all male spaces to retreat back to. As women speak out about their mistreatment and the careers of Hollywood giants are derailing due to an overwhelming number of sexual assault allegations, some bros cling to their hegemonic ideals of masculinity that are under attack. Kimmel sensed and described this phenomenon emerging in 2008, and I do not believe that it is a coincidence that his observations coincide with the beginning of the Obama era.

Yes, young men have always wanted to prove themselves, and that is nothing new. But today that desire has a distinct tone of desperation to it. In a world where their entitlement is eroding, where the racism and sexism that supported white male privilege for decades is taking hits left and right, where women are “everywhere they want to be,” and affirmative action has provided at least some opportunities to minorities, the need for a “Band of Brothers” feels stronger than ever (Kimmel 2008:18).

What did the Zetas get out of breaking into 426? They attempted to grasp onto that sense of entitlement that they perceived as so vulnerable. While the women kept reporting the harassment, the lack of Public Safety’s intervention in addressing the Zetas only reaffirmed the Zetas’ legal invincibility. They became brazen enough to joke about the break-ins at parties in front of one of the women who lived in 426. With how many incidents the Zetas got away with before Public Safety spoke to their president and said that men who broke in again would have to go through DePauw’s standards board, their entitlement became more and more tangible.

With the physical repairs to our house — the clogged sinks and bunched up carpet on the stairs — the university responded immediately with someone in to fix the problem usually the next day. But the Zetas' harassment was not a problem that they could easily fix. Their harassment was a kind of problematic behavior that is harder to understand and address. As with most performances of hegemonic masculinity, it was easier for Public Safety to look away and dismiss the behavior as frat boys will be frat boys.

The Zetas know that they never owned 426. They merely rented it from DePauw for a semester. Yet they frequently flaunted how entitled to the house that they felt. By continually walking through the house and harassing the residents, we — as the women of 426 — suffered for taking what the Zetas believed was rightfully theirs. One unaffiliated woman and six women from a mid-tier sorority, three of whom were women of color, stole their house, using it to study, cook, sleep, and host parties all on their terms. In theory, these were seven women who could kick out whoever they wanted or prevent people from entering.

The Zetas could have selected 426 because they had priority in housing. They were not angered that other students had moved into the house; they were incited by the fact that it was seven women. Emboldened by their frustration and resentment of our intrusion, the Zetas continually worked to assert their dominance by making us, the women residents of 426 fearful, uncomfortable, and unnerved in our own home. The Zetas yelled from the street at a woman who was studying in 426; one slammed the door, waking up the women inside, when his baseball team won; Zetas ran through the house as soon as most of us left for a party at another fraternity; two Zetas broke in within five minutes of a woman leaving the house unlocked in the middle of the night. The eerily coincidental timing of the latter two examples suggest that either the Zetas



frequently checked our front door to see if it was unlocked or they were watching 426 to see whenever the door may be unlocked. Both explanations are forms of surveillance.

On DePauw's campus, performances of hegemonic masculinity operate on the fact that the women enacting hegemonic femininities are contained to their large, Panhellenic sorority houses where they cannot have alcohol, forcing them out of their houses to attend parties at fraternities. IFC fraternity bros are able to control the large social spaces and party life on campus. Fraternities and sports teams seem to be the last frontiers for women to penetrate; they are the spaces in which bros can enact their masculinity uncensored and unburdened by a woman's presence reminding them that talk of degrading or dominating women affects actual people. IFC fraternities can serve as hegemonic spaces in which white bros can be surrounded by people who predominantly look like them, and so that they do not have to engage in conversations about race or confront their own privilege. Of course, women are invited into fraternities for parties, but on the men's terms; women are allowed on the football field, but as cheerleaders. Men are still able to control women's access and frame the women's presence in a subordinating role of hegemonic femininity.

During my "What does it mean to be a DePauw man?" discussion, a white man, unaffiliated with a Greek house, commented that women do not have very many drinking spaces that they control on campus. Recalling upperclassmen women on his cross country team who lived in a university-owned house their senior year, he felt as though being able to invite people over to drink and monitor who came into the house was very empowering for the women. The women hosted their team's parties in their own space. One roller derby player, whom Finley interviewed, commented about derby being a women's run and owned sport: "[The] most

empowered thing about it—the reason it is growing is that as a sex we finally have a chance to own” (Finley 2007:380). The women of 426 owned their own drinking space. Not only did we live in a house that used to belong to the Zetas, but we also no longer needed the Zetas for their fraternity space. We could study, host a party, or drink in 426 without their regulation or permission. We did not have to store our alcohol at Zeta or rely on a party to provide it if we decided to drink.

Many women’s organizations were founded historically in response to their exclusion from men’s organizations, such as sports and fraternities. Yet in discussing roller derby, Finley notes, “This sport was not positioned as a lesser version of men’s where masculine superiority could be constructed” (380). Women determined the rules in the roller derby rink. If men wanted to play the sport, they would have to play by the women’s rules. When we owned 426, we had a space in which we could determine the rules.

### **Make DePauw Great Again**

White men, who feel cheated in terms of privilege, often feel nostalgic about the past. IFC fraternities prize tradition. Many of them were founded before or in the decades after women were allowed to even enroll at DePauw University. Thus, reminiscent of Donald Trump’s campaign platform, IFC fraternity bros may idealize a mystical DePauw past where women were lucky simply to be granted access.

One top-tier fraternity, Gamma, placed “Trump 2016” signs out in front of their house, generalizing their political beliefs and flaunting their power and entitlement by siding with a controversial candidate who promised an undoing of social and legislative progress for women,

minorities, and immigrants, in favor of policies that benefit a patriarchal and racist society. When Hugh Hefner died, a Gamma sent in a message between members of Gamma and my sorority, Chi:

Ladies, one of this worlds greatest legends passed away late last night, Hugh Hefner, a man of multiple talents and endless skills, a role model for many young men in America, a man who never kneeled for the anthem, in honor of his great story we are having a themed party Saturday night, Playboy Party, we hope to see you all there to respect this legend as he watches us as we party the way he would want us to party

Once the Gamma did not receive any responses for his message, he sent out an apology, claiming that it was all a joke. Yet this message reveals the desperation to maintain a specific kind of social order. Criticizing the masculinity of the football players of color who have knelt in protest of police violence during their game's national anthem, the Gamma flaunts a distaste for men's attempts to address racism in the United States and make social changes.

The Gamma also degrades the women in the group chat who were expected to comply — laugh, maybe roll their eyes, and be flattered by his sexual attention and invitation while knowing their place as “lesser than.” By referring to Hefner, an ironic feminist, who commercialized the porn industry directed at satisfying men's fantasies of women's femininities and sexualities in the the name of feminism, the Gamma's joke aims to poke fun at the social progress that erodes his world of entitlement. Hefner rallied for women's access to birth control so that they would have a very specific kind of sexual freedom: the ability to be more sexually

accessible to men and fulfill men's fantasies. In this political time, bros are desperate to return to the Hefner times because they are living in the wake of a fast-moving social progress: they are afraid of Hillary Clinton's promise in her concession speech to Trump coming true: "Now, I know we have still not shattered that highest and hardest glass ceiling, but someday someone will — and hopefully sooner than we might think right now" (Golshan 2016).

### **Signal Fires: All Eyes on Our Entitlement**

It is not some distant place across the country that is attempting to advance women's movements and challenge racial inequalities, deconstructing our misogynistic and racist society. DePauw University has its own initiatives that attempt to address issues of race, gender, sexuality, and socioeconomic status. The Women's Center provides a safe space and resources for anyone who identifies as a woman. The new Center for Diversity and Inclusion provides the same kind of spaces to engage in conversations about race, socioeconomic status, gender, and sexuality. The university provides bystander intervention trainings to inform students about how to react when they see an overly intoxicated person or predatory behavior at parties.

But when it comes to campus inclusion discussions about race, gender, sexual orientation, and class, such as the campus-wide Day of Dialogue, there is often a glaring discrepancy in attendance, leaving people to wonder: where are the white fraternity men? Some fraternities, who identify as higher status fraternities, even schedule parties for the day before, night of, or perhaps even during the panels, speakers, and discussion groups at DePauw's Day of Dialogue. Almost every person that I talked with after the Day of Dialogue mentioned that there were only one or two white men in their break out groups — if any. Many members of high

status fraternities feel the need to trivialize or even mock the diversity and inclusion talks while celebrating the day off of classes. The outspoken disapproval, apathy, and disrespect for the Day of Dialogue among the highest status IFC fraternities is a performance itself. Empathy, political correctness, and respect align with the feminine; thus, they play the part of who they believe “real” men are by calling other men “fags,” disrespecting women, using the N-word when they sing rap songs, failing to recognize their own privilege, or at least pretending not to care.

The promise of social progress is knocking on fraternity doors. In order to clutch their notions of hegemonic masculinity, some IFC fraternity bros respond in resentment and even violence.

Around 9:00 in the evening, the same night that the Zetas later slammed the door of 426 trying to get in, broke our handle, and later came back to throw sauce on our door, I was walking to my friend’s house through a parking lot that wraps around Beta, a top tier fraternity that people generally consider to be the “jock” house. As I walked around Beta, I noticed a couch on the front lawn. It was engulfed in flames from armrest to armrest.

Two young men stood a few feet away from it, admiring their work, with planted feet and arms crossed. Their smug faces were illuminated in the red orange glow of the flames that churned over themselves, enveloping the furniture.

“Hey,” one of them yelled over, directing their attention to me. “What’re *you* doing tonight?”

“Just hanging out,” I said quickening my pace. I turned back a few times to see them crossed armed again, chatting with each other and looking at their couch with such pride that you’d think that they had just finished building it by hand, instead of destroying it by fire.

I called DePauw’s Public Safety when I arrived at my friend’s house.

“There’s a couch burning outside of [Beta] on the lawn,” I said once the officer picked up the phone.

“A couch?”

“Yes,” I replied.

“Okay,” she said letting out an audible, exasperated sigh. “We’ll send someone over. Thank you.”

The DePauw, our campus newspaper, released an article about the couch burning the week after. Another couch was dragged out to the sidewalk next to East College, the oldest building on campus — the one proudly featured on all of our brochures — and set on fire as well. Including fire alarm pulls, the Greencastle fire department had made eight trips to campus that night. The head of Public Safety reported that the new sidewalks had been burned so badly that they left a permanent mark and would need to be replaced (Mazurek 2016). Passing by East College, I remember seeing the black rectangular ash stain for months after the big football game.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> (Mazurek 2016) Image by Gerald Pineda of *The DePauw*



Mere yards away from the oldest building on campus, the Betas claimed DePauw as theirs. The fraternity that set the couches on fire is still on campus. It is the same fraternity that released the podcast that degraded women by deeming their members as “scaife hounds,” blurring the lines of a hook up and rape. Their lack of punishment for the couch burning and podcast is a brazen and blazing reminder of their privilege.

Despite the head of Public Safety’s response, condemning the couch burnings and her promise to find whoever is culpable, the students quoted in the article did not present very much surprise about the fires. A sophomore football player responded, “I mean it was a big game and sometimes people don’t know how to react. . . . People sometimes set things on fire to show enjoyment” (Mazurek 2016). The word “people” is misguided here, because it was not a group of sorority women dragging a couch all of the way over to the heart of campus; it was not a group of independent students pouring the gasoline all over the cushions; it was not men from an NPHC or MGC fraternity lighting the match. It was a group of IFC fraternity men. So why is couch burning a natural way “to react” or “to show enjoyment”?

If the Zeta bros or couch burners had been from a multicultural fraternity, independent students, and or community members from the Greencastle community, Public Safety would

have taken the reports more seriously and likely sent out an incident report to the campus. At what point does society criminalize white young male unlawfulness or violence? What behavior crosses the line of boys just being boys in the public's perception? One of the best examples is school shootings: a young white heterosexual male crime. Analyzing the 28 school shootings between 1982 and 2001, Michael Kimmel and Matthew Mahler found that all of them were male<sup>11</sup> and 27 of them were white (Kimmel and Mahler 2003).

In an article, "School Shootings Aren't Due To Toxic Masculinity, But A Lack Of Masculinity," published on *The Federalist*, James Hasson claims that shooters are "Man-Boys [that] have many traits in common: social isolation, delusions of grandeur, and perpetual adolescence" (Hasson 2018). In defense of traditional expressions of masculinity, people like Hasson attempt to dismiss the clear patterns that link shooters in gender, race, and sexuality degrade the shooters as men who are lesser than real men.<sup>12</sup> As Tom Nichols — another man

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<sup>11</sup> (Kimmel and Mahler 2003) There was no evidence that any of the school shooters studied were homosexual, yet "[a]ll or most of the shooters had tales of being harassed—specifically, gay-baited—for inadequate gender performance; their tales are the tales of boys who did not measure up to the norms of hegemonic masculinity." The shooters were not bullies, but rather the victims of bullying who continually suffered the consequences of not measuring up to the steep expectations of masculinity.

<sup>12</sup> Hasson gives the example of the heroic actions of the assistant football coach, Aaron Feis, at Parkland High School who shielded students when the gunman opened fire. Hasson argues that contrasting Feis' masculinity with the gunman's "provid[es] a side-by-side comparison of authentic masculinity versus a perverted . . . version of what it means to be a man." I would comment on Feis's humanity — his compassion, quick thinking, dedication, selflessness, and bravery (a mix of traditionally feminine and masculine traits) — before his masculinity. Hasson exploits Feis's response to the shooter by categorizing it as a natural masculine expression — enacting the role of the protector — instead of the heroic actions of an individual.

Hasson uses the example to say that Feis was more of a man than the shooter, masculinizing the role of a heroic responder instead of the shooter. However, I wonder how Hasson may react to Vicki Soto's response to a gunman entering her first grade classroom. Soto hid the children, distracted the shooter, and then shielded the children from gunfire (CBS New York "First-Grade Teacher Vicki Soto Being Hailed A Hero"). Feis and Soto gave their lives to protect "those more vulnerable," as Hasson puts it. The heroic responders in school shootings have been both men and women. Yet all shooters are young white men. So why are some people so resistant to taking a critical look at masculinity? Masculinity



who tries to deflect scrutiny of hegemonic masculinity — states, “they are not men in any sense of the word that connotes responsibility, restraint, self-discipline, or the other traditional masculine virtues” (Nichols 2015).

Yet these Man-Boys that Hasson describes sound a lot like Kimmel’s “guys” living in the limbo of Guyland. If the guys in Guyland are enacting a hegemonic masculinity that is considered to be normal college behavior, then isn’t it time to take a look at our perceptions of masculinity as an explanation for the violence committed by this demographic?

As the sociologists who studied the 28 school shootings in a 19 year time span, Kimmel and Mahler connect the masculinities that young shooters are enacting to the United States’ normalized, hegemonic masculinity: “in our view, these boys are not psychopathological deviants but rather overconformists to a particular normative construction of masculinity, a construction that defines violence as a legitimate response to a perceived humiliation” (Kimmel and Mahler 2003:1440). Aside from extreme cases, violence as revenge is acceptable for white men.

Hasson argues that “[t]oxic masculinity is not plaguing our society — a lack of masculinity is” — just the kind of message that drove these young men to such extreme violence in the first place (Hasson 2018). Hegemonic masculinity relies so heavily on heterosexual expression and success, domination, and apathy while condoning violence as an appropriate way to “get even” or respond to shame and challenges that the stakes of failing to perform became too high for the young men committing these school shootings.

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should not only be defined by the extreme moments — a shooter’s catastrophic destruction or a hero’s self-sacrifice; it is defined in the “normal” interactions that occur among men and others daily.

Since a successful and constant expression of hegemonic masculinity is forever just out of reach, men often feel inadequate, channelling that embarrassment into anger and violence since sadness in response to their shame would send them sliding back further from the masculine ideal into the feminine. If extreme white male violence can originate from feelings of shame, humiliation, or feelings of inadequacy as a man, then we need to take a critical look at all forms of male violence, including property destruction, intimidation, sexual assault, and trespassing.

The media, parents, teachers, coaches, and institutions' reaction to school shootings highlights the line where performances of hegemonic masculinity cross from a natural boy behavior into acts of deviance: "while schools certainly acknowledge the atrocities of violence that have occurred within them, the role of bullies as a significant antecedent is only beginning to be seen. Popular discourse still minimizes the impact of such everyday aggression, again with a 'boys will be boys' refrain, and refuses to recognize the gay harassment and dating violence inherent in this aggression" (Klein and Chancer 2006:96).

In examples of male violence at DePauw University, including sexual assault, fighting, and hazing, similar themes of shame, insecurity, and desperation to perform a fraternal hegemonic masculinity emerge.

Tim Beneke, author of *Men on Rape*, interviewed men about their perspectives on sexual violence. Though none of the men had committed rape, "the violence in their language is arresting" (Kimmel 2008:228). The men held deep anger towards women; for example one even went as far to say, "If I were actually desperate enough to rape somebody it would be from wanting that person, but also it would be a very spiteful thing, just being able to say 'I have the

power over you and I can do anything I want with you' because I feel that they have power over me just by their presence" (228).

By making sex with a woman so important to the performance of a hegemonic masculinity, bros can become frustrated with women who reject them or even women who are just being — as the man from Beneke's interview illustrates. Since violence is an appropriate way for men to cope with resentment, rape turns into a sadistic revenge tactic. Excessive sex talk, another staple of hegemonic masculinity in all male spaces like fraternities, degrades women, bolsters a man's heterosexual performance, and exaggerates men's sexual encounters. Sex talk creates a competitive environment of "misinformation ([false] beliefs about other guys' sexual activity)" (226). Since women are men's tickets to flaunting the heterosexuality that hegemonic masculinity prizes so much, young men who are eager to prove themselves can build up a resentment towards women for not wanting to have sex with them while the women seem to be so willing to have sex with their fraternity brothers.

In the previous chapter, I mentioned after I refused Jase's sexual advances, he verbalized his frustration that he was not going to get what he wanted, by yelling at me, "Fuck you." Jase lashed out in retaliation in a heated moment of anger, yet I also have witnessed an example of premeditated retaliation.

In my sorority, Chi, we have a dinner in order to thank the waiters whom the sorority pays to serve the food, wash dishes, and clean the tables. All of the men were fellow students belonging to IFC fraternities. At the Appreciation Dinner, the waiters

stood up and gave speeches. A few other men had already expressed stories of friendships with women in the house and gratitude when Justin stood up.

He had a bouquet of roses. He pulled one out, walking over to a woman at a neighboring table, saying, "I just really wanted to thank, Abbey." He gave her the rose. Some women exhaled, "Awww."

He pulled out another rose and called another woman by name, handing a rose over to her as well.

By the third or fourth rose, the laughs and sighs fizzled out as women began to catch on that he was only giving flowers to the women with whom he had hooked up. Whispers diffused the excitement in the room.

One woman refused to take a flower, so he set it on the table in front of her. Jamie had left the room before her turn, so he called her name. "Someone, go get Jamie," he insisted.

"Do *not* get her," one of her friends exclaimed, and no one moved as he called the next name.

Deeming women a trophy to be added to the shelf of sexual conquests steamrolls women's sexual agency and preferences. Just like the bros who would break into 426 the semester after the waiter dinner performance, Justin was a Zeta. Like his brothers later did, he was also claiming a women's space as his own. Justin was a heterosexual, white man in an IFC fraternity whom a sorority was appreciating for his services in the kitchen. Washing dishes, putting the food out, and cleaning the kitchen were activities that put him in a traditionally feminized and domestic

role. At this dinner, Justin stifled any sentiments of gratitude or friendship in favor of an attempt to assert his power over the women.

At the time, women on campus, but especially people in our sorority, Chi, had accused Zeta men of drugging them with date rape drugs at parties. I personally know over six DePauw women who claim to have been drugged at Zeta. Sociologists determined in a study that “they could distinguish between ‘rape prone’ and ‘rape free’ fraternities in part by the ideologies that the guys held and their beliefs in rape myths” (Kimmel 2008:234). The Zeta bros were not ignorant to Justin’s performance, the drugging allegations, or their brothers’ breaking into 426. The resentment that these bros felt towards women — and perhaps women particularly in our sorority — manifested itself in sexual and symbolic violence.

As a sophomore in the sorority, I delivered a letter to Chi’s executive board — as they considered his punishment in response to the incident with Justin — reading in part:

While the other waiters . . . conveyed stories of gratitude, friendship, appreciation, and respect, [Justin] created a spectacle of our sisters with a clear premeditated intent: he drafted up a list and purchased props. [Justin] exposed personal details about our sisters and made them vulnerable in their own house. By announcing the names of our sisters [whom] he has hooked up with and giving them roses, he asserted a sort of dominance over them, gained control of the room, devalued their individual significance, and enforced that the worth of the women of our chapter is dependent on his temporary reception of their attention. [Justin] praised girls for their physical and superficial value;

he resurfaced past encounters and perhaps lapses in judgements. We are real strong women, who stand on our own, needing no approval, especially from [Justin].

He humiliated our members in their own home, disrupting the feelings of comfort, support, and safety that this sorority promises them. We should trust our waiters. We welcome them into our home. We see them around the kitchen, dining room, and formal. . . . Being a waiter is based on privilege and a sense of respect, not entitlement.

Like the Zetas, Justin aimed to dominate and claim a women's space. He attempted to drive a wedge between us, attempting to humiliate not only the women who had hooked up with him, but also the women who care about them.

Each condoning the same result, the Zetas fall into two categories in relation to their perpetrating brothers' hegemonic behaviors: passively complicit or outright supportive. Zeta used to — and it may still — release a newsletter that they emailed to their entire chapter, highlighting brothers who “hooked up” with women and naming individual women. Sometimes they included pictures of women overlaid with jokes about the women. A Zeta forwarded the newsletter to one of my female friends, Ally, who was featured in the magazine. Ally had not known that she had hooked up with a second man that night; thus, this newsletter, blind to consent, does not appear to distinguish between sex and sexual assault, praising both as boast-worthy accomplishments.

Fraternity bros have rituals, like this newsletter, that relieve the resentment that they may feel towards women. Kimmel argues that men who commit sexual assault or perpetuate rape

myths, which normalize rape and victim blame, do not perceive “sexual aggression as the initiation of violence” but rather “as retaliation” against the “power that women have over them” (Kimmel 2008:227). Rape is not about getting carried away sexually or enjoying sex too much. It is about resentment and retaliation, not sex. It is the same resentment that fuels the degradation of women in Zetas’ newsletter and sent them banging on 426’s door and running through the house. Kimmel interviewed a 25 year old man, Dave, who captured his anger toward women.

Oh definitely the girls. They have all the power. They have the big power—the power to say no. I want them, I want sex with them, and they’re the ones who decide whether it’ll happen or not. Some bitch decides whether or not I get laid. I don’t decide, she does.

That’s not fair (Kimmel 2008).

Men like Dave who share this kind of mentality want to sexualize women in order to reduce their value to one function: sex. Leveling the playing field that they feel is so uneven, Dave calls a woman who refuses his advances a bitch in order to present her as a woman who fails her gender role, relieving himself of the insecurity that he feels in his own role. Relying on a complementary femininity and women’s compliance in order to fault his heterosexuality, Dave becomes frustrated by women’s disinterest or resistance. When women want to be something more than just sexual or when they assert their sexual agency and refuse a man, they present themselves as complicated, dynamic humans like the men themselves. Dave only sees women’s sexualities as so overpowering of men because he assumed to have the entitlement over women’s bodies in the first place.

Getting back at the each “bitches” — to use Dave’s language — in Chi, Justin performed his rose-giving ritual at waiter dinner with two clear purposes in mind: to expose the women whom he had “hooked up” with solely because they had engaged in sexual acts with him and to punish the women who pay him no notice or the ones who had refused him; he humiliated their sisters while simultaneously asserting that he only values Chis for sex. Much like in 426, one Zeta was able to come into our Chi house and rattle all of the women in an elaborate, blatant, and desperate reclaiming of power.

### **Framing White Male Violence**

While conversations about school shootings tend to revolve around gun violence, an analysis of the shooter’s psychological health, or his family history, Jessie Klein and Lynn Chancer argue that people ignore a discussion about masculinity that is hiding in plain sight: “[n]ormalized masculinity and its requisite expectations for victory at all costs, invulnerability, aggression, domination, and sometimes violence becomes hidden in everyday dynamics. The ‘boys will be boys’ refrain has absolved many from civil offenses and sometimes crimes with a belief that boys cannot control their aggressive impulses” (Klein and Chancer 2006:95). In the wake of such tragedies, it is frightening to consider the idea that there is a problem with how we raise, teach, and handle our developing boys.<sup>13</sup>

In processing these tragedies, it feels more logical and comforting to pin a school shooting on one disturbed individual, distancing “normal” people from the violence. But we

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<sup>13</sup> In turning the lens to our normalized perceptions of masculinity in dialogues about school shootings, I am not ignoring the debate about guns. I am not saying that people should have access to semi-automatic weapons, but rather, I am arguing that hegemonic masculinity needs to be a part of the conversation. It is much easier to rally for a change in gun laws than deconstruct a gendered social construction.



cannot keep waiting and accepting boys' apathy, bullying, and violence as normal until it spirals into extreme violence: "normalized masculinity is operative in everyday dynamics, and it is the escalation of these 'normal' behaviors that are then labeled as deviant and addressed with specifically targeted policies" (75). We need to hold boys, bros, and men accountable for their everyday transgressions against each other and women.

Klein and Chancer explain how "normalized expectations of masculinity are involved in public harassment, school shootings, and intimate violence" (95). "Teasing, gay-bashing, dating violence, and sexual harassment" (85) have become so deep-rooted into our expectations of young white men that the behavior is rarely criminalized.

From the criminal justice system's point of view, if women are "only" followed—even if frightened to the point of panic—no action can be taken unless such acts of public harassment result in "actual" (as opposed to imagined) assault. Moreover, in cases where women may only have been followed once, stalking—that, in legal terms, presumes patterned rather than isolated behavior—cannot even be charged or proved (79).

As the women of 426, we constantly faced Public Safety's evasion of following up with Zeta. When the Zeta broke our door handle and frightened the women in the house by banging the door, Public Safety said that they could not do anything because the Zetas did not enter the house. When the Zetas actually entered the house, Public Safety said that we did not have proof. The officers' responses represent the normalization of white men's acts of intrusion and violence.

Though mostly men were the perpetrators while women were the victims of public harassment, Klein and Chancer found that “gay men . . . may find themselves mocked in public places in ways certainly comparable to women’s victimization” (80). Public harassers bolster their own performances of masculinity by degrading the feminine: attempting to regard themselves as dominating over women and as more manly men than gay, bisexual, or transgender men.

Commenting on women’s bodies as they walk by on the street is not an innate and biological male behavior. Biology does not compel men to grab a woman at a bar or break into her house, but rather society grants them the entitlement and legal and social impunity to do so: “[t]o trail women to work or by subway, make comments or catcalls, grope women in crowded places—and/or, for that matter, to do this to some men—is unimaginable unless one experiences a sense of social power, indeed, social ‘permission’” (80). This entitlement ties into each of the narratives that I have provided about examples of hegemonic masculinity on DePauw’s campus: Aaron and his friend felt entitled to a kiss; Jase yelled “fuck you” after I refused his advances; the Zetas walked into 426 repeatedly as if they had owned the place; the Betas burned a couch on their lawn simply because they could; Justin gave roses to women, marking them as *his* sexual conquests.

### **Extinguishing the Fire: Rescinding “Social Permission”**

These bros would not be engaging in these performances if DePauw as a community and institution did not grant them that “social ‘permission’” (80) to do so. Bros performing hegemonic masculinities can broadcast and flaunt their social permission and ownership of

DePauw by burning couches, drinking out on their lawns, and catcalling other students without punishment.

So why white fraternity men? I argue that there are three reasons behind the outlandish and violent behavior that IFC fraternity men on DePauw's campus have committed. Firstly, colleges foster a safe "Guyland" for IFC men. Alumni and their hefty donations to the university secure their long lost fraternity brothers immunity from serious punishments for their actions: alumni essentially buy the current members of their fraternity the "social permission" to continue their fraternity's reign and traditions, leading to the second reason.

The masculinity that many of these fraternity bros adopt is a high stakes commitment: to be the most heterosexual, aggressive, apathetic, unafraid, and dominant is an impossible, forever unfulfilling task. Women become casualties in the crossfire as bros attempt to exploit and harm them in order to prove their perverse notions of what it means to be a man. White bros are able to bolster their masculine status through sexual aggression without adopting stigmas about their predation.

Lastly, the resentment — which may even be subconscious — that these white fraternity bros feel towards women and minorities manifests in seemingly inexplicable moments of "boys being boys": burning couches or breaking into women's homes. As these guys linger in Guyland, procrastinating ambition in order to enjoy their college years, they become frustrated when the internships and jobs — that they feel entitled to — are given to more qualified candidates: "many minority youths have begun to move into those slots designated for the ambitious and motivated, just at the moment that those slots are being abandoned by white guys having fun" (Kimmel 2008:11). This last reason seemingly undercuts the previous two explanations, but it only

clarifies the frustration, rage, and violence that these bros bring to their fight for entitlement: their resentment grows from their fear that their institution's "social permission" and their own tightly held hegemonic expressions of masculinity are going to come to an end soon. They fear that their privilege is fleeting and that they are losing power as others simply gain equality.

Women's ability to occupy certain spaces or their ability to choose their own sexual partners can cause frustration for men who feel cheated by women's agency: "Guys who put the hard work in to perform hegemonic masculinity expect payoffs, and "having dutifully subscribed young men often feel cheated—and pissed off—when the rewards associated with power are not immediately forthcoming" (55). Yet not only do they have permission to express their sense of entitlement, but also they gain social status in their fraternities through their performances. As an institution and community, we need to stop dismissing white men's demonstrations of entitlement as natural, frat boys will be frat boys behavior.

## CHAPTER 4

### Who's Got Game?:

#### Racialized Surveillance of Sexual Behavior

It was the first month of my freshman year. I had just run my first cross country race, and that weekend, I went to my first college party. After a few hours of walking around and talking with the people I knew, I sat down in a group of six people. We played a drinking game. Josh, another white freshman, was sitting next to me. Every time that he won the card round and could administer a few drinks to people of his choosing, he gave them all to me so I took baby sips.

Josh sank into the couch and put his arm around me. I was looking the other way, glancing over to him for a moment. I felt that talking with him or even looking at him gave him attention or even permission, so I just kept talking to the guy sitting on the other side of me about Colorado where my brother lives.

Josh dropped his arm fall down my back. My expression flickered, but I kept my conversation. With his hand, he squeezed where my hip met my thigh that he went on to grope and stroke. My face winced as if I were getting pricked by a needle. Shifting his eyes down to my lap, the sophomore guy next to me noticed Josh's hand. He looked embarrassed for me, but he just kept up with our conversation.

The humiliation was heavier than the alcohol — the embarrassment turned into syrupy lactic acid pumping through my veins, and I couldn't lift my lead hands to get Josh off my thigh

until he grabbed in between my legs and I sprang into action, pulling away his hand like a mug filled with my hot shame that had already spilled all over my lap.

When I left the party, another guy, Sam, offered to walk me home.

“I’m taking her home,” Josh insisted, raising his eyebrows at Sam.

“Walk back with us, Sam,” I said. Sam looked at me for a moment. However, once he locked eyes with Josh, Sam turned around to catch up with another group going to a fraternity.

“You’re so beautiful,” Josh said walking home.

“Thanks,” I replied. “Let’s just keep walking.”

I kept thinking, *Don’t give him the wrong idea, don’t be rude, don’t be a flirt, don’t be a bitch*. My legs were wobbling on this social tightrope. I tried to turn and say bye at the door to my dormitory. Then again at the stairs, and once more as we got to my third floor. But Josh wasn’t leaving.

“Let’s go to your room,” he said.

“No, let’s stay out here,” I replied.

He pulled me into his lap as I sat on the arm of the couch, so I got up saying that I had to use the bathroom. When I walked back into the lounge area, I said, “If nothing else is going on tonight, I think I’m going to bed.”

“Sure, let’s go to your room,” he replied.

“Alone.”

“Rachel,” he said.

“Yeah?” I said.

“Do you like me?”

“Yeah, as a friend,” I replied. “But not like that.”

“I get it. You can come back over and sit here,” Josh said with a beckoning wave. “I won’t try anything again.”

I sat back on the arm of the couch, but he just reeled me right in — fish on the line — with that lure because within a minute he had me back in his two-armed clutches as I made eye contact with *help me* eyes with a few other freshman men and women who walked by with nothing more than a double take before going down the stairs.

I had to text my friend so that she could come help me out and walk him home.

\* \* \*

I went to a fraternity for one of the first times over my senior year. Now that I was 21, I preferred bars as a place to socialize. I came over that night because it was the first night that freshmen women could go on Greek property. The fraternities notoriously treat the night as an alcohol-soaked open season for their members to hunt down first year women, so I went to keep an eye on a few of my freshmen girlfriends.

I was in a room with a few of my friends in the fraternity.

At one point, one of them said, “Did you see Josh down there? Still chasing those freshmen girls? Twirling them and shit.”

“I wonder what it’d feel like to get felt up by Josh,” another replied laughing. “To turn around and he’s up on you.”

“Oh gosh, I couldn’t imagine.” They kept bantering and joking.

I felt like a lidded kettle whose water just started boiling. I wanted to lose it. I wanted to shout that I knew what it felt like. I know what it feels like when he’d grab. Let me tell you it

feels nauseating. You feel out of control. In that moment, you're shocked that you've never noticed how vulnerable you really are. I can assure you that you wouldn't be laughing if he'd felt you up.

“Can't believe he's still going for it senior year.” The guys continued talking.

“Well, good for him,” one of them said, ending the conversation.

### **Whiteness and the “Lovable Loser”**

His friends express an amused admiration for Josh's sexual persistence and his tactic of targeting younger women. The white man sitting next to me when Josh started touching me did not intervene. Sam did not come home with Josh and me even when I assertively expressed, “Walk back with us, Sam.” Other first year men and women passed by the third floor lobby despite my eye contact with them and raised eyebrows. Those two men knew Josh pretty well. Since I was friends with many of the other men on his athletic team, many of them knew about how I felt uncomfortable around Josh because at parties, he repeatedly came up to me in the first few months of my first year, apologizing for his actions at our first party before attempting to pull my hips towards him not five minutes later.

Yet Josh ended up joining the same fraternity as those friends. His brothers — just like his team — constantly made fun of Josh, casting himself as the gullible, naive, and awkward victim of other people's jokes. I overheard one of his teammates apologize for insulting Josh, but Josh replied that he actually enjoyed that kind of attention, and people always made fun of him in his friend group in high school. He gave his teammate permission to mock him in order to preserve his joking persona. In Delta, Josh's fraternity, he continued to prey on women while



casting himself as an unfortunate laughing stock. Josh muddies the lines between an unlucky guy and sexual predator, and thus, casting the times that he has nonconsensually “felt up” women with the same humor as the times he simply fails in talking with a woman.

In “‘He’s Got No Game’: Young Men’s Stories about Failed Romantic and Sexual Experiences,” Neill Korobov discusses how white men, like Josh, adopt a “lovable loser” persona, emphasized in popular culture as “an average and ordinary ‘everyman’ — a youthful and predominantly white version of masculinity that is playfully ironic and self-mocking” (Korobov 2009:284). These men downplay their white male privilege by “creating a simulacrum of marginalized and victimized masculine positionalities and disseminating them throughout culture” (285); essentially, they create a ploy at humor, sympathy, and mock oppression by casting themselves as innocent, awkward, and unlucky. Sexual failures, instead of being embarrassing or disheartening, become funny stories to tell among male friends. Employing strategic apathy towards women, the men in Korobov’s study discussed how they “often playfully mitigated the seriousness of their romantic problems so as to appear nonchalant, uninvested, and at times mildly amused by their own and each other’s romantic troubles” (285). In predominantly white environments and in his historically white university, Josh’s sexual aggression flies completely under the radar.

In Korobov’s group interviews of predominantly white men, three men recount a story about one of their sexual failures. They joke about how Terry attempted to make out with a woman who kept refusing his advances, but he went on to touch her vagina. When Terry originally told the story to his friends, he said that he was “playing the vagina,” making for an amusing joke amongst his friends: “What makes the gaffe additionally funny is that they were

not, according to Kyle [another member of the group interview], even ‘making out’ . . . when Terry attempted to touch her vagina” (290). Terry blames the failure of his interaction with the woman on his sexual awkwardness and naiveté: “Terry displays ignorance and laughs as he says ‘I dunno what I’m doing down there’” (290). Instead of considering Terry’s actions to be inappropriate in the least, his groping becomes a joke in their friend group. Terry claims the white “lovable loser” persona, emphasizing his own awkwardness and inexperience that exonerate him from any and casting him as humorously harmless: “His laughter, though, mitigates the seriousness of the self-criticism, lacing it with a kind of knowing or hipster irony. In other words, because he knows he’s not cool with the ladies, he is in a way, cool” (290). Despite his lack of sexual success, Terry displayed a sexual aggression and persistence that garners him a successful heterosexual performance in his attempt.

As soon as Terry and the woman returned to her house, she told him that he had to leave. Terry explained his thoughts towards her, “I was like ‘what the fuck’ like ‘why are you telling me to leave after all this?’” One of Terry’s friends interrupts, “you’ve already touched her vagina” and the other friend contributes, “no played the vagina” (290). Terry can behave with this woman in a persistent and even aggressive manner because if he had successfully pressured her into sexual activity, which she originally rejected, he would bolster his heterosexual success. Yet his persona safeguards him against people criminalizing his behavior. The woman is far from the victim in this situation. She even becomes responsible for not being clearer with Terry in rejecting his advances: “Terry is positioned not simply as a victim of his own fumbling hands, but also of the young woman’s (alleged) capriciousness when it comes to sending sexual signals and setting clear boundaries” (290).

Josh exploits this same white man as a “lovable loser” persona, rebranding his persistent unwanted sexual attention as simply a humorous side effect of an awkward personality. Josh acknowledged his awareness of the situation and my discomfort when I told him that I was not interested in being more than friends and he replied, “I get it,” inviting me back over to sit on the couch with him and promising that he “won’t try anything again.” In front of other women and mostly men, he often played up his awkwardness, frequent social and intellectual misunderstanding, and overt sexual desire but unfortunate unluckiness whenever he acts on his urges. Yet in this one-on-one moment, he exposed a well-grasped awareness of the situation: he acknowledged that he had touched me and followed me home as a ploy to hook up with me despite my discomfort. Now with a verbal confirmation of my disinterest, Josh admitted, “I get it,” strategically lowering my defenses before trying something again.

White men, like Josh, can put on costumes for themed parties, play loud rap music, and try to hook up with women, but they can always take off their masks and fall back onto the self-mocking part when they need to. His fraternity brothers, whom I heard talking about Josh’s attempt to hook up with first year women, were greatly amused by his efforts and laughing as they tried to imagine what it would feel like to “get felt up” by Josh. As a woman who was “felt up” by Josh, I felt humiliated to hear them talk. I felt shameful as though I had let myself be humiliated by Josh and become a punchline to his fraternity brothers’ jokes. Then I felt angry that these — mostly white — bros had the luxury to laugh.

Alcohol is so important to IFC fraternity parties not only because it impairs the judgements of women, the targets of heterosexual prospects, but also because it serves as an excuse for the men, providing them with an excuse for their behavior: “inebriation stories allow

for hazy recollections, where the narrator is able to play ‘mind’ against ‘world’” (292). The narrator of the story is able to distance himself from his actions, embarrassment, romantic failure, or sexual harassment or aggression with “[p]hrases like ‘apparently’, ‘I don’t remember’, ‘somehow’, ‘that’s a little fuzzy’, ‘I hear different stories’, and ‘I guess’” (292). Simply by claiming not to remember all of the night, the narrator can skew an embarrassing or even incriminating incident into a lively and amusing story that bonds him with his fraternity brothers. By failing to condemn — or even promoting or joking about — sexually aggressive behaviors, fraternity bros create a dangerous environment for women.<sup>14</sup>

### **“He Usually Gets the Girl”**

It was the weekend. It was my sophomore year, reaching the end of 2015. I was hanging out in a fraternity, let’s call it Delta, in a room full of guys except for the two women on the couch: my friend Sophia and another woman, named Jane, whom I didn’t know, but I’d seen her around like everyone else at DePauw. I could tell you what sorority she was in, who she’s hooked up with, and her friend group, but I’d never talked with her. At that point, I couldn’t have even told you her name.

It was Jane’s birthday, and Sophia was holding back Jane’s hair as she stared into the bottom of the trash can, occasionally coming up for air or water only to throw it up again. You’d think that she’d just take her friend home, but Sophia was playing it safe. Their sorority was a

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<sup>14</sup> Rape does not have to be a male perpetrator’s attack on a female victim. Women commit sexual assault; men sexually assault other men; however, “[n]early all rapes on campuses involve male rapists preying on women, the vast majority of women known to them” (Mora and Christianakis 2018:445).

five minute walk, ten in their state, and that's plenty of time for Public Safety to pull over and breathalyze them.

Sophia was to Jane's left, and Vince was on Jane's right. I knew Vince from other Delta parties.

\* \* \*

Once Vince had reached out for my hands to twirl me. As a woman, you run the risk of the man twirling you right into him once he has your hands. If you refuse, he might say, *Jeez, I just wanted to twirl you, why do women always think guys want something more.*

Vince twirled me away from a my group of friends who were all dancing by the DJ stand where a member of the frat played music. Only about ten feet away from my group, I kept an eye out for my friends, but Vince kept trying to block my view with his face. I felt like a little kid that a doctor was trying to distract with superfluous facial expressions so that he could administer a vaccination. But it wasn't going to work.

As he backed me up, I turned away when he leaned in to kiss me and so instead he started moving his face down my body once my back hit the basement wall. Sliding down my chest, his face, nose, and lips were pressing into my cream-colored, flowered dress and following the lines of my body. He slid down into my stomach. My blood turned into the slow lava of burning shock and shame, weighing down my body and mind. There was a lag time in my reaction — the time that it takes to turn off my politeness switch. By the time that his face and open mouth were pressing between my legs, I slowly lifted my iron-heavy hands, putting them on the top of his head and pushing him away from me by the forehead. He looked up with a sly smile and stood

back up. Before he could lean into me again, I walked around him back to my friends, burrowing myself in the group.

\* \* \*

He had sunk into the couch next to her with his arm wrapped around Jane while asking her questions when she was not throwing up. Flashing a smile to over men around the room, he hovered over her while she limped over the trash can.

Finally I think that Sophia was getting worried. She said her goodbyes propping up Jane and throwing Jane's arm around her own shoulder so that she could pick her up. Sophia struggled to lift her friend, but none of the Deltas around the room offered to help. When I offered my assistance, she told me that she'd be fine. From behind Sophia and Jane's backs as they worked their way out, Vince gave a smile and shook his head as he swept his hand slowly out in front of him with a snap of his fingers.

Once I was alone with the six other boys, one of them said as soon as the door closed behind the two girls, "Aw man, usually Vince always gets the girl." But I heard what he really meant, even if he didn't even realize it: *usually Vince rapes the girl*. By the praise of the attempt, I wouldn't have been surprised if this group of guys would have clapped if he'd dragged her out of there.

### **Men of Color in IFC Fraternities**

Vince, who was not a white-passing Latino, had brown skin that distinguished him from the majority of his fraternity who were white. Belonging to a mid-tier IFC fraternity, Vince held a position of leadership within the house. At one point, Vince was the assistant to the Pledge

Master — or the upperclassman in charge of the new members’ training, adjusting to the fraternity’s expectations, discipline, and essentially hazing.

It is a nuanced question of whether Vince was assimilated into white culture — “[t]he process of assimilating involves taking on the traits of the dominant culture to such a degree that the assimilating group becomes socially indistinguishable from other members of the society” (Pauls 2008). In his fraternity, he assimilated to their notions of hegemonic masculinity: the constant emphasis of heterosexuality, excessive drinking and partying, and sexual dominance over women. Yet Vince also established a strong relationship to members of color outside of his IFC fraternity. While he assimilated to IFC fraternity culture within the walls Delta’s walls, he also held onto an investment to his friends of color whereas maintaining friendships outside of the fraternity is usually rare among white IFC men.

I spoke with one of his white fraternity brothers, Ethan, in order to gauge how people in his house perceived Vince. Ethan said that Vince was very well-liked in his own pledge class — or the men in his same year of initiation — in the fraternity, but Vince was not popular among the younger men, especially the pledge class that was initiated the year after Vince’s. The bros in Vince’s class valued binge-drinking party culture much more than the class after them, so what garnered Vince popularity in his own class and the ones above him, hurt his image in the eyes of the younger classes. Vince’s social success for his performance was short-lived. Ethan said that Vince was a quintessential Delta — an archetypal fraternity man — a big partier, fronted by a big ego, who flaunted his lifestyle, drank a lot, and was always looking to hook up with women. Perhaps due to Vince’s performance of an archetypal Delta member, Ethan said that Vince was “not universally liked, but universally respected.”

When I questioned how his race affected his brothers' interactions with Vince, Ethan talked about the fact that people did not really mention Vince's race, even though Vince did, but they did often refer to the very large city (as in New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago, etc.) that Vince was from and considered him much "cooler" for it. Yet Ethan mentioned that white fraternity members who were from large cities — many from Chicago — were never known for their cities like Vince was. People viewed white men's home cities as "just where they're from" whereas Vince's city became a part of his identity, making him suaver and more interesting. Perhaps, making Vince's home city so integral and emphasizing its significance is his white fraternity brothers' attempt to address race. Yet instead of opening a dialogue in order to learn about the experience of a man of color in their fraternity, they only get far enough to acknowledge the fact that he comes from a diverse place. In the end, this signifier of his identity actually ignores any recognition of his race and boils down Vince's experience as potentially differing from theirs only in the population and bustling excitement of where he lives.

In response to my question about Vince's race, Ethan also talked about how people thought of Vince as cool because of the fact that outside of the fraternity, he had social ties to other students of color, specifically Latino and Black students. Referring to Black men specifically, Wilkins coined the term "'player talk' — men's collusion with stories that portray them as 'players' relentlessly chased by white women,"<sup>15</sup> arguing that player talk "elides variations in the sexual opportunities, practices, and preferences of Black college men by constructing Black men as a uniquely desirable *group*. It emphasizes the universal, rather than individual, attractiveness and sexual superiority of Black men" (Wilkins 2012:276). The

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<sup>15</sup> This persona can put a strain on Black men's relationships with Black women (Wilkins 2012:272).



hypersexual stereotypes attributed to Black men threaten white men's presumed ownership of white women. Simply having Black men in their fraternity can bolster a white fraternity's perceived group desirability; the white members may exploit the hyper-heterosexual stereotype that people project onto Black men by claiming them as a part of their organization.

The white members do not necessarily want the Black men enacting behaviors that align with these stereotypes. I have heard about top-tier fraternity bros preventing men of color, specifically Black and Latino men, from coming to their fraternities out of fear that these men will steal the attention and sexual interest of the white women — whom the fraternity bros claim as theirs — at the party. The hyper-sexualized and possibly predatory stigmas — the “game” — that these top-tier fraternity bros attributed to men of color actual materialized itself. These white bros acted on their stereotypes, limiting the access of men of color entering their fraternity parties.

Yet these top-tier fraternity bros have accepted — or rather tolerated — the presence of the few men of color who belong to their own fraternity, perhaps for a few reasons. Having a few token members of color in their fraternity excuses them from having to defend an all white environment that has blatantly selected only white individuals. These top-tier fraternity bros fear their inability to tame the sexualities of the men of color *and* claim the white women at the party for themselves; yet, they have drafted the men of color over to their fraternity in order to play for *their* team. Thus, the white bros can control, claim, and surveill their own men of color while men of color unassociated with their fraternity display an independence that challenges the IFC men. Although a few members of color suits the fraternity for multiple reasons, many members

of color would threaten the white men's control, explaining the predominantly white environment of their fraternity.

Although some top-tier fraternity bros limit the access of men of color, specifically Black men, into their fraternities and Delta claims to attempt to attract more men of color, both fraternities fall under the same stereotype that exoticizes Black men. They both cast Black men as suave, heterosexual, and hypersexual. Excluding Black men from private, privileged spaces is an explicit and deplorable exploitation of racialized power. Yet for the fraternities that claim a racial openness, as Delta, still have a ways to go. Recruiting men of color into IFC fraternities does not mean that the community can claim a racially inclusive environment, especially if there are only a few token members. Acceptance requires providing and enforcing a racially aware and sensitive space. White IFC men need to challenge themselves to consider their stereotypes and question their recruitment motivations and not just recruit men of color because they fit into an IFC's fraternity's culture due to hyper-heterosexual stereotypes or have a suaveness that fraternity members attribute to them.

By flaunting an interracial, heterosexual desirability, Vince participates in the ritual of sorting women sexually (Sweeney 2014:380). The ritual of "girl watching" — "the act of men's sexually evaluating women, often in the company of other men" (Quinn 2002:387) — develops a group consensus about "women's desirability, allowing men with presumably varied tastes and interests to coordinate action regarding subjective issues such as feminine beauty and sexual propriety" (Sweeney 2014:377). Vince participated in this group ritual by expressing his sexual interest in the white woman, Jane, in front of a group of his white fraternity brothers, who respond that "he usually gets the girl," casting Vince as popular among white women.

Through his public display, Vince provides an opportunity for his white bros to participate in sexual sorting, which occurs at parties as men in groups watch women and judge their attractiveness.<sup>16</sup> By selecting white sorority women to pursue, Vince also aligns himself with his bros' group sorting criteria. Sexual sorting tries to narrow sex to a group established desire, excluding the options for men to be sexually attracted to women for their intelligence, independence, personality, or beauty that is not acknowledged by the group's opinion.

Whiteness is an important aspect of this ritual and the fraternity environment. Asian men have been channeled into domestic service, experiencing economic feminization throughout history.<sup>17</sup> Since anti-femininity is practically the most important aspect of hegemonic masculinity, Asian men may be dismissed by fraternities at DePauw for their asexualization and historic feminization. Michael Kimmel interviewed an Asian-American student, William, about his perspective on pornography; William said, "I'm offended by it. Seriously. I've seen some porn that my fraternity brothers had at Berkeley. All those Asian women who acted like whores.

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<sup>16</sup> Girl watching and sorting women sexually — like most hegemonic performances of fraternal masculinity — are time consuming. Establishing a group consensus about which women are most desirable, men have to attend parties constantly with their fraternity brothers in order to look at women, judge their attractiveness, and evaluate their sexual value — if the group labels her as a "slut," she could damage a fraternity man's reputation (Sweeney 2014:381). The group's judgement of a woman's sexual propriety determines how the men should treat her sexually. In Sweeney's study, a white fraternity man claimed, "if I know she's a good girl, then I'll be more respectful of course" (381); not pressuring them into sex, he also asserted that he respected that no means no for the "good girls."

Yet the "slutier" that women were in the eyes of other members of the fraternity, the worse that they would be treated by the men who engaged in sexual activity with them. With an attractive woman whom the men deem to be a slut, "men will try to 'get' sex 'without giving in return.' By framing some sexual encounters as instrumental, as artfully goal-driven (just sex) and non-intimate, men transform a potential disadvantage (sexual contact with a woman deemed undesirable) into a player advantage" (381).

<sup>17</sup> Yen Le Espiritu explains Asian men's feminization through an economic, historical, and social lens: "racialized and gendered economic policies and labor conditions forced Asian men into 'feminized' jobs such as domestic service, laundry work, and food preparation" (Espiritu 2013:18). During World War II, the Japanese internment disrupted family structures. Japanese men still faced the societal pressure to be the family breadwinner, but they could not fulfill that role in internment camps.

They were all dressed up in some exotic fantasies about what Asian women are like. And they're always with white guys. It's like the Asian male is invisible" (Guyland 2008:183). In the hyper-heterosexual environment of a fraternity that caters to the white male just as pornography does, Asian men seem to become invisible on DePauw's campus as well.

The ritual of sexual sorting does not even consider the possibility for homosexual men — who become invisible and deviant in this process — to acknowledge or even have sexual desire.

<sup>18</sup> This complex arena of sexual failures and conquests is meant to downplay the sexual power that the men fear that women have over them while bonding men together, giving them specific goals and guidelines in order to best perform their masculinity among their fraternity brothers.

The white members of his fraternity who praised Vince's attempt to hit on the woman who was throwing up was meant not to bolster the masculinity of Vince, but rather to capitalize on it. Just like Aaron's wingman in the first chapter, the bros profit on their collective performance. But there were other fraternity brothers next to him, partnering with, validating for his "good guy" status, and teaming up on the woman with him. There was no one aligning himself with Vince and offering to share in the risk and reward of the performance. His brothers merely sat back and watched Vince until they could voice their support for his sexual prowess after-the-fact, once the women had left.

### **Watching the Game with a Beer and Your Boys**

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<sup>18</sup> This kind of hegemonic masculinity is not available — in the case of homosexual men — to all fraternity members. It is also not attractive to all members. Coming from a lower socioeconomic background, one fraternity member — in Brian Sweeney's study — who was "raised by his grandmother in a poor community, explicitly ties college to upward mobility and sees hard partying and casual sex as traps—as part of what he calls a 'cycle of poverty'" (Sweeney 2014:383).

I asked Ethan if Vince's constant girl-chasing at parties garnered him respect among his fraternity brothers. Ethan did not think so. When I gave him the example of the Deltas praising his attempt to hit on the woman throwing up, their comment — “he usually gets the girl” — took him aback. I asked Ethan for his perspective about why they responded as they did. Ethan replied that it must be “sort of like watching a basketball game for them, watching him rack up points,” an analogy laced with racialized meaning. Basketball as a college and professional sport is played predominantly by Black players with almost exclusively white owners (Crawley 2011).

Explaining the Deltas' relationship with Vince with an analogy to basketball unearths the limiting stereotypes associated with men of color that could be shaping Vince's role in the IFC fraternity: combining assumptions about skill on the court scoring baskets and off the field “scoring” with women. These stereotypes, mostly attributed to Black men, reduce men of color to an assumed physical ability, aggression on the court (and perhaps presumed off the court as well), and athletic physique; this objectification limits perceptions of Black men, failing to value or recognize intelligence, their potential disinterest in sports, ability to express a sexuality other than or capacity for expressing emotions, unassociated to a sports game.

Sports talk “enables white guys to enter what they often perceive as a black-dominated arena. Like those legions of white suburban guys who listen to gangsta rap, talking about sports with black guys is a form of self-congratulatory racial reassurance, many guys' was of demonstrating to themselves and others that they are not racists” (Kimmel 2008:142). From their couches around the room, Vince's white fraternity brothers sat back and watched as he maneuvered his way towards the overly intoxicated woman and dribbled through a conversation, aiming to score. Applying sports metaphors to the incident reveals their superficial attempt to use

their notions of common interests among men — women and sports — as superficial proof of racial inclusion. Just like how Vince’s brothers so often labelled him by his home city instead of addressing his race, sports talk “can be a substitute for the serious conversation about race—and racial inequality—that is so necessary to truly bridge social divide. When it replaces that social and political conversation with a moment of bonding, sports talk may reproduce the very problem its adherents seek to transcend” (142). Like white men claiming basketball teams and players — “that’s my team” or “we won” — the Deltas appropriate Vince’s sexual pursuits as their own failures or successes, in a ritual that fronts itself as racial bonding while it actually reinforces hyper-heterosexual stereotypes about men of color and claims an ownership over brown bodies. Just like the football fans who just want their players to play — not protest racial oppressions that the Black players face — Though they may stand by their players, win or lose, the fans may not have stood by their protests, criticizing their players for kneeling during the anthem. The support for these players only goes as far as the fans’ use for them: creating an entertainment that fills the seats surrounding the field or court.

Vince hoped to achieve the benefits — the patriarchal power, respect, and popularity — that ascribing to hegemonic masculinity awards to his white peers in his fraternity. Yet the men who praised Vince did not respect him as their equal, but rather they sexualized and exoticized him, finding a kind of showmanship and entertainment in watching him perform their kind of hegemonic masculinity. Josh does not adopt the “player” label that they ascribe to Vince. In the framework of the basketball narrative, the white guys watching Vince treated him as a drafted player expected to perform. They watched him from the luxury of their couches, sipping their beers, just as they probably do as they watch their basketball teams during March Madness.

Lacking the personal investment and participation that Aaron's wingman demonstrated in his friend's sexual pursuits, Vince's fraternity brothers keep their distance until flaunting their knowledge of his stats — his usual success with women. After their comment, Vince walks out, suggesting that he is going to rebound and find another woman to pursue. Dismissing Josh's — very similar, if not more insistent — behavior as awkward and humorous, the Deltas did not treat Vince as harmless or clumsy; their comment — “he usually gets the girl” — frames Vince's actions as suave and strategic.

The cliché phrase — “He's Got No Game” — in the Korobov's article title sets up a contrast between the white “lovable losers” and men of color who have “game.” Although his brothers remarked on Vince's flirtations with a woman, no one commented on Josh's unwanted touching and following me home. Even the white man — who I was talking to while Josh felt around my hips, thighs, and lap — pretended not to notice. People attempted to be intentionally oblivious to his predatory behavior. Not only do bros ordinarily not intervene — their silence serving as permission — but also both Josh and Vince were supported for their attempts to hook up with women. Josh's sexual failures incur the kind of joking attention from his fraternity brothers that allow him alleviate his embarrassment, excuse his behaviors, and bond over a good story while still at least proving his heterosexual desires: “because he knows he's not cool with the ladies, he is in a way, cool” (Korobov 2009:290). His fraternity brothers perceived Vince's sexual failure as a rarity. They attribute an intentionality, suaveness, and desirability to Vince that they certainly do not associate with Josh.

Bros in Josh's and Vince's fraternity joked about Josh's sexual aggression that was still occurring his senior year, four years after our initial interaction at my first party. They laughed

about what it would be like to “get felt up” by Josh, casting him as awkward, innocent, and laughable. These fraternity brothers were in the class in which Vince was not very popular due to his constant partying and lack of attention towards school. But Josh usually partied whenever he could. He experimented with different drugs, and he was not a particularly studious student. Yet Josh’s party behavior never affected his relationships with other men. Ethan described Josh as “very white bread.” Josh, played up ignorance, misunderstanding, and awkwardness at times in the company of his brothers, just in day to day life. Similar to a class clown, Josh became a laughing stock at times for his brothers’ entertainment. Yet in developing himself as an awkward, sometimes unintelligent, goofy guy, Josh flew under the radar. People just thought of him as that “very white bread,” white guy.

### **Downplaying the Player Label in Black Fraternities**

Delta has a particular portion of their Monday chapter-wide meetings dedicated to the men who had sexual relations with a woman that weekend. If a man “hooked up” with a woman the previous week, he could stand up, so that his brothers could validate him. Such a ritual — while seemingly normal in an IFC fraternity’s heteronormative and misogynistic environment — poses a conflict for members of color. While the white bros in this fraternity are exempt from the stigmatization that their members of color face and have been socialized to expect.

White bros have social permission from peers to be as promiscuous as they desire. They have legal protection by their fraternity and the university if their reputation as a player has been founded on sexually consentless exploits. Black men may gain masculine status by emanating a hyper-heterosexual “player” image, yet due to their race, they also suffer stigmatization that



deems them as sexual predators, a historically rooted stereotype: “by portraying Black men as rapists who could not stay away from white women, powerful whites justified the need to control Black men through lynching, disenfranchisement, and segregation, and they controlled white women through ‘protection’” (Wilkins 2012:273). Thus, deciding whether to attempt to hook up with the (mostly) white women shuffling through their fraternity parties or whether to stand up if they did hook up with a woman becomes an issue much more complicated for men of color.

Fraternal hegemonic masculinity encourages a sexual domination over women: “[a]mong college men, there is a strong association between sexual violence and both the belief in traditional gender roles and the power and dominance of men” (Mora and Christianakis 2018:445)<sup>19</sup>; men in fraternities prize tradition in a brotherhood that promotes their interests as all men.<sup>20</sup> Studies have proven time and time again that fraternity men commit sexual assault at a higher rate than their unaffiliated peers. The research usually mention that some fraternities are deemed higher risk of rape because their group identity encourages an environment in which “men are more likely to be single, interact with women for the sole purpose of sex, and be athletes” (447); yet, in their clarifications of higher and lower risk fraternity environment, the studies often fail to consider race. Researchers — Tyra Black, Joanne Belknap, and Jennifer Ginsburg — took an intersectional approach to analyze college rape culture in Greek life at a

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<sup>19</sup> Neil Malamuth, a UCLA psychologist, found that around 18 percent of male college students reported that they would commit rape if they were assured to get away with it; when Malamuth exchanged the word “rape” with “force a woman to have sex,” the number rose to approximately 40 percent. And “[i]n another study, 15 percent of college men said they actually had used force to obtain intercourse—a rate which does seem to corroborate the statistics provided by women (Kimmel 2008:224).

<sup>20</sup> Of those college men, fraternity men and male athletes prove to be the most dangerous statistically: “[f]raternity men are three times more likely to commit rape than other college men” (Mora and Christianakis 2018:447). Of all of the gang rapes on college campuses, 50 percent of the perpetrators are fraternity members and 40 percent are male college athletes (447), leaving only 10 percent of gang rapists to be college men unaffiliated from Greek life and sports teams.

historically white college. Comparing white and Black fraternities, the researchers interviewed white and Black men and women who participated in Greek life in “the only [study as of 2012] that included the black Greek system” in their research (Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg 2012:395).

Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg found that “[w]omen who interacted with white fraternities were very familiar with incidents of rape. *All the women in this study who interacted with white fraternities reported knowing someone personally who had been raped by a white fraternity member*” (415); for example, “[a] white former sorority member stated, ‘Almost every girlfriend I have, or girl that I know, has been in a situation where they have been drinking and hooked up with a fraternity guy that is sexually aggressive. They will either do something that they do not want to do, like have sex, or do something else . . . like . . . that will make him relieve his sexual tension or whatever.’” With personas such as the “lovable loser” available to white men, sexually aggressive actions can be excused by other members of the fraternity and the community as an unfortunate result of the perpetrator’s awkwardness and inability to read the woman’s disinterest and resistance as a rejection.

The only woman in the study “who reported being a survivor of a fraternity rape” — it was a white fraternity — was a Black woman who interacted with both white and Black fraternities; she also reported, “There is a predominantly white fraternity on campus that made a point that every single fraternity brother had to go out and find a black woman, have some kind of sexual relations with her, and report it to the fraternity brothers” (416-17). This abhorrent ritual is heavily racist and misogynist, but there is very little that remains to surprise me as a

student on a Greek-heavy campus.<sup>21</sup> This ritual itself is an inside joke amongst the fraternity men. If a fraternity man is talking with or being sexually persistent or aggressive towards a Black woman at their parties, the other men can observe and either mock his failure or praise his success. The men can frame their failures as humorous stories that their predominantly white fraternity bros enjoy, and they can report their successes with pride.

Some Black fraternity members used some sexist language, such as referring to women as “bitches” or perpetuating rape myths about alcohol, but others were adamantly outspoken about their anti-rape stances (416). One member discussed that when it comes to an overly intoxicated woman at their parties, the main concern and only action that the members discuss is: “How in the hell are we going to get her home?” (416). Another expressed intense revulsion in response to a hypothetical question about his fraternity brothers: “I hope that there is no individual in our organization that is perverted enough to try to rape somebody” (416). Another Black fraternity member placing acts of violence in terms of race critically in terms of historical context: “It [rape] shouldn’t happen. It’s a horrible thing. It shouldn’t happen to anyone, but if it were to happen to a black woman, then I would be totally outraged because black women have been raped for too long and it’s painful to hear of whites raping black women” (416).

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<sup>21</sup> Creating such rituals in order to establish sexual prowess, power, and the importance of tradition as a group, these white men exoticize, sexualize, dehumanize, and claim ownership over Black women’s bodies recalling a heinous stereotype from U.S. history. The Jezebel, a fictive Black “sex-starved woman, who was childishly promiscuous and consumed by lustful passions,” was used particularly by owners of slaves in order to “concretized Black female subordination, justifying the rape of African women by white men. According to this portrayal, the African woman truly enjoyed being ravaged by her master and his sons, so that abusing her was simply satisfying satisfying her natural desires” (Simms 2001:882-83). If rape myths are meant to excuse and justify rape, then this particular instance — of white men requiring their fraternity members to bring back proof of having sex with a Black woman — has heavy historic and deeply rooted racist implications embedded in its rape myths.

Considering the Black survivor's response, this fraternity member's fears were proven true on his very campus.

Kimmel ascribes the high rate of college men who would commit sexual assault as long as they had legal and social immunity to men's willingness to believe in date rape myths (Kimmel 2018:224-25), citing two researchers who "found that they could distinguish between 'rape prone' and 'rape free' fraternities in part by the ideologies that the guys held and their beliefs in rape myths" (234). However, I do not consider believing in rape myths to be the only determinant of a "rape-prone" fraternity. Unfortunately, rape myths have permeated our society so much so that women — college students and even parents — are encouraged to believe and perpetuate them too. Both women and men participate in victim blaming. Yet even though both men and women have been seeped in a culture that condones rape myths since their childhoods, most rapists on college campuses are men. Though rape myths are an integral factor to rapists' ideologies, justifying their violence, rape myths are not the sole indicator of sexual violence. They normalize rape, make rape socially acceptable, blame the victim, and divert the attention to the woman's clothes, drinks, or actions and away from the challenging conversation about traditional notions of masculinity.

Considering Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg's intersectional research, I believe that the most important indicators of a rape-prone fraternity is the performance of masculinity that the men choose to adopt and their social permission to do so. In their study of Black and white fraternities, "[a] pattern that emerged across race (and was also reported by the director of the Greek system) was the men's belief that of the few rape cases they knew about, the 'victims' could not be trusted, and the charges were probably false" (Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg

2012:414). While both Black and white men ascribed to rape myths, white men seem to be the ones committing rape.

In fact, rape was an exclusively white fraternity man's crime in their study. In dramatic contrast to the women's overwhelming consensus about knowing women whom had been sexually assaulted by white fraternity members, "*none of the women who interacted with black fraternities reported knowing anyone who had been raped by a black fraternity member*" (415). The authors noted, "[t]his does not mean that sexual assaults do not occur in black fraternities" (415), but their research has revealed a very interesting pattern that challenges us to acknowledge which fraternity men are really the ones who are three times more likely to commit rape. Similar to the ability to burn couches or break into women's homes in the middle of the night, Black men do not have the social permission and legal leniency to commit sexual assault as white men do. Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg point out how institutional surveillance of Black men on the historically white campuses may differ on historically Black college campuses.

It is important to note that [this research] does not allow us to assume that black and white fraternities behave differently due to cultural values or beliefs. However, it does suggest that the structural differences between black and white fraternities permit the white fraternities to behave in ways that the black fraternities cannot. Because black fraternities are extremely marginalized on this largely white campus, an important area for future research would be to study the sexual behavior of fraternity members at historically black campuses, to determine whether there is a difference between black fraternities on white campuses and black fraternities on black campuses (418).

Impervious the stereotypes and implicit biases associated with Black men, the predominantly white environments of DePauw's IFC fraternities may aim to gain white sorority women's trust under the guise of a sense of familiarity, ownership, and protection; yet, in terms of sexual assault, IFC fraternities are the most dangerous places for women on campus. Fraternity rituals that promote sexual violence or women's exploitation and domination are dismissed as boys will be boys for white guys. Whether due to self-policing, different notions of masculinity, or institutional surveillance, historically Black fraternities on predominantly white campuses do not have the high rates of sexual assault that white fraternities do.

Wilkins explains that some Black men — in attempt to access the benefits that they lack from a patriarchal society — “assume the hypersexual image, using it to claim status and respect in the absence of other routes to masculinity” (Wilkins 2012:274). Yet recalling the title of Wilkins article, “Stigma and Status,” the masculine status that these Black men achieve is undermined by a harmful stigma: “[b]ecause the ‘player’ image caricatures Black men as heterosexually superior and able to control others, it can be a source of masculine status. This same image, however, simultaneously stigmatizes Black men as predatory, promiscuous, uncontrolled, and dangerous, justifying greater institutional control and persistent racial inequality” (274).

In order to counter the stereotypes, some Black college men emphasize relationships with women or academics over sex, but some men may feel that “images of Black middle-class respectability portray Black men as weak and effeminate” (274). Black men are trapped in a conflict between society's expectations of their gender and race performance. This conflict is

particularly challenging for men of color in IFC fraternities to navigate. I know Black men who may engage in hookup culture, but make it clear that they respect women's agency to consent or refuse sexual activity.

Vince is a Latino man who has brown skin that does not afford him the ability to pass as white among his majority white fraternity brothers. Yet perhaps the fact that he was not Black put him in a complicated liminal space in between social permission and the threat of being labeled a sexual predator, unlike his white peers participating in his same behavior. None of the Black men whom I knew in his fraternity performed this kind of player masculinity; instead, they emphasized academics, relationships with women, interest in social justice, or community involvement. Some of these men have resigned their memberships to their fraternities after a year or two of being in the organization as well. One possible explanation for Vince's behavior in comparison to the other men of color and Black men in his fraternity relates to the fact that a Black man could not even attempt such a masculinity without fear of being kicked out of his fraternity, or incurring university intervention or legal action against him.

Vince's fraternity brothers with skin darker than his do not attempt to embrace the kind of player masculinity that their white peers can perform freely. Vince is able to perform the hegemonic fraternal role like his peers, but his participation comes at a cost. Whether he ascribed to a hegemonic masculinity or not, his sexuality and gender expression would be under observation, unlike the forgiving "guys being guys" behavior that makes people like Josh so unnoticed and unstigmatized. In gaining masculine status through his sexual prowess, Vince was faced with stigmas for his behavior that his white fraternity brothers, like Josh, could largely enact with social impunity and immunity.

## **If You Want to Be One of Us**

What did Vince gain through his performance of hegemonic fraternal masculinity? He got to be one of the guys. Or he almost did. Vince played the part of a promiscuous, alcohol and party loving, fraternity man, who was eager to engage in sex with white women: he played the part that his white fraternity brothers, who sought to perform a hegemonic masculinity, strived to perform. But he also risked stigmas of sexualization — attributed to him by some of his brothers — and sexual predation — potentially attributed by outsiders to the fraternity — from which his white fraternity brothers were exempt.

Similar to the white rappers who mine the misogyny out of rap music, leaving behind the conversation about race that Black rappers initiate (Oware 2015), Vince's brothers capitalized on his performance, using him within their organization for a very specific purpose. Yet they left out the conversation about his race, replacing that conversation with a universalizing emphasis on his race. Ethan said that no one ever really acknowledged his race, even though Vince brought his race up often. Some of his white fraternity brothers even became annoyed, feeling like Vince brought up his race too much. I believe that there are two motivations behind his fraternity brothers' unacknowledgement and even at times annoyance surrounding the conversation about race.

Firstly, by ignoring the conversation, his white fraternity brothers could have believed that they were avoiding the possibility of saying anything racist, and perhaps taking a colorblind approach to race, they believed that they achieved equality. Yet this post-racial perspective threatens to present a false sense of equality. Just because a handful of men of color are accepted



into an IFC fraternity — or just because a Black man was elected president — does not warrant the argument that white privilege or racism has dwindled off. In fact, ignoring race justifies people's implicit biases without acknowledging socialized beliefs about people of color, particularly Black people.

The other reason that explains the Deltas' silence or annoyed resistance in response to Vince bringing up his race could originate from their own opposition to acknowledge their own white privilege. Perhaps casting Vince as self-involved or egotistical liberates them from considering their power over him in a racist society. How these guys, who perform hegemonic masculinity, use Vince parallels how they use women. Despite how much they overemphasize their acceptance and love of women walking through the doors of their fraternity, these guys avoid becoming involved romantically or even on a friendship level with the women outside of parties. Many woman whom I know lose their guy friends after freshman year to a fraternity. Using sex talk, these guys frame women's great significance to them in terms of visual and physical pleasure purposefully avoiding any reference to intellectual conversation or emotional connection. They often claim that women are vain and elusive, justifying poor treatment of women and even sexual violence. Wanting to use women to bolster their heterosexual performance, these guys do not want their girls to talk about feminism with them. By not addressing feminism and misogyny with women or race and racism with Vince, these guys avoid confronting their role in a patriarchal and racist institution — their fraternity, university, and country — founded originally by and for white men.

## CHAPTER 5

### Leaving the Bros Behind:

#### Paving the Way for a New DePauw Man

#### So I've Heard

I've heard that the men in one IFC fraternity make their pledges plank on upturned beer bottle caps that dig into their forearms with all their weight, making them bleed. I've heard that another one does an elephant walk, making the pledges strip down and hold onto the pledge's penis behind them as they walk in a circle. In one fraternity, I've heard that they hire strippers from Greencastle. They select the women whom they deem as unattractive or overweight and force their pledges to pay them for a lap-dance. I've also heard that they have to pay them for something more too. I've heard that another fraternity makes their pledges stay in a room until all of the handles of hard liquor are all empty. The upperclassmen keep slipping handles into the room as the pledges try to finish them. When they finally get out, upperclassmen walk around trying to force the pledges to do cocaine. This is just what I've heard. I've heard that in another fraternity, the pledges aren't allowed to go back to their dorms; they have to sleep on mattresses on the floor in the fraternity — if they are lucky enough to get mattresses. For its pledgship hell week before initiation, pledges could only choose two of three activities: sleeping, talking, or studying. Most of them choose not to talk for that week. In one fraternity, I've heard that they force their pledges to drink every hour of the day. I've heard from a few people that pledges in one frat always have to have an “emergency kit” on them — including condoms, lighters,

cigarettes, amongst other things — and if the pledges do not have any of those things to give to an upperclassman at any time when he asks, they're punished. I've heard that a fraternity gets their pledges blackout drunk and then drops them off in the woods or the middle of a field; their pledges have to find their own way home. One fraternity forces its pledges to strip naked and crawl into dog cages. The upperclassmen lock them up and pee on them. Or so I've heard.

The hazing in IFC fraternities is often underlaid with sexual connotations — such as the elephant walk, the “emergency kit,” or the forced sexual contact with strippers whom the upperclassmen deemed undesirable<sup>22</sup> — that demean women. Especially with rituals like the elephant walk, their homosocial bonding teeters homosexual interest and homophobia. Genital touching among a group of closely-knit fraternity men suggests homosexual interest between the individuals participating and curiosity or arousal among the onlookers; however, since the genital touching is forced and nonconsensual, the ritual becomes a sadistic and violent parade of blatant homophobia. Since hazing is supposed to be torturous and degrading, the fraternity sends the message that homosexual relationships are so unnatural and humiliating that pledges have to be forced to simulate homosexual behavior as a test of loyalty and how far the men are willing to go to be members. The emphasis on dominating women — aside from clearly affecting women — excludes homosexual men as having a place in the fraternity, establishing their sexuality as invisible or deviant.

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<sup>22</sup> The hazing ritual in which the fraternity upperclassmen allegedly hired strippers is meant to humiliate their members by making them engage in sexually suggestive behavior with women whom the upperclassmen deem as unattractive. The fraternity members participate in sexual sorting (Sweeney 2014), ostracizing the women who do not fit their idealized expectation of feminine thinness.

Through hazing, like all of the rituals and performances of masculinity that I have described in this thesis, bros aim to steamroll individual agency and expression in order to replace them with a group identity. This ideology is rooted so deeply in the kind of masculinity that these men seek to perform that they even attempt to universalize acceptable academic interests, hobbies, behavior towards women, and something so subjective as sexual preference for women or which women.

While alcohol and drug abuse and violence against women are more common in white fraternities, hazing is one of the few problems in fraternities that transcends racial lines; in fact, “[h]azing appeared to be more common in black than white fraternities, which explains part of the racial differences in male-on-male aggression” (Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg 2012:412). The hazing in Black fraternities can be very physical: “[i]t is interesting that men in white fraternities were more likely to ‘do gender’ (or assert their masculinity) by dominating women, often sexually, whereas the black fraternity members were more likely to ‘do gender’ through hazing and other male-on-male abuse” (419). White fraternities tended to reinforce heterosexual aggression and the degradation of women whereas Black fraternity men prove their masculinity within their organizations. Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg assess how the hazing in Black fraternities evoked historical trauma.<sup>23</sup>

The men in multicultural fraternities are not afforded the leniency and privilege of having spaces for massive parties, participating in alcohol abuse, girl hunting, breaking into women’s

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<sup>23</sup> “It is also important to address how the nature of these common ‘sports’ in the black fraternities, such as branding, beat-ins, auctions, and nicknames, appear to pattern African Americans’ slavery experience in U.S. history. On the one hand, these black fraternities serve as a haven of safety and respect that African Americans rarely experience on this largely white campus; on the other hand, many activities in the black fraternities directed toward their own members smack of internalized racism and even slavery” (Black, Belknap, and Ginsburg 2012:413).

houses, or getting away with the predatory behavior that white fraternities endorse. Yet masculinity is still so prized in our society that men in multicultural fraternities may enact their masculinity through hazing by inflicting mental, emotional, or physical violence onto their own members.<sup>24</sup>

### **Dropping the Performance**

Performances of hegemonic masculinity are costly to the men enacting them as well. Not all men naturally think, talk, and act the same ways, but they trim away their individuality to fit a mold that is harmful to themselves and others. All men do not want to condone violence or the harm of other people: “Young men must understand on a deep level that being a real man isn’t going along with what you know to be cruel, inhumane, stupid, humiliating, and dangerous” (Kimmel 2008:287). But members who reap the rewards of an IFC fraternity — the future alumni connections, power on campus, and supposed “brotherhood” that the organization provides — while failing to address its negative aspects, intervene when a brother is out of line, and call out racist and misogynistic comments and rituals are just as much a part of the problem as their brothers.

I have talked with fraternity men individually who are appalled by some of their fraternity brothers comments or actions. Many of the authors — whom I have read from Pascoe at the high school level to Kimmel at the college level and beyond — have discovered that the young men that they have interviewed often feel torn about their performances. They may distance themselves from their public behaviors, saying that they are not like the other guys

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<sup>24</sup> Far too nuanced to address in this undergraduate thesis, the brutal hazing in many Black fraternities is an important phenomenon to unpack and analyze in a future paper.

(Pascoe 2007) or that they were secretly not comfortable with the rituals that their fraternities performed (Kimmel 2008:281).

Kimmel gives an example of fraternity pledges whose pledgship task was to stand on their fraternity's balcony on Sunday mornings and holler at women walking home from the fraternity in their clothes from the night before while cheering for the men who were returning to the fraternity (281). Although most of them were uncomfortable yelling at women — whom they may have been friends with as well — none of the men expressed their disdain for the ritual with their peers until Kimmel encouraged a few of them to speak their minds. Rallying the other pledges, who agreed that the ritual was misogynistic and demeaning, the men made a change in the fraternity, putting an end to that tradition.

The first-year men, whom the fraternity deems “pledges,” are crucial for the fraternity's survival. They hold the power to be the future of the organization, and so they hold much more weight in the house than the upperclassmen aim to convince them of, during pledgship. Masculinity is an endlessly steep and achievable goal. Its frustrating elusiveness reminds me of the Greek myth of Sisyphus, a king punished for his deception and made to push a boulder — which would always roll back down — up a hill for eternity. The DePauw bros take up this futile challenge to achieve a masculinity that is forever out of reach. But they still waste their time and effort — compromising their own individuality and beliefs — pushing their performances of hegemonic masculinity to their limits, trampling women and men who express different masculinities in the process.

Kimmel talk about what it means to be “a real man,” but better yet, in less gendered terms, he describes what being a good and productive person means: “doing the right thing,

standing up to immorality and injustice when you see it, and expressing compassion, not contempt, for those who are less fortunate. In other words, it's about being courageous. So much of Guyland encourages cowardice—being a passive bystander, going along with what seems to be the crowd's consensus" (287).

Corralling most of the white, heterosexual, and affluent men — who already have the patriarchal and racial privilege on their side — into one space and social circle, which they rarely venture outside of, amasses their power into an organization. These men are not taking advantage of the learning that they could be doing outside of the classroom from their fellow students. In fact, they resist that kind of learning, a mentality that could be spawned by disdain and resentment, but perhaps it is a fear of recognizing privilege. These men may be afraid of realizing that they have been promoting sexual assault, racial inequality, and homophobia, but it is never too late to change their ideologies, discontinue their performances, and combat injustices.

### **Who the DePauw Man Should Be**

I have heard of a few men who made an announcement to their fraternity that people should not be using the word, "faggot." I have seen a white man intervene when one of his fraternity brothers was trying to take a drunk woman upstairs. I have felt proud of the men who threatened to quit their fraternity if a rapist wasn't kicked out. I have known a white IFC man who has replied-all to a house email, asserting that the brother who sent the email should not be talking about women in such a degrading way.

But I haven't heard, seen, felt, or known it enough. Not as much as I've heard the words, "bitch," "slut," "faggot," "pussy," or the N-word. Not as much as I've seen men plying women

with alcohol — women who can barely stand on their own without swaying back and forth. Not as much as I've felt their hands pulling me into them, touching me, and grabbing me. And not nearly as much as I've known women who have been raped by IFC fraternity men.

Although the inspiration for this thesis originated from a place of pain, through the writing process, that anguish — though it will never dissipate — has led to understanding, constructive research, and hope. At the Honor's Scholar poster presentation at the beginning of the year, I had the question — “What does it mean to be a DePauw man?” — on my poster board onto which people placed their responses. I also had a second question as well: “What *should* it mean?” The people who answered the first question, also left these answers to the second question.

“community service; commitment, using power of voice for good”

“To be able to express emotion without being placed into a binary of man/woman”

“respectful responsible honest”

“use their position of power to improve DePauw as a whole”

“to be engaging and intersectional”

“be an ally”

“what if our DePauw man weren't white + straight? CONSENT”

“vulnerable”

“listening actually listening”



All DePauw men have the potential to foster a safer campus environment and to become a positive community force. It is a matter of uprooting a campus culture that centers around a fraternal masculinity. DePauw should do everything that it can to protect the wellbeing and education of all their students. As a university that prides itself on a rigorous liberal arts education, DePauw should strive to send *these* kinds of men into the world.

I believe that this new image of a DePauw man can replace its current version not because such a culture change is easy by any means, but because it is necessary. The costs and casualties of this current masculinity are too high. While my audience for this project includes university officials, professors, faculty, students at DePauw and other liberal arts universities, the most important audience of this thesis may very well be the least likely to read it: the bros enacting the kinds of performances that my narratives describe and the fraternity brothers who let them. Exposing the reality of these men's performances to them, this project holds up a mirror into which they so often avoid looking.

While bros spend so much time resenting and resisting social progress, their acts of dominance and violence are futile attempts to reclaim the privileges that they are losing as other populations continue their quests towards equality. Bros' individual transgressions can inflict a range of consequences for the people that they victimize: ranging from frightening and troubling for the victim to painful, traumatic, and potentially life-changing depending on the crime. Yet while not all bros are the perpetrators, by not speaking out against the inequalities that their organizations promote, their silence serves as permission. Accessing their repressed compassion and conscience, the bros of DePauw need to drop their performances, becoming a part of the world that is coming anyway.

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