

Folklore of Acacia

By

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For

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Interview with Michael J. Glumb:

John, question: Why did you join a fraternity?

Mike, answer: It's kind of a hard question, because I didn't plan on joining a fraternity when I came here to school but, I just came over to several different fraternities I seemed to like what I saw and um, met some guys I liked and it [joining the fraternity] just seemed like something I wanted to do. The guys in the house seemed like they were really close. It's just, I thought it was really cool how everyone was really close and I just wanted to be a part of it.

J. What does Acacia mean?

M. It means, lots of different things. It's named after an actual wood, the acacia tree. It means, to us, everlasting strength. Our motto is human service.

J. What is your symbol?

M. Our symbol is a right triangle in the first quadrant with the proportions of three by four by five.

J. What does it mean and do you have any certain colors?

M. Our colors are black and old gold. The triangle basically represents three facets of human life. *specifically?*

J. Why do you have two names, Acacia and the greek letters AKAK?

M. Because the word acacia comes from the greek spelling of akakia and that's just short for it.

J. Can you tell me some of your house history, like origins, anything that was here before it, legends, myths about it?

M. [Not important to the topic]. . . Beta Theta Pi which we bought their house and tore it down and built our addition, hence, the third set of stairs out there, we call those the Beta stairs. The Betas call those the seven stairs to nowhere. We started out at Indiana University in 1922. We were originally called the Indiana Masonic Fraternity which is based on the masonic religion, is really not much of a religion any more it's like the lions club, a place where old guys hang out. A tradition that we no longer do, back in the sixties during the supposed "hell week" the pledges had to go steal a dog. They called it the yellow dog week back then and they had to go steal some dog and paint it yellow. We have a scrap book down stairs that's got articles in the paper of how some man reported his dog stolen and then a few days later he reports that he found his dog and it was painted yellow. We also have a little legend around our house that one of the founding fathers was going to betray the fraternity and he was therefore murdered. He was supposedly killed for giving away fraternity secrets and buried in the basement of the house. So we supposedly have a ghost in our house and which a lot of the noises around the house are blamed on.

J. What are some of the cut-downs and nicknames you give to some of you fraternity brothers?

M. Cut-downs, it's just a lot of times cut-downs are pretty much inside jokes on like some event that that person did or some time, it usually sticks with them no matter how long ago it happened. Once they get some kind of stigma about 'em it stays. Most of the nicknames are related to your last names, however, something that rhymes with your last name like a one guys name is Sam Ankme, we call him Sam Spankme. We make fun of the town of Brownsberg, a suburb of Indianapolis. Two guys are from Brownsberg and we just make fun of them and call them hillbillies. My roommate Matt Brown, we call him Brownie or we call him Brownsberg just because we make fun of Brownsbergs. This is a supposedly a brotherhood so everyone shares everything but, some guys are real stingy so we give them a little ethnic joke, we add on a Jewish ending of a last name of some guys like we call one guy Richieberg and a Tomodastein or we just call them generic names of one guy we didn't really like that much. We call 'em Freddie. His name is Fred. We just call them some other guy's name. You walk down the hallway and you just call someone Degrute who's not Degrute because Degrute is a mutant.

*Edmuntson
is alone +
well!*

J. What is a mutant?

M. A mutant is any guy or girl, girls are trolls, mutants it's someone who is just very unpleasing to the eye, or they just do ridiculous stuff all the time.

J. Does that mean that "unpleasing to the eye" ugly or what?

M. All genetic misfits go into this category. A guy who's mom and dad are cousins you know generally comes out to be a mutant. Mutant is a generic term we use that's just one of our house terms we call undesirables that we don't want.

J. What about trolls, why do you call them trolls?

M. I don't know where we got trolls from, a lot of people call ugly girls trolls. Because troll is a fictional type thing or who knows it could be real, ah folklore?

J. What are some of your slang terms?

M. Like when you go take a nap or go to sleep for a while, I'll say "I'm gonna go bag in my room."

J. What is a live-out?

M. A live-out is a guy that doesn't actually live in the fraternity house but, is in the fraternity, he's a member, he's an active member but, does not live in the house, the fraternity house.

J. Is there any reason why they don't live in the house or is it just personal preference?

M. Most of the guys that live out right now, are either fifth year seniors or seniors or guys who we were supposed to have our house renovated over the summer and they all assumed that the construction would still be going on during the semester and they didn't want to deal with it so they decided to get apartment living-out. Otherwise almost everyone lives-in. Next semester we have to make people live-out because we won't have enough space because we'll have too many that want to live-in. Most people love to live-in but, lots of times they get tired of a, the group living after awhile and want some more privacy. So that's one of the main reason why some people live-out.

J. What's a cold dorm?

M. A cold dorm is a like a room we have upstairs where, it's just a huge room, the windows are open year round. Therefore, winter time it's cold. It's still called a cold dorm Summer and Spring even though it's hot in there. It's full of bunk beds and almost everyone sleeps up there. You can sleep in your room if you want but, a lot of people sleep up there and I enjoy it because I get the best sleep. In the mornings, we've got a call board up you can get woken up by a pledge any time between six o'clock and ten o'clock they will wake you up. It's great!

*interesting -
heating bill
must be
high!*

J. What's a call board?

M. A call board is a board we have on the wall, it's got a bunch of hooks on it. Each hook has a corresponding time and you have a bed number and you hang your bed number tag on a the hook you want to be woken up at, which time.

J. During the course of each year you guys have pairs with a sorority. How do you get a pair?

M. How do we get a pair, well? I suppose that depends on your reputation. A lot of houses strive on their reputation but, mostly it, it's called gunning. You go gunning for each pairing time. There are three pairings per year. One is Homecoming, one is IU Sing, the other is the Little 500 Bicycle Race. You go during gunning week, you have a schedule of sororities that you would go to each night and you would serenade them. What we particularly did, we had a band, guys in the house, and we went and performed for the girls in each sorority house. Also, the sororities do the same thing. They come to the fraternity houses and serenade the fraternities and at the end of the week people call each other up, the social chairman or pairings chairman of each fraternity and/or sorority will call each other up and basically they usually don't directly call the sorority that they want to pair with, they call everyone else and find out what everyone else is doing. It's very complicated, you go by rumors and eventually you will pair with someone if you are a fraternity because there are less sororities than there are fraternities here.

good info

great material

Interview #2

Informants: Kara Hendrickson & Tonya Feters

Katie Barnes: Ok, why don't you tell us a little bit about yourself, Kara.

Kara Hendrickson: Well, I go to Indiana University and I'm staying in Foster Harper dorm and...

KB: Ok, um...

KH: I...

KB: And tell me a little bit about your eating habits. I mean, do you eat in the cafeteria?

KH: Yeah. There's three meals in the cafeteria, three times a day.

KB: Uh huh.

KH: Usually we have some food in the room too, but try not to keep that much food in the room.

KB: Oh really?...Oh um..(laughter). So how often do you eat? Do you go to breakfast in the morning?

KH: I usually don't go to breakfast and...just lunch and dinner. I try not to eat anything in the morning.

KB: Oh?

KH: I'm usually not hungry and rather try to eat less..Ha Ha.

KB: Oh, do you um, does your roommate, what...Have you been dieting at all?

KH: Trying to but it hasn't been working.

KB: You just try to.

KH: I've been trying to, I've been trying not to keep food in the room and just eat...

KB: So Kara, have you gained any weight wince you've been at school yet?

KH: Um, I'm sure I have. I haven't weighed myself. I'm kind of scared.

KB: Oh, ha ha ha.

a room in our house that's got stolen signs that we put up on the walls from every walk out class. I don't remember much from my walk out because I was drunk the whole time.

J. So the basic purpose of walk out is to let loose and get off all the stress of pledgeship?

M. Yah, pretty much that's I would say that's, it's a lot of fun and you get to know some of the guys in your pledge class a lot better when you do the kind of stuff we do.

J. What are some of the rumors of things you do to your pledges?

M. Rumors? Well because I haven't heard any of the rumors. I mean everyone always asks you what you do and they're like do you do this do you do that. I don't know.

Effrin. [one of Mike's pledge brothers on a rumor about what they do] Some guy in a, some beta told told 'em that we a raise a pup [a dog] at the beginning of pledgeship and to get initiated we have ta kill it. We don't do that.

J. What's a beer slide?

M. Oh, a beer slide is when, it usually happens at the end of the night or during Little 5 when everyone is drunk, drunk! drunk! drunk! Way drunk! They lay out some plastic on the floor and pour beer all over it and you run and you slide on it across the entire room.

J. Have you learned anything about yourself since you joined the fraternity?

M. Sure.

Interesting!

*Sounds
athletic!*

J. Like what?

M. Like you need to trust people more and you need to trust people more and you need I mean, you learn how to get to know people and actually I mean really deal with problems. You really learn how to deal with problems.

J. Do you feel that there is a "fraternity image" that you have to keep up since you joined the fraternity?

M. Yah 'cause sometimes. Around this campus anytime a fraternity does something wrong, "bad", it just gets blown out of proportion. And usually the things that have been done have been pretty bad. Like one frat. yelled some homosexual slurs and another had a spray painted some things on their own property because about music students. They called them fags because they were parking around their place. Pretty much all the fraternities are social fraternities so um we're here to get to know people and things like that. If the dean doesn't like you, he doesn't like the way your fraternity is acting he will put you on probation. Therefore, you will have no activities so there is no point in even being in a fraternity if you have no activities ever. To keep your self out of the negative spotlight is a key.

✓ good

✓

J. Do you think the apologies given by fraternity members for those actions that were "bad" are sincere?

M. Well of course not. People don't change that easily and if I said something to you and it got all my buddies in trouble I think I would apologize just so that's pretty much the most they can do to change the situation around but, it really most apologies like that they can say they are sorry and usually it's the other fraternity members that do the apologizing for their brothers.

M. A green ass is somebody who just got initiated. We also call them the new shits they're actives but, we just call them green ass or new shit. Pledges are anything derogatory we call pledge: pleeb, puke, shit, fuck, asshole, dickhead, whatever.

J. observations not included

J. How do you get a paddle and who gives it to you and why?

M. You can get a paddle from anyone actually, this particular paddle is another tradition. On initiation day your fraternity father, which is a thing we have is an older guy [than you] in the house, who gives you advice and is your friend and helps you feel more comfortable with being in a fraternity when you're a pledge. The paddle on the wall there was given to me by my fraternity father the day I was initiated and I in turn bought him a paddle. Any friend, or someone in another sorority, it's usually a fraternity and sorority that exchange paddles.

J. Is there anything specific that comes on the paddle or is it anybody puts whatever they want on it?

M. We usually have near the handle we have our crest, which is our coat of arms, also we have letters either AKAK or Acacia on our paddle or if you traded with a sorority their greek letters and a little message at the bottom.

J. observation not included

J. irrelevant

M. irrelevant

M. Last night a guy got sung. We have sit down dinners where they're a formal dinner we go through a nice little singing of our song at the beginning of dinner and we have a serving order and you pass the food around and everything at the end [of dinner] the seniors have their own table and the seniors can "sing" someone and that's means, actually it can be anything. They can sing anyone for any reason they want. What happened to this guy was, he's getting engaged to be married that's the reason they sung him. What happens is all the pledges have to leave the dinning room and their job is to catch him before he gets away. He has to get away and stay away for twenty-four hours. He has to hide out but, if they catch him they have to bring him in the house and throw him in the shower. But if they don't catch him they have to do whatever he wants, he can make out a list of stuff and they have to do it. . . .

J. What's lavaliered?

M. Lavaliered is when a little charm that's got your greek letters on it. You lavalier a girl. You give her your lavalier which has your letters on it. It kind of means you are going steady, your steady girlfriend. It's kind of a serious thing.

Interesting

J. unimportant

M. unimportant

J. What's mutant tipping?

M. It usually happens during Little 5 where we just use it as a generic term when some guy in the house is sleeping on the couch and he's taking up too much space and everyone wants to sit down and watch TV. You just dump him out of the couch backwards. You take the couches in the basement and just flip them over and he falls out and you get it.

J/M. . . . unimportant

J. What is a line-up?

M. A line-up is a motivational device it can be called hazing.

J. I thought fraternities are not allowed to haze.

M. They're not, it's a motivational device.

J. You have a secret room in the basement, what is it called?

M. The bike room. That's where we keep all the little 5 bikes and no one gets in there but the bikers, no I'm kidding.

It's the chapter room which has all of our rituals.

J. Is that where you have chapter meetings?

M. No, we have our chapter meetings in our dinning room because that's where we have them.

. . . unimportant.