

# The Brotherhood

An honors Thesis

By

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Purpose of Thesis:

This novella attempts to combine some of the social settings I was exposed to while at Ball State. I was in a fraternity and heavily involved with the Student Government Association. When I learned of a group similar to the Brotherhood in Alabama, I wanted to write a creative project using that theme. From there it was just a matter of writing the plot. I just combined what I already knew about Greek systems and student government into the Brotherhood.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:**

I must begin by thanking Mary Clark-Upchurch. Without her guidance and grammar advice I would be completely lost.

I would also like to thank Tracy Curtin, who would stay up and watch me type. Even though she would have had me end the story half way through, she still deserves special thanks for all her ideas.

Prepared by Chris Pappaioanou  
May 1994

## Introductions

On a beautiful March day, the sun was shining across the grassy quad of Grant University. The quad consisted of five academic buildings and the administrative building. East of the quad one could see the residence halls in the distance. Looking further to the east one could see the outline of downtown Charleston in particular the silhouette of the Cooper river bridge. Many people were walking or riding bikes through the quad, the second semester was well under way and many people were going to and from classes. There was also a group of students playing catch with a football in the middle of the grassy lawn. Along the west side of the quad sits the Jefferson Flemming Political Science building. Many classes were in session currently in particular one located in room 122, Dr. Brown's class on Political Systems of the World.

"Class as I mentioned a few weeks ago we have that research project coming up. I hope you have a good idea on what you plan to do. Those of you that don't need to meet with me, maybe I can give you some ideas." Professor Brown, Alex as he was known by students, was one of the youngest and best liked professors in the political science department. Students had trouble getting into a Brown class. "Well other than that have a nice weekend." As the rest of the class gathered their belongings and began talking about weekend plans Dr Brown was approached by a familiar face.

"Alex I have been researching ideas for my project and I was wondering if you could help me out, or give me some pointers," asked a familiar voice to Dr. Brown. He looked up to see one of his favorite students, Michelle Flemming. Michelle had chin length straight brown hair and

beautiful grey blue eyes. She was dressed attractively in jeans shorts and a tee shirt, she had her hair pulled back through a baseball cap, making her eyes stand out even more.

"Sure Michelle, I'm busy the rest of this week and ... Hey do you have your material with you right now? I have a meeting at five but I'm free till then." This was typical of Alex Brown, the 33 year old professor and graduate of Grant University who had only been working for five years but was well on his way to becoming the youngest professor to be named chair of the political science department, he would always make time for his students. Alex was very young looking in fact on the first day of class he would often sit amongst the students and talk bad about himself to see what other people had heard about him.

"That would be great. I have my stuff in my bag."

"Well let's go up to my office and see if I can help ya."

Michelle Flemming was one of Professor Brown's favorite students. She has proven herself as an exceptionally bright political science major, who caught his attention the first day he met her due at first because of her looks but later because of what was behind the looks. Michelle was always ready to give her point of view in class discussions and also voice any disagreements about any particular subject being lectured on, a regular occurrence that professor Brown always looked forward to.

They walked through the cool halls of the Jefferson Davis Political Science building, located on the far west end of the Grant University quad, up to the second floor where the offices and a small library are located. Alex's office was typical of most professors. His shelves

stacked high with books ranging from Das Capital to volumes on United Nation's policy. In the office was a cluttered desk with stacks of students papers that he'd been meaning to get to and also his latest research material. His desk overlooked the grassy quad bellow which was filled with students coming and going to class. The only other furniture in the office was a green file cabinet which came standard in all professors' offices.

Grant University, a medium size liberal arts school located fifteen minutes southwest of Charleston South Carolina, is one of the most prestigious schools in the south. A descendant of US Grant had donated one of the family's plantations to start the school. The campus has a central lawn area that the buildings surround as well as a local village with shops and restaurants also located near the quad. Sitting on a hill overlooking the campus was the original family's plantation house now occupied by a wealthy alumni. Grant University is deeply rooted in tradition and is known as the school of choice of the remaining debutantes and gentry.

As Michelle sat down in a chair that had been hidden by stacks of books before, Alex made some small talk about the weather and the basketball team until Michelle seemed organized.

"Well what seems to be the problem? Hold on, before you do that tell me exactly what your topic is going to be."

Michelle had already anticipated his first question and was ready with her answer.

"I'm doing a history of campus politics. I began by going through records of past elections and old copies of the campus paper. This is

where I'm having problems. I've come across what seems like a pattern in the elections. I was wondering if you have had any of these people as students, asked Michelle as she handed over a crumpled sheet of notebook paper."

"First tell me about this pattern." Asked Alex as he tried to straighten out his desk in a feudal attempt to look professional.

"Each election for the past twenty years seems to work the same way. As you know we elect entire slates as opposed to individual offices. Each year two or three slates become official candidates by getting 500 signatures for a nomination petition. In each case, by looking at advertising, campus polls, and related articles in the Grant Daily covering debates and things like that, only two or three slates actually appeared to have a chance, but in each case by the time the election came around only one of these slates would be left. The others withdrew from the election for a wide range of reasons. The reasons were not related, but these people had all changed their minds suddenly."

"Hold on I think you've lost me responded Brown finally paying attention now that he could see the wood surface of his desk."

"I know this sounds strange but each slate that dropped out did so very suddenly; some had even paid for advertising the day before they decided to drop out. It doesn't make sense to me, it just seems like they all changed their minds too quickly. In every case the slate that was left won, that's why I came to you. I don't have any way to investigate this any further. I don't even know if there is anything to investigate. Do you have any suggestions, I'm at a loss."

"I don't know if you have found anything but it is interesting,"

said Brown while trying to figure out exactly what Michelle had just said.

"I think you may be reading things into what you've found. Have you thought of trying to get ahold of some of the people who dropped out of the election. You should be able to find their addresses and phone numbers from the alumni office. Why don't you start there and come back if you need anything else."

"Thanks I hadn't thought of trying that. Will they give that information out," stated Michelle as she kicked herself in the head for not thinking of this herself earlier.

"As far as I know. Give it a try, if they won't come back and we'll go from there," replied Alex knowing that the Alumni office would not give that type of information out.

"See ya Alex, and thanks alot," she said confident that she would have this all figured out soon.

"Anytime," Brown said as he watched Michelle leave his office and then switched his attention out his window to a particularly attractive undergrad making her way across the quad causing him to think how much he liked his job. He then thought about Michelle's project and anticipated when she would be in next to have him help obtain the list of names she was seeking or to try and switch topics.

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## Parliamentary Performance

Later that evening, across campus along Magnolia Avenue there was a meeting of a different kind going on. Magnolia Avenue was the fraternity and sorority row for Grant University. At Grant, if you were not greek you were considered nothing. In fact 89% of the student body was involved in a fraternity or sorority, one of the highest percentages in the nation. Surprisingly, the greek system at Grant University was very close. Rivalries rarely left sports fields or other events. Occasionally, incidents between houses would arise, but they would usually be settled by the houses. Grant University's greek system has had traditions going back nearly to the inception of the university.

"Hey everyone just shut up." "We're not going to get anything done if ya'll don't just shut up."

The Chi Phi chapter never ran very smoothly. One of the largest houses on campus, it is known for being laid back but very unorganized. Conner Davis, chapter president, never liked chapter meetings. Not because they were unorganized but because brothers could never agree on anything. It seemed to Connor that there was nothing he could do to get

them to listen to him. The only thing the chapter seemed to agree upon was that the pledges are never ready to go active and there should be at least two mixers each week.

"Damn it ya'll shut up, let's get started," pleaded Connor. Finally people began to settle down and start to pay attention. The first people to give reports were the officers they each began with the latest gossip about who hooked up with whom at the last mixer, or what they saw a pledge do.

"Thank you before I begin I would like to compliment each one of you for being complete drunken idiots at the basketball game Saturday. That's an excellent way for us to go back on probation with the interfraternal counsel. Oh, I would especially like to point out Andy, for puking on the shuttle bus." Immediately cheers rang from across the room as Andy stood up and took a bow.

"Nice going Andy," Connor continued trying not to laugh. "Now that we have covered all of the truly important business we need to move on, we do have some things to talk about tonight. For those of you that were not here last week, it has been moved that the pledges go into Hell Week tomorrow night", said Connor questioning why he ever accepted his nomination for president .

"Now discussion was last week so all we are doing now is voting on the motion."

"Hey I don't want to be an ass but I want to discuss this more. I wasn't able to be here last week and I have something to say," shouted Troy Alameda self appointed chapter hazer who always had something he wanted to say and someone he always wanted to torment.

"Troy, I said discussion was last week. It's not my fault you were not here," snapped Connor. "However, since there were so many of you not present at last week's meeting", a trend that Connor hoped would continue, "we will have

one pro and one con to the idea and then we vote". Connor continued hoping to remain in control of the meeting. "Well since Troy has something he would like to say, we will let him speak the con, that is what you would like to speak on right,"--a question that didn't need to be asked and one that sparked laughter around the room.

"As a matter of fact I will be speaking the con tonight."

A comment which sparked even more laughter from the room.

"I don't know how most of you feel about this but these pledges have no respect for this house. They are rude to girls at mixers and in no way represent what a true Phi Chi stands for. When I was a pledge we would have been kicked out if we had acted like these pledges."

This was a tactic Troy loved to use, but everyone hated to hear. Since he had been around longer than everyone could remember he loved to reminisce about when he was a pledge and everyone was perfect.

"I just think that it's too early for them to go active maybe early next semester."

"Thank you Troy for sharing your feelings, now who would like to speak on behalf of the pledges," asked Connor?

Immediately several brothers raised their hands, among them was Mark Butler, known as a quiet brother but very well liked by everyone else.

Connor glanced at the raised hands and immediately called on Mark.

"I'll be brief," Mark began. "I know these pledges very well and

there are several reasons why I think that they should go this week. First of all they have completed their pledge books and have done all of the requirements for pledgship. Secondly they have become very close with each other and with many of us. Finally I would like for you to let them go active as a favor to me. As many of you know I am graduating in May, and I would like to see my little bro, Mike, go active while I'm here."

Michael Foster was Mark's Phi Chi little bro and the actual brother of Thomas Foster a recent Phi Chi alumnus. "I have known Mike since we were kids he has always been likemy little brother. I grew up with Thomas and have always been like a second older brother to Mike. I have talked to Thomas and the only time that he can make it back tosee Mike go through is this next weekend. It would mean a lotto Thomas and myself, if you would consider this when you vote."

As Mark finished talking, Connor quickly moved into voting hoping people had listened to Mark.

"Ok, those in favor of the pledges going into hell week this week say, yea."

Surprisingly the room was filled with yea's, even Troy voted yea. This completely caught Connor off guard, causing him to remember why he accepted the nomination for president. Mark's speech had gotten through to many of them and many others joined in on the bandwagon during the vote.

"Ok, the pledges will officially start Hell week tomorrow night. Big bro's, please take your little's bro's out for the traditional final supper."

The final supper was one of Phi Chi's traditions. The night before

Hell Week began, big bro's would take their little bros out for a good dinner and inform them what would be expected of them for the week.

# 3

## Administrative Assistance

"Alumni association, how can I help you," asked the dry and emotionless voice on the other end of the telephone. "Yes my name is Michelle Flemming, I am doing a project for one of my classes and I need some addresses and telephone numbers of some alumni."

"Ma'am do you have a release signed by the parties whose information you are requesting," responded the voice on the other end of the line in the tone of a true bureaucrat.

"What do you mean a signed release. If I had a signed release I wouldn't need the information on how to get in touch with them now would I," Michelle was getting frustrated and was trying not to show it.

"It is our policy not to give any personal information regarding Grant University alumni. What you need to do is bring in the signed releases before we can go any farther." Now Michelle was really mad, she waived a clinched fist at her room mate, Brittany, as she began to speak.

"You mean to tell me that there is no way that I can get those names without signatures?"

"No"

With that, Michelle slammed down the phone.

"Dammit why is it when you try to get any help from people at this

school you need forms and permission?"

"Don't know" responded Brittany. "Have you tried to go around the rules, ya know, like we do for everything else," she was referring to the many instances in which they circumvented university policies and sorority fines.

"Good idea Britt but this lady is like talking to a brick wall. "That's never stopped us in the past said Brittany with a familiar sparkle in her eyes. How should we do it, wait I have an idea. Do you remember when we needed the lists of students in our history class to ask those guys to the Welcome Back dance last year?"

"What do you mean we needed, if I recall correctly you were the one who wanted their names not me. "I also believe that it was my idea that you should ask them that day in class but oh no not Brittany. You waited until it was too late to ask them in class, you wait until the day of the dance to decide to ask someone and then you talked me into helping you get that class list."

"Well whatever," responded Brittany hoping to get back on the subject, "I'm talking about how we got the class lists not why we got them."

"Yea, that just might work," said Michelle remembering how they convinced the registrar that the professor in question had unfortunately misplaced the official class list and needed a replacement. With the help of a phone call from that professor, actually a mutual friend of the girls doing his best to sound like a professor and hoping he would not get caught, the registrar reluctantly printed a new class list only after preaching for several minutes on the phone to the "professor" about losing

such an important item as a class list and that the only reason she was giving the list was because it was only two weeks into the semester and that he had been so polite on the phone.

## Revelations

Mark picked up the phone hitting the auto dial for Mike.

"Mike hey this is Mark how are you doing?"

"Real good and yourself?"

"I'm doing good, I have some good news to tell you so get ready and I'll be over to pick you up in fifteen minutes and take you to dinner."

"Sounds good I'll see you then." As Mike hung up the phone he wondered why Mark hadn't told him over the phone but decided not to call back because after all he was getting a free dinner out of it. By the time Mike had changed clothes Mark was sitting in the driveway.

"Hi Mark, what's up?"

"I'll tell you about it over dinner--get in."

"Dinner well this must be good, either you got a job or hit the lottery."

"Neither I'll tell you about it when we get there."

"So where you taking me," asked Mike, knowing the answer before he heard it.

They pulled up at the Black Dog Tavern, Mike was intrigued to find out what Mark had in store for him. The Black Dog was a longtime favorite with Grant students who especially love the home brewed beers. They each ordered, and after the server delivered a round of the dark winter ale Mark began to speak.

"Well you may not know this but it is a Phi Chi tradition that pledges receive a last supper before beginning Hell Week. I suggest that you make the most of this dinner because Hell Week begins tomorrow. As Mark finished the sentence Mike could hardly control his excitement, he was finally going to be a full member of the Phi Chi fraternity. "Are you serious Mike blurted."

"Well it shouldn't surprise you so much. You are a legacy, in fact you are a double legacy."

"No I'm not. Thomas is the only other Phi Chi in our family Mike interrupted."

"Yea well I wasn't exactly talking about Phi Chi but we will get to all of that later. Time to eat."

Mike wondered what Mark was referring to but forgot about it as soon as Mark began to tell Mike about rules for Hell Week.

## Devine Assistance

As Michelle dialed the numbers she preyed to herself that she wouldn't have to talk to the same lady she had dealt with earlier.

"Hello my name is Michelle Flemming. I am president of the journalism society. We're planning our spring reunion and I need some help. All of our records with addresses of past members were destroyed in a house fire last week and I need to begin mailing invitations out this week."

"Well Miss do you have release forms signed by the people you are seeking information on?"

Michelle was already getting mad. These people never think she thought to herself.

"No but it is very important that we send these invitations out.

"How do you think these people are going to feel when they are not invited to the reunion. Additionally, how do you think they are going to react when they find out they did not receive an invitation because the Alumni office of their alma mater would not give their addresses out. Actions like this should greatly increase the likelihood of receiving donations from them."

"Ma'am can you hold a second?"

"Sure," replied Michelle relieved that there seemed to be at least a chance that some progress was being made.

As she waited, she glanced into her bedroom making a mental note to

be able to see the floor of it before going to bed this evening.

"What did they say," asked Brittany who was busy doing nothing on the couch. Something that would change in the next few weeks.

"I think they are buying it, or at least she put me on hold this time," said Michelle softly as she waited for the woman on the other line to come back.

"Ma'am, seeing as these are extraneous circumstances we are willing to provide you with the information you have requested."

"Thank you very much, I will come by and pick up the information later this afternoon," replied Michelle as she flashed thumbs up to Brittany.

"Well we did it again," smiled Brittany satisfied that her idea had paid off.

"Yea but some day they are going to find out and kick us out of here," added Michelle relieved that she had what she wanted.

"Well you're probably right but don't count on it," laughed Brittany.

"So what do you need all of these names for," asked Brittany wondering why she hadn't asked the question earlier.

"Well you know that class that I have with the professor that I always talk about? Well we have to do a research paper for the final and I am doing mine on the history of the campus political system. The names that we are getting are all people who have dropped out of the election."

"Oh sounds neat," replied Brittany hoping it would end there but knowing it wouldn't.

"You see every year for as long as I can tell one group drops out of

the election even though they have a chance of winning. So I thought that if I contacted some of the people who dropped out I might get a better idea on why they dropped out."

## Strangers

As Mark finished talking Mike could only think about this week being over. The rules for hell week were very strict. They were designed to mentally overwhelm the pledges. Many of the things that Mark had told Mike were not even true. Since Mark enjoyed joking with Mike to begin with he had an extremely good time worrying Mike about what would be expected of him for the next week. Once Mark got on a roll he was ruthless, at no time did Mike even suspect Mark was lying.

"Remember, all of the actives went through the same thing and make it just fine. I'm sure that you'll do the same."

That was a reassuring idea for Mike who immediately decided that if Thomas had done it he could do it.

"Yea you're right, if you made it I shouldn't have any problem," joked Mike.

"Well are you ready," asked Mark as he stood. "I have some other things to show you tonight," he continued as they headed toward the parking lot.

Once they were back in the car they proceeded towards campus. Mike ignored the fact that they passed the Phi Chi house assuming that hell week would begin somewhere off campus. When Mark stopped the car in front of the English building Mike could not help but wonder what was going on. "Come with me," said Mark, as he headed towards the side door.

As they entered the building Mark began to speak.

"Do you remember at dinner when I called you a double legacy? Well I am now going to show you something that very few people at Grant College ever get to see."

Mike followed along figuring that this was some strange induction into hell week. Mark led the way down the cool partially lit hallway to the stairs and continued down to the basement, something that Mike found rather odd. The whole building took on a different appearance with the lights off. Mike glanced at the bulletin boards full of advertisements and flyers hanging on the wall. Everything seemed so silent, almost too silent. The only noise came from a soda machine in the commissary.

The basement was a rectangular hallway which led around several storage rooms and a door leading to the janitor's office. Mark walked up to that door and pulled out what looked like a credit card. He placed the card in a small black box that was mounted on the wall a green light came on and the door unlocked. At this point that Mike knew this was not a hell week activity.

"Hey Mark isn't this illegal. I would rather not get arrested tonight if you don't mind."

"You won't get arrested just follow me and keep quiet, watch what I do because you will have to do this on your own next time."

"What do you mean next time, I'm not going to do this again."

"I said keep quiet," replied Mark trying not to laugh. Once through the door they proceeded down another short hallway to a second door with a black box. Mark inserted the card, the door unlocked, opening it he turned on a light which revealed a narrow stairway leading down.

The construction on the walls of this stairway seemed different than that of the rest of the building. Instead of being the larger cut stones that comprised the rest of the building they were different sized and did not appear to be cut instead they had odd shapes that were rough to the touch. In addition the air was cooler and smelled musty. The lights that hung from the ceiling were dim compared to the florescent lights of the previous halls.

The lights filled hallway with shadows and the cool air made everything seem even more unreal.

"What does this stairway lead to," Mike was unable to remain quiet.

"This stairway leads to a tunnel that connected the family houses that comprised the original plantation. The owner had them dug when the civil war broke out in case the plantation was attacked. They are some of the only tunnels in the area especially if you consider their age. You see they lie only a couple of feet above the water line which meant they had to be very strong and water proof. The ollege has used them to run computer cables, water and things like that," Mark explained as he lead the way along the narrow corridor.

"These tunnels connect every building on campus as well as the three remaining houses that were part of the plantation."

About every hundred feet or so there were grey boxes resembling circuit breaker boxes. They contained the switches for the next section of lights.

"These lights are on timers and turn off automatically," said Mark, as he turned on the lights for the next section. To Mike it seemed like an eternity before they reached another stairway leading

up. Connecting to the central corridor, Mike noticed several other passageways intersecting along the way. In total, he counted ten sections of lights that had to be turned on in order to reach the point that they were at now.

## Interviews

"Hello is Mr. Jack Evans home," asked Michelle in the most business-like voice she could muster.

"This is Jack," responded a dry and careless voice on the other end of the line. "Who is this?"

"My name is Michelle Flemming, I am a student at Grant University. I am working on a research project on the history of the campus political system. I learned that you had run for president several years ago and decided to drop out of the race. I was wondering if you could give me some information about why you decided to withdraw."

"Well," began the voice on the other end in a serious tone that did not sound happy to be receiving unexpected calls. "The slate that I was running with decided to withdraw because it was very expensive and we didn't have the finances to continue the campaign."

"So the only reason you dropped out was because of money," asked Michelle. "I don't mean to pry but according to the finance report that was turned in to the elections board your slate had spent the maximum amount of money for the campaign."

After a pause he continued, "At the time we made up those numbers so people wouldn't feel sorry for us and try to give us money," he said in a rather aggravated tone. "Is that all you needed from me?"

"Yes, I guess it is," replied Michelle taking the hint in his voice that he had nothing else to say. "If you think of anything that you

forgot to tell me I would appreciate it if you would give me a call at this number." As she gave her number she couldn't help but think that Mr Evans wasn't telling everything he knew.

"How'd it go," asked Brittany as she sat in front of the TV eating dinner.

"Well I got a hold of this guy but he didn't help me very much. He told me that his slate dropped out because they ran out of money. The thing is they had spent nearly the maximum already so why drop out."

"Don't know," responded Brittany with a mouthful of food.

Michelle was frustrated that she had not received much help from Mr Evans. She picked up the list and decided to try a woman, maybe she would be more helpful. There were very few women on the list, of those that were there, only three were local calls so Michelle decided to start there hoping to keep her long distance bill as low as possible.

"Hello is Mrs. Amy Peters home?"

"Hold on please," responded a child's voice on the other line.

"Hello?"

"Hi my name is Michelle Flemming, I am a student at Grant University. I am working on a research paper dealing with the history of the campus political system. I learned that you had run on a slate that dropped out of the election in 1969, and I was wondering if you could give me a little more information on why your slate dropped out."

"Well," began the voice on the other end of the line in a kind voice, "John Baird was running for president, I was running for secretary. John pretty much ran the election and it was his decision to drop out. I was disappointed along with the rest of the slate because it was a very

sudden decision. He said that he wouldn't have the time and that we should either find someone else to run for president or drop out. So we dropped out."

"Is that what you were looking for?"

"Yes it is. I would like to talk to Mr Baird do you have a number he can be reached at, the overly bureaucratic alumni office did not have a record for him."

"I'm afraid you won't be able to get in touch with John. He joined the Air Force after graduating from college and was killed in Vietnam ."

"Oh I see, well maybe you can tell me if he acted strange before he decided to withdraw from the election."

"I'm afraid it was a long time ago I really don't recall how he acted. He was very busy, but I thought he would have done anything to be class president."

"Thank you for your time, you have been a big help and if its alright with you I might call back if I can think of anything else," said Michelle as she stared out the window trying to decide what to do next.

"That would be fine, in fact why don't you give me your number and I will call you if I think of anything."

"That would be great," replied Michelle glad to feel that someone was interested in helping her. "I was just going to ask you the same thing."

Michelle gave her number as she tried to finish writing down the notes she had taken on the conversation.

## Pandora's Process

"Well Mike we're here," said Mark as he led the way up another set of narrow stairs.

As they reached the top Mark pulled out a key. The door at the end of this stairway was antique looking. It was a rich brown color carved with a floral pattern at the top and around the handle, completely different than the one in the English building.

"Why isn't there a box like at the other door" asked Mike in a rather shaky voice.

"Well this is not a school owned building, its the originally plantation house," responded Mark quietly.

The original plantation house overlooked campus from a small hill west of the academic quadrangle.

Opening the door, they proceeded into a hall way decorated with antiques and art work. Everything seemed very elegant. The hallway had wood paneling and intricate molding and the carpet was a very expensive looking woven oriental rug. The house smelled old but not dusty more like the cleaning products used to keep everything shiny and new looking.

They both walked down the hall and entered a billiards room with large pictures of past family members and paintings depicting the old plantation. As Mike looked around the room he noticed two large french doors from behind which he could hear voices. Mark motioned for Mike to follow. Mike hesitated and then obeyed. Mark approached the door, asked

Mike if he was ready, then not waiting for a response walked in. The room was rather dark but Mike was able to see a long table surrounded by high backed chairs.

Sitting in the chairs were several people he recognized and many whom he did not. Everyone was talking amongst themselves. Mark escorted Mike to two empty seats and sat down. To Mike the whole house seemed like something out of an old movie.

"What is this, and why are we here," asked Mike the instant he was sitting.

"All of your questions will be answered in a little while," said Mark with a large grin on his face.

Mike looked around the room and noticed several other people who appeared to be just as interested in the surroundings as he was. Mark was talking with three girls who Mike recognized and remembered were from different houses. They were talking about how things were going and what they were up to. The people Mike recognized were all in fraternities and sororities. As he looked around, people would wave or give a nod when he made eye contact. Just then a voice came from behind them saying welcome and how glad he was to see new people.

The voice which greeted them was deep and sounded much older. Mike turned around in his seat to see a rather distinguished gentleman with silver grey hair, wearing an expensive looking blazer and tie. The man approached the head of the table and began to speak. There were no introductions, something which he found strange.

"Before we begin with tonight's meeting I thought that we should explain our existence to our newest members. Mr. Chair would you be so

kind as to tell our new friends about the Brotherhood?"

"Certainly," said a younger sounding voice from across the table, who was hidden by a shadow from where Mike was sitting. "We are known as the Brotherhood our existence is not known to anyone but the people who you see before you and the people who have preceded them. We are the driving force behind Grant University. Membership is handed down within each of the fraternities and sororities on campus by the current member when he or she graduates that is why there is not a room full of new members. As a member of the brotherhood you are entitled to many privileges and many responsibilities. We pride ourselves on service to the community especially the interests of past members and the general student body. You see we are not dependant on the university for funding and therefore we set our own agenda and policies. The greek system is the median that we work through. Since we all know that the greek system has represented over 85% of the student body for years, with the proper motivation we can control any student organization and through use of our past members we can have great influence on the administration and their policies. This may sound very hard to believe; however, I assure you that we have developed a very intricate system to delegate power and set policy."

"I think that the best way for you to understand the importance of what we do is to watch us in action. Keep in mind that you will be expected to carry out the duties that your predecessors have carried out. We have the upmost faith in your abilities. You have each been hand chosen by the entire brotherhood."

As the speaker finished the introduction Mike leaned towards Mark

saying, "you certainly didn't hold back tonight did you."

"No I guess not but you'll get over it," responded Mark laughing. "So what do you think so far?"

"I'm not sure I even understand what has happened so far. I've become a part of an organization that no one knows about but decides everything that happens at school. This seems like something out of a God Father movie."

"Well it takes some getting used to but all we are really doing is motivating people to vote for the candidates that we decide on. Essentially, we just accomplish things through others that don't even know that we're here. That's the beauty of it, we decide what's best for the students particularly, those in the greek system. I think that once you see how we work you will understand how important we really are."

As Mike and Mark continued to whisper to each other the speaker who gave the introduction began to continue.

"The only order of business tonight is to discuss and vote on who we want to back for the student body elections coming up. Does anybody have any nominations?"

A couple hands immediately went up but refrained from speaking until called upon. The first had spoken to a prospective candidate at a recent student senate meeting, the person was qualified and had several interesting ideas that he planned to incorporate into a platform.

The second speaker stood and said the name of the candidate, Wayne DeLong, and the reasons he felt that this person was planning on running. He then explained that Mr. DeLong's father was a past member of the Brotherhood and had been very generous to the organization over the

years. This comment sparked a number of approving comments from around the room.

The Chair then stated that he personally knew the Wayne's father and that the only reason that he was not in the Brotherhood, was because the member from his house had not yet graduated.

Mike leaned over towards Mark asking how decisions are executed.

"The basic idea for something like the student body election works by first sponsoring the campaign through an anonymous third party normally, but not always a past member of the brotherhood. Then each member of the Brotherhood is responsible to influence his or her house. We have a number of ways to do this depending on personal preference. For example, I will send Connor a computer mail message saying that I am a concerned party and I feel candidate X best represents the needs of the Phi Chi fraternity."

"So you mean that Connor knows what is going on," interrupted Mike.

"No not exactly," he has been told by the past precedent that he will receive some form of communication from a 'concerned party'. This information is vital to the future strength of Phi Chi, therefore it is very important that he follow the advice."

"What happens from there."

"Well, Conor will then mention in chapter that an election is coming up and he has asked one of the slates to come into chapter and make a presentation. After the presentation, Conor will move that the chapter as a whole support that slate and that a vote for them will count as a 10 dollar credit in everyones account. It works very well, in the past the entire house has voted at once."

# 9

## Motives

As the meeting finished up, Mike looked at Mark saying. "So is there anything else you are going to show me this evening?"

"No not that I'm aware of responded Mark," knowing he had lied.

Everyone in the room was talking, the new members were being introduced to other members. Mike was somewhat surprised to see that people were using each others names now. He pulled Mark over asking him why they were using each others names now.

"Well in the meeting it is just a tradition to use the terms chair and counselor, over time as we have grown we have kept the traditions. Once the meeting is over we use our real names. In public we acknowledge each other as friends from a class we have had in the past."

"Who is the older guy," asked Mike referring to the man who began the meeting and was currently circulating around the room shaking hands and laughing occasionally.

"In the meetings he is referred to as the Chancellor. His name is Fredric Hollister," responded Mark as he led Mike toward the gentleman. As they approached, Fred excused himself from the conversation he was in be able to introduce himself.

"Mike Foster," he said extending his hand. "I am Fred Hollister," began the Chancellor on a very sincere tone, "I am very glad to have you with us. Your brother was a very productive member and I look forward to working with you."

"Thanks, I think, I'm still trying to get used to everything," responded Mike looking around the room.

"Well we're here to help you in any way we can, just let us know."

With that he excused himself and walked to another group of people and introduced himself to another new member.

"Come on let's go", said Mark as he led the way back through the rich wood paneled halls. As they walked away Mike could hear voices echo through the basement of the old house. The shadows from the lights bounced off the grand woodwork, that in combination with the muffled voices coming from behind the now closed doors of the meeting room, caused chills to run up Mike's body.

They continued back the way they came, the tunnels seemed cooler on the way back. Mike had many questions about how the brotherhood was founded. Mark responded that 40 years ago a group of students had won the student body election and tried to eliminate the greek system, because they had each been black balled from different fraternities. The reason they won was because the greek system was divided by three other slates. That caused a split in the majority of votes allowing the nongreek slate to capture the most votes.

"After that election a member of one of the houses had the idea of uniting the greek system. He had some close friends in other houses and they had friends in other houses. That is how it all began. That group would meet at different houses around campus and hold meetings. Over the years, as past members have contributed back to the brotherhood it has become more organized and powerful."

"You remember Fred? Well Fred is the person who began it all 40

years ago. The house that we met in was given to him as a gift for his years of service by several very wealthy past members. They gave it to him because they knew it would be the perfect place to have Brotherhood meetings.

The reason we have the computer access keys is because the owner of the construction company that does all of the work for the school is a past brotherhood member. We have access to any building on campus with these cards."

As he finished speaking, they reached the stairs leading to the English building. Mark unlocked the door to the building and then repeated the process at the second door. The two walked out of the building as if nothing extraordinary had happened. Mike was glad to be outside in the cool night air. He could look across the quad and see the dimly lit plantation house with its large columns and balcony that runs the entire length of the colonial house. It was odd knowing that there was so much activity going on inside the house that looks so peaceful and dignified from across the now dimly lit quad.

They proceeded to the car and drove off. Mike was surprised to see that the entire meeting had lasted only an hour

and a half even though it had seemed like several hours. Mark drove to the Phi Chi house and looked at Mike saying, "I'm glad you are continuing our tradition, I will be taking you to the next few meetings until you feel comfortable doing it on your own."

With that said Mark turned off the car and stepped out, not waiting for Mike to follow him inside.

# 10

## Distractions

Michelle hated waking up early, but as her alarm sounded this morning she had no trouble getting out of bed. She quickly showered and dressed, grabbed a diet coke, her breakfast of champions, and began walking towards campus. It was a cool morning. There was the smell of dew in the air and a bit of fog remaining in the lower areas of the quad. She headed directly to Alex's office where she found him busy, asleep at his desk. She knocked at the open door causing Alex to jump, nearly falling out of his chair.

"Alex, are you busy," she asked smiling.

"Uh...no come in, responded Alex trying to wipe up a spot of drool on the desk without Michelle noticing.

"What brings you in so early?"

"Well I would like to talk to you about my paper."

"Oh yes, have you gotten those names yet," asked Alex expecting a no from Michelle.

"Yea I've had them for some time now and have gotten a hold of many of them. Most of the people couldn't give me any help. Some seemed like they didn't want to talk to me about it. I am going to meet with one person who said they had received harassing phone calls and dropped out because of that."

"That sounds like a start," began Alex, "but I don't think you can

base a trend on an interview with one individual. I'll tell you what I'll do for you," he continued, "go ahead and meet with the woman you were talking about and write your paper as a theoretical possibility as opposed to a fact. I know how much work you have put into this project and I guarantee that I will reflect it in your grade."

Michelle was surprised to hear Alex try to talk her into giving up. The point was not the grade, what mattered to her was finding out if her hunch had been correct.

"Well I guess you might be right, I'll meet with her and see what I can do." Saying that she gathered her belongings and left the office. Her mind was racing, the whole way home. Something was wrong, something she could not put her finger on but the voice inside her head was screaming like a train whistle that something was wrong and she was missing it. She ran the entire conversation through her head the whole way home but came up with nothing.

As she walked into her apartment she was greeted by Brittany who immediately asked how the meeting had gone. As Michelle began, her mind was filled with bits of the earlier conversation.

"He told me to turn in what I had and run it as a theoretical possibility."

"What do you mean," asked Brittany who was suddenly interested in what Michelle had to say.

"He wants me to meet with that woman,"....As she said that a light went on in her head and the hair on the back of her neck stood in end. "Wait a minute, he said woman. I never told him that I was meeting a

woman. He knows the people that I am talking about, I showed him the list right after we picked it up. Today he asked me if I had the list and if I had talked to any of the people. I told him that I had and that I was meeting with one who had dropped out due to harassing phone calls. After that he tried to talk me into turning in what I had. He Knew it was a woman after I had mentioned harassing phone calls."

"Shell I think you need to have your head examined, don't you think that you might be jumping to conclusions."

"I don't know what to think, there is no way he should know who I'm seeing, I know I didn't tell him."

"So what are you trying to say."

"Don't you think if I knew the answer to that question I wouldn't be bitching about all of this now," snapped Michelle.

"Shell I have an idea, why don't you get all pissed off at me and be in a bad mood all day instead of trying to get this whole thing figured out." Saying that, Brittany walked out of the room questioning why she ever tried to help in the first place and swearing off all future help.

Michelle taking note of Brittany's fiery exit made a note to buy Ben & Jerry's that evening, the only acceptable form of apology the two had ever known. She gathered all of her notes and began to compare them for similarities. After an hour and a half of close examination the only thing that she was sure of was that she had not made any progress. She did have five different people who were unsure why they had dropped out. There seemed to be one thing that five individuals had in common. The fraternities which they belonged to seemed unreceptive to the idea of them running. One man spoke of being confronted by the president of his house

about his running conflicting with the interests of the house. The president claimed that the house would lose a social probation hearing if the slate did not drop out.

That seemed very odd to Michelle, why would someone's brothers turn their backs on one of their own. If it was true that the Social Issues Review Committee was going to recommend probation then a majority on that committee would have to find them guilty and recommend probation. That would have to mean that someone had convinced each house to vote guilty in the hearing without the other houses knowing.

The whole situation seemed so strange, she then called each of the five people again to check out their stories one more time. They were all rather close, but there were still wide gaps that needed filling. What she was now sure of is that the houses on campus were not hesitant to tell a brother to drop out of an election. She then gathered her belongings to meet with Miss Curtin, the woman who had received the harassing phone calls, she hoped that this would shed some light on things. As she was walking towards the door she had an idea that she knew would be her best chance to figure this whole thing out. An idea so far out it would require "Wavy Gravy" from Ben & Jerry's to recruit its main participants.

Around one o'clock Michelle headed to a restaurant located in downtown Charleston. She was on her way to meet Miss Tracy Curtin, the woman she had spoken to on the phone. They had arranged to meet over lunch. Tracy arrived at the restaurant fifteen minutes early so she could get a table. She waited until Tracy arrived. Michelle was surprised to see how young Tracy was, but then she figured that could only be around twenty-six since she had only been out of school for three years. Tracy

was very attractive and had a very pleasant personality. Michelle thanked her for coming and taking the time out of her busy schedule. Tracy responded saying that it was no trouble at all.

After they had both ordered, Michelle asked Tracy if she could recall the story that they had discussed on the phone. Tracy began by talking about the election and the campaign process. The slate that she was on thought that they had a good chance of getting elected, until they started receiving harassing phone calls.

"At first we just dismissed it as supporters of other slates, but after time we all got scared." "They would call at all hours of the day, and sometimes late at night. The only thing they would say is that we had better drop out of the election or something bad would happen. They seemed to know where I was at because they would talk about a class that I had earlier in the day or what I was wearing one day. I got really scared and figured that the election was not worth having something bad happened to me. The entire slate felt this way, that is why we dropped out. Right after we dropped out all of the phone calls stopped and we never heard anything again."

While she spoke, Michelle took careful notes and wrote down questions to ask after Tracy finished. The two ate their lunch as Tracy answered Michelle's questions.

"So how long have you lived in Charleston," asked Michelle.

"Oh my," responded Tracy in a rich southern drawl, "we have lived in Charleston all my life. I guess you could say my family can trace our roots back to some of the first plantation owners in the region."

The two talked for nearly an hour. By the time it was time for

Tracy to be going, the two were carrying on like old friends. Michelle thanked Tracy for her time and asked if she could call her if she had any more questions. Tracy said that was fine and asked Michelle to give her a copy of her paper when she was finished with it.

## Chancellor's Dinner

Mark pulled up in the Phi Chi's driveway anxious to see how Mike was holding up. It had been four days and hell week was almost over. Hell week actually involved no physical hazing, the week was primarily based on stupid but very humorous games for both pledges and actives alike. The pledges usually ended up being the entertainment for both themselves and the actives. As Mark walked in the house he was passed by the "Phi Chi Speed Skating Team", actually the pledges were cleaning the house only where ever they went they pretended they were speed skating. Mark walked in the chapter TV room saying hi to everyone along the way. Mark walked up the Chris Bower, Pledge Trainer, and asked if he could borrow Mike for a couple of hours.

"Sure I guess, what do you need him for?"

"I have to do a computer project and I need him to help out. It won't take long, I'll have him back before candle passing, referring to the closing ceremony each night."

"OK that sounds cool, just don't let him break any of the rules," responded Chris laughing.

"Thanks Brother," replied Mark as he walked off.

He then walked down the hall to the formal room where the pledges were still cleaning.

"Michael."

"Yes sir," responded Mike as he ran towards Mark.

"Knock that crap off," said Mark referring to the yes sir. "Hows it going?"

"Good," replied Mike trying to hide the fatigue in his voice. "What brings you by so early?"

"Well we have somewhere to go, so get in your formal clothes and come back downstairs."

Mike disappeared up to Mike's room returning five minutes later, dressed in his coat and tie. He proceeded out to Marks car and waited patiently, wondering where he was off to and why the formal attire. Mark came down a few minutes later dressed similarly.

"So where are we off to," asked Mike hoping he would be away from the house for a while.

"Well we have dinner and a meeting to go to. Are you in a hurry to go somewhere," asked Mark sarcastically. "If you like we could just skip the meeting and you could go back to the house," continued Mark knowing that Mike would go with him.

"Gee thanks, but I feel that it is my duty to attend all free dinners," he answered laughing.

"Glad to hear that," said Mark as they drove off. "So how's hell week treating ya?"

"Good but I could use an extra forty hours of sleep or so."

"Yea that sounds pretty familiar," added Mark. "Its almost over just a couple of more days. By the way, I spoke to your brother last night, he asked me to say 'hi' and to keep up the good work."

"What is Thomas up to," asked Mike.

"He really didn't say, he was busy and all we talked about was this

weekend."

The two continued to talk about the activities and events that had happened on the way towards the old district of Charleston. Mike loved this part of town especially when the tourist numbers were down.

"Where we going," asked Mike.

Mark didn't respond, he pulled into an empty parking space on Meeting street and said, "we have some spare time so let's walk around." They got out of the car and walked along the cobblestone streets along the Battery Park, the sun was setting, casting long shadows across the pastel row houses towards Fort Sumpter in the distance.

"Do you remember the naked guy," asked Mike grinning, referring to a local celebrity of sorts. One of the property owners who became upset with the constant crowds of tourists brought by his house on the buggy rides that passed his house every fifteen minutes. He decided to stand in front of his large bay window on his ground floor for hours in the nude. His plan worked, the buggy drivers received so many complaints that they changed their course to avoid his house.

"Yea I remember that, there are some strange people in this town. Let's go and just wait at the restaurant."

They walked towards the Cotton Exchange which in its time was the largest slave auction house in South Carolina. It had recently been restored to a restaurant and several shops. The restaurant, Il Catore, has a long history of being the best restaurant in Charleston. It had recently moved to the Cotton Exchange from another location in the historic district.

The two walked in and were seated ahead of all of the people waiting

in the posh reception area. Il Catore has a strict policy against reservations but in the case of the party this evening, an exception would be made.

Mike and Mark were seated at a large oval table set for ten.

"Who are we meeting tonight?"

"Well, Fred wants all of the new members to get to know one another and this is a good way to do it."

As they continued to talk the waiter brought out a plate of jumbo shrimp stuffed with crab and garlic. Mike immediately began to eat. Hell week rules out fine dining, in fact hell week rules out most food that is well liked. Supposedly, to test the will power of the pledges, actually it is just another rule to be broken. As Mike finished the last shrimp, other people were filtering towards the table. Moments later, Fred walked in greeting several other restaurant patrons along his way to the table.

"Good evening my friends, I hope all of you are doing well. I thought that this would be an excellent opportunity for us to get to know each other a little better."

Now that they were all seated the waiter came out with several different appetizers followed by bowls of She Crab Soup, the house specialty. As everyone began to eat, Fred gained everyone's attention, then asked if each person would introduce themselves to the group.

"It is important that we know each other and become friends. We will accomplish much more if we are comfortable around each other."

With that said each of the guests introduced themselves, telling their names, the house they were representing as well as information such as major and hometown. Mike politely listened trying to make mental notes

of everyone's names as he continuously shoveled food into his mouth. Mike knew several of the people seated around him all of whom were enjoying their dinner and talking about everything from classes to what they were doing for the summer. As dinner progressed Mike began to feel more comfortable with his new responsibility.

If Thomas and Mark were associated with this group then he would do his best to follow in their footsteps he thought to himself. Dinner lasted just over an hour. Fred invited everyone back to his house for dessert and coffee.

Leaving the restaurant, Mark and Mike walked from the cotton exchange back down a now dark Meeting street. Along the way they passed several couples taking an evening stroll. Most of the tourists in the area were on their way back to their hotels and condos. Those remaining were coming and going from the area's many restaurants and nightclubs.

The street that had been so busy earlier in the day now took on a much calmer, more distinguished feel. Mike could feel the history of the whole area, it clung to everything like a fog. The two arrived at their car and drove back across the Cooper bridge, along interstate 17 back towards campus. They arrived at Fred's several minutes later, this time driving up the oak lined driveway towards the majestic house.

"How come we are driving up to the house tonight," asked Mike.

"Well since there were only new members at dinner, only those people will drive up to the house, the others will come through the tunnels." The two went inside and met their dinner companions. As they walked up the sidewalk to the porch, Mike admired the intricate detail on the exterior of the house. They walked inside, Mike was not surprised with

the decor in the house. The large front door opened up to a grand entrance hall with a large staircase with a carved wood banister. The two were ushered through a parlor with antique furniture and paintings of the original family, including a very large painting of Ulessis S. Grant hanging above the oversized fireplace.

All of the furnishings in the house were original. Although Union forces destroyed many of the plantation houses during the war between the states, this particular house was spared because a union colonel had taken up residence during the occupation of Charleston. The family, like many others in the area, managed to hide many of their heirlooms and valuables from the Union forces during the war. The two were led through the parlor into the dining room. The dining room had a large buffet table set with various types of desserts and a large coffee urn.

They picked up slices of pecan pie and made small talk with the others in the room. As the last of the group arrived, Fred gained everyone's attention. He spoke of the importance of the Brotherhood. He mentioned the importance of secrecy, a fact that didn't need to be brought to the attention of anyone in the room. With that said, Fred invited everyone to join the rest of the group already waiting in the basement. They proceeded down a staircase with mahogany paneled walls. They all walked through the billiards room into the meeting room, which Mike had learned had once been the trophy room. There were still many stuffed animal heads hanging on the wall.

The room was buzzing with conversations. Mark stopped to talk to a group of ladies talking in a corner, while Mike walked inside the room. Some people began to take their seats while others continued talking.

"You are Mike Foster right," asked a voice from behind. "Yes," responded Mike as he turned around to a somewhat familiar face.

"I'm Keith Bozeman, I'm in your psych class. This is Jeff Young and Rob Corwin," Keith continued as Mike shook hands with the other two trying to keep their names straight. "We knew your brother. Hows he doing?"

"He's fine, he works for a public relations firm in Savanna."

"So tell me, what do you think of all this so far?"

"Well its still so new to me, I'm just trying to get used to it."

"Yea, it takes a while to get used to it, just remember we are the most important people on campus."

Mike agreed but thought to himself that the tone of his voice was saying something else.

They all continued to talk until most of the people in the room had taken their seats. The four found their seats just as the meeting came to order. Mark sat to Mike's right and the three others sat to his left. The propose of this meeting, he was told, was to elect the officers of the interfraternal council and to settle a dispute between two sororities.

The latter accomplished by the representatives from the houses presenting their sides and what they propose as a solution. This was one of the most important functions that the Brotherhood served. Instead of petty rivalries destroying the cohesiveness of the greek system, the Brotherhood mediates disagreements between houses.

In this way both sides feel that they have presented their views to the other. If there is a major problem, it will be brought before IFC, but any fines or punishment handed down will be handeled by the Brotherhood. This is the case because the president of IFC is always a

Brotherhood member in order to influence all IFC decisions.

The problem this evening was settled very quickly and turned out to be only a misunderstanding. Periodically throughout the meeting Mike would look across the huge wooden table at Fred, who was contently listening to the presentations. He seemed genuinely interested in what was being said. The only time Fred would speak was to offer advice but regardless of the subject Fred remained neutral. Mike could see the pride that he felt in this group. Mike liked Fred immediately because he could tell that he was a good person who was trying to make a difference in something he believed in. That made Mike more comfortable in his place in the Brotherhood.

The meeting continued and moved along, the last order of business was an update on the upcoming Student Government Association election. In total, there had been three election packets picked up. The first packet was picked up by Wayne DeLong the candidate who had been discussed at the last meeting. The second packet had been picked up by a Todd Wood, he had also been mentioned at the last meeting but was not endorsed. The third was picked up by a Brittany Carlson. No one knew anything about Miss. Carlson other than the representative from her sorority stating that she knew nothing about it. Adding that she would have more to report at the next meeting.

It was then moved that the Brotherhood support the DeLong slate financially through an anonymous donation; the motion passed.

Mike leaned back in his chair to pop his back, in doing so he turned towards Keith and the others who were saying something about the other slates. Keith looked at Mike and said, "when are people going to realize

that they can't win without our support?"

Mike responded saying that people don't know about the Brotherhood so how can they be expected not to run.

Keith looked back half laughing, "we have our ways".

Keith seemed to be joking but either way Mike was certain that he didn't like him.

With that taken care of, the meeting was adjourned. Mark looked at Mike and said, "hey we have to get back to the house, I promised Chris that you'd be back by the candle passing.

"OK lets go," said Mike

The two headed out, taking time to say good-by to Fred and several of the other members. They reached the front door of the house, Keith approached Mike to say good-by and that he'd see him in class the next day. With that the two headed down the path to Mark's car. On the ride home Mike asked Mark what he thought about Keith.

"Well he's ok," Mark began, "I think that too much of this has gone to his head. Why do you ask"?

"No reason, I guess he just rubbed me the wrong way."

"Yea he can have that effect on people."

## Reflections

After leaving the restaurant, Michelle headed back to campus to go to her afternoon class. Along the way she stopped off at the Student Government Association office to pick up an election packet. After class she headed back to her apartment to plan what she was going to say to Brittany, along the way she stopped off at Ben & Jerry's and picked up a pint of Wavy Gravy. She then waited for Brittany to come home.

Brittany came home about an hour or so later, she was exhausted. She walked into the apartment, dropped her books next to the couch and jumped on it ready for her afternoon nap.

Michelle had anticipated this. To approach Brittany now would be suicide. She waited for Brittany to fall asleep and then ordered take out from her favorite Chinese Restaurant. After that she made a few calls to some friends and asked them to come over around 9 pm.

It was now around 7:00, Brittany had been sleeping for around an hour and a half. Michelle had picked up dinner and was setting the table when Brittany woke up.

"Hi, what are you doing," asked Brittany as she tried to wake up.

"Nothing, I thought I'd pick up some Forbidden City for dinner tonight. Come on let's eat," said Michelle desperately hoping her plan would work.

"Twist my arm," responded Brittany as she reached for the plate of Mongolian beef.

Dinner went very well Brittany seemed to accept Michelle's nonverbal apology. As they both finished up, Michelle excused herself and came back with the pint of Ben and Jerry's and two spoons.

Brittany immediately caught on to her special treatment. "Either you thought I was really mad at you or you have done something really bad and I just haven't found out yet," blurted Brittany between large spoonfuls of ice cream.

"I don't know what your talking about," said Michelle trying to look innocent. "Well I guess that's wrong, I need some help. This paper I am working on is due in a few weeks. I need to get some more information. You see when I talked to Tracy, the woman I told you about, she told me what happened to her slate in the election and that gave me an idea. If I could watch a group try to run for election maybe I could"...she was interrupted by Brittany at that point.

"Oh no! No I know exactly what you're thinking. You can't make me do it," exclaimed Brittany eager to see what Michelle was going to say next.

"Just hear me out," began Michelle knowing the game was on, "all you have to do is run, you won't get elected I guarantee."

"Are you saying that I can't get elected if I wanted to," interjected Brittany.

"Shut up Britt, what I'm saying is just run so I can see what happens."

"Can't you watch one of the other slates and see what happens for them?"

"That wouldn't work because I don't know who is being supported and

if you run I know you will not be supported, I hope."

"Don't you have to have four people on a slate?"

"Well your running mates will be coming over in half an hour," she laughed. "They can't know what I'm doing that's why I turned to you. I knew you would help me, you are my best friend," explained Michelle, hoping all of this was working.

"I can't believe I'm letting you talk me into doing this."

"Please do this for me. I know its asking a lot but it means a great deal to me."

"OK," said Brittany hoping she was not making a mistake, "I am going to do this for you but I am telling you right now you owe me so big you probably will never be able to repay me."

"I know," said Michelle, a little surprised that Brittany had given in so easily.

She then explained the election process to Brittany as they looked over the election packet. Brittany's seemed genuinely interested in the whole election process the only question she had was who were her running mates.

"Well," Michelle began, "Jeff Lazwell would make a good vice president."

"What the hell are you talking about," laughed Brittany. "He's so lost he barely knows his name."

"Shut up and let me finish Laz is the VP. Samantha Stennet is Treasurer and Jimmy Burkert would be a good secretary.

"How did you pick these people," asked Brittany still laughing.

"Well you see, they all owe me a favor, but I think that they would all do a good job if you just gave them a chance," Michelle added for

effect. Brittany still wasn't sold on the idea, but she was trapped now although she did have a feeling that it would be fun. Around that time there was a knock at the door, it was Lazwell. Soon after that Samantha and Jimmy, Bimmer as he was known by his friends, showed up at the door.

None of them had any idea why they were there but that would all change soon. Brittany began, still trying to get things straight in her head as she explained everything to the three. Since they all thought Brittany was choosing them to run with her they all seemed interested in doing it. They each had held leadership positions around campus so this was an almost natural step.

They spent the rest of the evening going over the elections packet. All they needed to do was collect 250 signatures by the nomination convention. They divided up the pages and then tried to work on ideas that they would run with.

Since the issues really never changed, it is rare for a group to come up with something unique.

"Lets do something different than all the other groups that are running," said Bimmer. "Brittany, I think we should come up with something that will make it more fun to go to school here."

"It seems to me that all of the groups running in the election in the past have been way too serious, lets really do something different."

"Like what" asked Laz,

"I don't know, like tail gate parties before every home football game or an all campus mixer in the quad and call it 'Kegs in the quad'," he continued.

"So you think we should go with an all social platform," asked

Brittany.

"I guess."

"I love it," replied Samantha smiling.

The five sat around the coffee table in the apartment for several hours. They worked up a platform centered around the theme of making Grant a more fun place to be. In the process did manage to add a few traditional points to their platform. Around 1:00 in the morning they all decided to meet the next afternoon to discuss things further.

# 13

## Activation

It was now Saturday night, Mike along with the other pledges were loaded into a van. Once inside, they were told to put blindfolds on. Mike and the fifteen other pledges reluctantly did so, each wondering what was going on. The van pulled away from the house and drove around for what seemed like half an hour. The van actually drove around campus for about 20 minutes. Then they headed east towards the intercoastal waterway, the van pulled up to a marina and the pledges were told to get on a boat. Even though blindfolded, Mike immediately recognized the boat just from the feel of the seats. Mike knew they were sitting on it was his families Hattaras 45 foot fishing boat. Mike raised his hand until an active came over to where he was sitting.

"I would like to speak to Thomas," said Mike.

"What are you talking about Foster," said Scott See. Scott was one of the active brothers that was on this boat ride to the island where the houses ritual was being held.

Mike sat back down, he was trying to guess which of the many small islands they were being taken to when a hand grabbed him by the shoulder and pulled him out of his seat. Mike started to fight whoever was pulling him up until he heard a very soft voice, it was his brother Thomas.

"Calm down and keep quiet," as he led his blindfolded brother up to the flying bridge taking it off as they reached the top.

Mike had not seen his brother for several weeks they looked each

other over and hugged.

"So little brother, (as Thomas always called Mike) how has hell week been on ya?"

"I am a little tired, but I'm hanging in there. I thought you weren't going to be able to be here."

"Well I didn't want you to know too much ahead of time. So I hear you did some fine dining this week, referring to the dinner Mike had attended with the Brotherhood."

"Yeah, I went out with some friends," responded Mike. "You were really popular with them, I've heard nothing but good things about you."

"Really, well its nice to know that I was well liked," said Thomas as he changed the boats course slightly to cut down on the roll. "I hope your pledge brothers don't get seasick. The breakers are playing hell with the stabilizers," he said referring to the large waves traveling perpendicular to the path of the boat.

"Give me the controls," said Mike as he stepped up to the helm. "You know I'm much more experienced than you." Mike was telling the truth, he had been driving the 45' boat since he was 15. Mike immediately changed course heading more into the waves and cut the port side engine some to maintain a straight course. After doing so, the large boat settled down and stopped rolling.

"Where'd you learn to do that," asked Thomas once again impressed in his brother's seamanship.

"Dad showed me once. You see, we go in a straight line even though we are cutting in to the waves."

"So where are we going?"

"Far side of Pauline's Island, responded Thomas.

"Out by the camp sights."

"Yep," responded Thomas as he handed Mike a Coke.

"Thanks I needed that."

Mike throttled up both of the big diesels and opened the boat up. They were doing nearly 20 knots and heading directly for the Pauline Island channel markers. Mike could see the red and green lights of the marker buoys slightly in front of the background of the islands. The sun was setting lightening up the entire sky and the water. This was Mike's favorite time of day to be on the water. The marshes take on a deep green hugh and the water sparkles with bright reflections cast from the sun.

Mike knew these waters well, as he headed toward the outer markers he cut the power to the big marine diesels the boat settled and rode its own wake as it passed the first marker. The tides were coming in and would be high in several hours. That makes everything that much easier. Even though the channels are dredged regularly, Mike knew several people who have ran their boats around when traveling through the marshes during low tike. Mike idled the boat around several small islands he could see the gulls trying to catch crabs along the sands of the marshes. There were also some fisherman probably hoping to catch one last fish before it got dark. Mike piloted the boat to a dock along the back side of the island. He pulled up to the dock so accurately that the bow lines that had been passed to the people on the dock to help guide the boat in were unnecessary.

Thomas looked at Mike saying, "You really know how to handle this boat I spent almost 30 min trying to get close enough to toss the bow

lines without hitting the dock."

"Well I guess some people got it and some don't," replied Mike laughing.

Several of the actives got off the boat. The pledges were still blindfolded sitting on the deck in the back of the boat. Thomas told Mike to join his pledge brothers and that things should be starting soon.

Mike took one of the fishing seats and sat down. Though blindfolded, he could hear the water lapping against the side of the gently rocking boat. The air smelled like mixture of fresh salty sea air and thicker air rising off the marshes, in addition Mike could smell smoke, probably from a camp fire.

Mike sat and thought about the weeks activities, he remembered how excited he was when he found out he would soon be going active. He then thought about the brotherhood. He still had a few questions about his role in that particular organization. The one comforting factor was that Mike truly felt Fred was a good person, but Mike did have other feelings concerning a few members. It would be very easy to abuse the power that you had but how would anyone do anything about it.

At about this time, someone removed Mike's blindfold. He looked up to see Mark standing in front of him, motioning for him to be quiet. Mike looked around the deck noticing that several of his pledge brothers were gone and that the actives had taken blindfolds off of two others, now standing beside him. There were still about 10 pledges till blindfolded on the deck. The three were led off the boat and up a path to a large clearing with 3 bonfires.

Mike's heart rate began to quicken, he was finally going to go

active. He could hardly contain himself as he was led to a group of actives all wearing Black robes. They were read a statement outlining the ideals and expectations of the Phi Chi fraternity. Mike tried to take in as much as possible. He did think to himself how glad he was that his brother was here to see him go active. As the secrets of the fraternity were passed down to him, Mike thought how several of the actives sayings that he found confusing at the time they said them now made perfect since.

Mike and the two other pledges were led from one fire to another, at each stop they would learn secrets pertaining to the fraternity. By this time Mike had chills running through his body he still couldn't believe that he was almost active. At the third fire he was given the fraternity grip and password and welcomed as an active brother of the Phi Chi fraternity. Immediately after that Mike was pinned by Mark as Thomas took a picture. Mike had tears of joy running down his cheeks and was completely overcome by the emotion of the moment.

Thomas hugged his brother saying, "congrats little brother, its nice to finally be able to call you brother."

Mark then gave Mike a hug welcomed the newest member of the Phi Chi fraternity, saying how proud he was that Mike was carrying on their traditions.

At this time the next group of pledges were on their way up the path. Everyone took their places around the fires. Mike was congratulated by everyone and asked to step aside with the other new initiates out of view of the pledges not yet through ritual. Mike watched as the four other groups each went through. When it was all over cheers rang all around the campsite. Beers were passed around and the

celebration began. Everyone was in a festive mood, and before the partying began everyone circled around the three fires and sang the bond. After the singing of the bond, they were all informed that the AOTT sorority was meeting them at the house so they needed to get back as soon as possible.

Thomas asked Mike if he minded piloting the boat back. Mike said sure but first he wanted to know exactly how many people there would be in the boat.

Mike then walked back to the boat with Mark to get it ready for the return trip. Once aboard, Mike immediately turned on the engine vents as well as the boats positioning radars and marine band radio to receive current sea conditions.

Thomas was the next person on board he told Mike that there were fifty-one brothers including them for the return trip. Mike had to estimate the weight of all the passengers to see if they were in the boat's maximum payload capacity. Mike figured that they should be ok as long as half sat on the front deck and half on the back until they cleared the outer marker.

Everyone loaded on the boat, Mike started the engines which both broke the relative silence of the night with their low comforting rumble. Mike then turned on some bright running lights so he could navigate the marshes leaving Pauline's Island. The boat inched along the channel, Mike was thankful that the tide was in because the boat was sitting very low in the water due to its many passengers. Mike kept a constant eye on the depth gauge to the left of the throttles. Mike maneuvered the boat along the lowest point of the channels, coming closer to the bottom than he was

comfortable with several times. They finally reached the outer marker, Mike immediately throttled the boat to full power eager to get back to the house for the party. The boat was very sluggish with all of its passengers Mike figured it would take twenty minutes to return.

"Hey ya'll, were in deep water now so you don't have to stay in the front anymore," called Mike from the bridge. He then turned on the boat's stereo and sat back enjoying the view. It was completely dark now, Mike knew these waters very well and could see Charlston in the distance. Particularly the flashing strobes reaching out from atop the Cooper river bridge.

They were back rather quickly due to calm seas and full throttle the entire way home. Mike skillfully docked the large boat and began shutting down the boat's electronics. The others got off the and all began heading back to campus. Mike made some final checks of the boat and rode back to the house with Mark and Thomas, eager to relax and party.

# 14

## Celebration

Michelle was looking for her jean shorts. She remembered washing them two days earlier. Brittany and Michelle were getting ready for the party at the Phi Chi's. Michelle had many friends that were Phi Chi's and she was really looking forward to cutting loose tonight.

"Britt, have you seen my jean shorts?"

"These jean shorts", yelled Brittany as she threw the shorts in question into Michelle's room.

"Yes those would be the shorts I am looking for, thank you."

This was a rather typical scene for the girls. They always shared each others clothes and often had no idea what belonged to whom.

The AOTT's had a tradition of paring with the Phi Chi's for initiation nights. Brittany was ready early tonight and took the time to mix a couple of Tom Collins for herself and Michelle. By the time she had the drinks mixed, Michelle was ready to go. The last thing on Michelle's mind was her paper and the happenings of the entire week. The two grabbed their drinks and headed for the door. They both knew that the Phi Chi's would have alcohol for them so there was no need for them to bring their own.

It was a rather short walk through the dimly lit quad. The two had nothing to fear walking through campus at night. There were many people out walking to various parties. In addition, Grant had almost no crime problem to worry about, possibly due to the students trying to live up to

their reputation as being true southern ladies and gentlemen. Michelle looked up towards the second floor of the political science building where there was a light shining from a familiar office.

Michelle thought to herself wondering what Alex was up to at this time of night. She had to catch herself from going over all of the recent developments in her mind, she was determined to enjoy herself tonight.

The two walked along the path bordering the quad. Michelle glanced across at the plantation house at the far end of the quad commenting on how nice the house looked and how she would like to see the inside sometime.

They reached the end of the path and headed along Magnolia boulevard towards fraternity row. The Phi Chi house was a large brick building of Georgian design, complete with pillars and ivy growing up the side, it was located along the fourth block of fraternity row. As the two walked along, they passed three other houses, each one had a crowd in front of the houses drinking and enjoying the evening.

As they reached the Phi Chi house, Michelle was happy to see that there was a large crowd already inside the house. As the two ladies approached the house, they were welcomed by several of the brothers.

"This is going to be a good party tonight," said Brittany looking at Michelle.

"How can you tell?"

"All of the Phi Chi's are already drunk. That's always a good sign."

"You're right, I think someone's going to get lucky tonight", joked Michelle.

"Shut up dork," replied Brittany.

The two were greeted at the door and proceeded to try to find refills on their now empty drinks.

"Michelle," called a familiar voice from behind.

"Thomas," replied Michelle surprised to see her good friend who had graduated two years ago.

"What are you doing up," she asked as she gave her friend a hug. "I came up to see Michael go active," replied Thomas.

"Oh yea that's right your brother went active tonight. Where is he? We've got to congratulate him.

"He's in Mark Butler's room, do you want to go up there and congratulate him and we can get you another drink replied Thomas noticing Michelle's empty glass.

"Sure! Hey Britt," called Michelle from across the crowded entry hall. Brittany who was with several friends came over to see what Michelle wanted.

"We're going to go to Mark Butlers room and get some drinks and also congratulate his brother on going active tonight."

"Sounds good to me," replied Brittany, eager to get another drink. The three walked up the stairs of the old house. They reached the second floor and walked along the hall which overlooked the dance floor on one side and had rooms along the other. These were the choice rooms of the Phi Chi house, occupied only by the seniors with the highest pin time. Mark had the room located in the middle of the hallway.

The door to Mark's room was wide open and there were already several people standing around talking. The room was rather large, with a bar

running the length of one side of the room. Mark and Mike were both behind the bar mixing drinks for other people in the room. As Thomas and the girls came in the room, Mark called out to Michelle, welcoming her and asking what she wanted to drink all in one sentence.

"Hi, I'm fine and I would love a Tom Collins," replied Michelle answering, all three questions in the same manner in which they were asked. All three walked up to the bar, Mark and Mike took their glasses and began mixing two extremely strong drinks.

Thomas jumped up and sat on the bar in order to reach across to a cooler filled with ice cold bottles of Rolling Rock beer. As he lifted a green bottle from the icy water he gained everyone's attention.

"Hey ya'll, can I have your attention?" He called to the many people in the room trying not to show how drunk he was. As everyone looked at their friend, who was now standing on a bar stool with his beer held tightly in one hand, the room became quiet.

"I would like to congratulate my brother Mike on his initiation this evening. He has waited quite a while for this moment and I would just like to congratulate him on making it through hell week."

The room immediately filled with cheers and raised glasses. Mike, who had now consumed nearly as many drinks as he had passed out to people in the room, tried to hide his embarrassment as he thanked everyone.

Mike walked from behind the bar and came up to his brother, who was still talking to Michelle and Brittany who were now halfway through their second drink.

"Mike, I would like for you to meet two very good friends of mine. This is Michelle Flemming and Brittany Carlson."

"It's nice to meet you," said Mike as he extended his hand to each of the girls.

"Nice to finally meet you," said Michelle. "I feel like I already know you. Your brother talked about you all the time. Oh, by the way, congratulations on going active," she added smiling.

"Thank you very much and I hope my brother was kind with his words," responded Mike laughing.

Mike then turned to Brittany and asked how her drink was. "Gone," replied Brittany whose red cheeks gave away how she was feeling.

"Well, let me fix that for you," replied Mike, taking the glass from her hand.

"Is your brother trying to get us drunk?" asked Brittany.

"Well of course he is," responded Thomas. "He's a Phi Chi and no beautiful girl is going to go without a full drink at our house."

Brittany and Michelle laughed, both thinking how hungover they would be in the morning. Mike came from behind the bar with two full glasses. He had taken the time to pry Michelle's empty glass from her hand.

"Let's go listen to the band," said Brittany as she grabbed Thomas's hand, heading for the door.

"Shall we?" said Mike to Michelle as he motioned to the door.

"Sure," she replied as she grabbed Mike and followed Brittany and Thomas back downstairs.

They all proceeded down to the first floor, which was filled with people moving to the beat of the music. The four weaved through the crowd, stopping several times to greet friends. They found a clearing on

the left side of the stage. The four were dancing and having a blast. They were all drunk by now. Brittany had to use the restroom and since Michelle seemed to be enjoying Mike's company she asked Thomas to walk with her. He gladly obliged, walking her to the back of the room past the formal and trophy room towards the women's restroom.

Brittany went in and returned several minutes later. She asked if Thomas minded getting another drink. He said that he could use another beer as he led her up the back stairs. After they got their drinks, they decided to go outside and enjoy the cool evening air on the front porch.

Meanwhile, Michelle and Mike were dancing and laughing at several of the brothers who had been drunk since the boat ride from the island. They were currently trying to sing a Johnny Cash song while the band took a break. Connor was doing his best to get them off the stage but not having any luck in doing it. Mike noticed that Michelle's glass was once again empty and asked if she could use another. She gladly accepted and followed him upstairs to Mark's room.

"Great band huh?" he said as he mixed the drinks.

"Yea, they're the best," she replied smiling at Mike. "So, Brittany is running for student body president right?" began Mike, forgetting that the names of people picking up election packets were not made public until the nomination convention.

"Yea, she is," replied Michelle, who was concentrating more on appearing as sober as possible than at the conversation at hand.

"Do you think she will win?"

"I hope so," replied Michelle, whose mind had still not made the connection.

The two continued to talk for nearly an hour. They talked about everything from majors to hobbies and lifelong goals. Both were very interested in each other and had made nervous eye contact several times as they talked. Michelle was surprised how comfortable she was around Mike. They had both noticed each other at previous social events but had never been officially introduced. She decided that this would be her last drink. Her head was spinning and the last thing she needed to do was make an ass out of herself.

"Hi ya'll," shouted Brittany, in the strong southern drawl she unconsciously uses when drinking, as she stumbled into the room, followed by Thomas who was now completely drunk.

"So what have ya'll been up to?" she continued winking at Michelle.

"Talking," replied a blushing Michelle.

"Hey the band is going to start its last set. Do ya'll want to go and see it?" offered Thomas as he grabbed another beer from the cooler.

The girls looked at each other and responded "sure" simultaneously. Then the four walked back to the dance floor where the crowd had thinned out a bit, many people were outside on the front lawn, running around and enjoying the night air.

The band played around eight songs in this set. The four were all dancing with each other and having a great time. As the band finished the last song, Brittany looked at her watch and was very surprised to see that it was 2:30 in the morning.

"Shell, it's 2:30. We should be going."

"Yea, I guess we should."

"I'll go and find someone to drive you home," stated Mike.

"No, we are going to walk home. It will be nice to get outside, right Britt?"

"Oh right Shell," she replied sarcastically. "I guess it wouldn't be that bad," she added, giving in to her friend's wishes.

"Do you want us to walk you home?" asked Mike, looking at Michelle.

"That's so sweet," she said as she gave him a big hug, "you don't have to do that, it will be nice to get outside."

Michelle realized that she had left her glass in Mark's room. Mike immediately volunteered to go upstairs with her to get it.

"Michelle, could I give you a call sometime? Maybe we could go out," said Mike as soon as the two were in Mark's room.

"That would be great," she replied with a huge smile on her face, flattered that her interest in Mike was not one sided. She wrote her number down on a post-it note that was sitting on the bar. She handed it to Mike saying, "you better call me."

"I will," Mike trying to wipe the sweat from his palms relieved that she had not laughed in his face.

Mike and Thomas walked the girls outside and watched as they disappeared down the dark street.

Many people were still in the house, and even more outside on the lawn. Thomas turned to Mike saying, "so what's up with you and Michelle."

"I don't know," Mike responded somewhat embarrassed.

"She's really cool. I think you two would make a neat couple."

"Well, thank you for your approval. You will get invited to the wedding," Mike added laughing. "By the way, do you have any idea where Mark is? The last time I saw him, he was running around completely

drunk."

"No, I completely forgot about him," laughed Thomas. He probably passed out in someone's room as usual."

"You're probably right. Let's go and see if we can find him. Maybe he is still passed out and we can draw on him," added Mike. Drawing on each other was another Phi Chi tradition one that Mark Butler was used to.

Across campus, along the path through the quad, Brittany and Michelle were walking, talking about how much fun they had had.

"So what's up with you and Mike?" asked Brittany with a sparkle in her eyes.

"I don't know," she replied, smiling. "We traded phone numbers and are going to go out sometime."

"What did you two talk about when Thomas and I were gone?"

"Well, we talked about the election," she began, stopping in mid-thought. The hair on her neck stood up and she shivered. Her mind was racing as fast as her heart.

"How in the hell could he have known that you were going to run?" yelled Michelle. "He just came right out and asked me how I thought your chances were." Her mind was still spinning from all that she had drunk earlier, something that did not help right now. She tried to concentrate but there was just too much to comprehend.

"Shell," Brittany began, "Mike knows Lazwell and probably found out from him."

"That could be right," admitted Michelle. "In fact, that would be a good explanation."

The rest of the walk back to the apartment went by rather

uneventfully they silently walked through the quad and down the street leading to their apartment. Michelle looked up at the stars, concentrating on a flight heading to the airport north of Charleston. Her mind was moving in hundreds of directions at once.

Once inside the apartment, Michelle wrote down what she remembered of the conversation with Mike, fearing that she might forget something by morning. At the same time, she picked up the phone and dialed Lazwell's number to confirm Brittany's suspicion. The phone rang several times before the machine picked it up. She hung up, not wanting to leave a message for just anyone to hear. She was frustrated that she would have to wait until morning before she would find out anything.

She then got ready for bed, still thinking about the evenings happenings. Everything spun in her mind. She concentrated on every detail, time and time again. She glanced around the dark room hoping that something might leap out at her. Perhaps she would make a connection. She did not.