

HAZING

A Byron Hurt Film

[TRANSCRIPT]

INTRODUCTION

BYRON HURT: Every time I hear about a young person dying because of hazing, it tears me up inside, because truthfully, I've been a part of the problem. For too long, I've held back from talking about the hazing I experienced out of loyalty to my fraternity, because of my fear of the consequences, and because I didn't want to be seen as a snitch. But that all ends now.

[OPENING CREDITS & TITLE SCREEN]

A HEAVY COST

MAN: Hey, Que's. Hey, Que's. Say it back. Four, three, two, one, Omega party has just begun.

BYRON HURT: This is my frat, the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc. The brothers in purple and gold, our four cardinal principles are manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and my personal favorite, uplift. We love to have fun, fellowship with each other, step, or hop, as we call it, and most importantly, we're deeply committed to community service. We're part of what is called the Divine Nine, a group of Black Greek Letter Organizations, some of whom were founded more than 100 years ago, because white Greek letter organizations didn't let us in. They were also formed for young people to create powerful social networks, resist racism on white college campuses, challenge white supremacy, and to give back to the Black community. So many of the Black and brown people that I look up to within the Civil Rights movement, the Black Liberation struggles, the arts, the sciences, and in the world of sports and politics, are members of the Divine Nine. But for many, including myself, membership can come with a heavy cost.

Pledging Omega Psi Phi Fraternity was the most difficult thing that I have ever had to do in my life, straight up. The process started out with what is called an interview. They start asking all these questions. Why are you trying to be in my frat? What makes you think you're good enough to be in this frat? What do you know about my frat? Tell me some history. When was the frat organized? What do you want to do? What can you do for Omega? Who founded the frat? What do you want to do with your life? It was just like chaotic. Somebody starts pushing you, and pulling you, and tugging at you. Somebody comes and smacks you in the face. But I looked at it like, OK, this is a test, a test to see whether I could meet with other men before me had met.

I look back at that time in my life, and I asked myself the question, yo, B, what were you trying to prove, man? Why did you continue with this process? The answers are complicated. And

since I pledged, I've seen so many tragic hazing cases hit the news cycle like clockwork almost every year, over and over again.

ANCHOR: Allegations of hazing are growing more disturbing by the minute.

BYRON HURT: I feel a strong need to get underneath hazing culture, beyond my fraternity, and my own experience.

REPORTERS: Investigating the alleged hazing... Allegations of hazing... Allegations of hazing... Disturbing case of hazing.

BYRON HURT: I want to know why we hold on to rituals and traditions that are so dangerous.

REPORTER: Had rocks thrown at him while being dragged across the barracks.

BYRON HURT: And that cause physical and emotional harm.

REPORTERS: In order to become a brother... One student was forced to grab a player's private parts... Swim in a kiddie pool of vomit... Drink alcohol to the point where some became sick while frat members hit or tackled them. When rites of passage rituals cross the line into potentially dangerous hazing.

HAZING IS NOT RIGHT

BYRON HURT: One story that's haunted me for years happened in 2002, involving two women who drowned while pledging a Divine Nine sorority.

REPORTER: Powerful waves pulled 22-year-old Kristin High under as she struggled to save a friend, 24-year-old Kenitha Saafir, from that same rough surf. High's mother says the girls had been brought to this spot as part of weeks of initiation rituals for the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority.

BYRON HURT: One of those women, Kristin, left behind a two-year-old son. As a father of a daughter, her story really hit home. I wanted to learn more about what happened to Kristin, so I headed to LA to meet her mom, Patricia Strong-Fargas, affectionately known as Pastor Pat.

PASTOR PAT: I think of Kristin almost every day of my life. I wonder what she would be doing now, if she would be working with me, because we were so much alike. I read a book when I was cleaning her room out, and in there she says, I'm going to own a nightclub, and it's going to be called The Loft. Taking Skyler to his softball games, and basketball games, she had a lot of dreams. Thinking about 16 years ago, that I could have had my daughter if they just hadn't come to this beach, and how beautiful it is, but just to have such a hurt from it is-- it's hard.

I've called friends and family in to remember Kristin, and join together in the efforts of continuing the call of fighting against hazing. So but the first beginning--

NIKKI HIGH: I didn't know Kristin was pledging. And so it kind of-- I don't know why I didn't question her, because we were so close, that I kind of beat myself up.

REPORTER: How to explain to two-year-old, Skyler, that his mom will never be coming home again.

NIKKI HIGH: I came to pick up Skyler that night, and I was almost to the corner, and I turned around to see what Skyler was doing. And he's turning, and he's waving at my sister. She's waving back. That's the last mem-- that's the last memory I have of my sister, waving at her son, telling him bye.

Even when she first started, I just have to be honest, I hated people who were in sororities. And I had to go to group therapy. I was depressed. I was sad for years. I dreamed that Kristin was trying to struggle to get out of the water for me, and mama, and Skyler for years.

And I asked God to just give me the purpose of Kristin's death, because I don't understand. But for me, her purpose was for this, for people to know that hazing is not right. Just her name.

BYRON HURT: Since the deaths of Kristin, and her line sister, Kenitha, many more have followed, and more parents are coming together to figure out how to end hazing. Pastor Pat told me about a group that she planned to meet with in California called P.U.S.H.

IT WASN'T A PARTY

DEBBIE SMITH: PUSH is Parents United to Stop Hazing. We created PUSH because there's no place for parents to go. When my son Matt was killed, I didn't know anything. I couldn't find anybody. I didn't know how to find anybody. So we wanted to bring our families together to have that support. When you lose a child to hazing, it's different than losing a child in any other way, because people in general, blame the victim when they're hazed.

WOMAN: The first thing they think, oh, they were partying.

MAN: It wasn't a party. It was here's what you do to get through this next step of this process.

PAMELA CHAMPION: It was not an incident. These are planned events. They know the history. So what do you expect to happen?

This is the last picture he sent to me, and said, this picture reminded him of him when he was a little boy. Robert saw Morris Brown College when he was about four or five-years-old, and he

was fascinated with the drum major. He called them gentlemen. And after then, everything was music. And he wanted to share that love for music with others.

BYRON HURT: Robert's bandmates had been trying to haze him since he stepped foot on campus, but he resisted. Eventually though, his bandmates got their way.

ROBERT CHAMPION: It was a Saturday night. We both went home, we got that phone call. It was our daughter. Something had happened to Robert.

MAN (to 911 Operator): I don't even know how he was. He was just sitting there. We were just talking. And they said, you know, he was-- he was shaking, and not doing anything. I don't know-- I don't know what-- I don't know what's going on.

911 OPERATOR: You're in the back of the hotel on a bus, correct?

MAN: Yes, ma'am.

911 OPERATOR: OK. And you're right by him now?

MAN: He's in my hands. He's cold. He's in my hands.

PAMELA CHAMPION: I can't wash my hair on a Saturday night, because it's a reminder, because that is what I was doing when my daughter called. It affects that deeply that I don't do that anymore. I don't wash my hair on Saturday anymore for that reason.

ROBERT CHAMPION: When you send your kid off to college, you're thinking that this college is going to take responsibility of each and every one of those kids that are in college.

PAMELA CHAMPION: You spend your time and your effort in raising that child, teaching them the right values, watching them grow, pursuing their dreams.

ROBERT CHAMPION: And then you get a phone call and say, Robert is no longer with us.

REPORTER: Florida A&M University announces that they are dismissing four students from the University in connection with the alleged hazing incident that cost the life of drum major, Robert Champion, who collapsed and died after a football game.

PAMELA CHAMPION: He just didn't collapse. He was killed.

BYRON HURT: Robert's bandmates beat him to death during a hazing ritual called crossing bus C. It's a tradition where veteran bandmates initiate new members as they walk down the aisle of the bus.

ROBERT CHAMPION: They say he was beaten with sticks, being stomped, hard as they could stomp. They kept stomping. They kept beating. And this school knew that that was going on for more than 50 years. They failed to do anything about it.

BYRON HURT: Hazing experts like Dr. Ricky Jones, weighed in on cable news and spoke to the lack of honesty, and failures of leadership on this issue.

RICKY JONES: Everybody at that school, from the band director, to the students, to the administrators all the way to the president, they know that this is a practice that goes on in these bands. It also goes on in Black Greek letter organizations, which the bands are mimicking. When they say they don't know about it, they're either lying, or they should be fired for negligence.

BYRON HURT: Robert's was the first known hazing death in a college band. But there are records of numerous hazing cases citing severe injuries and lawsuits within marching bands at colleges all over the United States.

REPORTERS: The Ohio State marching band investigation alleged there's been a culture of sexualized traditions and customs... Another allegation of hazing against the well-known OU marching band.

BYRON HURT: Robert's death sparked a public outcry. And still, the next year eight more young men died in hazing related events.

REPORTER: Tonight, in the drinking death of a local teen out of Fresno State fraternity.

GARY BOGENBERGER: He wanted to be accepted. He wanted to be liked. The price that was put on it was to have to go through this ritual.

BYRON HURT: Time after time with each new death, families lose a loved one. And I'm left wondering, why do these tragedies continue?

PEER PRESSURE

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: This culture becomes bigger than ourselves, bigger than us. This didn't have anything to do with fraternities. This didn't have anything-- he's already in the band. He's a drum major. It's this whole you got to be validated, you're not part of this group unless you go through this process.

BYRON HURT: This is my frat brother, Rasheed. He's one of the few Omega men that I know of who speaks out against hazing culture.

- What's going on?

- How are you doing?

- It's good to see you too, man. All right.

BYRON HURT: I have to tell you, brother, that it's very refreshing to sit down and have a conversation with someone who takes this position, and this view on hazing. I mean, there are not a lot of brothers that I feel like I can talk to. So tell me, what kind of push-back do you get from members of our fraternity when they hear that you are doing work that's anti-hazing work?

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: What's interesting, I think, is the younger members really want to do something different without letting their older brothers down, without letting their older sisters down. And they're trying to struggle with, well, what does that mean? I still want the respect of older members, but I still want to do the right thing. Bottom line, people feel that in order to have some type of worth, some type of self-value, that you got to pledge to get it.

And we're going to start with this pledge line. Now, the pledge line was the process. Let me hear you say process.

- Process.

LASANA HOTEPI: The player's process is this notion of it being somewhat of a rite of passage. You're going through rituals, challenges, in order to do dances that were restricted before. You wear clothing that you couldn't wear before, and have secrets and privileges that you didn't have before, and be accepted into this larger community. We accept you as one of us, because you have gone through this process.

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: And the harder you pledge, how hard you had to work to get it, in theory, you appreciate it more.

- Oh shit. I heard something crack.

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: I mean, it's peer pressure in its rawest form.

ANNOUNCER: The Incomparable Marching 100.

BYRON HURT: I went home, and I watched footage of Robert's final performance, only hours before he stepped onto bus C. Why didn't anyone intervene to save Robert's life? Why didn't any of his bandmates stop it from happening? Thinking about my own experience, the answers aren't that easy. And I could easily have been Robert.

A PART OF MY LIFE

BYRON HURT: In college, Robert and I both showcased our talent on the football field, but I wasn't in the band. I was a quarterback, a position I played since I was nine-years-old. Growing up in Central Islip Long Island on teams that were racially diverse, being a Black quarterback was never an issue for me. The challenge I faced was being a Black quarterback at a predominantly white university, and feeling isolated from other Black men for the first time in my life. And so, because of that, I started looking for other places where I could fit in.

Of all of the Black fraternities on campus, it was commonly known that the Que's pledged the hardest, and therefore, they got the most respect. I pledged for a total of eight weeks, four weeks underground, and another four weeks above ground. So underground means nobody knows that you're pledging. I spent many days and nights in this apartment. Our big brother spent hours and hours making sure that our line was on point, teaching us fraternity history, and the poems that we had to memorize. But the biggest challenge to me was enduring our grueling sets.

LASANA HOTEPI: A set is where all of the people who are on line or who are pledging goes to a designated spot, where the people who are pledging them are there to challenge them.

BYRON HURT: Basement is down there. So we'd have to go downstairs in that basement, all six of us late at night, and that's where a lot of the hazing took place.

There's a scene in Spike Lee's classic movie *School Daze*, where the big brothers are paddling the Gammites, the pledges. And that was real life for me and my line brothers. When we took our first four strokes of wood, that shit hurt. As we got to the later stages of our pledge process, we were taking well over 100 strokes per night. If you made a mistake when you were on line, if you messed up reciting the Greek alphabet, a greeting, our big brothers would devise all sorts of torturous, barbaric things to do to us. And they said it was all in the effort to break us down in order to make us stronger. As a young man, I trusted my big brothers. I believed that the risks associated with pledging were worth it. But privately, I questioned the purpose of the abuse.

RAP LYRICS: Why we beating on each other? Where did it come from? Hazing is really violence, and it's dumb, son. The older men move in silence because the trauma they went through was a war without the armor. So what would you do? Because we have a choice. Give out the same pain, or where we use our voice?

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: So let me hear you say values.

STUDENTS: Values.

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: Oh, we're founded on academic excellence. We're founded on brotherhood, sisterhood. We're founded on community service. Well, there is some incongruence with what we say we're about, and what we're actually doing.

BYRON HURT: I still have a lot of love in my heart for my fraternity. This is my lamp. Well, I haven't had this on in a very, very long time, and it brings back memories. When we were pledging, we had to wear these on our necks at all times, and we have to protect it. We had to paint these lamps ourselves. And so that's why it looks so messy, because the pledge process is very hectic and very chaotic. You have to kind of jump up at a moment's notice.

It was a part of my life, my life process, my life journey. So I don't want to reduce the pledge process to just violent hazing. The process is more than just getting your ass beat. It's about bonding with a group of men who you previously didn't know, and getting to know them on a very, very deep, very intimate level. My line brothers are special to me. They're special men in my life.

LEFT TO DIE

BYRON HURT: The news clips we see often become background noise, but tell a familiar and recurring story.

REPORTERS: The hazing that left a fellow student beaten to death... Their ritual, called the glass ceiling, a gauntlet meant to represent the plight of Asian-Americans... The final act of their initiation process was to go into that river as boys and come out as men of honor... Cal State Northridge student collapses in the mountains. He was on a hike with other young men who were trying to join a fraternity... 18-year-old Burch drank during a fraternity ritual, leaving him with a blood alcohol level six times the legal limit.

MARIE ANDRE: Those children wanted to be neurosurgeons. They wanted to be lawyers. They wanted to be everything. They were good children. And now, what happened?

BYRON HURT: I read about Marie and her son, George, in The New York Times. It was their story that inspired me to make this film, a mother who immigrated from Haiti to give her only child a chance at a better life.

EXCERPT FROM GEORGE DESDUNES' COLLEGE ESSAY: "My family consists of two people: my mom Marie and myself. Over the years, I've come to realize the sacrifices that she has made for me in order to help me achieve something with my life."

MARIE ANDRE: When George was about two-years-old, his father passed, and it became George and I. George was the love of my life.

It was a Monday. I came home at around 11:30. I heard a scream. And I still hear the scream in my ears today. It was George. He said, "Mom, I got accepted." George got accepted to Cornell. That was one of the happiest day for him.

SONG LYRICS: Friendships that live on and on, bonds that grow so strong, brotherhood forever good last forever now.

BYRON HURT: At Cornell, Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity had this annual tradition where pledges got to haze their big brothers. And on February 25, 2011 at around 3:00 AM, the pledges got to haze George. Soon after, news broke about the hazing.

REPORTER: They bound his wrists and ankles with zip ties and duct tape, and compelled him to consume alcohol until he lost consciousness. Back at the frat house, Desdunes was dumped on a couch, and left to die.

MARIE ANDRE: When you read what happened, like, I can every time I close my eyes, and I think, what they did to George? And then I'm like, is this what gentlemen do? Is this what make you a man?

BYRON HURT: George was the fourth hazing related death with the SAE, a fraternity with deep roots, and a storied reputation covered widely by news media all over the country.

REPORTERS: Labeled the deadliest fraternity in the US, SAE has had multiple deaths from hazing and alcohol related incidents... Sigma Alpha Epsilon, SAE, announced it closed down the local chapter.

BYRON HURT: A few years after George's death, someone leaked this video made by members of SAE at the University of Oklahoma.

- (SINGING) You can hang em' from a tree, but it will never start with me, there will never be a nigger at SAE.

BYRON HURT: The video went viral.

REPORTER: Now infamous, SAE chapter at Oklahoma University.

BYRON HURT: It made me wonder if SAE's reckless and blatant disregard for George's body may have been rooted in the fraternity's racism. Since then, SAE has been trying to change its image.

ANNOUNCER: Because now, more than ever the world needs true gentlemen.

MARIE ANDRE: You want to be a gentleman? I have place for you. I have plenty of place for you. There are hospital who need help, nursing home, there are the prison. They can go and educate the prisoner. I will send them places to pledge.

BYRON HURT: George's story propelled me into a world of hazing that I'm aware of, but that honestly I know very little about: historically white fraternities, where most hazing cases take place by far.

ALL ABOUT MANHOOD

JOHN HECHINGER: Fraternities are ingrained in higher education. They own \$3 billion in real estate. They house a quarter of a million students, more than any other landlord except for colleges themselves. They raise \$20 million a year for charity. Their alumni are among the most loyal donors, so that is powerful.

BYRON HURT: With that kind of power, it's not hard to see how fraternities keep the tradition of hazing alive with very little accountability. I wanted to know how the white pledge experience differed from my own. So I found a young man who was willing to share what he went through while a student at Penn State University.

JAMES VIVENZIO: The men of Kappa Delta Rho cordially extend James Vivenzio a bid to pledge our fraternity. It was an honor to get a bid. Everyone wanted to be in a fraternity. It was a big deal.

[ASHER ROTH, "I LOVE COLLEGE"]

- (SINGING) And I love college, ay.

BYRON HURT: Asher Roth in his video, "I Love College," shows the appeal.

JAMES VIVENZIO: And then you had pledges to do everything, take out your trash, clean your room, do your laundry. If you had an essay you needed done, you have a pledge to do it for you for the next four years.

[ASHER ROTH, "I LOVE COLLEGE"]

- (SINGING) Do something crazy.

RASHEED ALI CROMWELL: You had a pledge for six months. But once you became a brother, it's a breeze going through college.

BYRON HURT: Tell me what a typical night was like for you.

JAMES VIVENZIO: Well, you'd get a text, and it would be, be at the house in 10 minutes. We're going to fuck you up.

Immediately just told to go downstairs, line up, face against the wall, nose against the brick. It'd be pitch black. Music would be blaring. You had to know everything about the people around you, names, family members, high school. You had to memorize that all, or else you'd get hazed. It would start with calisthenics. You just have to do push-ups until you can do no more,

and we'd go into wall sits. Then you'd just have to start passing weights around while you're wall sitting. Start at 20 pounds, 30 pounds, 50 pounds, you'd start sweating. And then they'd start bringing you down liquor, tell you it's water. It would make you throw up. It didn't stop, sit-ups, push-ups, wall sits, liquor. We would all be huddled around a trash can, and just have a bottle of the cheapest vodka around, and a brother there yelling at you, chug, chug until you throw up. When you threw up, you passed it on to the next person, and you just kept on going in a circle for hours.

I remember one of my brothers grabbing me by the leg, begging me to take him to the hospital. And the older brother is just saying, you know, he's fine. He does this all the time. I went to high school with him. Don't worry. When you have a kid grabbing you to take him to the hospital because he thinks he's dying, that will change you. That really will. And then the fact no one would.

JACKSON KATZ: This is all about manhood. A lot of hazing rituals are exaggerations of some of the qualities of so-called manhood that boys and men often feel pressure to conform to. Narratives about this are everywhere in entertainment media, including Hollywood films. Boys and young men receive all sorts of messages that reinforce the idea that this is how you earn respect from other men. Like prove how much of a man you are by drinking more, and more, and more. And are you committed to this group? How much are you committed to being a part of this brotherhood that you'll push yourself beyond your limits?

HANK NUWER: It's like a cult to have psychological influence over the newcomer, blinding you to your ethics, your values, your principles out of allegiance to the greater organization, and the leader of that group.

JACKSON KATZ: And anybody who would say, it's easy, just walk away. It's foolish behavior. It's obvious. They haven't been in that situation.

JAMES VIVENZIO: This was after a fight. It was because I missed one of the lineups. One of the brothers brought me outside, and then he just started wailing on me. He pulled my shirt over my head, and just kept on punching me in the face, threw me against the car, and then started kicking me. And this was all because I missed a lineup, one lineup.

Now, if you drop out, it only makes it harder on everyone else. So you almost feel a pull from all your pledge brothers like, I can't leave them, or else they're going to have to go through all this. And it's going to be even harder, because there's one less.

BYRON HURT: Well, I can tell you that I can relate to that, because I mean, it was the same thing for me. Looking back, did you-- would you do it all over again if you had the opportunity to do it again?

JAMES VIVENZIO: Absolutely not. If I would have known everything before I signed up for KDR, I would have never signed up for KDR. I would have never even looked towards Greek life.

BYRON HURT: Knowing what I know now, I wonder if I would go through the same process again.

NO BROTHERHOOD

REPORTER: Sigma Nu fraternity has been suspended following the death of a student, Ryan Abele.

BYRON HURT: I hadn't heard about Ryan Abele until I met his parents, Jack and Wendy.

JACK ABELE: You know, one of the kids in the pledge class with our son, Ryan, he said-- he said, it's surreal, because it could have been any of us, but it should have been none of us. And there were 30 kids all handed a bottle of booze. He was several weeks into that pledge process, and they had a planned event, an event called the Big Brother Reveal.

Our son, Ryan, was handed a bottle of 100 proof, and instructed to drink it down to a certain point in the bottle. And from that point forward, he was incapable of making a rational decision. He was just drunk out of his mind. They decided to bring him back down into the basement, and mess with him some more. So they walked him to the stairs. He paused at the top of the stairs. He then fell, hit his head on a concrete wall, suffered a fractured skull, never regained consciousness, and died several days later in the hospital.

BYRON HURT: Did you have any concerns when he told you that he was pledging a fraternity?

WENDY ABELE: No, because Sigma Nu made sure they got his transcripts. They made sure that he did community service, made sure he had good grades. And it was supposed to be like the top of the notch fraternity. So no. I believe that he thought they would look out for him. And they didn't. So there's no brotherhood in that.

BYRON HURT: Most colleges and organizations have anti-hazing policies. But the real question is, do they actually work?

REPORTERS: Sigma Alpha Epsilon national headquarters reaffirms its zero tolerance policy... Syracuse University released a statement saying it has, quote, "Zero tolerance"... Zero tolerance... Zero tolerance for hazing.

RICKY JONES: They use that for legal defenses, but it does nothing to eradicate the problem of hazing.

MARY MADDEN: They don't want to get their other members in trouble. But more than that, there's a reward on the other side of it, which is belonging. I did what everybody else before me did in order to be a part of this organization.

BYRON HURT: Despite my feelings about hazing, moments like this remind me of why I love being in a Black Greek letter organization, because even when I'm among strangers, I feel at home.

It's a vibrant community, the unconditional love, the beautiful Black joy, and that D9 pride that we all share in common. This is family. This is my Divine Nine family. But now that I've met other families who have lost loved ones to hazing, I wonder how many of us are willing to admit that the price we have to pay, and that we make others pay for membership is too high, because no matter how many big checks we write, or how much good work we do in our communities, it doesn't mean a damn thing to a family who has lost their loved one to hazing.

NO SISTERHOOD

LOREAL ARBUCKLE-MUHAMMAD: I remember I was asking Kristin, why do you want to be an AKA so bad? Like, why are you doing this? She's like, because all the great Black women come from AKA.

BYRON HURT: Alpha Kappa Alpha is the first national Black sorority with a rich history of shaping influential Black women.

KARIM SAAFIR: We got engaged in 2000, and got married in 2001, March 17, 2001. We got engaged at the music pavilion downtown. And I remember getting on a knee in front of the fountain and all that kind of stuff. So that was-- this picture is from that moment.

Kenitha wanted to be AKA for forever. She wanted to do things to empower women. And she felt that if she became an AKA it would help her along with her goals a lot easier.

BYRON HURT: And how did you feel about Kenitha pledging?

KARIM SAAFIR: With the pledging I was thinking, they're girls. What can they do? I was like, what do girls do, you know? So I'm thinking that it couldn't be any harm in her doing that.

BYRON HURT: What do you remember about her pledging and her pledge process? What stands out to you?

PASTOR PAT: Kristin, she tried to keep the pledging experience away from me, but she started coming home late. She came on one day and her tooth was knocked out.

LOREAL ARBUCKLE-MUHAMMAD: For me, that is no sisterhood, to cause another sister harm is no sisterhood. You never should have to die to belong.

BYRON HURT: Since 1970, 13 women have died during sorority or fraternity pledging related activities. The majority have been reported as accidents, including the tragic deaths of Victoria Carter, and Brianna Gaither, both pledges for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Inc, the sister organization to my fraternity. While deaths are low in comparison to men, hazing charges among women continue to be a problem.

REPORTERS: Seven students from the University of Albany were arrested for allegedly hazing new pledges to their sorority... Police found four young women being forced to eat mud and garbage. One of the pledges needed medical attention.

MICHELLE GUOBADIA: I think the desire to pledge-- and when I use the word pledge, I mean going through some hazing process, right? I think that desire is very real for women just as it's real for men. I was sitting in my car watching this scene from Black Boots. I remember being that girl in someone's basement trying to get rough with a bunch of boys just to prove to them that I was tough too. And I think there's a difference that we see in hazing behavior between our women in historically white organizations, and women in our culturally-based groups, the African-American, Latinx, Asian organizations, where that is more mental, more physical, more emotional, and for different reasons. Many of our culturally-based Greeks are not huge chapters. They're small, and sometimes on the brink of extinction on particular campuses. And I think they're using hazing as a way to test the resiliency of people who want to join. You need to have people who are going to defend the honor of our organization, who are going to make sure the chapter survives. In hindsight as an adult, as a professional, I love my sorority, and I love being a member of it. I didn't need to go through a fraction of what I needed to go through to be a loyal member to the organization that I said I would have been.

BYRON HURT: While women do share hazing rituals in common, there are some distinctions to be made. The show What Would You Do? depicts hazing in white sororities.

REPORTER: And now our actresses are following those examples.

STACEY HURT-MILNER: There's a lot of mean girl culture.

- Look at this.

- She's fat.

- What makes you think you're good enough?

STACEY HURT-MILNER: An attack on your physical appearance, your vernacular, your background, where you come from, attacking you as an individual.

- Know your name.

- You're worthless.

- You are a slut.

STACEY HURT-MILNER: When you hear hazing, you think of the physical aspect. No one really thinks about the mental aspects of it.

I WAS DEPRESSED

BYRON HURT: I went to this small college town to meet with a woman named Jo Hannah, whose life changed after she pledged a sorority. She brought me with her to revisit the campus, where it all took place.

JO HANNAH BURCH: Growing up, I was a pretty shy kid, not very talkative in school, had a few close friends. When I went off to college, I wanted something more. I wanted experiences. I wanted to meet more people. There's a lot of fraternities and sororities at Young Harris College. I chose Gamma Psi. They were known as the popular girls. They were very involved, always partying, very close knit group of girls. And I wanted to be a part of that.

Oh my God. Yeah, it was right there. And I was so excited. This is where we used to meet a lot of the members up here. So the president and the vice president of the sorority lived on the second floor. And that was the big Gamma Psi room. We had a sleepover there. I forgot about that.

STACEY HURT-MILNER: What people fail to realize is you're taking high school students into a college atmosphere where they're left to their own devices. There's nobody there to care for them in the same manner that they had at home. So now, they're looking for that connection.

JO HANNAH BURCH: It's crazy. This happened eight years ago this weekend. I mean, I've had so many dreams about this place, nightmares. It was a cold night in February. They took us out in a car. There's this corner where we turned. And they said, put on your blindfolds. And then they start driving really fast, and then they changed music. You can't see anything, but you're hearing screams. The members of the sorority would pop up, and you didn't know they were there. They start screaming at you. What's my name? You got it wrong. Why don't know the-- stupid bitch, things like that. Even-- I don't know-- even just being right here just makes me anxious.

I remember these rocks like feeling so unsteady. I mean, it's even cold right now. It's freezing.

BYRON HURT: But you were here at night when this happened?

JO HANNAH BURCH: Yeah. I don't know.

It's freezing cold. It's probably 20 degrees outside. They would line you up, continue screaming at you, tell you what was wrong with you. You would crawl on your hands and knees in the mud, get in the freezing water, and you're in this creek for hours. That was the first night of hazing. When I got home, my feet were black.

BYRON HURT: Why didn't you quit? When they had in the creek, right in that moment, why didn't you just quit?

JO HANNAH BURCH: I didn't quit, because I was holding-- sorry, I was holding hands with my pledge sisters. They were your support system. They would encourage you. Keep on, we have to keep on, so we can become sisters. When I got home from the nights of being hazed, I felt so completely low, so depressed. My feet were numb. My body was numb. I didn't want to let anyone down. I didn't want to let my pledge sisters down. And that's why I continued.

BYRON HURT: After six weeks, Jo Hannah found the courage to quit, but suffered depression and anxiety as a result of her experience. I can relate to Jo Hanna's story, because by the time I finished my pledge process, which took eight weeks, I was depressed. I was really trying to process and sort out everything that I had just experienced. And there wasn't really anybody to talk to about it, because you're not supposed to talk about hazing publicly. But also, there's not a lot of empathy for hazing victims in this country.

MASCULINE CREDIBILITY

MITCH PRINSTEIN: Yeah, it's really unfortunate that people are blaming the victims of hazing, because the drive to fit in is real. In fact, there's really interesting psychological research that shows that at the minute that we feel that we might be excluded, our brain sends us pretty powerful signals telling us to change our behavior immediately. It actually activates the same areas of our brain as physical pain. It's for that reason that we might go to extreme behaviors to avoid social pain, to avoid that rejection, because fitting in is something that makes us uniquely human.

Around the transition of adolescence, so kind of like 11, 12, 13-years-old, there's a change in our brains that happens during puberty that makes us suddenly very interested in getting what we psychologists call, social rewards. And that means kind of feedback, attention, and power, or dominance. This gives us a desire or a craving for status. We live in a civilization that cares about status more than we have ever seen before. And the things that we will do, even as adults sometimes surprise us. Withstand this treatment.

We spend a remarkable amount of money to acquire material things, all to gain or maintain status. We're kidding ourselves if we don't realize that we all do a lot of irrational things too sometimes just to feel like we're accepted among a group of people that we care about.

BYRON HURT: We can talk about this, because this very same paddle that causes abuse also gives you power. For a lot of dudes who get struck by this paddle, this is a badge of honor. This means that you are stronger than other men.

When I was in college I was still insecure about my manhood. I wanted the masculine credibility that came along with surviving the pledge process. But then three years after I graduated, my life took an unexpected turn. I became an anti-sexist activist, educating boys and men about redefining masculinity. My growing awareness about abusive behavior put me in conflict with the culture of hazing.

I'm going to start out by asking a question, and this question is primarily for the men in the room. When you were a young boy, what were some of the messages that you received from other men in your life, your fathers, or maybe an uncle, could be a football coach? What characteristics did they tell you you needed to be in order to be a real man?

When I think about my experience as a victim of hazing, I have to look back to all of the things that led up to me accepting various forms of hazing. I grew up as an athlete with coaches always reinforcing, you have to be strong. Don't cry.

MARY MADDEN: Boys don't cry. Girls do that.

BYRON HURT: You have to be tough, and man up.

MARY MADDEN: Don't whine. Don't tattle.

BYRON HURT: My father would always tell me that quitters never win.

JACKSON KATZ: Young men want to prove themselves. They want to prove their worth, their manhood. There's no quicker way than through violent acts.

BYRON HURT: My earliest memory of violence was I was about five-years-old playing outside in the front yard all by myself. And this little boy walked up to me and he asked me a question. He said, do you know where [BLEEP] Avenue is? And that was my address. So I said, yeah, that's right here. And he just went, pow. I remember running into the house to tell my father what happened, and my father's response was to get up. I remember he put on a brown pair of slippers, took me to his car, and we went driving around the neighborhood looking for this young boy because my father wanted me to fight him to earn this boy's respect.

MAURICE SANGODELE-AYOKA: Our society socializes boys, socializes girls too to expect boys and men to endure violence. Boys and men must be able to negotiate violence. They must be able to handle it. They must be able to absorb it, and also give it. Like, you've got to check that box off. By the time you get to college, oh hazing, OK, I know what that is.

BYRON HURT: All right. So I mean, the bottom line is that hazing is something that a lot of my brothers embrace. And the film that I'm making is saying, what you guys believe in is wrong. The thought of losing the respect of my fraternity brothers and chapter brothers, it scares me. You know what I'm saying? Because I feel like that's going to be very painful, it's going to be painful to be rejected by this group of men who I love and I've known for 30 years now. And so I remain quiet tonight. Even though I wanted to say something, I felt paralyzed. So if it's that challenging for me as a grown man who's 51, and who knows better, think about how hard it is for somebody who's actually going through it to speak up.

Tyler Hilliard was pledging Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, but became another tragic hazing casualty reported in the news.

REPORTER: 20-year-old Tyler Hilliard died suddenly. His family doesn't know why.

TONI JARAMILLA: Tyler was subjected to harmful, humiliating, and life-threatening hazing rituals.

BYRON HURT: I've debated many BGLO members who say more people survive hazing in BGLO's than not. So why should we be concerned? Well, what about the unspoken physical and emotional trauma? Because the process that I went through that millions of other young people go through is fucking traumatic. We tell war stories about all of the dangerous shit that we went through, and we laugh about all of the humiliating moments, and things like that. But there's no mechanism within the fraternity to process whatever your experience was.

WALTER KIMBROUGH: And even if there isn't a death, there are lots of other negative consequences from hazing. And so those are the understudied aspects of hazing. Long-term illnesses, long-term injuries, we don't really have any idea of the psychological impact of hazing. And I think sometimes it is presented in terms of those war stories. I think that sometimes has a negative impact, because then there is a younger generation of people who say, I want that. No matter how negative it is, to feel part of the organization, I want to experience that too.

MARC LAMONT HILL: The thing my brother told me when I told him that I was interested in becoming a member was, you'll be fine. Dad went through it. I went through it. You'll be OK, as long as you ain't no bitch ass nigga. He said it like a joke, but I can't lie, like, that was in the back of my mind. Well then when you're going through this process, you know, and you're sitting there like, I don't want to drop, because I want people to think that's me.

A FAMILY TRADITION

BYRON HURT: When Greek life is a family tradition, the desire and pressure to experience the pledge process is even greater. It was for Brent, the son of a Kappa.

- How are you doing?

- Hanging in there.

- Good to see you.

- Good to see you too.

- Doing all right?

- I'm maintaining in this world of pain.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: So me being a legacy, holding on that crown that my father was a Kappa, you know, me being a Kappa, and that's something I'd been wanting since I was about five-years-old. And this picture right here, you can see I was always surrounded by Kappas in my home, always.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN: I had a group of young men that I was pledging to be Kappas. At the same time, she was pledging AKA. We were both active in our fraternity and our sorority.

DIANE MCCLANAHAN: We're a Greek family. And it was like welcoming another Greek, my son, into the Greek family, I was excited.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: When I made line, I felt amazing. I felt great, you know? I was like, man, this is it.

BRENT'S LINE BROTHERS: [LAUGHING] That's not funny... We've been on line for three hours... Threw up... Just been alone for three hours, took the oath. We're sworn in. I threw up everything. I got beat like a slave today, you know what I'm saying? I put Icy Hot on my butt, you know what I'm saying? Because it's still sore... See, I told you, I laugh about it what I get beat. I mean, it's not funny when I get hit. But afterwards, it's like, dang, like... All right, all together now. One, two, (SINGING) The road to Kappa Land, long, rough, and rugged, takes a helluva man.

BYRON HURT: Tell us about the house that we're approaching right now.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: This is the house I was hazed at every night.

BYRON HURT: Which house?

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: That one right there.

That first night we were supposed to be doing this whole little ritual. Our Dean was like, fuck all that. Tonight, you going to get some wood, because you're going to be the strongest line ever.

You're going to get wood every night. So we're like, oh, OK. So this is what it's supposed to be like?

The first time I took wood it was a traumatic experience for me. I didn't know that the first hit was going to be 100%.

- Damn.

- Whew.

- How you doing? Brent-- Brent? Don't fall. Don't fall, dude.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: I had a prior back surgery. So when they swung, I mean, I felt it, like electric shock just shot up from my butt to my back. And I'm crying over there. I'm tearing up, because it hurts like hell.

LASANA HOTEK: One of the things about our contemporary situation is that the older brothers and sisters have been removed from the process because of the risks associated with legality.

LAWRENCE ROSS: On a national level, our organizations basically turn a blind eye. If I don't catch you, we will not actually eradicate underground pledging.

LASANA HOTEK: Which leaves young people who are untrained leading these things that take a lot of organization. You end up with a chapter full of men or women who only think they can prove is that they can take an ass whoopin.

BYRON HURT: Who videotaped this anyway?

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: Our AD videotaped it all, because we needed to make sure we had a photo book to make sure we can sit back and go through, this is what you went through.

PLEDGES: Push it, push it real good.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: Just how good you guys were.

LAWRENCE ROSS: The validation part. So you can relive the fact-- because the whole point of it is supposed to be have you a memory that suddenly changes once you're initiated. Someone else watching this I can guarantee you, is going to look at this and say, I've taken worse.

MARC LAMONT HILL: Yeah. I see how that out of context could look brutal. And I'm not out here advocating that people should go through that. What I would say is that people should go through something. When I go through the hardest shit in my life, when I'm struggling the most, I look back and say, because I went through this, I can do that.

BYRON HURT: I've said the same thing. If something very difficult, a challenge comes my way, I say, I pledged, right? But did I really need to go through that in order to get to the place where I have stamina and perseverance in my life?

MARC LAMONT HILL: Maybe.

BYRON HURT: That's the question.

FOR NOTHING

- If you fucking drop, that's some real shit. You fuck with my frat.

STACEY PATTON: What I just watched was a historical echo of a long history of pain, and brutality, and dehumanization of Black bodies, except in this particular context, the masters are the men holding the paddles. For Black people, that's the cultural specificity of this. The type of ritualistic violence that we saw in slave plantations did not exist in West African cultures. So this is where this tradition of hazing begins. It has its roots here.

WALTER KIMBROUGH: Now, for all hazing, when you look at early hazing in the United States in the 1800s, it all was physical. They used to have something called freshman and sophomore class rushes, where the sophomores chased the freshmen around and beat them down. At Indiana University they had a case where they actually scalped the young man. They took a knife and cut the hair from his head with a knife. That was all physical. It was violent.

So in the 1920s, the institution said, we've got to stop this hazing of freshmen. And that's when you start to see it evolve in the fraternities and sororities. And then since then, you started to see the predominantly white groups really gravitate toward alcohol. The historically Black groups, when they started to develop those organizations, they continued the original American tradition of hazing, which is still very physical. And it continued to evolve.

HANK NUWER: I really think it has to do with society. For example, we've had hazing deaths in fraternities going back to 1873, but we didn't have an alcohol death until 1940 at the University of Missouri. When you look at the deaths in African-American groups, you think it goes back in history, but it doesn't.

BYRON HURT: The first death in a BGLO was in 1977. The organization was my own. And the cause of death was a heart attack after repeated beatings.

LASANA HOTEPI: And I have absolutely talked to brothers who pledged like back in the day, they say, I played in the '30s, I pledged in the '40s. It just wasn't the same. I don't hear things about paddling. These are things that kind of picked up in the '60s and '70s. And I think it came out of the GI Bill. You had mature, nontraditional students who were coming into our organizations,

and who were introducing these things that they had picked up in the military. And I think this stuff intensified post-Vietnam War.

HANK NUWER: We became a lot more violent society. Alcohol became the litmus test for young people. It was glamorized. And so it was added to the ritual.

REPORTER: Since Vietnam, hundreds of Marines may have gone through it.

STACEY PATTON: There's this internalized belief that pain makes us stronger, to tell these stories that we've survived, and go back and reminisce on it, to laugh about it, to say we got through this. It's a form of trauma bonding.

BYRON HURT: In Boston, I hung out with some of my older Gamma chapter brothers, OGs who pledged in the 1970s. We talked about the significance of this type of male bonding.

KARL COISCOU: Pledging in the '70s was a really rigorous experience. But the one thing that bonded us all around the world is everybody went through that same rigorous experience. And the real value to me of that whole thing, particularly in the '70s, you went anywhere in the world, sport your colors, and you were treated as family.

KELVIN BALDWIN: It brought out the best in me. It really did.

KARL COISCOU: Lord knows he had to dig deep. [LAUGHING]

KELVIN BALDWIN: And they did. They dug real deep to get the best out of me, because I have to admit, man, at some point during that time I was a slacker, man. But guess what? Those four cardinal principles, manhood, scholarship, perseverance, and brotherhood was ingrained in me. And I'm better today for it. So I thank God for that process. Thank God for the Omega Psi Phi.

STEPHEN WYNTER: But we understand things must change, because it's a different breed. It's a different breed of people. It's a different college student. It's a different world. And the things that we went through were necessary at that time, as much madness or whatever it is. But this is the end result of the good brothers that came through that. So to say that that's necessary, I don't think so, but it's just that that's what we have.

KELVIN BALDWIN: The Bible calls it the ride of correction. You know, so has it gone too far? I think some of the stuff that's going on nowadays, that's gone absolutely too far. It's to the point where it borderlines being sadistic. Am I a proponent of that? No, I'm not. I really am not. So there's really like a thin line between training a child in the way it should go, and brutality.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: There was a point when I was like, you know what, I'm tired of this. I mean, my ass is dark blood purple. And so me and my brothers, we did a boycott. We didn't go to session one night. So the next night, we go back to session, and they beat-- I mean, they beat the hell out of us the next night.

A couple of times the paddle hit me in my back. It actually shattered my disk. And when my disk was shattered, I actually had fragments of my disk in my back. And the effect that it caused was traumatic.

MARC LAMONT HILL: Can I say one more thing?

BYRON HURT: Yeah, sure.

MARC LAMONT HILL: I struggle with this myself. And I think what scares me in addition to-- because I asked myself, how is it that I have far more advanced and progressive conceptions of masculinity around love, and relationships, around sports, around education, around all these other areas? But why is this thing the thing where I tend to have contradiction? And I think part of it is that deep down, I'm probably afraid that at the end of the day I did all that shit for nothing, that none of it mattered, and none of it meant anything, you know? That I went through all of that, and did all of that for something that doesn't amount to anything.

THE GATEKEEPER

BYRON HURT: When I was on line and I was pledging, I said to myself, and I even said to my line brothers that I wasn't going to haze. I was not going to do to others what was happening to me. And when I became a member-- I was welcomed and embraced into the organization. And when you've gone through eight weeks of this really difficult, challenging process like these scenes from Black Boots and He Ain't Heavy depict, you're not going to just let somebody just walk up in your fraternity.

- (SINGING) I got a feeling. I got a feeling somebody's trying to sneak in the frat. And there ain't going to be no shit like that.

BYRON HURT: I was on the other side of that now. Omega Psi Phi gave me status. And there were other young men who wanted what I had. The idea of somebody sneaking into my fraternity without going through what I went through became unthinkable for me. And so I became invested in making sure that the young men who came after me experienced the same thing that I experienced.

STACEY PATTON: Something happens in the brain where you rationalize it. It doesn't matter that I might have some psychological issues over this, some bad memories, maybe some bruises here or there. I am here. This worked. So let me perpetuate the cycle. Same thing happens in the family context. I do this because I love you, because it's good for you, unlike bullying, which is about excluding people, it's about hurting them, isolating. Whereas, hazing isn't about that. That's not the intent. I'm doing this because we're going to be brothers, sisters, because we're going to love each other. We're going to have this lifelong commitment bringing you into something that's special.

- What's the goal?

- Brotherhood.

- What is the first pillar?

- Trust.

- What is the goal?

- Brotherhood.

- Good.

BYRON HURT: It makes you feel powerful just like you see it in the movies. You get to just walk into a room and you command the pledges' attention. And they're submitting to you. It feels good to have somebody answer to your beck and call.

- Make me laugh first.

BYRON HURT: They're willing to do whatever you ask them to do.

- Assume the position.

BYRON HURT: Because they want something that you have.

- Thank you, sir. May I have another?

BYRON HURT: And you're the gatekeeper. That's a very powerful feeling.

JACKSON KATZ: It's easy for people on the outside to look at that and say they're somehow not a really good human being, but we know from the last century of research and experience huge numbers of otherwise normal people have committed incredible acts of abuse, or participated as spectators. This is true with racism. This is true with sexism. This is true with the Holocaust. The typical perpetrators of hazing abuses are otherwise normal guys. And so it implicates what does it mean to be normal in our society?

JACK ABELE: There's no intention to kill, but there's enough danger that they put them in that it results in death. Our son played water polo and baseball. And as a water polo player, if you're in the pool, you're swimming laps, you're swimming laps, the coach tells you swim 10 more laps, you don't think, OK, what if I cramp up? What if I go under? You're certain that someone's going to pull you out. So there's that inherent trust that you have of the people who are the so-called big brothers. And that trust is betrayed.

BYRON HURT: I violated that trust. I helped to perpetuate the culture of hazing. You know, I feel like part of my responsibility is to do justice to the stories of their children.

CODE OF SILENCE

BYRON HURT: Pastor Pat continues to keep Kristin and Kenitha's memories alive. Both families are still tormented by how their loved ones died. This is the other side of the headlines that people don't see.

KARIM SAAFIR: The story was they were doing an exercise on a beach.

PASTOR PAT: It was around 10:00.

KARIM SAAFIR: Pitch black dark, no light. And Kenitha then went to go rinse off in the beach water, and that's how they drowned. It just didn't make sense.

BYRON HURT: Police reported their deaths as an accident with no evidence of hazing, even though numerous eyewitness accounts said otherwise.

PASTOR PAT: The other story was that it was more than just sisters. It was fraternities. They were having a party out there. And as soon as they started hearing the screaming, everybody started running to their cars and slamming the doors. This came from the neighbors that lived on the beach.

NIKKI HIGH: In my mind, I didn't even think about why they were there. I was thinking about why didn't she survive, because she was an excellent swimmer, to the point where she could have been a lifeguard. We still don't know--

PASTOR PAT: The truth.

NIKKI HIGH: The truth.

REPORTER: AKA materials Kristin usually left in her car have now mysteriously disappeared. These girls reportedly witnessed the horrifying drowning. Yet, High's relatives say they can't understand why they're so hesitant to talk about what happened.

NIKKI HIGH: Once they delivered my sister's car back to our house, the pledgees, they were refusing to tell us what had happened, how did we get to this point. I mean, to the point where one of them was about to talk, and the other one looked at her, and she just like shut her mouth.

REPORTER: The Cal State LA chapter is trying to quietly distance itself from this deadly accident.

BYRON HURT: So you believe that the big sisters of Alpha Kappa Alpha, and the pledges covered up what happened?

- Definitely.

- Definitely.

- Definitely.

- Without a doubt.

MARIE ANDRE: The cover up, the code of silence, come on, please. One of your brother die, and you are part of it.

RICKY JONES: The code of silence in Greek I would compare to the code of silence among police officers. You loyal to your brothers, you loyal to the organization first and foremost. And if you are not, then you know it goes back to the street ethic of snitches get stitches.

MAN (in video): It gets real, real fast. [BEATING SOUNDS] That was a good one. Brent-- Brent, you all right? Don't fall. Don't fall, dude. [LAUGHING]

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: I crossed. I'm a member. After all that, I still believed in trying to be a Kappa. Even when I was in the hospital doctors were in there saying, well, what happened? Oh, it was rough sex. That's what I was saying, trying to cover it up.

DIANE MCCLANAHAN: This went on for days. So I demanded, I said, Brent, be honest. Please do that for me, because who's going to be there to take care of you? I said was it related to Kappa Alpha Psi? And he said yes. And then I informed the nurse who then they called the police.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: Once I told the police what happened to me, it was like, OK, that's it. You're a snitch.

RICKY JONES: You're relegated to a type of social death within the organizations. And there are many members who will reject you. You're not going to be able to go to the parties that you pledged to be a part.

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: When we crossed, Fresno was having a party that night. They said, don't come to the party, because you're going to get wrecked. But because of all that, man, I tried to commit suicide.

BYRON HURT: Why did you want to take your own life?

BRENT MCCLANAHAN II: I was tired, paralyzed from the waist down, left leg messed up, erectile dysfunction, back is all messed up. That was just too overwhelming for me. And it wasn't that I tried-- there was no trying, Byron, I'll tell you that right now. It wasn't no trying with me. I actually-- I put the bullet in the chamber, in the chamber, and I pulled that trigger. Then when that bullet jammed in the gun, that's when I finally realized, OK, maybe I'm here for a reason.

BYRON HURT: Brent filed the lawsuit against Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity for his injuries, and settled out of court for \$2 million. The National Headquarters banned new membership in that chapter for seven years. Cal State Bakersfield was not held responsible for any wrongdoing.

JACKSON KATZ: This really does get to authority and leadership within institutions. This is not about the 18-year-old guys. The 18-year-old, 19-year-old, 20-year-old guys who were making these decisions are the bottom rung of the chain. Change has to happen at a higher level, the university or the college itself, but also the national fraternities. And that means you're challenging power. It's an uphill climb, because power has ways of protecting itself.

AN EPIDEMIC

BYRON HURT: James made it through the pledge process, earning the letters of Kappa Delta Rho, but he didn't wear them for long.

REPORTERS: James Vivenzio describes a violent run as a pledge of the Kappa Delta Rho fraternity at Penn State... He gave police printouts of KDR's private Facebook page, where images of hazing, illicit drug sales, and sexual assault were posted.

JAMES VIVENZIO: I wanted the secret to be out. What I endured, I should never have had to endure. And for that reason I wanted to show people what I had to go through, and why this isn't all right, and why this should end now. That Penn State can, and must do much more, and can do-- At the beginning, I thought Penn State did have my back with it. They sent the lead investigator to my house right away, told me they would create a task force, go against the hazing, going to really try and bring this to an end. But--

JAMES PIAZZA: Let's be honest. This didn't have to happen. My ask of all of you, if you can help someone, help them.

REPORTERS: 19-year-old, Timothy Piazza, died a little more than a day after police say fraternity brothers saw him fall down stairs intoxicated... Police believe he was being hazed, forced to drink excessive amounts of alcohol.

ERIC BARRON: Short of us sitting in that house on private property, privately managed with us having to be invited in, short of that, if people are willing to hide that type of behavior, and protect that level of secrecy, I do not see how it is the University will ever know.

JAMES VIVENZIO: This makes absolutely no sense. I really tried all I could to save the lives up there. I tried to tell the people that wouldn't listen. Going through page of page of documents, pictures, everything that I possibly had, Timothy is not here with us because of your wrongdoing. Penn State, you screwed up.

WALTER KIMBROUGH: Everybody says no tolerance to hazing. But what does that really mean? So do you suspend a group for two or three years, and let them come back? Do you suspend them forever? Depending upon the campus, if you have prominent alums who are members of a group, they'll fight you over that. And they'll say, we're not giving any more money if you close our group down. That becomes a challenge for a lot of campuses.

CHRIS CHESTNUT: There is a long history of hazing in the band at FAMU. And obviously, through the decades of this tradition, there has not been sufficient accountability or consequences, because it continues.

REPORTER: Gerard Dees pleaded guilty Friday to felony hazing, and got slapped with five years probation. Plus--

JUDGE: He will attend and successfully complete an anti-hazing class.

REPORTER: Even though they don't exist where he lives.

BYRON HURT: Of the 15 band members who were charged with felony hazing, most of the defendants got off easy. The Champion family hoped for justice they never received.

PAMELA CHAMPION: There's a haze around hazing. The courts, the lawyers, the administrators, the schools, they can't see through the haze of what it really is.

RAPPING: Just like Robert, I just want to be a champion, and play in the band and jam for fun. Who would have thought that it would cost me my life? Another brother dead, the media lost to hype. Despite the lawsuits, suspensions, and arrests, hazing still happens pushing people to death.

REPORTERS: Eight Georgia college students in an alleged fraternity hazing incident that sent one person to the hospital with alcohol sickness... All eight students are members of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity on South Wayne Street.

RAPPING: Hazing, it's sad that it won't end.

PAMELA CHAMPION: We call it a disease, because it infects your mindset. So if you have an infectious disease, and you don't do anything to it, what does it become? An epidemic.

RAPPING: The effects are still daunting. The evil is still haunting. They still laughing and taunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end.

JACKSON KATZ: Hazing is clearly a systemic force, as opposed to a series of isolated incidents. It's way too common. And incidents are similar to each other over time and across geography.

RICKY JONES: This isn't a chapter problem. It's not an individual problem. It's a problem of organizational culture. Either the organizations don't want to stop hazing, or they don't know how.

RAPPING: The effects are still daunting. The evil is still haunting. They still laughing and taunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end.

CHANGE THE CULTURE

BYRON HURT: Every single person in this room, whether you're Black, white, Latino, Asian, it doesn't matter what your ethnic or cultural background is, every single person has the ability, the power, the influence to actually confront this culture that I'm talking about.

NEWS CLIPS: What is needed is obviously for peers who are saying, I cannot allow this... We certainly need to change the mindset that our students have... If we empower them and teach them how to stand up, and how to question that authority, then I think we can change the culture.

BYRON HURT: Now, I can tell you where I was when I first started doing this work, when I was a young man in my early 20s. I was just a regular, typical dude, but I was challenged by somebody to change the culture that we live in.

JACKSON KATZ: I remember you just downloading all this information about how pervasive men's violence against women, and men's violence against other men was. And you were wrestling with the fact that you had come out of a fraternity culture where there had been some violent hazing. And you didn't want to talk about it.

BYRON HURT: It was the first time that anyone had ever really exposed me to like the roots of male violence. And so that began my journey to unpack my own ideas in my own relationship to violence. And I began to-- sort of morphed into the kind of person that I wish that I had when I was pledging, somebody who a pledge could talk to, could confide in. I was the person that they could feel safe around.

ANTHONY WILLIAMS: You were big brother uplift. You were mindful of the other experience. You at that point in season was just controlling the flow.

YVEL JOSEPH: So I remember two sides of the coin. You were that daddy uplift for me. However, there was one part where we were at your crib, and that's where you lost-- you lost

whatever-- your control, or you went off the deep end. This is my brother that I'm looking forward to an uplift, and he went upside down on me.

BYRON HURT: I remember I believe I either dragged you up my staircase.

YVEL JOSEPH: Yep. Specifically.

BYRON HURT: I dragged you up my staircase. And I believe I did so by the neck, or by your collar, something like that.

YVEL JOSEPH: After that night, I was just like, well, who can you trust? I felt like my brick walls just kind of came higher up. It didn't matter who it was.

BYRON HURT: I remember feeling a lot of shame. I felt shame because I knew I had done the wrong thing. You were the very last individual that I put my hands on.

YVEL JOSEPH: Right.

BYRON HURT: I apologize to Yvel, and to any other member of my fraternity that I've harmed. And I vow to work toward healing.

YVEL JOSEPH: How do we help each other release? How do we help each other cope? It's what friendship is about. Woo, man. No, this is the most I've ever talked about this. This is the most I've ever talked about this. It's going on 27 years.

BYRON HURT: When I started out on this journey, I feared that I was betraying my brothers by making this film and breaking my silence. After speaking to so many parents who have lost their children and other victims of hazing, I realize now that it's our silence that's an act of betrayal.

PASTOR PAT: [CRYING] It's heart-wrenching to think about my daughter being out here.

BYRON HURT: What would just say to the line sisters who know what happened, but haven't been truthful about what happened?

PASTOR PAT: It's time for them to come and relieve my heartstrings, and to relieve their heartstrings. So it's time for them to come and tell the actual truth what happened.

[END CREDITS]

RAPPING: The effects are still daunting. The evil is still haunting. They still laughing and taunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end. Cats want to get in, want to fit in, get punched and kicked, all sorts of hitting, spit in the face, public disgrace given. We hear about the dudes, also it happens to women. Like Robert, I just want to be a champion, and play in the band and jam for fun. Who would have thought that it would cost me my life? Another brother dead, the

media lost to hype. Despite the lawsuits, suspensions, and arrests, hazing still happens, pushing people to death. Thinking you chosen and valued, they are lying. Until you hear the sirens, they hurt you like Byron. The gang rapes and beat downs, people are dying. Family home crying, abusers reclining, walking around campus, laughing, and flaunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end. The effects are still daunting. The evil is still haunting. They still laughing and taunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end. The effects are still daunting. The evil is still haunting. They still laughing and taunting. Hazing, it's sad that it won't end.

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