

Rite of Passage Gone Wrong

✘ Maybe I'm not the person to be writing about fraternities and sororities and hazing and rites of passage and initiations. I went to a commuter college and a commuter law school and I was there for one thing and one thing only – to get a degree which would get me a job. Period.

So when I read stories about hazing, I have to just shake my head. I just don't get it. Apparently, the majority of states, 44 actually, have anti-hazing laws but I'm guessing that a lot of this secret initiation stuff is still going on below the radar.

The latest tragedy resulting from this adolescent behavior comes out of Florida where 26-year old A&M University band member Robert Champion died aboard a chartered bus parked outside an Orlando hotel last fall.

Even though Florida passed a hazing law back in 2005 after a drunk University of Miami student died trying to swim across a lake at the urging of his fraternity brothers (drinking and swimming???), this didn't stop the idiots at A&M from hazing Champion.

Although no criminal charges were brought against the morons who urged the drunk to swim against the lake, eleven band members are now facing felony hazing charges in Champion's death. Two others are facing misdemeanor charges. According to evidence released by the prosecutor, Champion was beaten to death with drumsticks and bass-drum mallets.

"Hazing is often winked at as a benign initiation ritual, but it has a tendency to spiral out of control, as it did in the horrific events at Long Island's Mempham High," I read in an article from 2003 in Sports Illustrated.

When I read these stories, I can't help but recall the novel,

Lord of the Flies, and the groupthink vs. individuality questions it presented. These hazing rituals don't seem all that different than what happened on William Golding's island.

As I said before, I've never been a part of a sorority, so it's impossible for me to relate to those who want so desperately to be part of a group that they would subject themselves to every type of humiliation and cruelty imaginable. It's also difficult for me to understand the apathy of those who stand by and say nothing about what they're witnessing. And I don't even want to attempt to get into the minds of the sadistic savages who actually perpetrate the abuse on those who want to belong. I'll leave all that up to the psychologists and sociologists.

I don't get it, but if you do, God bless you.