

## The Orange Statement

### Intro 1: About the Book

My question is a simple one; who am I to write a book? I do not know. I am just writing it. You are just reading it. Let us not worry about it.

### Intro 2: Who Wrote the Book

I wrote the book. I should like to point out immediately that just because I happened to be born in 1987, it does not mean that what I have to say as a nineteen-year-old is worth any more than what nineteen-year-olds had to say in, to pick a year at random, 1920. To say that youth is what is happening is absurd. It has always been happening. Everyone is nineteen, only at different times. This youth-cult scene is a disservice to everyone. I am anticipating a severe psychological set-back when I turn twenty, and I do not know what I am going to do when my youth-fare card runs out. As for this “do-not-trust-anyone-over-30” shit, I agree in principal, but I think they ought to drop the zero.

### Intro 3: Who We Are

People want to know who we are, and some think they know who we are. Some think we are a bunch of snot-nosed brats. It is difficult to say really who we are. We do not have snot on our noses. What we do have is hopes and fears, or ups and downs, as they are called. Where are we going to go after graduation? What are we going to do? How are we going to survive without our friends, our roommates, and our total independence?

### Intro 4: How the Book Was Written

Writing a book is a lot like having a baby; they both involve bringing something into the world that was not there before, and they are both a pain in the ass. The best, truest way to read this book would be to rip it up and throw the scraps all over the house. Then, later, should you come across a piece, read it, or do not read it, depending upon how you feel. Or, better, save it until four o'clock in the morning when you would rather do almost anything else, and read it then. Above all, do not spend too much time reading it because I did not spend much time writing it.

#### Cast of Characters

Female, freshman, nursing

Male, freshman, undecided

Female, sophomore, biology

Female, sophomore, elementary education

Male, sophomore, English

Female, senior, accounting

#### The Important Stuff

The University of Illinois, one of the original thirty-seven public land-grant institutions, was started in 1867 after originally being named the Illinois Industrial University. According to its website, it has sixteen colleges and instructional units, 562 total campus buildings, and the largest public university library collection in the world! It is an enormous institution with an extraordinary reputation.

So why did all of us choose to come to the University of Illinois? Why not! The tuition is cheaper than private school tuition, the degrees are prestigious, the campus is incredible, and the student body is gigantic (there are 42,728 total students, to be exact). Additionally, Big Ten

athletic teams are housed here and it is far enough away but not too far away from Chicago and the suburbs, where many of us are from. Would we advise our friends and siblings to come to this school? We definitely would.

Most of us do not spend *that* much time sitting in classes. We do bust our butts outside of class though. We spend countless hours reading and writing papers. We know that this is a challenging school. And we know that the majority of the professors that we have are way, way smarter than us. Many of us believed that we were significantly more intelligent before we came to this university. In high school we stood out, but at the University of Illinois that is a more difficult task to achieve.

Just because we go to a challenging school, though, does not mean we do not know how to have fun. The daily trials might make us crave fun, actually. Some of us have fun by weight lifting every day at IMPE or CRCE, the campus recreation centers. Some of us have fun by playing Frisbee or football on the quad when it is warm outside. Some of us have fun by getting involved in campus clubs or organizations or playing video games until three o'clock in the morning on weeknights. Many of us have fun by hitting up the bar scene. Students only have to be nineteen to get into the bars. Joe's Brewery, Station 211, the Clybourne, Kam's, and C.O.'s are popular bars among undergraduates.

Aside from the daily and weekly fun that we take part in, there are also exciting events that only happen once a year (unfortunately). The costume parties on Halloween are unforgettable, and no where near as appropriate as the ones we attended in junior high and high school. Unofficial Saint Patrick's Day is unforgettable too. It is the day two weeks before the *actual* holiday where students were green, assemble at the bars, and drink green beer starting at the crack of dawn and ending when it is no longer possible to stand up.

At the University of Illinois we work hard, we have fun, and we have strong opinions as well. There is one issue on this campus that students here are very passionate about: the Chief. The Broadcasting Service of the University of Illinois has a website that states that “To some, Chief Illiniwek is an honored symbol of the University of Illinois which should be preserved. To others, he is a race-based sports mascot that has to go.” I have yet to find a person who stands in the middle on that issue. In 1926, Lester Leutwiler performed the first half-time dance as the Chief, and in 1981, the Chief logo was trademarked. In 2005 though, the NCAA banned schools with “hostile and abusive American Indian nicknames” from hosting postseason events, and in 2007, the Board of Trustees ruled to retire the Chief Illiniwek dance to comply with NCAA regulations. Some students were ecstatic to see the retirement of the dance, but others were extremely disappointed and wear their “Chief” apparel often. The division truly seems as strong as that between Republicans and Democrats; both sides are passionate about their views, and neither side will ever agree.

There is another issue on this campus that students here are very passionate about: the Greek system. The university claims to have over six thousand members in its Greek community! Some students on this campus join and love their houses because of the scholarship, leadership, brotherhood/sisterhood, service, and social opportunities that get presented to them. Other students on this campus could never bring themselves to be a part of something so cliquy, time consuming, restricted, and unoriginal. Students that do not join fraternities or sororities miss out on opportunities to meet large amounts of people and attend fun and entertaining exchanges and dances. Students that do not join fraternities or sororities do not have to attend weekly meetings or deal with all of the expenses, though. The division of pro-Greek and anti-Greek opinions is strong and noticeable.

Then there are the issues that most of us seem to agree on. If we could magically make a few changes to this close-to-perfect campus, many of us would. Some of the lecture halls seem like they are going to crumble to pieces while students are inside of them if they are not renovated soon. Cracked tiles in Lincoln Hall and broken or missing desks in Gregory Hall are all too common. We also have a building named Illini Hall, which sounds like it would be a glamorous building for University of Illinois students and faculty members to be proud of because of its name, however, I would not advise parents or students to take a tour of that building if they were coming to Champaign for a campus visit!

Registration can be frustrating at times, especially as a freshman when only the last choices for times and classes are available for selection. Even though that is to be expected, we would change that if we could. We would also work our magic by guaranteeing to students and faculty members that nothing as horrific and eerie as the Virginia Tech Massacre could ever happen here. The setting where that incident took place and the setting that we live in for nine months out of every year are much too similar.

Putting that thought aside, though, the University of Illinois website reports that about six percent of the students here are African-American, six percent are Latino/a, eleven percent are Asian-American, one percent are Native American, and thirteen percent are International. With that being said, it is probably safe to assume that a variety of languages are spoken on this campus.

There is a University of Illinois language that we all understand, though. “Pokey sticks” are the amazing cheesy-bread creations that come from Gumby’s and taste good at any hour of the day. “Fat Don’s” is the restaurant that comes to the dorms on Wednesday nights and saves the lives and stomachs of students that would otherwise be eating something that they could do

without. “Orange Krush”, “Block I”, and “Illini Pride” are the groups that the die-hard Illini sports fans belong to. The “Morrow Plots” are one of the reasons why our school is unique and the only reason why our library is underground. The “21”, the “22”, and the “26” are the main bus routes. The “honeymoon period” is the time at the beginning of every school year when we think our grades are really good because we have not taken any major exams yet. The period *after* the honeymoon period tends to be a little bit of a disappointment! “Facebook” is the way we chat to one another throughout the day and look at pictures that people have posted and events that people have invited us to. Most of us know our grandparents would not approve of our sites. The list of University of Illinois vocabulary words could go on and on and on...

What is really comes down to is that even though we do not agree on everything, University of Illinois students are similar in so many ways. We left our families and our friends from home in an effort to seek an incredible education and personal development. We make our own decisions and we deal with the consequences or rewards that come from the decisions we make. We have friends here that are like family members to us. We are smart and ambitious and we are going to do amazing things when we leave this campus. There is no where else that we would rather be. We bleed orange and blue. We are the Illini.