Truth or Ultimate Truth

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Truth or Ultimate Truth

Game

Informant

Mikayla Howes, more commonly called “Mac”, is twenty-two years old. She was a member of the Utah State University Women’s Soccer team, just finishing her senior season about a month ago. She played significant minutes this season as an outside back. She was a fifth-year senior, having to sit out her freshman and sophomore years due to a torn meniscus and broken collar bone respectively. Mac is from Sherwood, Oregon and came to Logan to play soccer and study at Utah State. She is currently pursuing a degree in Public Health and will graduate in Spring 2018. After that, she plans to apply to nursing school. Mac is known on the team for her friendship and mom-like care over the team. She is also best friends with Amber.

Informant

Amber Marshall is eighteen years old and just finished her freshman season as a member of the USU soccer team. She has been playing soccer since she was seven years old, and is from Layton, Utah. She currently is an undeclared major. This season, Amber played an outstanding number of minutes as a center midfielder, earning the Utah State Women’s Soccer Newcomer of the Year award. She is known on the team for her aggressive play, but is shy and reserved off the field. She considers Mac her closest friend.

Context

I intended to collect this folklore just from Mac, but then Amber was also in the room, so I thought I would get her perspective too. I interviewed them in Mac’s room. Mac and I are roommates, and the overall feel was easy and relaxed since we know each other well. We live in an off-campus house. Mac sat at her desk while Amber and I sat on her bed. Mac’s room was a little messy and disorganized. Mac and Amber were in the middle of doing homework when I interrupted them.

USU Women’s Soccer is a D1 team and competes in the Mountain West Conference, meaning they compete in the highest classification of college sports and play other universities in the Mountain West area. This game takes place on the back of the charter bus that the team rides home from the airport. They are coming from traveling to play games in other states. Usually this only happens after a win if the team is all happy and in a good mood. Mac explained that this game begins by the seniors calling everyone to the back of the bus. Seniors by unofficial rule get the back of the bus and freshman must sit in the front. Truth or Ultimate Truth ends when the team either reaches their destination or the seniors say it is done. Mac noted that the frequency of this game has changed over time. Her freshman and sophomore season the team did this game
every time coming back from the airport; however, this season we only did it once on the final travel trip coming back to Logan. Everyone on the bus has the option to participate. If someone doesn’t want to come to the back or has homework they don’t have to come, but it is highly encouraged. Mac commented that in this game usually the people who ask the questions are seniors, but other teammates can chime in. The people being asked the questions are usually freshmen or other underclassmen because the team wants to know more about them.

Note: Most of the team are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or “Mormon’s”. The question then about having a missionary refers to the two-year church proselyting mission that most LDS men go on when they turn eighteen. It is referring boyfriends that are on those missions. This also makes the telling of the questions “how far have you gone” in a sexual sense more scandalous because this religion advocates that sexual intimacy only be performed after marriage.

Text

Mac: Kay, so basically. We only did it once this year, but usually every travel trip that we, um [every one?] my freshman year and my sophomore year we did it every single one. [wow] So we got everybody on the team like a couple times. Um, so we, usually its on the way home from wherever we are, and usually it’s hopefully after we win, cause it’s only usually after we win and everybody is in a good mood that we play this game. So, usually a senior gets everybody to the back of the bus and says ‘everybody has to come to the back of the bus coach says its mandatory’ [laughing] And we play Truth or Ultimate Truth were we basically put somebody in the hot seat, and ask them any question we want and they have to answer. And we try to go through the whole team, uh we usually only get to all the freshies, all the newbies that we don’t know as well cause everybody else has done it and everybody else has heard everyone else’s stories so usually we try to get to the people we don’t know as well and we try to get any information we can out of them. Um. I don’t know what else is there.

Mealii: Uh, can you do the question everyone asks and what everyone has to say?

Mac: [breathy laughing] What is the question?

Amber: [muffled from under a blanket] Have you ever been in love?
Mealii: No like, so like to start like the game

Mac: It’s. truth or ultimate truth and then the person says, ultimate truth and then it’s the whole team says ‘Ultimate Truuuuuth’ [emphasis added] and then everybody’s like ‘alright who has a question’ and then it’s usually ‘oh my gosh how far have you gone’ or ‘have you ever been in love’ or ‘do you have a missionary’ was always the one [Amber laughing] always every time, every time what else is there?

Mealii: Umm that’s pretty much it. Amber, how did you feel as a freshman getting asked questions?

A: I hated it. Everyone just stares at you. [laughing] And they want so much information, so scary.

[at this point in the interview the conversation got derailed to talking about other games that the team plays. This continues for a few minutes and then I stopped recording. I started recording again after we finished the other topic, but it was about context and texture information that is included elsewhere]

Textured

When I was interviewing Mac and Amber, Mac was interactive and open to sharing and talking, but Amber was very tired and spent most of the interview hiding under a blanket. She is more reserved and quiet. Mac also responded sarcastically a few times during the interview. Sometimes this was to mock the questions she deemed silly, but this is also how she usually interacts and is part of her personality.

This custom is meant to be a bonding activity for the team. In performing this folklore, the team learns almost everything about everyone, even the scandalous, cute, and embarrassing things one normally wouldn’t share with most people. It may be nerve-wracking at the time of sharing, but afterwards one feels like part of the group. I am also on the team, and this year when we played this game the upperclassmen made sure to stress that this was to bring everyone closer together and that we would never use this information against them. Amber commented, “there were some questions that I didn’t want to answer just cause they were kinda a lot to tell everyone, but I don’t know it’s kinda fun at the same time.” There is a difference to the way people ask
questions and the way people respond. Mac says, “All the people who aren’t being asked questions are very excited to ask questions, like, I don’t know they are thinking about what they wanna know about this person and, what they can get out of them usually.” She also talked about how the game is played in a light-hearted manner, but at the same time it’s not really an option to not answer the question. The people responding to the question usually talk quieter, maybe nervously or with embarrassment. When first asking a new person questions, and the team says, “Ultimate Truth” together. It is said in a very specific way. The best way I can describe it would be with girly voices, with emphasis on the /u/ sounds. For example, “Uuultimate Truuuth.” I highly recommend listening to the attached audio file where Mac says it to understand what it sounds like.

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