



Fat, Drunk, & Stupid: The Inside Story Behind the Making of Animal House

Matty Simmons

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In 1976 the creators of *National Lampoon*, America's most popular humor magazine, decided to make a movie. It would be set on a college campus in the 1960s, loosely based on the experiences of *Lampoon* writers Chris Miller and Harold Ramis and *Lampoon* editor Doug Kenney. They named it *Animal House*, in honor of Miller's fraternity at Dartmouth, where the members had been nicknamed after animals.

Miller, Ramis, and Kenney wrote a film treatment that was rejected and ridiculed by Hollywood studios?until at last Universal Pictures agreed to produce the film, with a budget of \$3 million.

A cast was assembled, made up almost completely of unknowns. Stephen Furst, who played Flounder, had been delivering pizzas. Kevin Bacon was a waiter in Manhattan when he was hired to play Chip. Chevy Chase was considered for the role of Otter, but it wound up going to the lesser-known Tim Matheson. John Belushi, for his unforgettable role as Bluto, made \$40,000 (the movie's highest-paid actor).

For four weeks in the fall of 1977, the actors and crew invaded the college town of Eugene, Oregon, forming their own sort of fraternity in the process. The hilarious, unforgettable movie they made wound up earning more than \$600 million and became one of America's most beloved comedy classics. It launched countless careers and paved the way for today's comedies from directors such as Judd Apatow and Todd Phillips.

Bestselling author Matty Simmons was the founder of *National Lampoon* and the producer of *Animal House*. In *Fat, Drunk, and Stupid*, he draws from exclusive interviews with actors including Karen Allen, Kevin Bacon, Peter Riegert, and Mark Metcalf, director John Landis, fellow producer Ivan Reitman, and other key players?as well as behind-the-scenes photos?to tell the movie's outrageous story, from its birth in the New York offices of the *National Lampoon* to writing a script, assembling the perfect cast, the wild weeks of filming, and, ultimately, to the film's release and megasuccess.

This is a hilarious romp through one of the biggest grossing, most memorable, most frequently quoted, and most celebrated comedies of all time.

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