

Pledge

an original screenplay by

Devon Buckley

Devon Buckley  
(631) 617-2572  
dbuckley5900@gmail.com

PLEDGE ONE

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

College students holding SOLO CUPS walk through the streets and sidewalks, lined with shading trees and flower bushes.

DYLAN (white guy, 18, mid-height, muscular, curly brown hair covered by a white backward baseball cap, blue jeans and white t-shirt, soft face) walks through the street, lost, glancing at every house. Few people stand on porches or manicured lawns. Light PARTY MUSIC emanates from inside.

He stops a girl in a mini skirt and black leather jacket to show her his SMARTPHONE and ask an INAUDIBLE question. She points down the block, he starts in that direction.

DYLAN

Yeah, okay, thank you!

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - NIGHT

The classic suburban bungalow with white vinyl siding, flashes with PINK/BLUE LIGHTS through the windows, rattled by a THUMPING BASE. The lawn is littered with solo cups, streamers and beer bottles and a cluster of pretty COLLEGE GIRLS smoke, chat and drink.

Dylan approaches, stopping at the walk way to the front door. He checks between his smartphone and the house. He breathes deep and enters as a HOT GIRL leads out a HOT GUY by the hand.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Inside is a wild party. LOUD BUMPING MUSIC. PINK/BLUE SWEEPING LIGHTS. GIRLS and GUYS dance and drink from CANS, BOTTLES, and SOLO CUPS. Dylan nervously scans for someone. FRAT BROTHER ONE slams his hand against Dylan's chest.

FRAT BROTHER ONE

Bro -- dude -- who let you in?

Dylan stares wide eyed.

FRAT BROTHER ONE (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outa here little dude.  
Ratio's fucked as is. If you don't  
know a brother you gotta fucking go.

Dylan swallow, then slides a finger under his nose and chuckles to seem un-intimidated.

DYLAN

Uh -- I'm actually a pledge here.  
Dylan ... H.?

Dylan reaches for a handshake, but the brother just looks at him skeptically.

FRAT BROTHER ONE

Oh, yeah, I'm sure? Tell me lil' guy, who's your Big?

Dylan retracts his hand and rubs them on his pants nervously.

DYLAN

Uh, Nikhil? Singh?

NIKHIL

Yo! D!

Dylan whips his head around to see NIKHIL (Indian guy, 20, grown-out crewcut, white t-shirt and blue jeans, tall, muscular, bright, kind smile) pushing his way through the crowd. Frat brother one gives him a once over, rolls his eyes and turns back to the girl he had been chatting up.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

Hey dude, there you are. Whats up?! We were expecting you here, like, hours ago.

Nikhil throws his arm around Dylan's shoulder and squeezes. Dylan's jaw tightens as Nikhil leans close to his ear.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

(low)

You know -- pledges are supposed to be here for set-up. Not like I'm gonna say anything but what gives?

DYLAN

Uh well, sorry haha, I tried texting Oran asking about details but he, uh, didn't get back to me.

(forces a cool smile)

I think maybe he gave me the wrong address. Ended up taking a while to find the place. Sorry Nik, I -- I'll make it up to you.

NIKHIL

Man Orans such a dick. Don't worry about it ... sorry. I'm sure it was just a mistake.

Dylan stares at his shoes and slides a finger under his nose.

DYLAN

Yeah, I don't know ... He -- uh -- doesn't seem to be a fan. Him and all the other brothers haha.

NIKHIL

Ah don't worry about it. They just don't get you cause you're different.

Dylan's snaps a defensive look. His voice turns pissed.

DYLAN

No, I'm not.

NIKHIL

Whoa, whoa, whoa,  
(chuckling)  
nah it's a good thing, you're just like nice and not a moron. Some of the brothers here can't comprehend.  
(laughs boisterously)  
Your brain hasn't been scrambled by beer and running through drywall yet.

Dylan tries to crack a smile through his disappointment.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

Don't sweat it man. Once they get to know you like I do, they'll love you. You're awesome, D. You and the boys just need some bonding time. Here, come on.

Nikhil takes him by the arm and pulls him through the crowd, in the direction he came.

The MUSIC DULLS and Dylan's eyes lock on Nikhil's hand.

They emerge from the crowd to a group of OTHER FRAT BROTHERS congregated against the wall, some dressed like Nikhil, some with their SHIRTS off, tossed over their shoulders or wrapped around their heads. They are all drinking from solo cups and chatting. When they notice Dylan approaching a few of their faces sour.

NIKHIL (CONT'D)

Yo boys, found my Little. Get my man a drink! He just crushed it at the pong table.

Nikhil nudges Dylan with his elbow and winks. Dylan forces nonchalance and daps-up several brothers. Some faces soften and the brothers nod. FRAT BROTHER TWO hands him a can.

FRAT BROTHER TWO

Lets go, sir.

Dylan goes to crack it open.

FRAT BROTHER THREE

Nah, nah kid! Shotgun!

Stress flashes across his face. He looks to Nikhil's beaming smile. He relaxes, returning the smile. He shotguns the can. Excess beer drips down his chin, on to his shirt. He looks down and tosses his hands up.

FRAT BROTHER TWO

Take it off my guy!

They chant until he concedes and pulls his shirt off. Nikhil hooks his arm around Dylan's waist and pats his chest. Dylan's face flushes. He nervously laughs. FRAT BROTHER FOUR enters the circle with SHOTS. Every one drinks. Nikhil hangs his arm on Dylan. Dylan looks at his arm, then at Nikhil's smile.

Dylan tips his head to finish a solo cup.

His vision streaks.

Time distorts.

Dylan shot guns another beer.

Nikhil's arm slips off his shoulder. Dylan turns to see where he went. He spots Nikhil across the room, leaning against the wall chatting with a SHORT GIRL with long black hair, batting her eyes at him. Dylan's face falls and he stares at them quietly. Dylan STOPS HEARING THE MUSIC. All you can hear is a HEARTBEAT.

INT. DYLAN'S MIND - CONTINUOUS

The image flashes between Nikhil talking with the girl (reality) and Dylan, replacing the girl, looking up at Nikhil (fantasy). Nikhil slips his hand around the girls waist. The differing realities continue to flash. Nikhil slips his hand around Dylan's waist.

They dance intimately.

HEAVY BREATHING.

Their fingers slowly run over each others skin.

Nikhil drags his lips over Dylan's shoulder, up towards his neck.

The short girl's, Nikhil's, and Dylan's heavy breathing mix together getting LOUDER AND LOUDER as the flashing intensifies.

INT. FRAT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Dylan's mouth's agape. His breathing is labored. His eyes tear. The MUSIC blares again. He whips around and bulls outside, knocking into people, spilling drinks.

EXT. FRAT HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Falling back to sit on the OUTDOOR STEPS, Dylan folds forward, face in hands. Nikhil emerges, eyes searching, then landing on Dylan. He sits beside him, concerned. He rests a hand on Dylan's shoulder.

NIKHIL

Hey man ... are you alright? What happened?

DYLAN

(into his hands)  
Nothing. It's just the alcohol.