

BOY ON FIRE

by
Soman Chainani
Austen Rachlis

Draft: March 8, 2006

No Pressure Productions
2565 Broadway, #131
New York, NY 10025
nopressurefilms@gmail.com
www.nopressureproductions.com
917 693 7280

FADE IN

EXT. CORONADO HIGH SCHOOL (SAN DIEGO) - DAY

CLOSE ON a MALE HAND carrying a LIME GREEN PARTY INVITATION, die-cut, bold calligraphy between shiny clusters of embossed balloons:

'WELCOME BACK CLAUDIA! SURPRISE PARTY TONIGHT - '

FOLLOW THE INVITATION from the boy's hand up as it passes into perfectly manicured fingers, PAN UP to the recipient, a toothy HOT BLONDE CHEERLEADER whose teeth are so white there seem to be no divisions between them -

HOT GIRL
(lasciviously)
Hope she doesn't show.

NOAH QUIST, 17, broad-shouldered in a CORONADO WRESTLERS varsity jacket, snatches back the invitation, starts walking away from her -

NOAH
Aw now, don't jinx me on my big day -

HOT GIRL (O.S.)
Noah, I didn't mean it -

TRACK with NOAH as he walks, handing out invitations to virtually everyone in the school. He has thick brown Greek curls, this idol of beauty; he could have modeled for Michelangelo. But though he's all jock, we can sense his sensitive, warm core, still glowing through all the manufactured masculinity and coolness.

PAN DOWN from a GIANT BANNER reading 'WELCOME BACK STUDENTS!' to Noah walking under it - he PULLS OPEN the giant blue doors of the gymnasium, and BARRELS INTO K.C., a FEISTY CROPPED-HAIRED INDIAN GIRL, on her way out. Papers and books fall to the floor and get kicked around by the throng of students trying to file into the gym -

K.C. pushes Noah aside -

K.C.
Asshole!

Noah's surprised by her acidity, bends down to help her -

K.C. (CONT'D)
Get your sweaty hands off my stuff -

Noah ignores her, finds the last of the books -

K.C. (CONT'D)
 Don't you have balls to kick?

Noah hands her a lime-green invitation -

NOAH
 An official apology.

She doesn't take it - just gives it half a glance, laughs mockingly.

NOAH (CONT'D)
 Come on. It'll be fun. Get you out of your hole.

K.C. looks up at him, eyes searing -

K.C.
 I hate Claudia Haucke.

She wrests the last book away from him, stomps off.

NOAH
 Bitch.

CLOSE on K.C. as she passes out of frame -

K.C.
 Meathead.

Noah stands up and gives her one last look before he turns and walks inside the gym.

INT. GYM - CONTINUOUS

The Coronado Gym has been transformed into a cavernous TEXTBOOK DEPOT, a makeshift Barnes & Noble, with neon signs pointing to the various subject areas and long registration tables dividing the masses into the appropriate class year -

Noah cuts to the front of the Senior line - a few ANONYMOUS SENIORS behind him try to protest -

Noah turns and frisbee-discs party invitations in their direction, which momentarily distracts them - quickly, Noah turns back to face MRS. PIRKLE, a perky old blue-haired lady in a Mary Quant dress.

NOAH
 Hi Mrs. Pirkle.

MRS. PIRKLE
 Noah Quist. Now how was your summer.

She starts digging through the file box under 'Q' -

NOAH
Pretty damn hot.

MRS. PIRKLE
Here we go -

She pulls out his schedule - frowns -

MRS. PIRKLE (CONT'D)
This can't be right.

Noah leans over, takes a look - quickly snatches it -

NOAH
Nope, that's it -

MRS. PIRKLE (O.S.)
But - but -

But he's already gotten a shopping basket and made his way to the MATH aisle -

He passes a few tables, stops in front of the ADVANCED CALCULUS stack, where a NERDY ASIAN GIRL compares the title of the esoteric tome to that on her schedule -

Noah casually reaches in front of her, takes a book, puts it in his basket, and beams at the girl as he struts away.

The girl purses her lips in confusion, slowly leans forward and peeks inside the cover of the book.

Noah heads over to the SCIENCE aisle, where he stops in front of the ADVANCED CHEMISTRY stacks, grabs a book -

PEPE (O.S.)
Dude!

Noah turns around, sees little PEPE, a 5'4 Nicaraguan built like a barrel, with shaved head and thick eyebrows, as he jumps into his arms. He's got the same Varsity Wrestling jacket.

PEPE (CONT'D)
What up foolio!

Noah drops him, steps back -

NOAH
Itinerary?

PEPE

Relax - talked to her dad, he'll call you when he's ten minutes away -

NOAH

And what about -

PEPE

Done. Bouquets delivered this morning -

NOAH

Dude. You're fantastic. And you gave the invitations to the Snots?

Pepe looks at him blankly.

Noah starts walking.

NOAH (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, Pepe. If she walks in and sees that her girls aren't there, she'll turn around and walk right out. No matter how many flowers and -

PEPE

Aye, aye, captain - I'm on it -

Pepe catches up to him, looks in his basket.

PEPE (CONT'D)

Who you shopping for?

Noah stops, gives him a dirty look, keeps walking.

PEPE (CONT'D)

Seriously, what's with the advanced shit - last I heard you failed Geometry again.

Noah looks at him -

NOAH

New year, new leaf, Pepe.

Noah takes a COLLEGE ECONOMICS book from the stacks -

PEPE

New leaf's gonna die.

Noah looks at him.

NOAH

Shouldn't you be delivering some invites?

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

CLOSE on scraggly block letters, 'NOAH QUIST,' etched into white boxes on a DUKE UNIVERSITY APPLICATION. FOLLOW THE BLUE ERASEABLE PEN as it taps on the table, and drifts up into Noah's mouth -

NOAH (CONT'D)

Should I make up a middle name that sounds sophisticated? Like 'Theodore'?

Pepe, in an adjacent seat, isn't listening. He's writing in sharpie on the back of one of the lime-green invites - suddenly looks up across the table -

PEPE

Is Charlotte with one L or two?

JOJO, beefy wrestler double-fisting corndogs, and SKELETOR, emaciated superflyweight, look back, befuddled.

SKELETOR

Dude, why you guys be writing so much.

Noah looks up at JoJo -

NOAH

Say you're applying to Duke -

JOJO

Blue Devils Duke?

NOAH

Blue Devils Duke.

JOJO

Man Blue Devils Duke wouldn't even spit in my direction -

NOAH

Suppose they would - more impressive if your father or brother went there?

JOJO

You don't have a brother.

NOAH

Irrelevant.

Skeletor's pondering now.

SKELETOR

Your *dying* brother...

Noah looks at him, bites his lip, smiles, starts writing.