

Brotherhood': Pledge Night Gone Wrong

Brotherhood | NYT Critic's Pick | Directed by Will Canon | Crime, Drama, Thriller | R | 1h 16m

By Neil Genzlinger

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Any college presidents who didn't ban fraternities after "Animal House" came out in 1978 might consider doing so if they happen to see "Brotherhood," a fast-moving thriller about a pledge night at a fictional frat house that goes horribly wrong.

The film, directed by Will Canon, has the unrelenting pace and cascading-catastrophe structure of a "24" episode, along with a cast of young actors who play it for everything it's worth. As the story opens, pledges are being sent into convenience stores, one at a time, with a gun and orders to rob the place. It shouldn't take a college education to see that this is an exceedingly bad idea, but no one thinks it through, and soon a pledge has been shot by a store clerk.

That's just the beginning of the troubles for these frat boys, who are led by a young man named Frank (Jon Foster), whose main goal is to keep the mess from being discovered. Adam (Trevor Morgan) is the conscience of the group, arguing that a trip to the hospital is the first priority.

The script, by Mr. Canon and Doug Simon, eventually strains credulity — even frat boys aren't this dumb — but Mr. Canon, in his first feature, shows a great knack for keeping things moving. The gathering implausibility is dispelled by a nice ending twist.

"Brotherhood" is rated R (Under 17 requires accompanying parent or adult guardian). It has abundant violence and cursing.

BROTHERHOOD

Opens on Friday in Brooklyn.

Directed by Will Canon; written by Mr. Canon and Doug Simon; director of photography, Michael Fimognari; edited by Josh Schaeffer; music by Dan Marocco; production design by Eric Whitney; costumes by Leila Heise; produced by Chris Pollack, Steve Hein, Tim O'Hair and Jason Croft; released by Phase 4 Films. At the reRun Gastropub Theater, 147 Front Street, Dumbo, Brooklyn. Running time: 1 hour 20 minutes.

WITH: Jon Foster (Frank), Trevor Morgan (Adam), Lou Taylor Pucci (Kevin) and Arlen Escarpeta (Mike).