

BROWN V. BORED

Pilot

by

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TEASER

OVER BLACK

LARISSA (V.O)

My mother deeply impressed the
importance of an education on me
from a very early age.

INT. DOCTOR'S EXAMINATION ROOM - DAY

A WOMAN (30) sits uncomfortably on the edge of the exam
table in her doctor's office. The doctor looks at his
chart.

DOCTOR

You've been throwing up all of the
time because... you're pregnant!

The woman immediately turns her head down toward her
belly.

WOMAN

It may seem small now, but the
whole world will open to you when
you learn how to read.

The doctor watches the woman curiously as she continues
to talk to her stomach.

CUT TO:

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM - DAY - 2003

The lights are off. White kindergarteners lie down on
blue and red mats. It's nap time, but no one's sleeping.
Two girls whisper to each other. The teacher chases a
boy.

LARISSA (V.O.)

So I always treated every part of
school very seriously.

A red-headed boy throws a paper airplane across the room.
It hits the only student who is asleep. It's YOUNG
LARISSA (5). YOUNG LARISSA lies on a blue mat with her
hands placed over her heart and her eyes closed.

Another paper airplane hits her. YOUNG LARISSA's eyes pop
open. She sits up. She grabs the airplane and looks

around for the culprit. She spots him. She pulls her arm back to throw.

LARISSA'S MOM (V.O.)

What you learn in school is the most powerful weapon you have against people who treat you poorly.

LARISSA lowers her arm. She crumples up the airplane. She sticks her tongue out at the boy. She lies back down, places her hands over her heart, and closes her eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. CATHOLIC SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - 2013

A short male teacher stands before a whiteboard covered in illegible writing. The class seems to be made up entirely of white teenagers, most of whom are dozing off. They all wear starched white shirts, the boys have on grey slacks, the girls plaid skirts.

LARISSA (V.O.)

Even when the material was questionable...

PAN TO: TEEN LARISSA (15) diligently taking notes.

TEACHER (O.S.)

The four sexual sins are Fornication. Adultery. Masturbation. And that most evil of evils - homosexuality.

TEEN LARISSA stops writing. She begins to raise her hand in a question.

LARISSA'S MOM (V.O.)

Education is the passport to the future, for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today.

TEEN LARISSA resumes taking notes.

CUT TO:

INT. "NAME BRAND" UNIVERSITY LECTURE HALL - DAY - 2018

The hall is filled with students of various ethnicities, but Asian Americans are solidly in the majority. The professor stares out at her class.

LARISSA (V.O.)

Even when I had pulled an all nighter, her words were always with me.

PROFESSOR

This is elementary, people. Which Supreme Court case overturned the ruling of Plessy v. Ferguson?

No one raises a hand. LARISSA BROWN (21) is dozing off. She's a brown-skinned girl with kind eyes and a softly muscular body. She wears her hair in a pineappled afro.

PROFESSOR

How about you, Mr. Moynihan?

The camera focuses in a on a "classic" American male: blond and blue-eyed with a square jaw.

LARISSA'S MOM (V.O.)

You'll have to learn and work twice as much to get half as far.

LARISSA jolts awake and shoots her hand up into the air.

LARISSA (V.O.)

So I really believed that education would get us all free.

CUT TO:

INT. LARISSA'S CLASSROOM - DAY - PRESENT

LARISSA stands in front of the smart board. The room buzzes with side conversations.

ANDRE (O.S.)

I ain't readin.

LARISSA

I'm not reading. But you are reading because everybody is going to get an education in this classroom.

ANDRE (O.S.)

Bet.

Beat.

A hardcover book flies up at the smart board. It narrowly misses hitting LARISSA in the head.

END OF TEASER

ACT ONE

OPENING TITLES.

BROWN V. BORED.

"SHOW THE WORLD" BY BOOSIE BADAZZ PLAYS DURING THE FOLLOWING MONTAGE. Despite his dangerous and harmful opinions, he is the soundtrack for a lot of folks in the city.

EXT. BATON ROUGE - MONTAGE - DAY

A riverboat moves slowly along the Mississippi River near the Horace Wilkinson Bridge.

A stream of mini-mansions on Highland Road.

An oak tree lined drive that leads up to a large white plantation style home.

A street of houses in North Baton Rouge. Some are very well cared for with fresh paint and nicely manicured lawns. Some are blighted, sprayed with graffiti and windows boarded up with wood.

An aerial view of the LSU campus with a packed Tiger Stadium at its center.

Men in green jumpsuits pick up garbage (post-tailgate) on the beer bottle and food wrapper covered grounds of the LSU campus.

Magnolia trees in full bloom with Mardi Gras beads caught in their branches. An egret flies across the frame.

A pink Mardi Gras float full of riders in blackface rolls by.

Plumes of smoke billow from the towers of the Exxon Power Plant. An egret flies by.

The downtown Baton Rouge skyline. The camera moves towards an old five-story bank building with lots of small tinted windows.

A banner with the word "INSPIRE" written vertically hangs next to the building's doors. As the camera moves closer, the word after each letter comes into focus as follows:

I -- Innovation

N -- Novelty

S -- Spirit

P -- Play (and)

I -- Imagination

R -- Results (in)

E -- Excellence

Education administrators really love a good acronym. Or a bad one.

CUT TO:

EXT. BATON ROUGE - ST. GEORGE NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN

CLOSE ON: A pair of feet in Mizuno sneakers in a jog down the sidewalk.

The sun has just begun to rise. Birds begin to chirp. The air is thick and sticky with humidity.

PAN OUT: LARISSA (22) jogs in running shorts and a tank soaked with her sweat. She has a folded pink bandana tied around her head.

Modest single-story homes with two-vehicle carports built in the 1970s come into view behind her.

LARISSA slows her jog to a stop. She looks at the timer running on her watch. 24:57, 24:58, 24:59. She stops it and resets it to 0:00. She drops into a low sprinting stance. She starts the timer and sprints down the sidewalk. Her feet pound the pavement loudly. She slows to a jog and then to a stop.

She stops the timer on her watch. She resets it to 0:00. She starts the timer and begins to sprint.

CUT TO:

EXT. NAME BRAND UNIVERSITY LAWN - FLASHBACK - DAY

LARISSA jogs down a sidewalk that runs through the center of a large green lawn. At various spots on the grass are mostly white college students. Some play ultimate frisbee, others share a joint, a few are sunbathing. Some pass by on skateboards or cruiser-style bicycles.

A SMILING WOMAN off in the distance hands out yellow flyers to students as they pass. She holds out a flyer to a passing COLLEGE-AGED MALE.

SMILING WOMAN
Profess For the U.S.

The COLLEGE-AGED MALE shoves his hands into his pockets.

SMILING WOMAN
You can make a difference. You can
be the change you want to see.

COLLEGE-AGED MALE
Nah, bro. I'm good.

He continues walking. She yells after him.

SMILING WOMAN
You can be a part of the civil
rights movement of our time!

MELANIE (O.S)
Can you, Larry?
(beat)
Larry? Larry?

A pair of hands claps in front of the camera. We now see three Asian-American women jogging with LARISSA.

LARISSA
What?

MELANIE

I said, I still can't believe we only have three months until we graduate. Can you?

LARISSA

Yes, but only because my parents remind me every time I call home. They keep asking about law school.

MELANIE

Well, have you heard back from--

JILL begins to cry.

JILL

We're never going to see each other again.

SUSAN

Please not now, Jill. You've been crying in public so much lately that I'm starting to think you're a white woman.

JILL

You're the first friends I've had who feel like family.

(off their nods)

I got into Yale.

She loses control of her crying.

SUSAN

Oh my god, Jill! That's amazing!

MELANIE

Congratulations!

LARISSA

Yeah. Congratu--

A bright yellow flyer cuts LARISSA off.

SMILING WOMAN

Profess For the U.S. You can make a difference in your community. You can be the change you want to see.

MELANIE, JILL, and SUSAN continue jogging. LARISSA stops to take the flyer. The text reads, "PROFESS FOR THE US. Only 1 in 5 urban students in the 9th grade knows how to read. If you don't teach the other 4, who will?" For some reason, beneath the text there is a picture of a shirtless black child with big, sad eyes and a distended belly.

SMILING WOMAN

I can tell that you were put on this earth to make a difference. I see it in your eyes.

LARISSA

I'm not an education major.

SMILING WOMAN

Oh, your major doesn't matter. PFU offers all the training you'll need.

CUT TO:

INT. EMOKPOLO HOUSE - LARISSA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The room is spare, containing only a bed and a desk. A light coral color serves as an organizing theme for the bedspread and curtains.

LARISSA stands wrapped in a towel and stares into her closet. On one side are dark long-sleeved men's button downs and polos. On the other are brightly colored dresses.

She zeroes in on a belted red shirt dress. She puts it on. It looks fine. Good even. But something is off. It doesn't quite feel right to her, but she still knows how to make it work. She grabs a pair of heels. She notices the hair on her legs for the first time.

LARISSA

Dammit.

She's gonna have to dry shave. And put her makeup on in the car.

INT. EMOKPOLO HOUSE - LARISSA'S BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

LARISSA sprays shaving cream into her hands, creates a pathetic lather, and then puts it on her legs. She begins to shave.

LARISSA

Good morning, scholars. My name is Miss Emokpolo-Brown. Miss Emokpolo. Miss Brown. My name is Miss Brown, and I'm so excited to start my teaching journey--

She nicks her skin.

LARISSA (CONT'D)

Shit.

A small amount of blood begins to run down her leg.

LARISSA (CONT'D)

That's what you get, Larissa. They'll draw blood if you let it slip that this is your first year teaching.

She wipes the blood trickling down and resumes shaving.

LARISSA (CONT'D)

Good morning scholars. My name is Miss Brown, and reading and writing are my passions. If they aren't yours already, I hope they will be by the end of this school year because words can transport us to places we never dreamed we'd be.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - DAY

A busted light blue 1989 Toyota Corolla pulls into an empty lot and parks next to a brand new black Acura. Two women are talking by the trunk.

INT. LARISSA'S CAR - CONTINUOUS

LARISSA looks at her reflection in the rearview mirror. She now has on a full face of makeup.