

BROTHERS FOR LIFE

Screenplay

By Wesley Trower

Copyrighted 2024

WORDS SLOWLY APPEAR ONTO THE BACKGROUND OF A BLACK SCREEN

When a man is denied the right to live the life he believes in, he has no choice but to become an outlaw. - Nelson Mandela.

INT. Bryan's apartment - Night

Camera shot zooms in of Bryan as walks up to his desk as he pours himself a glass of scotch and decides to sit down to glance upon his journal.

BRYAN JOHNSON

My name is Bryan Johnson, I was born on April 15th, 1951.

BRYAN JOHNSON

For all of my adult life now I feel as if I've been a solider fighting one war after another. It didn't manner who I shot and if they deserved it.

BRYAN JOHNSON

I just simply followed orders. But it wasn't suppose to go on for this long not originally. But how can you say no to more coin.

BRYAN JOHNSON

Plus men like me, we don't that many opportunities in life. And we both know exactly why that is. So when life offers you those opportunities regardless of whether or not there right or wrong you take it.

Bryan takes a sip of his drink.

BRYAN JOHNSON

And squeeze everything out of it until
there's nothing left take squeeze out.
At least that's what my dad told me
once anyway.

EXT. STREETS OF DETROIT- DAY

An African American family of four is shown entering the city
of Detroit in a black Cadillac while a grown up Bryan
speaking off screen.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

Detroit, Michigan. It's not New York,
or Chicago. But it'll do I guess.
Certainly hope isn't reminiscinent of
my last home.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

This here is my family me and my
sister Mary in the back. And my folks
Isiah and Clara in the front.

Isiah Johnson is shown driving the car with his wife sitting
next to him.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

You see my family and I have
originally came from ol Mississippi in
which you can guess was racist.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

Got even real after I got kicked out
of school for beating the shit out of
this one cracker after he picking on
my sister.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND. DAY (FLASHBACK)

Young Bryan is shown getting into an altercation with a
Caucasian student with fellow students watching on.

Bryan punches the student.

BRYAN JOHNSON

So tell me Jimmy, what did you say to
my sister again.

Bryan receives a punch back in the face.

JIMMY
Are you death monkey? You, your sister
and your family need to leave this
town you Nigg-.

Before he could finish Bryan pushes him down and continues to punch him.

Mary runs up and grabs Bryan.

MARY JOHNSON
Bryan, stop it. He's had enough.

Mary is too weak to pull him off but the teachers come running in and pull Bryan and Jimmy apart from one another.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE. DAY

Bryan is sitting with his mother listening to the principal speak.

PRINCIPAL
I'm very sorry Mrs. Johnson I am. But
we feel as if the other students are
just not safe around Bryan. And this
fight is just one too many for him.

CLARA JOHNSON
But what about the other student
involved. What are his consequences
exactly. And he was said to be
bullying my daughter as well.

PRINCIPAL
Well he will be receiving punishment
as well but just not as significant as
Bryan's.

CLARA JOHNSON
And why is that.

PRINCIPAL
Because and well let's face it Mrs.
Johnson, Jimmy has a lot brighter
future than Bryan here. Maybe he was
just curious about Mary is all.

CLARA JOHNSON
What is that suppose to mean?

PRINCIPAL

It means that Jimmy is more well mannered and has self control unlike your people.

CLARA JOHNSON

My people. You know what I think we have heard enough Bryan let's go. And hope you have an unpleasant rest of the day.

Clara and Bryan leave the room.

EXT. HOUSE DRIVEWAY. DAY

The family drives up into the driveway of their new home.

CLARA JOHNSON

Here it is guys are brand new home.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Yeah guys, new home, new opportunities. And most importantly, a fresh start for all of us.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

So yeah my folks wasn't taking too kindly to how we were being treated down there.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

And they didn't want me to get into another fight with a damn cracker. So they thought that going up north for a new change of scenery and less racism would be better.

The family starts to unload all of their belongings from out of the car.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

Plus ma trying to enroll me into another school down there proved to a bitch in of itself.

EXT. JOHNSON RESIDENCE. DAY

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)
The neighborhood didn't look the best,
and of course the house looked like
crap but at least it was something.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)
You see my mom and dad were listening
to a lot of that Martin Luther King
guy lately and believed that times
were changing for us.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)
That soon we will all truly be free
from these racial discourses and the
Opportunities will start to arise for
all of us.

The Johnson family proceeds to make their way into the house
and view the inside of the establishment.

ISIAH JOHNSON
Don't worry, once I start working will
get this place patched up real quick.

EXT. DETROIT DOCKS. DAY

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)
Except those opportunities weren't
coming in as expected and that damn
white man had my dad doing back
breaking work down at the docks.

Isaiah and another worker are struggling to move a heavy
crate into the warehouse.

ISIAH JOHNSON
Andrew, you got to lift with the legs.
Your just hurting your back doing
that.

ANDREW
Yeah well why are you already
breathing hard. We haven't even gotten
that far.

ISIAH JOHNSON
Well last time I checked I am older
then you. And out of shape.

WAREHOUSE BOSS

You monkeys better shut the hell up
and get to stepping with those crates.
Or else you can forget lunch for
today.

The Boss looks over at Isiah.

WAREHOUSE BOSS

You have something to say to me boy?
Because if you do then by all means
share.

ISIAH JOHNSON

No Boss, I'm just trying to catch my
breath.

ISIAH JOHNSON

These crates here are mighty heavy.

WAREHOUSE BOSS

Well you better save your energy and
use it to move these crates damnit.

WAREHOUSE BOSS

We have a deadline to make. And I
won't let you damn darkies make a fool
out of me, understand.

Isiah holds back his anger towards his boss and nods his head
to him in shame.

ISIAH JOHNSON

We understand.

The Warehouse boss leaves to head back to his office while
checking his clipboard.

ANDREW

I swear Isiah, your a better man then
me. Some of these white devils need a
ass whooping once in a while.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Yes, yes they do. But I sadly can't
give it to them.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Because of my family.

Isiah and Andrew continue to haul the large crate into the warehouse.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

And this was just a taste of what my dad and his negro coworkers had to deal with on a normal basis. Shouldn't be that surprised though.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

And he was basically making pennies compared to his more fairer skin coworkers.

INT. JOHNSON HOUSE. NIGHT

Bryan and his sister Mary are sitting in the living room. Bryan is writing notes and Mary is reading a book for class.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

Things weren't looking as good as my parents had originally hoped. My mom had to even pickup double the work to pay the bills.

Clara walks downstairs putting on her earrings while looking at herself in the mirror.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

But of course Black Women had about the same number of options for work that black men had. Maybe even less.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

So she worked as a hotel maid during the day. And a janitor at the hospital downtown at night.

Isiah walks down stairs attempting to talk to his wife again.

CLARA JOHNSON

Oh oh no Isiah, we're not doing this again.

ISIAH JOHNSON

But Clara, give me a minute please.

CLARA JOHNSON

I would but I got work so no.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Babe, you don't need to work. I'm the man of the house and it's on me to provide for all of you.

CLARA JOHNSON

Well excuse me, mister man but you haven't been providing that much lately.

Clara grabs her purse along with her set of keys.

CLARA JOHNSON

We are behind on the bills and the mortgage ok. And me taking these jobs is the only thing right now that is preventing us from being evicted.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Oh so my job at the docks isn't good enough now.

CLARA JOHNSON

I didn't say that. I just thought that you would get paid more than you did at your last job but it looks like I was wrong.

ISIAH JOHNSON

And you cleaning up after all these crackers is suppose to be good.

CLARA JOHNSON

It isn't good but it's better than nothing.

Clara walks out the door.

EXT. HOUSE DRIVEWAY. NIGHT.

As Clara walks up to the car Isiah follows her from behind.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Look Honey, I didn't want to say anything but I recently picked up some extra work myself.

CLARA JOHNSON

You picked up extra work.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Yes, the boss is apparently friends with this one business man who happens to be black.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Anyway he hooked me and some of the other guys up with some work on the side that's suppose to pay very well.

CLARA JOHNSON

Well what type of work is it.

ISIAH JOHNSON

We're just simply moving more stuff around is all. Just more expensive stuff.

CLARA JOHNSON

Is that so?

ISIAH JOHNSON

Yes it is. Now look.

Isiah puts his hands on top of his wife's ass shoulders.

ISIAH JOHNSON

Now look babe. Things are finally going to get better for us. Just like we discussed.

ISIAH JOHNSON (CONT.D)

So you can go ahead and keep your jobs for a little longer. But once the money starts to pour in for us. Then let me take over alright.

CLARA JOHNSON

Alright, maybe.

Isiah kisses his wife on the forehead.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

And he proved to be right, as Dad was suddenly making more money than usual.

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O) (CONT.D)

Though I never did find out what my dad was doing for work. And never really bothered to cared.

EX. CITY SIDEWALK. DAY

BRYAN JOHNSON (V.O)

As at the time I was having time
making new friends in the
neighborhood. That was until one day
where I met one Calvin Brady.

