

B for Baby Boy

a film by Chika Anadu



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

Chika Anadu

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Since 2000, the Festival Residence has provided each year accommodation and support to twelve selected young directors in order to help them prepare their first or second feature film. A jury presided by a film director sits twice a year, selecting these young filmmakers on the basis of their short films, or even first

feature film, and the merits of their feature film project.

During their 4-and-a-half-month stay in Paris, they work on the writing of their feature film project, have meetings with professionals and try, with the support of the Cannes Film Festival, to bring their project to co-production status.

Technical Information

Working title: B for Baby Boy

Director: Chika Anadu

Screenplay by: Chika Anadu

Nationality: Nigeria

Genre: Drama

Format: 35 mm

Length: 90 min.

Shooting location: Nigeria

Production Company:

No Blondes Productions

Email: noblondesproductions@gmail.com

Director's Biography and Filmography

Chika Anadu was born in Lagos, Nigeria. She has made two short films, and a third is in pre-production.

Epilogue (2009), 6 min.

San Diego Black Film Festival, 2010

AVA (2010), 9 min.

Cannes Film Festival, Short Film Corner, 2010

Africa International Film Festival (AFRIFF), 2010

The Marriage Factor

(In Pre-production) – In association with Focus Features' Africa First Programme 2010

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It started as shrill. A sharp piercing wail.

A child is born. A female child.

And this is only the beginning.



SYNOPSIS

AmakaOkoli (39) is a devoted wife to Nonso (40), and a loving mother to their daughter Ijeoma (7). She is six months pregnant, and has a job that she loves. Amaka is happy. Then Mama, her mother in-law, tells Amaka that her current pregnancy had better be a boy to carry on the family name, or she will be forced to bring in another woman for her son to marry. A few days later, at Nonso’s 40th birthday party, Mama invites the potential second wife, Chima. This scares Amaka who herself is from a polygamous family because her mother gave birth to only her.

Amaka, who had earlier refused a sonogram, has one. It’s a boy! Later that day, Amaka starts to bleed. She rushes back to the hospital where she delivers her dead son. Complications with the birth means she won’t be able to have any more children.

The next morning, Amaka calls Nonso, who is away on business, to tell him about her miscarriage, but he beats her to it by saying his only brother, Chidi, just died in a car accident. Amaka tells no one about her miscarriage. Instead she fakes being pregnant while waiting for a good time to tell Nonso the truth. This causes Amaka to push him away. She also looks into adopting a baby for them but that falls apart.

After Amaka’s brother in-law’s funeral, Mama falls “ill” and moves in with Amaka and Nonso, and insists on bringing “help” in the form of Chima. This further widens the rift between Amaka and Nonso.

Soon after, an even more desperate Amaka is approached again by the same pregnant woman, Joy, whose baby she had tried to adopt earlier. A week to her delivery, Joy tells Amaka that she has changed her mind.

DIRECTOR’S STATEMENT

I feel privileged to be a filmmaker. And as a filmmaker, I believe it’s my duty to not only tell stories in a beautiful and entertaining way, but to also, where relevant, try to encourage debate to perhaps effect change.

“*B for Baby Boy*” is a contemporary drama set in Nigeria, about one woman’s quest for a male child, to help keep her world intact. This is a desperate situation that too many women often find themselves in. A situation where a woman’s worth is in whether she can provide the “right” type of heir (male) for her husband. This injustice is perpetuated in the names of culture, tradition and religion.

I intend to explore the irony that these injustices against women are mostly perpetuated and sustained by other women.

The antagonists in my story are the mother in-law, and society as a whole – neither of whom are monsters. They are just unquestioning followers of a system that needs to be reviewed.

SYNOPSIS

Amaka Okoli (39 ans) est l’épouse dévouée de Nonso (40 ans), et une mère aimante pour leur fille Ijeoma (7 ans). Elle en est à son sixième mois de grossesse et elle aime son métier. Amaka est heureuse. C’est alors que Mama, sa belle-mère, annonce à Amaka que si elle ne met pas un garçon au monde pour perpétuer le nom de famille, Mama sera dans l’obligation de donner une autre femme à son fils. Quelques jours plus tard, lors d’une fête donnée pour les 40 ans de Nonso, Mama invite la seconde épouse potentielle, Chima. Amaka prend peur : elle est elle-même issue d’une famille polygame, car sa mère n’a eu qu’elle.

Amaka, qui avait précédemment refusé une échographie, en fait une. C’est un garçon ! Plus tard dans la journée, Amaka saigne. Elle retourne à l’hôpital et accouche de son fils mort-né. Des complications à la naissance rendent toute future grossesse inenvisageable.

Le lendemain, Amaka appelle Nonso qui est en voyage professionnel, pour lui parler de sa fausse-couche, mais il lui coupe la parole en lui apprenant la mort de son unique frère, Chidi, dans un accident de voiture. Amaka ne parle à personne de sa fausse-couche. Elle feint d’être toujours enceinte en attendant le bon moment pour dire la vérité à Nonso. Elle tente d’adopter un bébé mais échoue.

Après les funérailles du beau-frère d’Amaka, Mama tombe « malade » et vient s’installer chez Amaka et Nonso, et insiste pour apporter une « aide » qui serait Chima. Cela creuse encore le fossé entre Amaka et Nonso.

Bientôt, Amaka qui est encore plus désespérée, est contactée par la femme enceinte, Joy, dont elle avait essayé d’adopter l’enfant plus tôt. À une semaine de la naissance, Joy annonce à Amaka qu’elle a changé d’avis.

NOTE D’INTENTION DE LA RÉALISATRICE

Je me sens privilégiée d’être réalisatrice. En tant que réalisatrice, je crois qu’il est de mon devoir, non seulement de raconter de belles histoires divertissantes, mais aussi d’encourager le débat pour peut-être déclencher un changement.

“*B for Baby Boy*” est un drame contemporain, qui se passe au Nigéria, une femme cherche un enfant mâle pour que son monde ne bascule pas. C’est une situation désespérée que trop de femmes vivent. Une situation dans laquelle on juge la valeur d’une femme au sexe de l’héritier qu’elle donne à son époux. Cette injustice perdure au nom de la culture, de la tradition et de la religion.

Je veux explorer l’ironie de la situation, où les injustices que subissent des femmes, sont généralement perpétuées et soutenues par d’autres femmes.

Les antagonistes de mon histoire sont la belle-mère et la société en général, qui ne sont pas des monstres. Ils se contentent de reproduire sans réfléchir, un système qui doit être revu.