



STARRING
KAREN ABERCROMBIE

A FILM BY JOSH MENNING

The Life Book

IN A WAR AGAINST GENERATIONAL DYSFUNCTION, SHAME IS HER FIERCEST ENEMY

A MENING FILMS PRODUCTION
IN ASSOCIATION WITH EARTH MOTHER ENTERTAINMENT
A FILM BY JOSH MENNING "THE LIFE BOOK" KAREN ABERCROMBIE
WRITTEN BY JAY SMITH DIRECTED BY JOSH MENNING



A life book is a tool (part scrapbook, part photo album, and part journal) to help a foster child put together the puzzle pieces of their life.

As a foster child gets shuffled from home to home, they take their life book with them, filling in the blanks as best they can. A life book helps the child collect and keep the few memories they may wish to retain, and to come to terms with the ones they want to forget.

After decades of helping her foster children assemble their life books, long time foster mom, Edna Washington, decides to create her own life book.

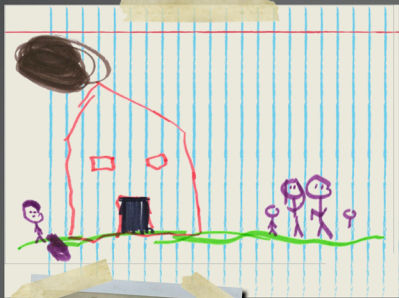
That book forms the basis of our film.



LOGLINE: Having experienced the devastating effects of shame and broken relationships as a child, Edna Washington becomes a fierce foster mom, boldly determined stop the generational dysfunction of one particular family and to forever change the destiny of its youngest member.



THEME: Shame is the most powerful weapon Satan has to separate us from God. When we push back against shame, we are doing God's work.

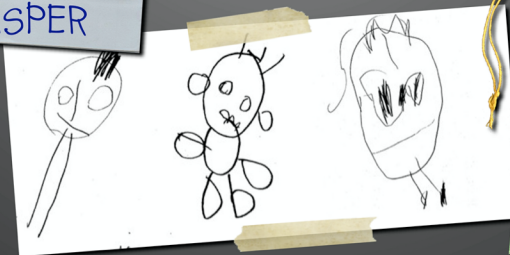


TONE: The Life Book is a deeply personal journey, intimately narrated by Edna, using her own life book as the vehicle.

It is at times gritty, wistful, nostalgic, and inspirational. It is a realistic portrayal of the pain, frustration,

and joy that are all a part of the emotional rollercoaster of foster care.

Ultimately, it finds hope in the hard places.





*Edna Booker (Me)
1959*

*"You have the power
to change destiny."*

THE STORY: This is Edna's life story, which spans from 1959 (when she is ten years old) through the present.

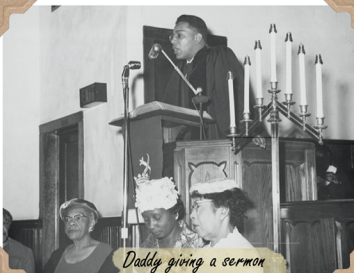
Edna's daddy was a preacher. Young Edna worshipped Daddy, and his adoration of her knew no limits.



the Booker Sisters



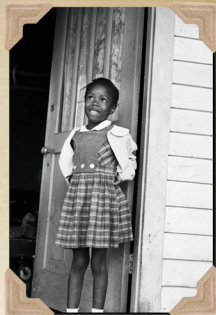
Daddy & Me



Daddy giving a sermon

On Saturday afternoons Daddy would take Edna calling on parishioners in their homes. In the beginning of the film, ten-year-old Edna is with Daddy making their rounds. The elderly Sister Alma is happy to see Daddy and Edna. She greets Edna with a big hug and a serving of peach cobbler à la mode. At the next stop, Edna is doted on with a huge slab of apple pie.

And so it goes all afternoon, until their last stop... Brother Jonsey's ramshackle house.



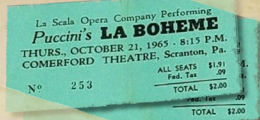
As they are pulling up to visit Jonsey, a lonely alcoholic, Edna asks Daddy why Jonsey drinks so much. Daddy replies, "Shame...

Shame is the most powerful tool the Devil has to separate us from God's love. That's why I visit with Jonsey... to push back against Jonsey's shame and to remind him that he is a precious child of God." Edna snuggles up to Daddy as he tells her, "Always remember, Punkin', whenever you see someone carrying a load of shame,



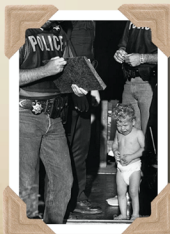
it's your job to push back against it."

This is the last conversation Edna would have with Daddy, as his life is cut short moments later when Jonsey accidentally shoots him with an old revolver.



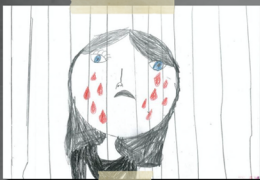
During the early years of their marriage, Edna and Grover Washington experience a series of heartbreaking miscarriages. When they finally have a successful pregnancy, tragedy again strikes as they lose their baby girl.

Just as the couple accepts a childless home as God's will for them, Grover mentions one of his junior high school students, Ben, who has been placed in a group home for boys after his mother is arrested for prostitution. Grover speaks of the soul-crushing shame in the boy's eyes, which triggers Edna's memory of her Daddy's words: "We must always push back against shame wherever we encounter it." Thus begins their journey into the world of foster care.

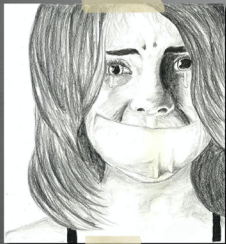




One of their early foster placements is a seventeen-year-old girl named Crystal, who is months away from aging out of the system. She is so badly damaged by years of trauma and abuse, that Edna and Grover cannot do much more than give her a safe place to stay until she turns eighteen.

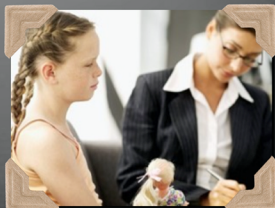


Eight years later, they have a six-year-old placed with them. She is the abused and traumatized daughter of Crystal. Dora is a huge challenge, but with the help of her therapist, Edna and Grover are seeing improvement and becoming more hopeful for her. Just as they are considering adopting Dora, Grover is diagnosed with cancer. In a moment of extreme duress, Edna responds to one of Dora's severe rages with a slap across the child's face, which is cause for Dora's removal from Edna's care.



The slap elicits an immediate expression of shame in Dora's eyes. Edna causes the very thing she had been fighting her whole life—shame. This is something for which she can never forgive herself.

Grover passes away, and in her grief and her own shame, Edna allows her foster care license to lapse. However, God has other plans for Edna...



Eleven years later, out of the blue, Edna's former foster care social worker, Carol, calls to notify Edna that Dora has been a victim of domestic violence, and is barely clinging to life.



Carol informs Edna that Dora's baby is being delivered in an emergency C-section.

Edna is determined to adopt Dora's baby. She is determined to stop the generational dysfunction in this family, once and for all.

The final battle in the film is Edna's fight to have her petition to to adopt Dora's baby granted. Edna works hard to get her license and home study completed in time for the placement hearing. However, the judge is reluctant to grant adoption of a newborn to a woman of Edna's advanced age of sixty-four.

It looks as if Edna's hopes are about to be crushed when the judge calls in an expert witness, a family therapist, to advise on elder adoptions. The therapist turns out to be Ben, Edna's first foster child (who has become a family therapist). He offers a passionate endorsement of Edna, which helps tip the scales in her favor. Edna adopts the baby and names her Sami (after Daddy).

The final scene takes place twenty-five years in the future, at Edna's funeral. We discover that Sami has turned out to be a passionate and caring foster mom, just like Edna. Edna has succeeded in ending the generational dysfunction in Sami's family of origin.

Scientists have long known that oxytocin (commonly referred to as the "cuddle hormone") is the chemical responsible for creating a sense of empathy and concern for our fellow human beings. There is compelling evidence that a well crafted story can increase oxytocin levels in audiences as they connect with characters who are facing great obstacles.



Our goal is to use this well-crafted story to boost the oxytocin levels of audiences, particularly in relation to the foster children who are at the heart of The Life Book, with the ultimate hope of this empathy translating into a genuine concern for the real-life foster children in our own communities.

