

Area Boys

by

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FADE IN.

1 INT. CHURCH. DAY. 1

Packed pews. Charismatic-style praying. Collection trays filling up with money. Back of the church, OBI and BODE, both in their early twenties, shabby-looking. The collection tray passes their way. They steal money from the tray.

PREACHER

I say to you that today you must see change in your life. God is going to work miracles for you. Some of you say "I cannot turn my life around. This is how God made me". Some of you say, "not today, tomorrow I will give change a try!" I say to you everyday is a day to change! Take control of your life. Stop treating your fellow man and money as your god. Take control: put God in charge and CHANGE!

2 EXT. CHURCH 2

Parishioners stream out. Several luxury cars in the church courtyard. Able-bodied and disabled beggars seek alms. OBI and BODE look around. OBI nods to a smart young couple getting into a gleaming 4X4. OBI and BODE exchange knowing glances. THE MAN (NDUKA) drives out of Church courtyard.

3A INT. 4X4. 3A

NDUKA

Your seatbelt, Ada.

ADA puts her seatbelt on.

ADA

Oh.

The 4X4 stops at a junction waiting for an opportunity to turn into the expressway. In the rear view mirror we see a van draw up behind the 4x4.

ADA

Sanusi was willing to come down in price. It's a bargain for a flat in Ikoyi.

NDUKA

I told you not to go back to Sanusi!

ADA

Tell Mr Adebiyi we've found another flat.

NDUKA

After I've just paid him the deposit?

The van pulls up to the passenger side of the 4x4.

ADA

So we're going to spend one whole year living in the bush because you don't want to confront him? I'm sorry I can't do that. I've spoken to Lawyer Okosieme/

The woman checks for oncoming traffic.

ADA

You're clear.

3B MAN turns into the expressway. VAN cuts across the 4X4, 3B forcing MAN to park on the shoulder. OBI steps out of the van and heads towards the man.

OBI

You didn't 'trafficate'.

NDUKA

Na wetin? You are you? Are you VIO?

BODE, along with AREA BOYS jump out of the van shouting at THE COUPLE. The area boys' ages range from 13-45 years old.

ADA screams as AREA BOYS pile into the back of the 4X4.

BODE grabs NDUKA by the neck.

ADA

Please! Please don't hurt him.

BODE

You want to prove that you know the law, abi? I will show you that I too I went to law school. Turn into that off road. Quick!

OBI gently prises BODE'S hand off the man's neck.

OBI

Omo Boy, take it easy, ah-ah. Oga, we don't want to hurt you.

BODE

Me, I'm ready to kill somebody today!

ADA

Oh my God! Please don't kill us.

NDUKA

He can't do anything.

BODE lashes out at NDUKA. ADA screams.

OBI

Omo Boy, cool down now. Oga, please do as he says. When he smokes his igbo he can do anything.

NDUKA turns into a dirt track. They come to a clearing in the middle of nowhere. The van trails behind. NDUKA stops the car. BODE reaches for the ignition and removes the keys.

BODE

Come down! Come down from your motor!

THE COUPLE get out of the 4X4. ADA is in shock with fear.

BODE

We have confiscate your car. You want us to release it, you know what to do.

NDUKA

This is kidnap.

ADA

Nduka, don't argue with them! Give them what they want.

BODE

Senior Advocate, listen to your wife, or else.

NDUKA

Or else what?

ADA

Nduka!

BODE approaches NDUKA menacingly. The other area boys converge around him. OBI intervenes.

OBI

It's all right. I'm sure this gentleman is not looking for trouble.

(DRAWS NDUKA ASIDE)

Oga, why are you behaving like this now? You want my friends to panel beat you?

NDUKA

You cannot treat us like this!

OBI

Treat you how, Oga? Did I touch you?

NDUKA

(BLUSTERS)

You cannot!

OBI

I've been a gentleman to you. All we want is something for our breakfast, that's all.

BODE

You are wasting time blowing grammar with this idiot. Comot the tyres!

The AREA BOYS make to remove the tyres. NDUKA tries to stop them. NDUKA'S audaciousness infuriates the area boys. Things get ugly. The youngest and most inexperienced area boy pulls a knife. OBI grabs the knife off YOUNGEST AREA BOY and stands in front of ADA. YOUNG AREA BOY glares at OBI. ADA looks at OBI as if she is face to face with the devil.

ADA

(PLEADS FOR HER LIFE)

Please don't kill me. Please, I beg you.

NDUKA

All right! All right. Whatever you want.

NDUKA pays BODE. BODE takes the money, still furious at the NDUKA'S attempts to challenge them. BODE slaps NDUKA.

BODE

You think say you be Rambo?

OBI still holds the knife- staring eye to eye with ADA.

OBI

It's enough, man. Let them go.

BODE slaps NDUKA again.

BODE

You think say you get power because you get money? Because you drive big motor/

BODE goes to strike NDUKA again. OBI grabs BODE'S hand.

OBI

Give him his keys.

BODE and OBI glare at each other. BODE relents. He roughs up NDUKA before handing over the keys. The AREA BOYS rough him up some more as he scarpers to his car. NDUKA and ADA drive off hurriedly.

The AREA BOYS laugh. OBI looks subdued. YOUNG AREA BOY holds his hand out for his knife. He retains his earlier contempt for OBI. OBI looks at him as if he is noticing his age for the first time. YOUNG AREA BOY takes the knife and joins the other area boys.

CREDITS ROLL.

In the mix of the credits we cut through panoramic shots of Lagos. See the distinctions between the well-off and the unworthy.

4 EXT. CLEARING, AREA BOYS HEADQUARTERS - DAY 4

The AREA BOYS head towards their office- some chairs plonked under an old oak tree.

OBI lags a way behind them- deep in his thoughts. BODE notices and slows down.

BODE
What was all that about?

OBI
Nothing.

BODE
You showed me up in front of the boys.

OBI
Not now Bode...

Up ahead, the AREA BOYS see DELE- a big, rough man, the leader of the area boys. He walks with an exaggerated swagger, as if he has to show his power in order to maintain control. The area boys hail DELE.

OBI
(REASSURINGLY)
Later.

DELE eyes OBI. OBI hands DELE the money. DELE shares the money, keeping the lion share for himself. OBI eyes DELE with contempt.

An argument between OLDEST AREA BOY (mid-40s) and the younger BURLY AREA BOY flares into a vicious fight. DELE and the other area boys look on with excitement. OBI attempts to stop them. DELE pushes him back. OBI looks on in disgust.

A brand new BMW drives up. ROSEMARY, sophisticated, gets out of the car. She looks at the car with the pride of a new owner. The AREA BOYS admire her with averted eyes. She walks through the gang. All eyes are on her. OBI looks away.

AREA BOY1
Oh-Boy, this Rosemary na waya, oh.

AREA BOY2
If I see this one babe, na to die go heaven be that.

AREA BOY3
Woman like Rosemary no go open for rat like you.

AREA BOY2
Na to go find love medicine.

ROSEMARY goes up to DELE. DELE embraces her possessively. ROSEMARY eyes OBI. They hold each other's gaze- the disgust painted on OBI'S expression.

DELE
You like your present?

ROSEMARY smiles. She turns to DELE, twirling her keys.

ROSEMARY
What do you think? But even new cars need petrol.

DELE hands ROSEMARY money.

DELE
Obi! Bode! Job well done. Your bonus.

DELE scatters measly notes in front of himself and ROSEMARY. OBI and BODE pick them up.

5 EXT. A FOOD CANTEEN. DAY.

5

OBI and BODE are eating. ROSEMARY walks in. BODE quietly moves to another table.

ROSEMARY
Hello handsome.

OBI continues eating. He looks around him furtively.

ROSEMARY
Dele's not here. We can talk.

OBI
You know how many of these people know Dele?

ROSEMARY
We're talking, that's all. It's not a sin.

OBI
Not here. I'll phone you.

ROSEMARY
You said that last time! Are you seeing someone else?

OBI looks around furtively. ROSEMARY calms down.

ROSEMARY
I'm not a good-time girl. I don't go chasing after the highest bidder.

OBI
So why are you with Dele? It can't be
because of his table manners.

ROSEMARY
You're a smart guy, why are you with a
pig like Dele/

OBI stands up and goes to sit next to BODE.

OBI
Excuse me.

ROSEMARY
(SLIGHTED)
It's not your fault, you common area boy.
I came to you.
(BEAT)
If you so much as look at me the wrong
way, I'll get Dele to fix you up.

ROSEMARY storms off in a huff but still manages to keep her
graceful glide.

BODE
Obi, you shouldn't have treated her like
that now.

OBI
If you want her, there she is.

BODE
You should have let her land gently. You
Igbo guys, you don't know how to treat
women.

OBI
And your countryman, Dele, he is Romeo,
abi?

BODE
Sha, you did the right thing. If Dele
ever finds out about you two...

OBI is not paying attention. BODE taps him.

BODE
What's up with you?

OBI
This morning. Did you see the look on
that woman's face?

BODE
Shé, the woman we robbed?

OBI

Who else, ah! She looked at me as if I was Satan.

BODE

That one good, now. It will make our job easier. When people see your face, na to hand over their money quick quick.

OBI

Man, I'm not joking.

BODE

Because you go church, you wan' become born again?

OBI

Bode, I want out.

BODE

Slow down, omo. Dele won't let any of us go like that.

OBI

That lowlife doesn't own me. You yourself, think. In a million years did you ever think you'd be taking orders from a shit like Dele?

BODE

Guys like him rule, Obi.

OBI

Because we let him. That's why the country's dying.

BODE

So what? You want to fly solo?

OBI NODS 'YES'.

BODE

(LOUD)

Obi, you want to die.

OBI

Sh! Na wetin?!

BODE

Dele will kill us..

OBI

Without us, Dele cannot operate. We are the brains of his crew. You know it, Dele knows it. We do our own thing, no how, no how we will succeed.

BODE is hesitant. OBI presses home his advantage.

OBI
Come on, Bode, you know you want to be
your own man.

BEAT

BODE
It's a risk.

OBI
What we do for Dele, that's not a risk?

BEAT

BODE
What's the plan?

OBI
I don't have one yet/

BODE
You see now/

COMMOTION. The area boys rush in, minus YOUNGEST AREA BOY.

OBI
What is it?

AREA BOY1
Dem don kill Karim oh!

OBI and BODE are stunned by this news.

BODE
What happened?

AREA BOY2
He go do operation for market.

6 EXT. OSHODI MARKET - DAY (FLASHBACK)

6

YOUNGEST AREA BOY (KARIM) is ON HIS OWN trying to steal from a market stall. The stall owner sees him before he can escape and grabs him, raising the cry of Ole! Karim is caught.

The crowd converges on him. Petrol and tyres are brought. Karim struggles for dear life.

7 FLASHBACK

7

The morning's operation. OBI takes the knife away from KARIM. KARIM eyes OBI with contempt.

8

INT. FOOD CANTEEN - DAY

8

BODE

Poor guy. He always was a hot head.

OBI'S mind races at a million thoughts per second.

OBI

Go back to base. Tell Dele what had happened.

The AREA BOYS scamper, still in a state of shock.

BODE

As if Dele cares.

OBI

That's what I'm telling you. We can get out of this shit as a team.

BODE

Dele won't like this.

OBI

Dele can go to hell.

BODE

I'm serious. This could end badly for us.

OBI

We're gaining our freedom. It can never end badly.

BODE

In case of 'incase-ity'...

OBI

Nothing's going to happen.

BODE

Never say never. You got my back?

OBI

As always. You got my back?

BODE

No paddy for jungle, man.

OBI

Bode!

BODE

It's a joke. I got your back.

OBI

Bode...

BODE
I said I'm joking, Obi, ah!

OBI
You Yoruba guys. I haven't forgotten Biafra...

BODE
I knew you would bring that up!

OBI
Why not if not/

BODE
Shut up.

9 EXT. OSHODI MARKET DAY (MONTAGE). 9

OBI and BODE look for work but are turned away. People abuse them, calling them criminals. A stall owner throws bits of rotten food at them.

A thief steals from a stall. The thief runs away followed by cries of 'Ole, Ole!' The thief escapes.

The crowd turns on OBI and BODE. Quickly OBI shouts Ole! OBI and BODE lead the crowd in chasing after the 'thief' in the opposite direction the real thief ran.

BODE distracts shoppers while OBI picks their pockets and bags.

They go through their pickings, finding only old trinkets and a few naira notes, not enough to buy them a meal.

BODE scatters the trinkets in anger. OBI holds up keys to a BMW. BODE hugs OBI.

BODE
We've done it, man! Hassan pays good money for B-mers.

OBI
The car's got to be around Yaba. Come on.

10A EXT. SPACIOUS CAR PARK. 10A

OBI and BODE search for the BMW. BODE finds it and signals to OBI. BODE opens it and gets inside. OBI inspects the car. ROSEMARY comes around the corner with two members of the gang. Their eyes meet. OBI jumps into the car.

10B OBI 10B
Drive! Drive!

BODE
What's up, man? What's up?

OBI
Drive, for God's sake!

OBI turns round. BODE looks into the rear view mirror and sees ROSEMARY. The two area boys run towards the car. BODE drives off.

11 INT. BMW. DAY. 11

BODE
What do we do what do we do/

OBI
Calm down, now.
(BEAT)
We head for Cotonou.

BODE
Dele will know that's where we're headed.

OBI
He can't know that/

BODE
(SCREAMS)
Where else does he sell stolen cars?

THE CAR SWERVES.

OBI
Easy omo! Easy. We get out of Lagos. I've got friends in Kano. Head for the Expressway.

BODE turns the car round. They head in the opposite direction.

12 INT. DELE'S HOUSE. DAY 12

DELE
I didn't send them on a mission. Are you sure it was Obi and Dele?

ROSEMARY
I'm not blind.

DELE looks at the boys. They nod in assent.

DELE
They are my sharpest boys. They didn't know the car was yours.

ROSEMARY
They saw me! Obi looked me right in the eyes. Laughing in my face. In your face.

DELE stands menacingly. He looms over ROSEMARY.

DELE

Nobody laughs at me, understand? They wouldn't dare deal behind my back. They are bringing the car back.

ROSEMARY laughs at that, mocking DELE.

ROSEMARY

Obi thinks you are a bushman! He says you are not fit to run this outfit. He's been scheming with Bode to kill you and take over! He wants me to be his woman. He is serving you notice!

DELE slaps ROSEMARY.

DELE

Shut up!

DELE turns to the boys.

DELE

Get the car.

DELE and ROSEMARY glare at each other. DELE tucks a gun inside his trousers.

ROSEMARY looks fearful.

13 EXT. BEFORE THE LAGOS-IBADAN EXPRESSWAY 13

The car shudders to a halt.

14 INT. BMW 14

THE FUEL GAUGE READS 'EMPTY'.

BODE thumps the steering wheel.

BODE

Why did I listen to you?

OBI gets out of the car.

OBI

There's a petrol station up the road.

BODE

And what are we going to pay with? You didn't think of that, just like you didn't think of how this plan would work!

OBI puts his head back in the car.

OBI

If you can't think of how to get us out of this mess, shut up.

BODE hits OBI.

BODE
Your father!

OBI drags BODE out through his side of the BMW. They fight, rolling into the nearby bush.

A beat up car stops. They stop fighting. The driver inspects the BMW. He looks around, gets into the BMW and tries the ignition.

OBI and BODE jump out of the bush, adopting their area boy pose.

OBI
Look at this thief-man.

MAN 2
I'm not a thief. I saw the car and/

BODE
And you wanted to test drive it, abi?
Thief!

MAN 2
Hey, hey, hey, I beg you. We can sort something out.

15 EXT. ALL OVER LAGOS DAY 15

DELE and the AREA BOYS scour the city for OBI and BODE.

16A EXT. ON THE ROAD 16A

The BMW passes by. DELE sees it. He cuts across the BMW with his car.

16B DELE drags MAN 2 out of the BMW. MAN 2 blabbers away. 16B

MAN 2
I dropped them off at the Bus station.
They didn't say where they were going.

DELE heads for his car. He signals to the AREA BOYS. They converge on MAN.

17 EXT. COACH STATION. LATE AFTERNOON 17

OBI passes a ticket to BODE. They get to the entrance of their bus.

BODE
Man, hunger dey wire me.

BODE turns and heads back into the station.

OBI
Buy some food when we get to the first
stop.

BODE
You have suffer head stomach. Me, I have
to whack or else I will pass out. Don't
worry man, we're free.

BODE heads for the canteen.

OBI
Bode! Bode!

Exasperated, OBI heads into the bus.

Passengers eye OBI. No one wants him to sit next to him. He
sits by a window seat and lies low.

COMMOTION. PASSENGERS LOOK OUT OF THE WINDOW. A PASSENGER
ENTERS THE BUS.

PASSENGER
Dem don catch thief. Dem dey deal with am
like say he tief dem penis.

PASSENGERS DISEMBARK TO WATCH. OBI CAUTIOUSLY RAISES HIS
HEAD. HE CAN'T SEE WHO'S INVOLVED BECAUSE OF THE CROWD. OBI
HEADS OUT OF THE COACH. AS HE STEPS OFF THE LAST STEP, A GAP
APPEARS IN THE CROWD- REVEAL BODE- BLOODIED AND SEVERELY
BRUISED. DELE HAS HIM BY THE SHIRT. OBI STOPS DEAD.

DELE
There were two of them. They raped my
girlfriend and stole her car!

MAN IN CROWD 1
And you're still playing with him? Put
tyre round his neck!

THE CROWD ROARS ITS APPROVAL.

DELE
I want your partner. Tell me where he is.
I will spare your life.

MAN IN CROWD 2
Look at this joker. Find the other guy
and kill them both! These bloody area
boys. They are all animals.

OBI'S HEAD SPINS. HE IS CONFUSED.

DELE
Obi! Obi! Come out you coward! Come and
save your friend's life. His blood will
be upon your head!

HEAVY-SET WOMAN

They think they can escape the day of reckoning. Where is your friend?

THE CROWD JOINS IN CALLING OBI'S NAME.

TANNOY

The Kano bus is ready to depart. All passengers for Kano.

OBI looks at the bus and at the crowd. Passengers for the bus run past, in between their bodies he snatches glimpses of BODE. They lock eyes.

BODE turns to DELE and smiles. DELE punches him in the face. The area boys descend on BODE. One of the area boys holds a tyre and kerosene.

The End.