

desire.

pain.

joy.

history.

pleasure principle



Pleasure Principle

TV Series: Show Pitch Bible



“When I speak of the erotic, then I speak of it as an assertion of the life force of women; of that creative energy empowered, the knowledge and use of which we are now reclaiming in our language, our history, our dancing, our loving, our work, our lives.”

-- *Audre Lorde*

LOGLINE

A sexologist with a messy love life tries to heal the world through her edgy research on Afrosexuality and American history, but is sabotaged by her former mentor out to destroy her career.

CO-CREATOR'S STATEMENT

In the U.S., Black women are a driving force of liberation, including sexual freedom. We believe centering our story around one of these unshrinking women is unique and yet universal. By daring to use the specific lens of Afrosexuality and American history, our intention is to reject prejudice as the status quo, showing Black sexuality not as the “other”, and instead focusing on the beauty and complexity of African American sexuality. Our larger aspiration is to help heal and reclaim Black humanity, and examine the idea of pleasure.

The intersection of sex, race and history might seem like a niche, but actually it opens up a world of experience affecting all of humanity by offering a path to true pleasure for everyone, journeying toward self-love and self-acceptance.

Like us, our show is committed to reclaiming love, sex, history, and pleasure.

SERIES OVERVIEW

Against the backdrop of Oakland, California, the story follows Keisha, a sexology therapist and professor researching a book on Afrosexuality. In her college course, she explores themes about how race, class, gender, power and history intersect.

Ebony Noir, internet-famous influencer, spotlights Keisha's risqué world view and helps her rise to stardom, even as Hazel, Keisha's ex-mentor, sabotages her career.

Keisha is embroiled in a messy love triangle. Her ex, Malcolm, wants to reunite with her and their daughter Jae, while her younger boyfriend Lenny wants more than she can give. Gifted at healing others, she struggles to heal her own issues.

The show also follows Keisha's dad Russell who searches for his biological family, and her client Carl who is suicidal over the trauma of growing up in a brothel in the 1950s.

The series takes place mainly in the present with flashbacks that explore the characters' pasts, focusing on African-American history and sexuality.

Keisha's quest to define Afrosexuality is the backbone of the series - tackling the show's themes in this ensemble drama told from outside the 'white lens' of human sexuality.

SYNOPSIS

Sexologist Keisha Barnes researches Afrosexuality as a professor, an author, and a therapist. She might have trust issues in her own love life, but she's committed to higher pleasure and joy for the next generation. But not everyone thinks Keisha's research is groundbreaking.

Her ex-mentor Hazel undermines Keisha's practice by gatekeeping the credentials she needs, even as Keisha expertly heals her clients, like Carl Peterson who opens up about the trauma of growing up in a brothel in the 1950s. So, Keisha finds other channels for her message, including Ebony Noir's pro-dominatrix podcast where Keisha becomes hugely popular.

In her personal life, Keisha's caught in a love triangle between her sexy but maddening ex-husband Malcolm - a musician and the father of their 12-year old daughter, Jae - and her younger Korean boyfriend, Lenny, who wants more than she can give.

Then there's Keisha's happily married parents, Vicky and Russell who differ on their vision of retirement. Russell is consumed with finding his biological family while Vicky wants to take up surfing.

At the heart of this timely one-hour drama is Keisha - a mom, a daughter, a lover, a therapist and sexology guru on the rise - bridging the intersectionality of sex, race and history, championing healthy sexual liberation and pleasure.

SHOW CROSS



A drama focusing on bold social concepts with deep psychological examinations of characters and family histories like Masters of Sex and This is Us.

KEISHA BARNES

MAIN CHARACTER

Forty, divorced, and a single mom. A sexology professor and therapist writing a cutting-edge book about Afrosexuality, race, sex, culture, taboo, and history.

A gifted healer with a therapy practice struggling to get accreditation with the American Sexuality Institute, run by her former mentor discrediting her legitimacy.

Compounded by her risqué world-views, she's in a messy love triangle with her ex, and a younger man wanting more than she can give.

She's a sex guru on-the-rise.



CAST WISH LIST: Gabrielle Union

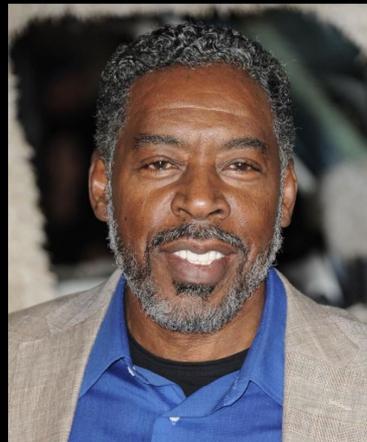


HAZEL HERSHFELD

MAIN CHARACTER

CAST WISH LIST: Anjelica Huston

Sixty, remarried, and childless. A renowned clinical therapist with a successful counseling practice. Founder and president of the American Sexology Institute, a premiere organization providing accreditation. She's dedicated to selecting only the best and demands loyalty at all costs. A former mentor, she challenges Keisha's professional legitimacy and Afrossexuality's validity in the sexology world.



CARL PETERSON

MAIN CHARACTER

CAST WISH LIST: Ernie Hudson

A retired successful sixty-something businessman and philanthropist from humble beginnings. A recent widower and family man, he's a recovering alcoholic, gambler, and womanizer who plays his cards close to his chest. He's in therapy with Keisha to deal with the trauma of growing up in a Black brothel run by his family.



CAST WISH LIST: Trevante Rhodes

MALCOLM JAMES

MAIN CHARACTER

A sexy, charismatic forty-year-old musician with a big career. He's used to being adored and gets caught up in the superficiality of the entertainment world. An absent dad always touring with his band, he misses family and wants Keisha back because she grounds him and challenges him to be a better person.



CAST WISH LIST: Manny Jacinto

LENNY KWON

MAIN CHARACTER

Late twenties, a robotics engineer, a deep-thinker with a high emotional quotient. He loves Keisha and her kid, and wants more from their relationship but is hurt and jealous she doesn't prioritize him, wondering if it's because of his ethnicity. He struggles with his own secret fetishization of Black women.

VICKY & RUSSELL BARNES

CHARACTERS

A sixty-year-old registered nurse, mom/grandmother, and fitness junkie who's jealous of her husband, also sixty, handsome, a blue-collar longshoreman foreman, a great dad/grandfather.

The family matriarch, she's weathered a troubled marriage due to his infidelities in their 40-year marriage. Their relationship is now rock solid, sex life hot, and they dream of traveling in their golden years.

An orphan, he obsesses over finding his biological family, stressing their marriage because she thinks he should leave the past alone.



CAST WISH LIST:
Lorraine Toussaint
Pickens, Jr.



CAST WISH LIST:
James

JAE JAMES

CHARACTER

A precocious twelve-year-old, curious about sexuality, uber-observant, believes her parents still love each other. She's crushed out on a boy secretly questioning his gender and sexuality.



CAST WISH LIST: Marsai Martin

EBONY NOIR

CHARACTER

A thirty-something smart, radical, internet-famous professional dominatrix, and Keisha's BFF. She has a popular podcast focusing on edgy themes and promotes Keisha's risqué Afrosexuality world-views. She's committed to making her into a guru, and she despises Malcolm.



CAST WISH LIST: Keke Palmer

PILOT

Valentine's Day 1990. Keisha at 12 celebrates with her family but when Vicky kicks her dad Russell out of the house for cheating, Keisha begins her lifelong journey exploring Black love and sexuality.

Present day. Keisha teaches Human Sexuality 101 to college students. She struggles to get credentialed for her therapy practice and is finishing her book *Pleasure Principle*, about Afrosexuality.

At home, Keisha is a single mom with trust issues dating a younger man, Lenny, who hates that Keisha hides him from her family and angles to be invited to his first Barnes family BBQ.

When a touchy moment in Keisha's classroom goes viral, Keisha's ex-mentor Hazel sees the video and uses it to postpone Keisha's Sexology Institute certification application. Frustrated, Keisha takes to the airwaves with one of the most popular sex podcasters, Ebony Noir.

Keisha gets a new client at her therapy practice - an older gentleman, Carl, who reveals over the course of the episode that he was raised in a family-owned Black brothel in the 1950s.

Keisha's mom Vicky resists the idea of Lenny coming to the family BBQ, wishing that Keisha and her touring-musician ex-husband Malcolm would get back together, causing family friction.

Vicky and Keisha's dad Russell are on the brink of retirement, their differing plans causing stress in their 40 year marriage. Russell wants to find his biological family; Vicky wants to relax and surf.

When Malcolm announces he's ending his road tour to stay at home in Oakland, Keisha's thrown into a spin, struggling with having to tell him about Lenny.

Vicky invites Malcolm to the BBQ, putting Keisha's commitment to Lenny to the test. She's not ready, and Lenny walks out, rejected.

With Malcolm suddenly back in her life with all his charms and dad-fun times with their daughter Jae, Keisha remembers why they split up. She misses Lenny who forgives her. But just as they bond...

Keisha receives an urgent call that her client Carl is perched on the ledge of a skyscraper about to jump.

SEASON 1, EPISODES 1-5

EPISODE 1: "DEEP ROOTS"

Juggling work, family, and Lenny, Keisha fails to get accredited with the ASI, deals with Malcolm's return, and takes on a new client who attempts suicide.

EPISODE 2: "CAGED BIRD SINGS OF FREEDOM"

Saving Carl, Keisha prioritizes his therapy, asks Hazel to reapply for accreditation, advises her dad on his search for his bio family, and admits her feelings for Malcolm & Lenny.

EPISODE 3: "NO CRYSTAL STAIRS"

Keisha focuses on Carl's trauma in the family-owned brothel, competes with Malcolm for Jae's attention, and makes Lenny jealous.

EPISODE 4: "IF I HAD OBSERVED THE RULES I'D HAVE NEVER GOTTEN ANYWHERE."

Hazel undermines Keisha but gives her another shot for accreditation. Malcolm finds out about Lenny. Vicky plans Russell's retirement party, suspecting he's cheating with a female genealogist. Therapy unravels Carl, who's secretly drinking again.

EPISODE 5: "DON'T STOP TIL YOU GET ENOUGH"

Malcolm and Keisha argue, then have sex, their sexual passion reignited. At Russell's retirement party, he reunites with Carl, an old friend. Keisha helps Carl through a bender, misses her ASI interview, validating Hazel's belief Keisha's not "ASI material."

SEASON 1, EPISODES 6-10

EPISODE 6: "SOME KIND OF WAY OUTTA HERE"

Keisha and her book go mainstream but Hazel doesn't accreditate her. Lenny learns she & Malcolm had sex; they break up. Upset with her parents, Jae moves in with her grandparents. Russell invites Carl on a trip to Kentucky, to find his bio family.

EPISODE 7: "THE HILL WE CLIMB"

An A-list publisher courts Keisha for her book until Hazel sabotages the deal. Keisha tries convincing Lenny for a second chance but he refuses. Vicky asks Russell to postpone his trip, but Carl quits therapy against Keisha's advice, and hits the road with Russell.

EPISODE 8: "GHOSTED."

Hazel discredits Keisha; it's a war. On the road, Carl spirals out-- drinking, and gambling while Russell learns about the plight of Black orphans in the 1950s. Vicky forces Malcolm and Keisha to parent Jae. Keisha goes on Oprah's tv show, explaining her Afro-sexuality research and its relevance. She trends overnight.

EPISODE 9: "LEARN TO UNLEARN"

Keisha's interview impacts the world, including Hazel who confesses suffering from white fragility. Carl admits to Russell how he 'broke in' his first love as a prostitute for his family brothel - he become suicidal again. Keisha and Malcolm reunite for Jae, but Keisha still loves Lenny. Hazel meets with the publisher in support of Keisha.

EPISODE 10: "FULL CIRCLE"

Keisha's fame as a sex guru skyrockets. There's a bidding war for her book. Carl visits his first love, asking for forgiveness. Russell learns how he became orphaned. Keisha's practice gains ASI accreditation, and grows. A Middle Eastern-American woman who's never orgasmed is her new client - to be featured in Season 2.

SEASONS

SEASON 1

Keisha struggles with her research, book, and therapy practice while treating Carl and dealing with her love triangle and her trust issues. Hazel undermines and sabotages Keisha at every turn until she confronts her reasons for doing it.

SEASON 2

Now a sex guru, Keisha signs with a publisher controlling her message, while still trying to heal her issues in a throuple and blended family. She treats a new client who's never orgasmed and scrutinizes the Middle Eastern American patriarchy. Her book becomes a hit.

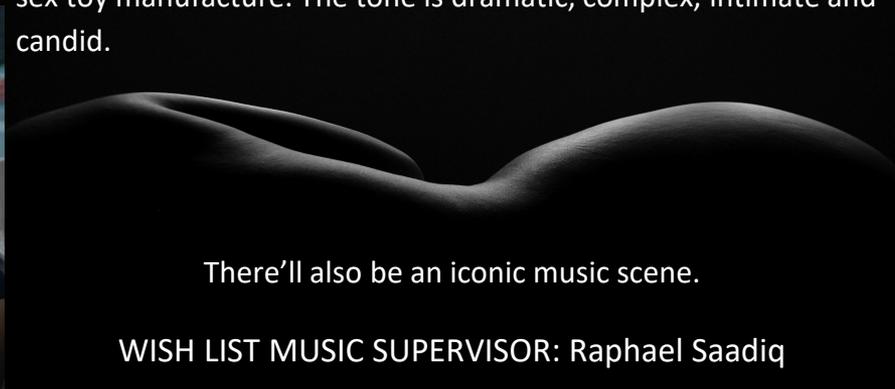
SEASON 3

Keisha hosts a tv show, its mission to undo global sexual oppression, putting her in the cross-hairs of an inter-governmental organization manipulating gender and sexual policies. Single, she's still trying to heal her trust issues through the power of love, pleasure and history.

WORLD & TONE



Set in present-day Oakland, Ca, with flashbacks in the 1980s, 90s, & 2000s. The world is an urban cultural liberal mecca rooted in being different and rebellious, promoting social changes and pushing the envelope. The vibe is cosmopolitan, multicultural, diverse. The world of academic sexology will juxtapose with the titillating world of sex, adult entertainment, the pro-dom scene, sex toy manufacture. The tone is dramatic, complex, intimate and candid.



There'll also be an iconic music scene.

WISH LIST MUSIC SUPERVISOR: Raphael Saadiq

LORNA GREEN

CO-CREATOR

Screenwriter and director. I write heartfelt stories about badass outsiders and underdogs challenging the system and going on emotional journeys intersecting race, class, and gender while overcoming adversities.

www.lornagreen.org



PAULA TIBERIUS

CO-CREATOR

I'm a writer and director with 10 years experience working with renowned sexologist Dr. Ava Cadell. I'm interested in telling stories that show the humor, joy, sadness and truth about relationships in all their messy glory.

www.paulatiberius.com

Pleasure Principle

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