

Defying the Odds

Script V.4

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Video	Audio
ACT (1) Graduation music plays Fade in OC: Jennifer Lackey B-roll: Graduation footage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students walking in sitting during graduation Close-up of their faces Jennifer speaking at the podium 	“I am in awe of, and I am humbled by, each of you. You have radically expanded what it means to be a Northwestern student, and you have enriched Northwestern University in ways that will echo for decades to come.”
OC: Benard McKinley Lower Third: Benard McKinley B-roll: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut away to the audience Sequence of Benard speaking on the podium 	“One day, I was asked a question, not too long ago, by one of my professors who witnessed my transformation over the years. And the question was, what has been one of the hardest things to ever do that I found myself being good at?”
Graduation music fades OC: Benard McKinley	“And my answer was, defying the odds.”
Text on Screen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Background: Benard speaking at graduation then black screen Fade to black	DEFYING THE ODDS

<p>Playful music plays</p> <p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benard and cousins on the porch and walking down the street 	<p>“Being woken up by a house full of toddlers, a couple of my cousins, hearing them get ready, but, you know, it consists of, you know, just being woken up to the noise of loved ones, you know, getting their day together”</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> kids walking down the street and screaming <p>Playful music fades</p>	<p>“There’s never a dull moment in the house because somebody, somebody is always getting on someone’s nerves.”</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>Lower Third: Benard McKinley</p>	<p>“My name is Bernard McKinley. I'm a first L. Law student of Northwestern Pritzker School of Law. Currently, I will be starting this fall. As of right now, I'm doing paralegal work. But my field of choice is public interest and then I expect to one day becoming a civil rights attorney.”</p>
<p>OC: Chachauna Houston, Cousin</p> <p>Lower Third: Chachauna Houston, Cousin</p> <p>Calm, relaxing music plays</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Old picture of Chachauna and Benard Together <p>Calm, relaxing music fades</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence of Benard with his laptop listening to a lecture 	<p>“He was, you know, he was like any other child. Just like all of us were, you know, at summer, what do you call that, summer camp. It was just fun stuff, you know, barbeque, hanging out with the family..”</p> <p>“He does come across so serious. And he's so humble. And he doesn't like to give himself the credit, you know, but he really is, he's really loving. He's very in tune, he's caring.”</p>

<p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benard laughing and conversing with other people 	<p>“He's actually playful. You'd be surprised. He's very playful. He's like a big brother, like teasing and joking.”</p>
<p>OC: James Soto, Friend Lower Third: James Soto, Friend</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James and Benard laughing with Jennifer Lackey 	<p>“I think what people don't realize is he has a real sense of humor, you know, and he has these comments that he'll say. Let's say he's trying to talk about my hat, you know. He'll say something like: ‘Oh, I see you got your hat on today. What are you trying to do? Not let the sun hit the top of your head?’”</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley, James Soto B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> James and Benard joking with each other 	<p>James and Benard talking</p>
<p>OC: James Soto</p>	<p>“He has a way of saying things, where it could be quite amusing.”</p>
<p>OC: Sheila Bedi, Professor of Law Lower Third: Sheila Bedi, Professor of Law</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sheila and Benard conversing 	<p>“He had a lot of pressure on him during this time where we've worked together, and he would still every single day ask me how I am, ask me how my kid is, want to know if I am okay. Just the fact that he could have all of this weight on him and still be such a giving person, and such a considerate person, says a lot about who he is.”</p>
<p>OC: Jennifer Lackey, Professor Lower Third: Jennifer Lackey, Professor</p>	<p>“He was one of the most focused and driven students I've ever met. He knew from the day I met him what he wanted. He wants to be a civil rights attorney. He knew that the day I met him”</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benard walking to his desk 	<p>“I had no choice. Either you do it or you give up. If I gave up, I wouldn't be here right now, so that was something I told myself when I</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doing his paralegal paperwork <p>Fade to black</p>	<p>was 19, getting out of that bus that I won't gonna give up. So I kept true to my words, and this is where I am at now."</p>
<p>ACT (2) Sad, dark piano music plays</p> <p>OC: Benard McKinley B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exterior shots of Stateville Correctional Center • Shots inside Statesville 	<p>"I was sentenced at the age of 19 to a 100-year sentence for a crime that I am fully held accountable for, that I had committed at the age of 16."</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing shots of a sunny park <p>Cut to black</p>	<p>"It was a hot summer day in June of 2001. I was 16 then. I get confronted by a few individuals that was on their way to the park. The language, it was a language barrier to a degree. It really escalated to even more than that, till one of the individuals I was with being knocked out. And you know, I was handed a gun and you know, I was told to shoot the individual. And that's what happened."</p>
<p>Text on Screen</p> <p>Fade out to black</p>	<p>19-YEAR-OLD BENARD BENARD WAS SENTENCED TO 100 YEARS WITH NO PAROLE. A DECISION MADE IN A MATTER OF SECONDS HAD LIFE-LONG CONSEQUENCES.</p>

Sad, dark piano music fades	
<p>OC: Chachauna Houston</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo of Benard when he was a teenager 	<p>“It was devastating, I think, for the dynamic of our family. Because like I said, we were so close. We were, everybody was like, just really devastated. And just also with just the sheer amount of number of years at age what 16 or 17 was, like, unbelievable.</p> <p>You know, and I definitely think the sentence was very harsh for him, you know, for young kids, I'll just say for young black kids all the time, systematically.”</p>
OC: Benard McKinley	<p>“You know, you can give up or you can persevere, you know. And you know, anything worth having is is worth fighting for.”</p>
<p>Uplifting music plays</p> <p>Text on Screen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Background: NPEP Classroom <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benard talking in NPEP classroom 	<p>IN 2019, BENARD WAS ACCEPTED INTO THE NORTHWESTERN PRISON EDUCATION PROGRAM.</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture of Benard in Stateville 	<p>“Education itself is transformative. It forces you to ask that big question. Who am I? Where do I see myself within the next five, ten years? What do I really want to do?”</p>
<p>OC: Jennifer Lackey</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jennifer working with students in NPEP • NPEP students studying together <p>Uplifting music fades</p>	<p>“I work with a lot of college students, and college is challenging, but college in a carceral space, especially in carceral space like Statesville, is, I think, any one of us who have not, who has not spent time there, it would be difficult for us to imagine just how challenging it is.”</p>
ACT (3)	

Text on screen	NOVEMBER 15, 2023 NPEP GRADUATION
<p>Bright, emotional music plays</p> <p>OC: Benard Mckinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sequence of Benard speaking in graduation 	<p>“One day, I was asked a question, not too long ago, from one of my professors who witnessed my transformation over the years. And the question was, what has been one of the hardest things to ever do that I found myself being good at?</p> <p>And my answer was, defying the odds.</p> <p>Whether it was getting back a 100 year sentence, getting two college degrees, or being the first person in Illinois to take and pass the LSAT incarcerated... this creed was determined to defy the odds and rise to the top.”</p>
OC: Benard McKinley	“That was a good day, you know, it was a good day.”
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benard walking during graduation Students clapping during graduation 	<p>“Being able to be in purple and black that day, and allowing my family to see me do something that, you know, a lot of people are not going to have the opportunity to do, especially in prison, to show their true self-worth. It was, it was an amazing feeling, you know, and, you know, everybody in there came in with positive energy, you know, celebrate now moment, and you know, that was, that's a moment that I'm always gonna have for the rest of my life.”</p>
<p>OC: Jennifer Lackey</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Picture of Jennifer and Benard posing together during graduation 	<p>“I mean, I practiced for days to try to not cry, like I was literally trying to, you know, see if there were any, like tips for how to prevent oneself.”</p>

<p>OC: Chachauna Houston</p> <p>B-roll: Photo of Benard with Chahcahuna and other people</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shot of a framed picture of Benard's graduation <p>Bright, emotional music fades</p> <p>Fade to black</p>	<p>"I was, you just feel so proud, you know, I feel so proud for him. You know, I'm proud of him. I like watching the steps and leaps and bounds that he's made, because he could have stayed there, and just accepted what they'd given. But instead, he decided to do more, and just trust the process."</p>
<p>OC: Sheila Bedi</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing shots of the Pritzker School of Law 	<p>"Benard got his first acceptance into law school. He received notice of it while we were sitting in federal court waiting for a hearing to happen. I actually had to step out of the room to compose myself."</p>
<p>OC: Jennifer Lackey</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photo of Jennifer and Benard posing together 	<p>"So he tried to call me. And I was, I was either on the phone, and I was just like: Oh, my God. Benard just got into Northwestern law school."</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benard introduces himself as an incoming law student during NPEP community hours 	<p>"Everyone, I am Benard McKinley. Recently released, and looking forward to start law school from Northwestern this fall."</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sequence of Benard walking around the law school 	<p>"Damn, sure feel good to be on the other side of the law, you know. Not to be on the defendant's side. You know it's, it's a funny feeling, you know.. I would say it's a good feeling, it's a rewarding feeling, because I've proven that I deserve to be on that other side."</p>
<p>OC: Jennifer Lackey</p>	<p>"I mean, he's not just a role model. Role model. He is their hope. He is their dreams all wrapped up in him and I mean, not just the</p>

<p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture of NPEP Cohort 1 • Picture of NPEP Cohort 1 graduated • Picture of Benard with a cake at the law school 	<p>students at Statesville and the students at Logan but I think incarcerated men and women across the nation.”</p> <p>“I think that there are so many men and women sitting behind bars who never even thought what Benard is doing was possible.”</p>
<p>OC: James Soto</p> <p>B-roll</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picture of Benard, James and Friends at the Arch wearing Northwestern merch 	<p>“To be able to get into, not only a law school, but Northwestern, is quite an accomplishment. And I think that vicariously, a lot of people could see themselves through him to say “Hey, I could fulfill my dream of doing the same thing.”</p>
<p>OC: Chachauna Houston</p> <p>B-Roll: Noah and Benard in the monkey bars at the park</p>	<p>“I'm raising three boys. You know, so like I said, to have a male figure like him so dynamic and motivated is definitely for sure a win. Because they get a chance to see, you know, what that likes and the perseverance it takes. What a good role model is. I just, I love that example for all of the boys in our family but especially, you know, my three boys, that look up to him for advice.”</p>
<p>B-Roll: Cinema Verite scene of Benard and the kids getting ice cream from the ice cream truck</p>	<p>Sounds of the kids and benard chatting</p>
<p>OC: Benard McKinley</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bernard and little cousins walking while holding hands • Noah pointing at the camera and Benard stopping him <p>Emotional music plays</p>	<p>“You know, especially after being around grown men for the past 20-something years, it's kids being kids. And, you know, just to sit back and be around kid being kid, you know, it's a good feeling.”</p>

<p>OC: Chachauna Houston</p> <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benard walks after the children <p>B-roll:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Benard on the swings and jumping from the swing. <p>Fade out to black</p>	<p>“I think he felt like he has something to live for. And when you have purpose you you live different.”</p>
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