

PRINCI-PAL

"PILOT"

written by

Michael Hager

michaelhag@gmail.com

COLD OPEN

FADE IN:

INT. ORANGE MIDDLE SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY (1999)

Twelve-year-old SANDRA NGUYEN ("when") closes her eyes and grips a hair brush. She stands next to her locker door and belts out the Sinéad O'Connor classic:

SANDRA
(singing)
"Nothing compares - nothing
compares 2 U... All the flowers
that you planted-"

MRS. HARMAN
Sandra-

SANDRA
"-in the backyard, all died when
you went away..."

An adult huffs near the oblivious sixth-grader-

SANDRA (CONT'D)
(singing)
I know that living with me-"

MRS. HARMAN
Sandra!

SANDRA
(singing)
"-was sometimes hard-" oh - Mrs.
Harman - I didn't hear you.

The kids standing nearby giggle at Sandra.

MRS. HARMAN
Go see Mrs. Pearl.

Sandra makes the dejected walk down the hall.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

MRS. PEARL's cascading gray- streaked hair curtains over her face as she takes a deep breath before-

MRS. PEARL
 (singing)
 "But I'm willing to give it
 another try...'cause nothing
 compares, nothing compares 2
 U!"

SANDRA
 (singing)
 "But I'm willing to give it
 another try...'cause nothing
 compares, nothing compares 2
 U!"

After the song ends:

MRS. PEARL (CONT'D)
 Now, my dear, are you willing to
 give it another try?

SANDRA
 I think so?

MRS. PEARL
 Did she say something mean?

SANDRA
 (sighing)
 I think so.

MRS. PEARL
 Did she ask you if you want to do
 nails when you grow up again?

Sandra shrugs one more time.

SANDRA
 Just because I'm Vietnamese doesn't
 mean I have to be a pedicure lady.

MRS. PEARL
 What do you want to be? A dog
 doctor? A movie actor?

SANDRA
 I want to be a principal like you
 so I can make kids feel better,
 like, when they have a teacher
 who's, "having a tough time with
 their career choices."

MRS. PEARL
 That's a deep thought, young lady.

SANDRA
 Either that or Mickey Mouse.

EXT. NARANJA MIDDLE SCHOOL - ESTAB. SHOT (PRESENT DAY)

SUVs and cars line up on Monday morning at the ninth largest of nine middle schools on the other side of the tracks in the respectable community of Anaheim, California. The school bell rings as students enter.

INT. NARANJA MAIN OFFICE - DAY

After school begins, the school's principal - now grown up - SANDRA NGUYEN, (30s, passionate) stands herself at the front desk; she grabs the school microphone like a singing idol and clears her throat.

SANDRA

(on the PA)

Good morning, Orange Crush, this is Ms. Nguyen, your principal, reminding you that our Talent Show is right around the corner. Come for the free cup of orange-flavored drink--stay for the music and dance brought to you by our office and custodial staff. This year's show-stopper is a timely reminder for all of us: "Always Know Where to Vomit."

A white-face boy vaults into the office-

SANDRA (CONT'D)

Not HERE! The bathroom! THE BATHROOM!

He launches himself through a door opened without blinking by CINDY ARANA, (40s, filterless) her office manager.

SANDRA (CONT'D)

That was a close one.

Sandra wipes away a bit of sweat and smiles in spite of the nearby retching.

END COLD OPEN