

NYCHA

Written by

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FADE IN.

INT. SINGLE MOTHER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

A SINGLE MOTHER, living on the tenth floor of the Frederick Douglass housing projects, has her oldest daughter, KEISHA, to help her change her BABY SISTER'S diaper.

SINGLE MOTHER

Okay, watch your sister, Keisha.  
I'm gonna throw this in the garbage  
disposal. I'll be right back.

KEISHA

Okay.

The single mother balls up the dirty diaper and leaves her daughters to step out of her apartment.

INT. FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING - HALLWAY - DAY

The single mother comes to the incinerator and throws a fit when she finds it jammed with one of her neighbor's trash.

SINGLE MOTHER

God damn it! My neighbors are so  
ghetto. Look at this mess. This  
shit makes no sense.

Single mother stands in the middle of the hallway and addresses the tenants on her floor from the top of her lungs.

SINGLE MOTHER (CONT'D)

I wish people would stop jamming  
the garbage chute with their trash!  
There are other people living on  
this floor besides you, whoever you  
are!

The single mother attempts to push her neighbor's trash down the garbage chute then comes to her senses.

SINGLE MOTHER (CONT'D)

Well, I'm not going to put myself  
through the trouble of forcing some  
other asshole's garbage down the  
chute.

The single mother walks back to her apartment still holding on to her daughter's dirty diaper.

INT. SINGLE MOTHER'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Single mother has no idea what to do with the dirty diaper in her hand.

SINGLE MOTHER

That's it. We're getting the hell out of NYCHA. I had it up to here with NYCHA.

KEISHA

NYCHA? What's NYCHA?

SINGLE MOTHER

NYCHA. You know what NYCHA stands for.

KEISHA

No, I don't. What's NYCHA?

SINGLE MOTHER

NYCHA, New York City Housing Authority. No more questions, not until I figure out what to do with this dirty diaper.

INT. BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - DAY

ROBERTO, a bored nine-year-old living on the second floor of the Frederick Douglass housing projects, finds his MOTHER putting her spices away in the pantry.

ROBERTO

Ma, can I go outside with my skateboard?

ROBERTO'S MOTHER

With all those knuckleheads hanging around outside? I don't think so.

ROBERTO

Come on. We live on the second floor. Can't you just watch me from the window?

ROBERTO'S MOTHER

No, I can't just watch you from the window, Roberto. Don't you see that I'm busy in here? Hang out in your room.

Roberto rolls his eyes and turns his back on his mother.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE FREDERICK DOUGLASS HOUSING PROJECTS - DAY

FIVE NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS hanging out the bench go from having a conversation about nothing to a heated one.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1  
All I'm saying is that I'm done  
with rap music!

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2  
You're talking crazy, Son! So,  
what are you going to listen to  
now, country music, fucking  
classical music?!

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1  
Rap music just isn't the same to me  
anymore. This new crop of rappers  
is garbage.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2  
Yo, who are you?! I don't even  
know who you are anymore. I think  
you better sit somewhere else.

Neighborhood kid #1 laughs.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #2 (CONT'D)  
I'm serious. I don't know why you  
laughing. Sit somewhere else.

Neighborhood Kid #2 gets up from the bench and snatches the hat off the head of Neighborhood kid #1.

NEIGHBORHOOD KID #1  
Give me my hat! I'm not playing.

Neighborhood kid #1 gets off the bench to take back his hat from Neighborhood kid #2.

INT. THE BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - BEDROOM - DAY

The sign on the door reads "Roberto's Room." Roberto hears the commotion going on outside and runs over to his bedroom window.

ROBERTO  
Oh, I think there's a fight going  
on outside.

Roberto can't stick his head out the window to see the action because of the window guards.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)  
 Damn it! I can't see shit with  
 these fucking window guards in the  
 way!

Out of frustration, Roberto tries to shake loose the screws  
 holding the window guard in place.

ROBERTO (CONT'D (CONT'D)  
 I don't know why I can't take these  
 stupid things down.

Roberto pulls himself away from the window and storms out of  
 his room.

INT. THE BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Roberto marches right up to his mother and asks for  
 permission to take down the window guards in his room.

ROBERTO  
 Ma, is it okay for me to take down  
 one of the window guards in my  
 room?

ROBERTO'S MOTHER  
 Absolutely not.

ROBERTO  
 Why not? I'm not a baby anymore.  
 It's not like I'm going to fall out  
 the window.

ROBERTO'S MOTHER  
 It doesn't matter, Roberto. I  
 can't risk somebody from NYCHA  
 stopping by unexpectedly, and  
 slapping me with a \$100.00 fine  
 because there were no window guards  
 installed in your bedroom. Sorry,  
 but the window guards stay up.

Roberto leaves the kitchen and marches back to his bedroom.

INT. THE BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - ROBERTO'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Roberto enters his room and can still hear the commotion  
 going on outside.

ROBERTO

What kind of world are we living  
in, where a boy can't even stick  
his head out of his own bedroom  
window just to get some fresh air?!

Roberto tries again to see the fight from his window.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Man, forget NYCHA! These window  
guards are coming down.

Roberto storms out of his bedroom.

INT. THE BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - HALLWAY - DAY

Roberto gets his father's toolbox out of the closet.

INT. THE BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - ROBERTO'S BEDROOM - DAY

Roberto rummages through the toolbox and finds the right  
screw driver to unscrew the window guards.

ROBERTO

This should work.

Roberto unscrews one of the window guards and takes it down.

INT. SINGLE MOTHER'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Flies buzz the dirty diaper on top of the rest of the garbage  
in the receptacle.

SINGLE MOTHER

I can't have this dirty diaper  
funking up my apartment.

Single mother picks the dirty diaper out of the receptacle  
and opens the window to throw it out.

SINGLE MOTHER (CONT'D)

That's that.

Single mother says as she wipes her hands from the matter.

INT. BELTRAN HOUSEHOLD - ROBERTO'S BEDROOM - DAY

By the time Roberto takes the window guard down, the fight is  
over.

ROBERTO

So I missed out on watching this fight because of the stupid window guards, that's okay. There will be another one soon enough.

Roberto sticks his head out the window for the first time ever, only to get hit on the head with the dirty diaper the single mother just tossed out the window.

ROBERTO (CONT'D)

Ah-Ha, so, babies falling to their deaths is not the only reason why NYCHA wants tenants to keep their window guards up at all times, no matter what. I get it now.

Still COVERED in turd, Roberto puts the window guard back in place and never speaks of taking them down again.

FADE OUT.