

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 for
not having guards on all of the
windows. 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 LIVING ROOM - DAY

The single mother finally tires from holding the dirty
diaper.

SINGLE MOTHER

The hell with this.

She goes to the window with her nose pinched and throws it
out.

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 see that now.

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

FADE OUT.