(SHE'S GOTTA HAVE IT)

("#CHANGEGONCOME (Gentrification)")

(Episode #109)

NOLA Goooood mmmmorning. Almond Milk. Took six years and seven months to arrive at my Corner Bodega. Sure, it costs more than a Kidney BUT my Lactose intolerant Ass doesn’t have to trek across to Brooklyn Heights anymore for Almond Milk or Kombucha or Kale! Mmm! Exotic Produce! One of the many advents of Fort Greene’s Newer Residents or ‘Newbies’ as Stokely likes to say. But with Fresh Produce comes Increased Rents and Renovations. And for what? I used to play Dollies with Carmen Baxter when her Family still live next door. Wasn’t nothing wrong with that House. Still. The Baxters took a payout, moved down South to ATL and now someone sees fit to rattling my walls. Maybe renovations are a Newbie’s way of making Fort Greene feel more Theirs when The Fort is all of Ours. Hey, I get it. Change is necessary. Sometimes even Good but what if you’re not ready for Change? What then? Do you just get Steam-Rolled, Bull-Dozed and Bo- Garted? Most of the people I grew up with moved away after College. And who can blame ‘em? You go away to get a Degree, to Come home and pay Three times the Rent?

DR. JAMISON Yet you’ve vigilantly remained.

NOLA Brooklyn’s Home. I’m not leaving. No matter how much it changes or how Broke I get.

DR. JAMISON Mm. Being Broke. That Ain’t No Joke. What I mean to say is, you’ve had a lot on your shoulders; financial struggles, your friend Shemekka...

NOLA She’s a lot better.

DR. JAMISON Good. But what about you? You got that tough Review.

NOLA I’m...Okay. Okay. Fine. But it’s not just the Review. My Art Life is in struggle mode. I’m creating work all the time. But I keep wondering if I’m ever gonna make it as an Artist or if I’ll end up like Papo, the Neighborhood Bum who was a Damn Good Artist in High School but who just couldn’t survive all the change.

DR. JAMISON That’s an understandable fear. Would you feel more secure if you didn’t have to juggle your Art Aspirations and your Relationships?

NOLA You say that like they’re a distraction.

DR. JAMISON Well can you focus with Three Boyfriends?

NOLA They’re not my Boyfriends.

DR. JAMISON I’m sorry. Lovers. And Opal. That’s four. That’s gotta be challenging.

NOLA I may have slipped up a Time or Two. Called one by the other’s name but I don’t confuse their Energy.

DR. JAMISON Okay. But is their Energy feeding your voice as an Artist?

NOLA Well. They each bring something different out of me.

DR. JAMISON Tell me about that.

NOLA With Mars I laugh ‘til my Sides hurt. We just have Fun, ya know? He makes me feel like a Kid again.

DR. JAMISON And Greer?

NOLA Greer’s spontaneous and surprisingly Cultured. Nothing’s ever the same with him. Certainly not the Sex.

DR. JAMISON And Jamie?

NOLA It’s so complicated....

DR. JAMISON Of course. The estranged Wife.

NOLA It was convenient at first. Him taking my Broke Ass to Expensive Dinners? Buying my Art when no one else would? But it’s shifted. I care about him and he cares about me, like no one ever has.

DR. JAMISON Not even your Parents?

NOLA Jamie’s Grown. I love that Energy. He’s a nurturing Parent. It’s the same with Opal. She’s the kind of Woman I aspire to be.

DR. JAMISON You’ll get there, in your own time. Well. It sounds like all together your Lovers make the Perfect Mate.

NOLA But you don’t think that’s Smart.

DR. JAMISON I didn’t say that.

NOLA ’ve got it under wraps Dr. Jamison. For one, Opal’s not a problem. I don’t see anyone more than Twice a Week. No Two Lovers in one day. No Sex without a Condom. And no Sex if it ain’t in my Lovin’ Bed.

DR. JAMISON You’ve got a lot of rules there.

NOLA I gotta have some kind of control.

DR. JAMISON Or what? Let’s go back to your Art Opening.

NOLA Do we have to? That was weeks ago.

DR. JAMISON I know. And I know it was tough but I think it’s a great opportunity to examine your ability to maintain control.

NOLA Or lack of ability. I nearly bust that White Boy’s Ass.

DR. JAMISON Understandable. But, Him aside, how did it feel with all of your Lovers in one Space?

NOLA Frantic. Crazy. Like I had to put out a lot of Fires.

DR. JAMISON What would have happened if you just let the Fires burn?

NOLA What? I couldn’t.

DR. JAMISON But it was your Night. And instead of being present for your Art...

NOLA ...I chose to put out the Fires. Shit.

DR. JAMISON Don’t beat up on yourself. Nola. You are a Vibrant and Beautiful Young Female Artist. You should be enjoying your Life.

NOLA Yeah but isn’t it time to grow up Responsibilities and Shit? Saturn Return is a time for decisions that could effect my Future, who I end up with but I’m putting out Fires!

DR. JAMISON I don’t want you to feel pressured to choose but the Reality is each Lover will likely want more of your Time and your heart. What will you have left for yourself? For your Art? Can I make a suggestion? Opal, was always transparent with you. Maybe it’s time to take a page from her Book. Maybe full disclosure will lift the burden you’re carrying and steer you clear of turning your male Lovers into a Three-Headed Monster.

NOLA A Three-Headed Monster....

BIANCA TATE C’mon sweetie. Ready for your walk...? TO finish up, I appreciate everyone coming out tonight. We’re going to wrap this up. I know you have other thing you need to do. So I’ll reach out to the Community Board with ideas for what should replace that Strip Club.

STOKLEY The Hot-N-Trot is Burlesque! There’s a difference! So I heard.

BIANCA TATE Okay. One final Order of Business. As you may know, some Heartless Thug has been defacing our Homes and Businesses with a Large Green

STOKLEY For Gentrification. Don’t forget that part!

MAX Graffiti has been here before us. It’ll be here after we’re gone!

BIANCA TATE Mr. Max. Are you suggesting we accept the defacement of our Brownstones?

MAX No I just think there are Bigger Fish to Fry. Like why have they kicked the Black and Brown Men out The Park simply for playing Soccer?!

BIANCA TATE There were noise complaints...but we’re talking Vandalism. And it’s clear who the culprit is! Papo.

PAPO Nah, you got the wrong Dominican.

NOLA Papo? Naw.

BIANCA TATE Oh Yes.

SEPTIMA Let’s leave the Man alone.

BIANCA TATE I’m sorry but he clearly has an agenda to scare the Newer Neighbors in Fort Greene!

RACHEL Papo’s Cool. He helped me move in Two Years back. I gave him a few bucks for helping.

BIANCA TATE See. He’s a Hustler!

RACHEL He’s an Artist! Have you seen his Work?

BIANCA TATE No but I’ve smelled the Mess he’s left after going through my Garbage to make ‘Art’!

SHELLY He does leave quite a Mess.

DOUG We paid a lot to have our vestibule renovated and to see it covered in trash...

PAPO Oh The Terror! The Trashy Mess! Children starving The World over. Patriarchy staining Young Minds and Vaginas! The FBI classifies Black Lives Matter as a Hate Group. But what to do about Papo’s trashy mess!

RACHEL Black Lives Matter.

BIANCA TATE White Lives ... I mean All Lives Matter. Mock us if you will. The Trash Attracts Rats! And Rats are a Health Hazard! Am I right?! Hello?

STOKLEY Look, Papo is a part of this Community, okay?

MAX He’s the Mayor of the Block!

BIANCA TATE He’s not MY Mayor. I did NOT Vote for Papo! The Man is a Mental Case!

NOLA You’re right, Bianca Tate! You’re right Bianca Tate, Papo has some Mental Issues. He’s seen all kinds of horrible things in Afghanistan defending The Red, White and Blue for everybody in this room, In Bk. In The US of A!

BIANCA TATE Okay. OKAY! Calm down everyone. I hear you Nola. I respect anyone who serves. But the Man is a Vagrant.

MAX Papo is a Human Being! I bet you treat your overpriced Dog better.

PAPO Woof! Woof!

BIANCA TATE I resent that! My Miss. Jiggles is a Service Dog, Thank You!

STOKLEY It’s Newbies like you who stopped that Shelter from being built on Park Ave! Maybe if ya hadn’t, Papo’d have a place to go!

BIANCA TATE Okay so I don’t want to live next to Homeless People. So I care about the value of my Brownstone! That makes me, The Bad Guy!?

MAX Pretty much!

PAPO I’m not homeless. I’m transitioning.

SEPTIMA Stop it! Would you look at yourselves!? We’re to set the example for the young Folk in this Community. I, for one, did not come here to gang up on Miss Tate.

BIANCA TATE Thank you.

SEPTIMA Sure her Designer Panties are Tightly bound! But our differences are what makes Fort Greene great. Look. New Folks gonna come. Old Heads gonna stay! But we gotta find a way to make this work. We should have a Pot Luck and use the day to get to know each other better. Am I right?

STOKLEY Can I ask a question?

BIANCA TATE The floor is all yours

STOKLEY This is the last thing I’m gonna say: ÒTo be or not to be, That’s the motherfuckin’ quesiton.Ó

NOLA Romare Bearden is The Collagist of our time. A Black Man. In his picture ‘Young Students’, he creates a Street Scene. Today, we’re going to create Collages that express what our Neighborhoods look and feel like.

KERVON But what if I can’t find no Pics of Big Bootied Girls?

NOLA Ignore him! Guys, don’t think too much about it. If an Image jumps out, cut it out and put it aside, okay? Let’s get to it. Guys keep it down, okay? Reggie are you on your Phone?

REGGIE But Ms. Darling...

NOLA ... You know Phones aren’t allowed in class...

REGGIE ...But, it’s you, Ms. Darling!

NOLA What?

HASSAN Word. That’s you aight!

NOLA Shit.

KIDS Oooooh.

REGGIE Shut up. Can’t y’all see Miss Darling shook?!

KERVON So you Famous now, Ms. Darling?

HASSAN Ms. Darling, How many likes you got?

REGGIE Like 2000!

NOLA Really, Clo? Really?!

CLORINDA I’m sorry, Tat. Give us a second? Is there a problem? I’ve known Nola Darling for quite some time but once I saw her powerful Campaign for My Name Isn’t, I knew this Street Artist would be the Art World’s next Force of Nature. You’re welcome?

NOLA I didn’t want this out.

CLORINDA No? Well that Post alone got over 50,000 views. Do you know how many times I’ve seen the My Name Isn’t Hashtag?

NOLA That’s not the point.

CLORINDA I’m sorry. What is the point?

NOLA It’s not what I...who told you?

CLORINDA Who else? Mars. He was concerned about how Broke you’ve been. And I’m trying to understand why you’re so upset right now.

NOLA ‘Street Artist’?

CLORINDA Did I lie?

NOLA It’s One Series of Fuckin’ Work. It came out of my Assault. I’m more than that!

CLORINDA And who would know this? Aside from me and your Parents and the Folks who came to the Group show? You’re a Real Talent, Nola! IT’S TIME TO SHINE!

NOLA Not like this.

CLORINDA Well how then? Like it or not, adversity serves you. Brings out your best and THIS is your best Work yet! I don’t know why you kept it from me for so long. It’s Bold. Fierce! Unapologetically Feminist and Fearlessly Anti-Mysoganist! This is should’ve been in The Group Show!

NOLA That’s not for you to decide.

CLORINDA Well thanks to that Post, people are interested, my Friend. Several inquiries were made in the last hour alone. One is a Celebrity Client whose identity I can’t yet reveal. Let’s just say his name rhymes with SHMEnny SHMABitZ! Okay?! You don’t look happy.

NOLA I’m not.

CLORINDA I just helped launch your Career in a Big Way. Any other Artist would kill for that kind of exposure but all you’re giving me is attitude!

NOLA Because you never asked me!

CLORINDA Like you did with Mars?

NOLA What? You keep bringing that up. What, you wanna fucking share?

CLORINDA Forget it, I did this because I knew it was the Boost you needed.

NOLA You don’t know everything, Ms. Bradford.

CLORINDA No but I know more than you about how this Art World works, Ms. Darling.

NOLA Word. Do you know more than me? Do you know that I’m about to walk the Fuck away from The New Medina Art Gallery right now?

CLORINDA Nola... Really?! So you just want to hide! Like some scared Little Girl?!

NOLA (to Tatyana) Good luck with that.

CUSTOMER Mars, Do you customize skateboards here at Joey Chainz.

MARS Do we customize skateboards? Is Mars Blackmon Puerto Rican? Of course We customize. For a mere Hunnit more, We put whatever you want on there: Eat a Bag! Kick, Push! My Lambo In Da Shop. I Like Big Booty Girls.

CUSTOMER I do like Big Booty Girls.

MARS Pardon my back. You aight?

NOLA Why? Are you gonna RESCUE me again?

MARS What’s up, Ma? I get off in a few..

NOLA If I knew I couldn’t confide one bit of info to you, I would have never...

MARS ...Woah Woah what are we talkin’ ‘bout here?

NOLA My Street Campaign? I asked you NOT to tell anyone about it.

MARS Aw Shit. Clo. I can explain!

NOLA I’m listening.

MARS First of all my Bad but my intentions were 24 Karat! Me and Clo, was just tryna help ya Art & Commerce thing.

NOLA I didn’t ASK for help! I asked you to keep it between us but..maybe...

MARS Maybe? Maybe what? Maybe what?

NOLA Mars...we’ve had a great time together..

MARS ..HAD? We in past tense now!?

NOLA Mars...

MARS ... Nola don’t. Don’t Nola. Please don’t.

NOLA I care about you. I know you care about me but...maybe it’s time we grow up, Mr. Childs.

MARS Mr. Childs? What Fuck that mean? Yeah, I’m younger but I ain’t no Child!

NOLA I mean...my Saturn Return...

MARS ...Fuck Saturn! I’m Mars and I’m here, Yo!

NOLA Listen.

MARS No. Stop. Fo’ Real, Nola?! Fo’ Real!? I ain’t been Ride or Die for you from Da Jump? I ain’t had ya back?!

NOLA You have but...

MARS ...but WHAT Nola?

NOLA Mars..

MARS Look, by gones, aight? Let me get my Bike! We can ride from this present Fuckery into some Brooklyn Sunset Bliss with you on the Handle Bars, swingin’ ya Cocoa Legs, wind in your Shea Butter Kinks. We head down to the Flea Market, right? Get Sodie pop, Artesinal Popcorn then head back to your spot to watch Anime and have Hot Make Up Sex!

NOLA Sodie pop and Make Up Sex?

MARS Yeah. We was Sparrin’, now we Ain’t.

NOLA No. I’ve got work to do.

MARS But Nola...

NOLA ...Mars...let it go. It’s been Fun, okay?

MARS Please Mamí? ¡POR FAVOR!

SHEMEKKA Girl!

NOLA Mekkaaaaaa!

SHEMEKKA What’s good, ma?

NOLA I’m about to Paint, no hanging out with Boys, it’s all about Painting today!

SHEMEKKA Aw shit! Good for you, ma!

NOLA I Miss You! How you feeling?

SHEMEKKA I’m good. Grinding. Tryna get some bills paid. Oh, if some Lady named Carmelita calls, I was your Assistant for a year. I was very polite, always on time and mad stylish.

NOLA When you didn’t show up Drunk.

SHEMEKKA Ha. Ha. Just make it sound good, ‘kay? Hello? You there?

NOLA Yeah. I’m just ... I’m just glad you’re ...

SHEMEKKA ...Oh boy. Nola, don’t get all dramatical on me again!

NOLA What? We coulda lost you! I can’t be happy that my friend is back to her hustlin’ ass self again.

SHEMEKKA Don’t say Ass. Seriously, You know I’m the bounce back Queen! I gotta a baby to raise. I ain’t one hunnit but close...so I’m back. So if that Lady call, Hook It Up. I need this shmoney. Bad.

NOLA They need Lunch Staff down at Tubman.

SHEMEKKA Harriet Tubman ain’t free us to be slanging no Sloppy Joes to no bad ass kids! Harriet ain’t want that for me

NOLA Girl you there?

SHEMEKKA Yeah. Hey, lemme call you back.

NOLA Okay but let’s meet for drinks later?

SHEMEKKA Bet. (ad lib)

NOLA Hey.

GREER She Lives.

NOLA I Live and Breathe.

GREER I guess I should say Thank You for finally picking up my call?

NOLA I’ve been really busy.

GREER As We all are. I got those pics I took of you. Can’t wait to show you.

NOLA That’s great Greer.

BIANCA TATE Of all the Stoops in Brooklyn, You have to pick mine.

PAPO Like Oscar Hammerstein ... It’s a beautiful day.

BIANCA TATE Really? What is wrong with you?

PAPO Lady, you Buggin’ what happened to Bueno Dias Papo!

MARS I can take a hint. So here, Nola. Everything you ever gave me. No. Nola, since you want some space, here. Nola I didn’t want this but...

NOLA If I was ignoring you Mr. Childs, I wouldn’t have answered your call.

GREER So why did you answer? Don’t you miss me?

NOLA I’m not in the mood for Fuckin’ if that’s what you’re asking.

GREER Woah. Really?

NOLA Greer, I’m in the middle of something.

GREER Don’t jump off the Phone! What’s going on, Nola? What are we doing?

NOLA Excuse me?

GREER Are we Dating? Or back to just Fuckin’? Well?

NOLA Hold on. Mars?

BIANCA TATE I called 911!

GREER Who?

BIANCA TATE How about that?!

PAPO What the Hell for?

BIANCA TATE You know!!!

PAPO Lady I don’t know Shit!

NOLA What is going on!?

GREER I’m asking you!?

NOLA Greer. I need to call you back!

MARS Who’s Greer?

GREER Baby, wait...! Let me take you out this week?

NOLA Fine. But I gotta go now!

NOLA What’s going on?

MARS Nola, all jokes Aside. If you want space...

NOLA ... No! That!?

MARS Aw Shit.

OFFICER BRINKLEY Somebody call?

BIANCA TATE Yes, I did.

OFFICER BRINKLEY Okay, what’s the problem?

BIANCA TATE This Man has defaced my Property.

PAPO Lady, I ain’t do nuthin’.

NOLA Bianca, what are you doing?

BIANCA TATE I want him arrested!

NOLA For what? Being Homeless?

PAPO I’m not Homeless, just in transition.

OFFICER DIAZ Sir, can I see some ID?

PAPO What happened? I thought Stop & Frisk was over.

OFFICER BRINKLEY It’s a New Day in America.

PAPO I ain’t do Nada, Officer. I was just pushin’ my Cart down the Block like I always do...

BIANCA TATE ...scoping out your next Victim...

PAPO ...mindin’ my Business and this Miss Bianca starts Profiling me.

BIANCA TATE Why don’t you check his Trashy Cart? He probably has some Green Spray Paint in there!

MAX Papo is harmless, Officer. He’s the Mayor of our Block.

BIANCA TATE My Stoop has been defaced with this G for Gentrification Reverse Racism. And this Man did it.

OFFICER DIAZ Sir, we already asked you once. Please show us some ID.

PAPO Give me a second, let me look into my wallet.

OFFICER BRINKLEY We just want to talk, okay?

NOLA Papo, you okay? Officers, please...leave him alone. Bianca, I did it.

OFFICER DIAZ Whatchu say, Ma’am?

NOLA I defaced her Brownstone.

BIANCA TATE We all know if was Papo, not you.

MARS Nola. What are you talkin’ ‘bout?

NOLA I said I did it.

MARS Well, stop sayin’ dat.

OFFICER BRINKLEY Why are you taking the fall for your friend?

OFFICER DIAZ Sir, let’s take a Ride to the 87th.

NOLA Cuff me.

MISS ELLA Nola, what are you doing?

OFFICER DIAZ Where you going?

BIANCA TATE Home.

OFFICER DIAZ You made the complaint. You’re coming too. All Three of youse.

MARS Officers, how come Bianca gets to ride alone? (ad lib)

MISS ELLA I’ll call your parents.

FEMALE OFFICER Relax your hand and let me do the work.

PAPO Muchas Gracias, Maetra.

OFFICER BRINKLEY Hey Joe, Open up.

NOLA It’s....Nola. I’m glad you picked up. I’m at the 87th Precinct. I know ... I’ll tell you about it when you get here. Can you come?

FRANK SINATRA (SINGS) It’s A Quarter To Three There’s No One In The Place Except You and Me So Set ÔEm Yo Joe I Got A Little Story I Think You Should Know We’re Drinkin’, My Friend To The End Of A Brief Episode Make It One For My Baby And One More For The Road I Got The Routine Put Another Nickel In the Machine Feelin’ So Bad Can’t You Make The Music Easy And Sad I Could Tell You A Lot But You’ve Gotta Be True To Your Code Just Make It One For My Baby And One More For the Road You’d Never Know It But Buddy I’m a Kinda Poet And I Got A Lot Of Things I’d Like To Say And When I’m Gloomy Won’t You Listen To Me Till It’s Talked Away

FRANK SINATRA (SINGS) Well That’s How It Goes And Joe I Know You’re Getting Anxious To Close So Thanks For The Cheer I Hope You Didn’t Mind My Bending Your Ear But This Torch I found It’s Gotta Drowned Or It Soon Might Explode So Make It One For My Baby And One More for The Road The Long It’s So long The Long The Long

OFFICER BRINKLEY You’re Free to go. Here’s your ? And your possessions.

NOLA Sorry? Thanks.

OPAL Of course. Not sure why you called me...and not one of your...guys..

NOLA So they could think they were saving a damsel in distress? I’m good.

OPAL What you did was Noble. Luckily you walk with a desk appearance ticket.

OPAL But Nola, you really could’ve gotten Hurt....or Worse.

NOLA You’re right. You can scold me as much as you want on the way home.

OPAL Oh no. I think they’d prefer to take you Home.

NOLA Jamie. I’m grateful for meeting you on The Promenade that day... ...who knows why The Universe brings People together...maybe to have these exchanges of Light. Illumination to better see themselves? I don’t know. You’ve been so supportive. You’ve taught me that People really can give from a genuine place. But what I need most now is understanding. If I’m going to make it, I need to know that the Greatest Lift is one I can give to myself. I have to Trust that the Universe send Signals that I’m on the right Path. God is Great. I got The Grant. I Got The Great. Something is happening Jamie. If I’m being H onest, there IS someone else......Me.

(END OF EPISODE)