

NICKI ESQ - EPISODE 6

"QUEEN VS ROOK"

Created by

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Teleplay by

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Address
Phone Number

Nicki and Jasmine are ready to leave. Nicki opens the door and is startled by Tanya in big sunglasses.

Tanya enters.

TANYA

Oooh I'm glad I caught you before you left.

NICKI

Tanya it's 7:45...I gotta get this child to school.

JASMINE

It's ok Mr. Moore never expects me to be on time. He always looks forward to mama's very creative excuses.

Tanya looks around.

TANYA

I don't want anyone to recognize me. You know a minute on TV can change your life.

NICKI

Girl nobody is gonna recognize you from that commercial.

JASMINE

You should put sunglasses on those legs so nobody recognizes them.

TANYA

Ugh not exactly the television debut I had hoped for.

JASMINE

It's about what I expected.

NICKI

That's life Tanya, ups and downs. Speaking of downs I gotta get to the office to deal with your case.

TANYA

Is everything ok?

NICKI

Oh everything's ok
(beat)

(MORE)

NICKI (CONT'D)

I just may need to borrow those sunglasses later.

TANYA

Why?

JASMINE

Mama got canned, you're getting a new lawyer.

2

INT. MR. LAYTON'S OFFICE - MORNING

2

Mr. Layton and Jessica are seated at his conference table.

JESSICA

How do you people work at these ungodly hours?

MR. LAYTON

Ms. Bouchard its 10:15 in the morning.

JESSICA

Aren't there labor laws that prohibit this type of abuse?

Nicki barges in.

NICKI

Mr. Layton you cannot take me off the Curly Q case.

(beat)

I mean you can, but I wish you wouldn't.

MR. LAYTON

I explicitly warned you about the importance of this case Ms. Howell.

NICKI

Need I remind you that the only reason we even got this case in the first place is ME...Nicki...hello.

JESSICA

Nicki according to opposing counsel a couple of the settlement plaintiffs have serious credibility issues.

NICKI

I can't even believe you're even in the office this early.

JESSICA
I know right.

MR. LAYTON
Ms. Howell I know you've worked
hard but I really think Edelson
should take over.
(beat)
You might be too close to the other
side if you know what I mean.

NICKI
Oh I know exactly what you mean. If
I was a man this wouldn't even be
an issue.

Nicki catches Jessica staring.

NICKI (CONT'D)
Are you ok?

JESSICA
Just picturing you as a man, yep I
can see it.

NICKI
Ugghhh.

Nicki storms out.

3 INT. NICKI'S OFFICE - MORNING

3

Nicki is at her desk unaware that Derrick has entered.

SHOT OF DERRICK LETTING OUT A LONG SIGH.

Nicki remains focused on work.

SHOT OF DERRICK RELEASING ANOTHER SIGH.

NICKI
Uncle D I can't ask "is something
wrong" because that would lead to
what I'm certain would be a really
long story which I just can't
afford right now.

DERRICK
It's my anniversary.

NICKI
Awww that's nice. Well I gotta run.

Nicki gets up to leave.

DERRICK
Sit down young lady.

NICKI
I gotta go back to Mr. Layton's
office, my reputation is on the
line.

DERRICK
The story isn't that long.

Derrick pauses to think about his statement.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
I can leave that part out. You know
that Bart was a dancer back in the
day.

NICKI
Oooh like an Alvin Ailey dancer?

DERRICK
No, like "put a dollar" in my g-
string" dancer.

NICKI
What?!!!

DERRICK
Anyway we always had a routine to
mark our anniversary.

FLASHBACK: 5
YEARS AGO

3A INT. DERRICK'S BEDROOM - EVENING

3A

SHOT OF DERRICK RELAXING ON A VERY LUXURIOUS BED.

BART, a late 30's black male enters. He's shirtless and
wearing basketball shorts.

BART
(sings)
Do you know what today is? It's our
anniversary. Happy Anniversary D-
Money.

Bart grabs his phone, selects "Toni Tone Toni" which quietly
fills the room.

Bart breaks into a sensuous dance as Derrick looks on in adoration. Bart climbs into bed and comes face to face with Derrick.

BART (CONT'D)

You like?

DERRICK

Oh I more than like but I don't see any presents, gifts. You know wrapping paper, big bows.

BART

Baby I am the gift. The gift that keeps on giving.

DERRICK

Can I return it?

BART

Trust me you don't wanna return all this.

SHOT OF BART AS HE KISSES DERRICK ON THE LIPS.

FLASHBACK ENDS.

Nicki is fanning herself with a folder.

DERRICK

You ok?

NICKI

I should call the fire department.

DERRICK

Why?

NICKI

To put out that story...good Lord!!! So are you gonna mark your anniversary this year?

DERRICK

Oh I'm going out tonight, there's gotta be another "dancer" out there somewhere.

NICKI

Well while you're out looking for Mr. Goodbar, I'll be trying to salvage my reputation.

4

INT. OUTSIDE JESSICA'S OFFICE

4

Jessica is talking with Tai Beauchamp, a statuesque black female beauty.

Nicki passes by in a rush.

JESSICA

Oh Nicki.

NICKI

Jessica if this is about some smooth talking Casinova who drank saki out of oyster shells and then gave you the pearls as a souvenir, I'm not interested.

JESSICA

Darling this is Tai Beauchamp, the fabulous...

NICKI

(interrupts)

Oh my goodness I know exactly who you are. So nice to meet you. I'm Nicki Howell. I read your beauty blog religiously. Big Black Beauty. That's me.

JESSICA

Nicki's in the middle of working out a settlement with Curly Q.

TAI

Wait, you're the one that's doing that. I think I know a couple of the women involved. What a mess. Well I'm up here trying to save my brand name.

JESSICA

Yes it looks like I'll be doing some legal finessing with a gentleman out west who's claiming to have had the Big Black Beauty domain for sometime, mind you none of the big black beauties seem to own clothes.

NICKI

Oh I see.

Gladys rides in.

GLADYS

Ms. Bouchard, Edelson wants you to take a look over these documents.

TAI

Gladys?

GLADYS

Who wants to know?

TAI

It's me Tai, I met you with Gavin. We dated for a little while.

GLADYS

Yess yess. Look at you. Still as beautiful as ever.

TAI

How's Gavin?

NICKI

Still as confused as ever.

GLADYS

Well good seeing you all.

Gladys drives into Jessica's office.

JESSICA

Sweetie where are you going that's my office?

GLADYS

Lord with all you women out here I figured it was the ladies room.

5

INT. BAR - LATE AFTERNOON

5

Nicki and Fabian are seated side by side at the bar. Fabian hold's Nicki's hand and kisses it.

FABIAN

I love the way we're managing to mix work and pleasure.

NICKI

You know Fabian I do too. We could teach a master class. Something like "managing Briefs in court and Bed"

FABIAN

I like that.

NICKI

I knew you would. I actually thought you would have been a "boxers" man.

FABIAN

I like a little support, what can I say.

NICKI

You raised some credibility issues I hear.

Nicki takes her phone shoves it in Fabian's face.

NICKI (CONT'D)

You know who this is Fabian?

FABIAN

No but it says Big Black Beauty.

NICKI

That's Tai Beauchamp, a very well known beauty and social media influencer.

FABIAN

What does she have to do with anything?

NICKI

With her loyal audience she's about to help me bring Curly Q to it's knees. You hear me Fabian Boyd. You think for one second I'm losing this settlement? HA!

FABIAN

I thought we weren't mixing business and personal. This is supposed to be our time.

NICKI

Oooh it is our time. But I applaud you for a very shrewd move.

FABIAN

Why thank you.

Nicki gets up to leave. She kisses Fabian on the mouth.

NICKI
But you're playing checkers. I'm
playing chess.

Fabian seems flustered.

FABIAN
Wait...hold up Nicki...what does
that mean?

NICKI
Remember the Queen is the most
powerful piece in the game of
chess...and you're just a rook.

Nicki exits.

FABIAN
Looks like this rook will not be
getting a check mate tonight.

6 INT. GAY BAR - EVENING

6

Derrick seated at the bar starring up at the male dancer,
removes a \$10 bill from his wallet and stands up to stuff it
in the dancer's g-string.

SHOT OF MR. MOORE AT THE END OF THE BAR. HE RECOGNIZES
DERRICK.

The dancer turns around to reveal his perfect ass. Derrick
shakes his head and takes out another \$10.

DERRICK
Damn.

MR. MOORE
Does Jasmine know you're here?

Derrick spits out his drink.

DERRICK
Excuse me?

MR. MOORE
You're Derrick right?
(beat)
I'm Antonio...Mr. Moore...Jasmine's
first grade teacher.

DERRICK
Time to go.

MR. MOORE

You can't leave now. The dancer is coming back.

DERRICK

Shouldn't you be home preparing tomorrow's lesson?

MR. MOORE

It's been prepared and I had a little free time. A good 3 hours sleep is all I need.

DERRICK

I remember those days. Now I'm usually out cold by 9:30p.

MR. MOORE

Almost past your bedtime then.

DERRICK

I'm celebrating my anniversary.

MR. MOORE

Wedding? Where's the hubby?

DERRICK

Oh he's long gone but I still like to mark the day.. So I figured I'd kill 2 birds.

Mr. Moore looks up at the dancer..

MR. MOORE

Well it looks like you're killing a couple birds tonight..

Derrick laughs.

DERRICK

You know when I was younger I used to look at a guy my age sitting in a bar and say "I'm not gonna be that guy". Now look at me. I am that guy..

MR. MOORE

Shoot.. I know dudes much younger than you who wished they looked half as good.

Derrick looks back up at the dancer.

MR. MOORE (CONT'D)
Believe it or not I used to dance..

DERRICK
I knew there was a reason I liked
you.

MR. MOORE
Happy Anniversary. I gotta show you
some of my moves one day. I'm much
better than Mr. Cheeks.

DERRICK
Who's Mr. Cheeks?

Mr. Moore gestures towards the dancer.

DERRICK (CONT'D)
What an appropriate name.

MR. MOORE
No money required in my g-
string...it's on the house.

7 INT. FABIAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

7

Fabian sound asleep. He wakes up. Nicki is at the foot of his
bed dressed in her sexiest outfit.

NICKI (O.C.)
Fabian...Fabian wake up !

Fabian sits up.

FABIAN
Nicki Howell?!...why are you
dressed like that?

NICKI
I don't know, it's your dream. But
why am I dressed like this?

FABIAN
Well I --

NICKI
(interrupts)
Nevermind...you are really trying
my patience with this Curly Q case.
You leave me no choice but to bring
out the big gun.

FABIAN

No no please not the big gun...wait
what big gun?

NICKI

Non other than my gorgeous and
nationally known beauty influencer
Tai Beauchamp...Hey Tai...

Tai enters.

TAI

Hey Nicki...oh hey Fabian.

(To Nicki)

Well you did say he was a briefs
man.

FABIAN

But what are you doing here?

TAI

Fabian?

(beat)

Fabian what were you possibly
thinking sweetie? This is Nicki
Howell. THE Nicki Howell. Yes her.
No one messes with Nicki Howell.
Curly Q can throw everything and
the kitchen sink her way but once I
spread the word about what Curly Q
did to me even the hair care gods
won't be able to save your ass.
That settlement Nicki offered, I
suggest you take it fast.

NICKI

Did you hear that Fabian?!

NICKI (O.C.) (CONT'D)

I said did you hear that Fabian?

Fabian jumps up in bed, eyes wide open.

8

INT. NICKI'S OFFICE - AFTERNOON

8

Nicki and Derrick are in the office.

NICKI

I just can't get over Mr. Layton
taking me off this case...it's MY
case.

DERRICK
You can't believe it but I can.

NICKI
What?

DERRICK
Have you looked in the mirror lately?

NICKI
You can see this pimple even under all this makeup?

DERRICK
Girl no !!! I mean you're still a black girl in a white man's world.

NICKI
Uncle D I'm so tired of carrying this firm on my back.

Gladys enters on her scooter with a plate of cookies.

GLADYS
Beep Beep!

NICKI
Oh lord, what do you want Gladys?

GLADYS
Why Ms. Howell is that a new dress? That's your color. Derrick how are you? Happy Pride.

DERRICK
That's in June.

GLADYS
Oh I celebrate all year long...oooh here, I made these for you Ms. Howell.

Nicki takes the cookies.

NICKI
Clearly an alien has hijacked your body.. They should be jumping out at any moment...what's going on Gladys?

GLADYS
Well Ms. Howell to be honest I do need a tiny favor.

DERRICK
 (to Nicki)
 Whatever it is please do it quickly
 cuz this Gladys is scaring me.

NICKI
 What's the favor?

Gladys hands Nicki a letter..

GLADYS
 I got problems.

Nicki reads the letter.

NICKI
 Oh you got major problems.....these
 situations usually effect old
 folks.

GLADYS
 Hey, watch it!!
 (beat)
 Is there any chance you can help
 me? Please..

Derrick whispers to Nicki..

GLADYS (CONT'D)
 You know I'm hard of hearing
 anyway. No need to whisper, that's
 just rude.

NICKI
 Gladys, Gladys...I will gladly help
 you on one little condition.

Derrick takes a bite of a cookie.

DERRICK
 Good cookie Gladys.

9 INT. NICKI'S KITCHEN - EARLY EVENING

9

Nicki, Derrick and Jasmine are seated around the kitchen
 island.

NICKI
 Uncle D, we never got to talk about
 your anniversary, how was it?

DERRICK

It was ok. I treated myself to a drink at a bar nothing special, anyway how was your day?

NICKI

Wait a minute now, did you meet anybody?

DERRICK

Hmmmm, did I meet anybody? Actually I did but nobody special. So anyway....

NICKI

Well what's his name?

Derrick hesitates to answer.

DERRICK

I think he said his name was Mr. Antonio Moore.

JASMINE

Wow, that's my teachers name..

DERRICK

Really?

JASMINE

You remember, you met him at school.

DERRICK

Did I?

JASMINE

Thank god it's not the same Mr. Moore.

DERRICK

Well....

Tanya enters.

TANYA

Hey everybody.

JASMINE

Wait, please tell me it's not MY Mr. Moore.

DERRICK

Well...

NICKI

Oh lord.

TANYA

What happened?

NICKI

Sounds like Uncle D went out last night and may have met one of Jasmine's teachers.

TANYA

Well what's wrong with that?

Nicki gives Tanya the look.

TANYA (CONT'D)

Ohhhh.

JASMINE

Uncle D there are a million other teachers out there, why mine?

DERRICK

Listen it just happened. I didn't plan it.

JASMINE

I'm going to my room.. My friend Erica gave me this book to read.

NICKI

What book?

JASMINE

It's called "surviving first grade". I honestly don't know how some of y'all made it.

Jasmine exits.

TANYA

Go on Uncle D, you can still pull em I see.

DERRICK

It's the curse of beauty.

TANYA

I'm sure...Nicki what'd they say about the case?

NICKI
Well as of right this very
second....

Tanya gets excited.

NICKI (CONT'D)
I'm still off the case and I'm
every bit of that angry black
woman.

TANYA
What are we gonna do?

DERRICK
Stay outta her way.

10 INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - MORNING 10

SHOT OF NICKI'S HIGH HEELED FEET WALKING SLOWLY.

10A INT. OUTSIDE MR. LAYTON'S OFFICE DOOR - 30 SECONDS LATER 10A

Nicki heads toward Mr. Layton's office door with
determination.

MS. HASTINGS
Let me let Mr. Layton know you're
coming in..

SHOT OF JASMINE IGNORING MS. HASTINGS

10B INT. MR. LAYTON'S OFFICE - 30 SECONDS LATER 10B

Nicki enters.

NICKI
Mr. Layton I need to speak to you.
This is just not right. I've
thought long and hard about this
and it doesn't sit right with my
inner feng shui, my caramel
karma...

MR. LAYTON
Your what?

NICKI
My inside. Now you realize Sir that
without me...

MR. LAYTON

(interrupts)

Ms. Howell you are back on the case.

NICKI

Mr. Layton this just isn't right, after all the...wait, what did you say?

Jessica enters.

MR. LAYTON

Not only are you back on the case but I've been informed that they've accepted your original offer.

JESSICA

Well this calls for a champagne toast.

NICKI

It's 10 o'clock.

JESSICA

And??? Darling do you know I once dated a charming Silicon Valley venture capitalist named Alexis Pappadeaux who started each morning by gargling with champagne while brushing his teeth.

NICKI

The point Yoda?

JESSICA

The POINT darling is that Mr. Layton has come to his senses, which equals a celebration which equals alcohol....duh.

NICKI

Why thank you Mr. Layton.

MR. LAYTON

I should have never doubted you.

NICKI

What made you change your mind?

MR. LAYTON

Now is that really important?

JESSICA

Darling no need to know how the
sausage is made. Just know that
it's delicious.

MR. LAYTON

After all I'd never want to mess
with your "how did you
say"...Caramel Karma.

11 INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - 5 MINUTES LATER

11

Nicki happily struts down the hallway feeling victorious.

"This Girl Is On Fire" plays in the background.

Suddenly Gladys on her scooter appears and crosses Nicki's
path.

NICKI

Will you watch where you are going
with that thing.

GLADYS

So you're back on the case I hear.

NICKI

What!! How'd you know that?

GLADYS

I told Mr. Layton that sometimes
you just don't mess with Big Black
Beauties.

Gladys quickly exits.

THE END