

"Blindspotting" [Starz Channel TV Series, Season 1, Episode 6 "Ghost Dad", aired July 25, 2021

SETUP: Ashley struggles with how to tell her 6-year-old son, Sean, about his dad's incarceration. While she takes a walk to figure out what to say, her friends and Mama Nancy are babysitting Sean. Mama Nancy and Sean try to figure out what to watch on TV. Mama Nancy suggests "Princess Frog", "The Wiz", "Akeelah and the Bee", or "Cool Runnings". Sean wants to watch "Paddington 2", a movie about a British bear.

Mama Nancy: "Don't you wanna watch a Black movie?"

Sean: "What's a Black movie?"

Mama Nancy: "A movie with people Black like you. What color you think you are, Sean?"

Sean: "Honey brown."

Mama Nancy: "F**k."

SETUP: Later, Mama Nancy discusses the incident with Sean's mom's friends.

Mama Nancy: "We need to teach Sean he's Black."

Janelle: "What makes you think he don't know that he Black?"

Mama Nancy: "I asked him, straight up."

Janelle: "Okay, but how did you ask him?"

Mama Nancy: "He don't even know what a Black movie is."

Earl: "What are y'all talking about though?"

SETUP: Mama Nancy calls Sean into the room to ask what are his favorite movies. Sean mentions the John Wick movie series and the Paddington movies. After Sean leaves the room, Mama Nancy tells Janelle and Earl that none of those are Black movies. Earl comments that Sean just needs to watch "true original Black film." When Janelle suggests "The Wiz", Earl informs Mama Nancy and Janelle that that has a "white writer". When the ladies suggest "The Five Heartbeats", Earl advises that Sean is too young for historical fiction. When they suggest Cool Runnings, Earl tells them that has a "white writer" and "white director". Later, Mama Nancy brings up the subject while sitting at the dining table and playing dominoes with Janelle, Earl, and Trish (Ashley's sister-in-law). Mama Nancy calls Sean over and shows how to hold dominoes correctly as "a cultural touchstone". Earl then introduces Sean to spicy Cheetos, saying it's in his blood. Sean runs out screaming that they are too spicy, and Earl jokes that the problem is more serious than they thought.

Janelle: "Look, y'all.... he's mixed Black. We can't expect him to have the same relationship to Blackness that we do."

Mama Nancy: "That's your youth talkin'. We all mixed Black. S**t, I just don't want him to grow up to be one of those light-skinned kids who think they better than somebody."

Janelle: "Well, Ma, he's just having less of a Black experience."

Earl: "Whoa, what? What are you saying? The scale of Blackness is proportional to how much you're s**t on?"

Janelle: "No..."

Earl: "There are all different kinds of Black, equally."

Janelle: "I'm just saying that Sean out in the world, has a different experience than I do."

Earl: "What is the Black experience, then? Incense and brass crabs and plastic table covers?"

Mama Nancy: "Excuse me???"

Earl: "No offense, Nancy..."

[CUTS TO OTHER SCENES, THEN RETURNS]

Janelle: "What I'm sayin' is, is that Black is an experience... and baby boy might experience it less."

Earl: "Well, not less. Like, he - - differently."

Janelle: "Right. That's what I'm sayin'. So, some Black people have more privilege than others."

Mama Nancy: "Black privilege? How the f**k does that activate?"

Earl: "No, I hear what Janelle is sayin'. Proximity to Eurocentricity privilege."

Janelle: "Thank you."

Trish: "Sean, what exactly did Mama Nancy say to you?"

Mama Nancy: "Don't ask a clearly confused child. He needs answers, not more questions."

Janelle: "Yeah, but Ma, did you ask him in a weird way?"

Mama Nancy: "What'd I say?"

Trish: "See... y'all are trippin'. Sean is from here. He's Black, okay? Ain't no semi-Blackness. There's all kinda shades of Black. He from the West. His daddy in jail. He with the s**ts, as far as I know."

Earl: "I don't know if 'with the s**ts' has anything to do with it..."

Janelle: "Right."

Earl: "...Because them is circumstances. You know, Blackness is not just a bunch of circumstances."

Janelle: "Yes, and some circumstances are uniquely Black."

Earl: "Facts."

Trish: "Exactly, exactly. See, the nigga who was raised rich in Piedmont and went to private school, is not the same Black the way we are Black. The nigga can't play spades and the nigga can't play bones, so..."

Janelle: "Well, hold up, 'cause I can't play spades or dominoes."

Earl: "What? Really???"

Mama Nancy: "Yeah, I tried."

Janelle: "No, I can't play spades, Earl. But what she talkin' about is the hood pass, and that's something completely different."

Trish: "Wait, okay, so y'all sayin' the hood pass has nothing to do with it, hmm? Like, y'all ain't never read nobody on they Blackness for how hood they are?"

Mama Nancy: "Hmm...that's interesting."

Trish: "Cap! Okay."

Earl: "Yeah, I mean, I did just read you 'cause you can't play spades, Janelle."

Janelle: "Oh my God, y'all, it's about how the world sees dark skin, period."

Trish: "Okay, I feel what you sayin', but what I am saying... is that, Black is Black, right?"

Earl: "Okay, I can dig that..."

Trish: "Okay. Then -- depending on where you raised and your environment, makes you more or less Black..."

Janelle: "No, Trish..."

Earl: "That don't make no sense. I'm hella Black. I'm officially super – like, I'm actually certified. I'm actually – like, at the DMV, I'm Black..."

Trish: "Uh-huh..."

Earl: "You know what I mean? And I'm from the East but, like, the nice part of the East. You know what I'm sayin'? My parents is cool. They love each other. They good...like, they got, like, retirement money. My pops drive a Mercedes. I'm less Black?"

Trish: "Yeah, nigga, and you were in Quentin for drugs."

Earl: "So now I'm Black?"

Mama Nancy: "Mmm..."

Earl: "You're saying I'm post-jail Black, Trish?"

Trish: "No...what I'm saying is that ---"

Earl: "No, what you're saying makes no sense at the end of the day. 'Cause here, look – your little beige self cannot tell me or qualify my Blackness at all. So... what's up with that?"

Trish: "Well, Nancy the same shade as me. Her grandmother is white. Does that make her any less Black?"

Janelle: "Uh-uh...hold up...nooo..."

Trish: "Does that make her less Black?"

Earl: "You're talkin' about people granny like that?"

Janelle: "Hold up! My momma is old beige Black. So that's -- that's hella different..."

Earl: "Oh, geez..."

Mama Nancy: "Okay, full stop. First of all, not old..."

Earl: "No, it makes sense. Like, 40 years ago, would have been a little bit better, but Nancy's still Rosa Parks Black..."

Janelle: "Mmm..."

Earl: "You 2018 light-skinned. You know what I'm sayin'? You like, Doja Cat Black."

Trish: "Oh!!"

Janelle: "Aww, \$#!+..."

Mama Nancy: "How old do y'all think I am?"

Earl: "You really wanna know?"

Trish: "Hang on. Hey, hold up. Wait, wait, wait, y'all. You think I look like Doja Cat?"

Janelle: "Wow. Wow. This is my whole point, okay? Growin' up, everybody used to say how beautiful Ashley was, right? Everybody always said her hair was so pretty. They always wanted to know what was she mixed with. Everybody was flauntin' they mix... 'Ooh, well, girl, you know, I'm mixed with India'.... 'Well, girl, \$#!+, I'm part Filipino'... meanwhile, I'm over there rockin' Afro puffs, standin' next to b*****s who look like you, and they over there tellin' me that I need to get my f*****g hair pressed."

Mama Nancy: "Okay, let's back it up for a second, my worldly academic youngsters, 'cause I been Black for a long time. Well, not that long... *chuckles* But longer than y'all. And I came here before you all were born, when Oakland was a place you went to, to get away from how Black people ---- ALL kinds of Black people *pointing to Earl, Trish, and Janelle* -- were being treated in the South. And it was a Black city... ooh, the Panthers built it up. Then the FBI made it a crack city. Then, redlining kept us from buyin' anything, and now we gettin' pushed out by new white money and generational old white money as if we never existed. So, this whole conversation is some Black privilege. And I love it. So keep on havin' it. And, you're welcome. And now I'm late for my date with a Chinese man, so -- progress!! And, goodnight. And, y'all show Sean 'The Wiz' and 'The Five Heartbeats', motherf*****s. Bye!"