

**FROM OUT BEYOND MY SHAME**

**An Excerpt**

**By Shawn Nabors**

**"From Out Beyond My Shame" was developed and received it's first reading as part of Liberation Theatre Company 's Writing Residency program under the direction of Christopher Burris.**

**Color Coded Productions  
scnabors1@gmail.com  
Colorcodedproduction@gmail.com  
www.shawnnabors.com  
347.423.6868**

This is the opening scene of the play where we meet SHEPHERD, our protagonist. During prom he forms an unlikely connection with the star quarterback of their high school's football team.

**PROJECTION SCREEN:**

**Spring, 2008. Prom Night.**

**The back of Canarsie High School. Brooklyn, N.Y. A bench rests between two bushes on either side of it. It's night time. Stars fill the sky. In the background we hear party music. An ambulance can be heard softly in the distance. *SHEPHERD*, ducking down behind the bushes, wears a tux. He jazzes it up with suspenders, his glasses and a bowtie.**

**He looks both ways to make sure the coast is clear. All systems go. He pulls out his eyeglass case and from it he removes a jay.**

**He awkwardly smokes said jay. Right as he takes a pull:**

***ANDREW*, their high school's star quarterback comes out wearing the prom king sash and crown.**

Shepherd starts coughing. Trying to put it out in a hurry. Waving the smoke away. Still coughing. **He stands, scaring Andrew:**

ANDREW

Holy shit. What the-

SHEPHERD

This isn't what you think it is.

ANDREW

Are you chiefting?

SHEPHERD

Am I what?

Smoking. Is that a spliff?

ANDREW

It's marijuana!

SHEPHERD

Are you stupid?

ANDREW

No.

SHEPHERD

Keep your voice down. Someone will hear you.

ANDREW

SHEPHERD

Sorry.

(Whispering)

ANDREW

Don't apologize, just let me hit it.

(Whispering)

SHEPHERD

What? Oh. Okay.

**Shepherd passes him the jay. Andrew puts it to his lips.** Shepherd stands there awkwardly. Staring at him.

What?

ANDREW

Nothing.

SHEPHERD

You gonna light it for me?

ANDREW

Absolutely. I mean, yes. Yeah. Sure. Why not?

SHEPHERD

Shepherd gets close. Closer. Closer. He's sweating.

Bring it in man.

ANDREW

**Shepherd lights it.**

Pause.

Thank you.

ANDREW

You're welcome.

SHEPHERD

Andrew blows it in his face and smiles. Shepherd coughs.

Second hand smoke!

SHEPHERD

It's weed man.

ANDREW

I know.

SHEPHERD

Are you always like this?

ANDREW

First time.

SHEPHERD

And you doing it by yourself?

ANDREW

SHEPHERD

Yes, well, my cousin gave it to me. He goes to another school. Told me to have a good time with it. All the cool kids are doing it so...I figured I'd just give it a try. Better now than never right? My mother would kill me if she found out about this. It - looks - much cooler when you do it though...

Put it to your lips.

ANDREW

Shepherd does as he is told.

ANDREW

Okay but hold it like this. Right. Now suck it in.

SHEPHERD

Pause.

ANDREW

Shut the fuck up nigga. You know I ain't mean it like that. The smoke.

SHEPHERD

I'm jokin. Relax. I'm just joking.

ANDREW

Pull. I mean. Excuse me.

Shepherd pulls.

ANDREW

Easy. Once you get the smoke in your mouth, you wanna...suck the smoke back in-

Shepherd laughs and that makes him cough. He messes it all up. Laughing.

ANDREW

You play too much. I expected you to be more mature than this.

SHEPHERD

Why?

ANDREW

Just come on man.

SHEPHERD

Okay okay.

Shepherd does it again.

ANDREW

Now - fuck it. I'm just gonna preface this whole thing by saying pause okay. Pause pause pause pause pause. Now - when you got the smoke in there - suck that shit back in through your teeth. Inhale or whatever.

Shepherd does it. It was more powerful than he expected. He wants to breathe it all out.

ANDREW

Hold it. Hold it.

Shepherd does.

ANDREW

All right now breathe it out nice and easy. You got this.

Shepherd does.

SHEPHERD

Whoaaaaa. Some even came out through my nose. That was so cool.

ANDREW

You a pro now.

SHEPHERD

How you know so much about smoking?

ANDREW

I been smoking since I was like 13.

SHEPHERD

Oh.

ANDREW

What school you going to?

SHEPHERD

Vassar.

ANDREW

Never heard of it.

SHEPHERD

It's a small liberal arts - doesn't matter. I'm excited.

ANDREW

What you gonna be? A rocket scientist or, or, a molecular biologist or some shit like that?

SHEPHERD

Although I'm flattered, that is incorrect. For now I'm studying English. I'm going to be a big novelist someday. You? LSU right?

ANDREW

That's right. How'd you-

SHEPHERD

Grapevine.

**Andrew sits.**

SHEPHERD

So...what are you doing out here? Shouldn't you be celebrating?

ANDREW

I'm grateful.

SHEPHERD

But?

ANDREW

I don't know. Just needed some fresh air.

SHEPHERD

This is gonna go down in history man. You'll remember this day forever. Mister Prommm king.

ANDREW

Doesn't mean much.

SHEPHERD

It's a privilege

ANDREW

Is it?

SHEPHERD

Obvi.

ANDREW

What does it get you?

SHEPHERD

Girls. Everybody in your face.

ANDREW

I was getting girls before I became prom king.

SHEPHERD

True.

ANDREW

What about you?

SHEPHERD

I didn't become prom king.

ANDREW  
But do you get girls?

SHEPHERD  
I don't know.

ANDREW  
How you don't know? Either you do or you don't man.

SHEPHERD  
I don't, okay.

ANDREW  
Okay. Nothing wrong with that.

SHEPHERD  
I know.

ANDREW  
You're young.

SHEPHERD  
I'm 18.

ANDREW  
So old.

SHEPHERD  
You're still 17.

ANDREW  
How you know that?

SHEPHERD  
You're Andrew Miller. Your birthday is November 5th. You're a Scorpio. You're a celebrity.

ANDREW  
I'm not a celebrity.

SHEPHERD  
That's how they all treat you.

ANDREW  
Please, I don't care about that fake shit. They just love the idea of me. Nobody at this school actually knows who I am.



SHEPHERD

Who are you?

ANDREW

How'd you know my birthday? And my sign and shit. Are you stalking me?

SHEPHERD

Please! God no. We've been in the same class since like the fourth grade.

ANDREW

Really?

SHEPHERD

Yes Andrew. You just stopped noticing me.

ANDREW

You're hard to miss.

SHEPHERD

Are you being facetious?

ANDREW

Especially when you use words like that. Who says that shit?

SHEPHERD

I do.

ANDREW

Yeah. I see.

Awkward silence.

SHEPHERD

I don't get girls because I'm not into them.

ANDREW

Oh. Okay.

SHEPHERD

I mean I am - I love women. I'm totally a feminist. My moms is a woman.

ANDREW

Who wudda thunk.

SHEPHERD

She is. But umm - I like guys - I like dudes - like...men. I like men. There. I said it. Now it's out there. Woopdy doo! Woo.

ANDREW

Interesting.

SHEPHERD

I've been reading and a lot of the most successful people say that the path to true happiness is through radical authenticity. They say that what you want the most is on the opposite side of what you fear and that if you're not willing to fail, you're not willing to be successful. I'm willing to be successful. Plus, I'm just tired of feeling bad about this shit. I just want to be - feel normal.

Pause.

SHEPHERD

So. That's me! What about you? Have you read anything interesting lately?

**Andrew passes the jay back to him. Shepherd jumps and flinches.**

ANDREW

The fuck is wrong with you?

SHEPHERD

I thought you were about to hit me.

ANDREW

Why would I hit you?

SHEPHERD

Because I just told you that I'm a faggot.

ANDREW

Shh! Stop saying that shit.

SHEPHERD

How come?

ANDREW

Because it - it's not cool.

SHEPHERD

That's what everyone else calls me.

You don't have to say it too.

ANDREW

Faggot faggot faggot.

SHEPHERD

Cut it out will you?

ANDREW

Fuck them.

SHEPHERD

Pause.

**Suddenly, Andrew kisses him.** Pause. Shepherd is shocked.

Yo you good?

ANDREW

Pause.

SHEPHERD

Shut the fuck up.

ANDREW

Sorry. I had to.

SHEPHERD

Was that okay?

ANDREW

I'm not - I'm not sure that I could feel it. Try it - try it again?

SHEPHERD

Andrew looks both ways. **He kisses him again. Pulls him in this time.** Shepherd closes his eyes. **Suddenly the doors burst open and CLIFF, enters.**

Ew! Y'all gay.

CLIFF

**Andrew pushes Shepherd. He falls down.**

ANDREW

What the fuck man?! Get off of me!

SHEPHERD

What? But you just said-

ANDREW

What the fuck is wrong with you dude? I just asked if you were okay man.

SHEPHERD

No. You kissed me.

**Andrew grabs Shepherd by his shirt.**

ANDREW

Don't make me beat the shit out of you on prom night my Nigga.

SHEPHERD

But-

**Andrew yanks Shepherd and then mashes him back onto the floor. Shepherd pushes his hand away. Andrew gets up.**

CLIFF

So you didn't just fucking kiss that dude?

ANDREW

I was just being nice. Fucking weirdo.

CLIFF

Faggot.

Shepherd gives them the finger. **They exit.**