

America, and the Adventures of Nat Turn-Up
An Excerpt

By Shawn Nabors

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In this scene our protagonist, NAT JR., who has recently returned home from four years in prison, confronts his estranged father who we learn is homeless.

SCENE SEVEN

In the black we hear a voice singing, "I Need You Right Away" Michael Bethany/Fred Hammond version. The voice is gravelly but beautiful, colored with his soul, his hopes and dreams. His pain.

NATHANIEL SR.

*"I need you right away
A second later would be much too late
This situation I am facing now
Is too much to face
Alone
And with your presence lord
Hold me close just like you've done before
I can count on you I know today
Lord I need you right away
I can count on you I know today
Lord I need you right away"*

The lights slowly come up to reveal a spotlight on Nathaniel Sr. on a subway train. Kind of otherworldly. He's disheveled. Drunk. Fucked up.

Nathaniel Sr. finishes and he takes off his hat. He quietly shuffles through the train i.e. the audience with his hat out in hopes of collecting money. He gets nothing.

NATHANIEL SR.

Fuck y'all then.

The train comes to a stop. He falls. He gets up. He hums and murmurs himself off of the train.

Nat stands there in the shadows.

NAT JR.

I shouldn't have to! You're my father.

Pause.

Nathaniel Sr. looks at him and smiles.

NAT JR.

What?

Nathaniel Sr. starts playfully hitting Nat in a fury. He makes helicopter noises and almost moves just as quickly. Nat quickly gets frustrated. It's too quick to catch up.

NAT JR.

Stop! Stop! Stop hitting me man! You better not hit me again.

NATHANIEL SR.

I'm chastising you!

NAT JR.

Stop it! Are you drunk?

Nat shoves him. Nathaniel Sr. Gets pushed to the platform edge, he slides, nearly losing his balance. Nat rushes to his aide and catches him.

Pause.

Balance is restored. They hold on to each other.

NAT JR.

That was - that was a close one.

NATHANIEL SR.

I got it. I'm fine. Thank you. Thanks.

Nat let's go and backs away from him.

Pause.

NATHANIEL SR.

That was - that wa on me.

NAT JR.

No no-

I play too much.

NATHANIEL SR.

That was scary.

NAT JR.

Almost lost me already.

NATHANIEL SR.

Pause.

You a grown man now. You done did time and everything.

NATHANIEL SR.

I was a political prisoner.

NAT JR.

You was brave. That's what you are. Know that. I know it. I've always admired that about you.

NATHANIEL SR.

You say that like you've been around to see it.

NAT JR.

I still know you son. You came from me all right. Partially. You got my gifts and you got my demons. Half from your mama too.

NATHANIEL SR.

Why'd you leave then?

NAT JR.

I didn't leave you. I - I just...man go on and leave me boy. Get! Can't stand yo generation.

NATHANIEL SR.

Older people always say that yet you the ones that got us in this predicament. Your generation ain't all peachy.

NAT JR.

You think you know everything. You don't listen and you too prideful.

NATHANIEL SR.

But you just said that you was proud of me.

NAT JR.

I take it back!

NATHANIEL SR.

Pause.

NATHANIEL SR.

I don't mean that.

Nat starts to walk away.

NATHANIEL SR.

Wait! See, that's why I don't like talking. I prefer singing any day. Could never think of the right words to say to ya. I don't know what to tell you Junior. You or your sister. I was scared okay. Am scared. Still. Today! Everyday I wake up like it's gonna be my last and I look at my life and my relationships, I ain't really create nothing. Except you two babies. That's the only good thing I done in my life. And meeting yo mama. But I ain't look after that proper. We went sour but I let my kids go too, I let my dreams go, I let everything go. I went. Kicking and screaming-

NAT JR.

Come home dad.

NATHANIEL SR.

Are you delusional? That's what you got from what I just said? Your mama don't want me there.

NAT JR.

We do. So...cut the bull shit. Make it happen.

NATHANIEL SR.

Who you think you talking to?

NAT JR.

You.

Nathaniel goes to drink from his flask. Nat runs and smacks it out of his hand. It falls on the tracks.

NATHANIEL SR.

Hey!

Nat walks away.

NAT JR.

Come. Home.

Pause.

Nat exits the train station. Nathaniel lingers. Considering if he can get his flask back. He kicks the bench hurting himself.

NATHANIEL SR.

Shit!

(to the sky)

Sorry. Sorry! I'm sorry. No more cursing lord. I swear - promise.