

RAW PROVOCATIVE HUMANE PLAYS

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Southern Cross

by
Timothy Davis

Developed with
The CRY HAVOC Company

A wounded war vet returns home to his family is hanging on for
dear life at the very last edge of the American dream.

Approximate Running Time: 15-20min

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SOUTHERN CROSS.

LIGHTS UP.

A dilapidated farmhouse.

An abandoned car sits forlorn.

On the creaky porch hangs two flags - a Confederate flag and an upside down American flag.

SAWYER enters and sizes up the house. He's in military dress, and carrying a duffel bag. He's missing both hands; in their place is a hook on his one hand, and a plastic hand on the other.

SAWYER

Hey, in the house! Anybody home?

Pause.

SAWYER drops his duffel bag.

Stares at the flags. He doesn't like either of them.

SAWYER

Hey! I'm home!

The screen door on the porch swings open.

Out rolls FINN, in a wheelchair. One of the wheels is bent funny, forcing the chair to wobble. He is wearing a Crimson Tide football jersey and shorts. His hands are bandaged. He struggles to push himself through the doorway - the screen door keeps swinging back into him and banging his shins.

FINN

Ow! Fucker.

SAWYER

Want some help?

FINN

(still struggling)

No, I got it.

(not yet)

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Fucker.

(he almost collapses himself
onto the porch)

Jesus. Fuckin' door.

SAWYER

Whaddya do when ya gotta go out?

Beat.

FINN

Go out where?

SAWYER

I dunno. Groceries. Mail.

FINN

Mail ain't out.

SAWYER

Well, it's off the goddamn porch is all I'm sayin'.

FINN

(pats his bent wheel with a
dirty bandaged hand)

Takes some doin'.

SAWYER

I'll bet it does.

FINN

That your bag there?

SAWYER

No, it's a lilac bush.

FINN

I mean your *only* bag, smartass.

FINN

Need help with it?

SAWYER

Help?

FINN

I dunno. I'm just glad you're home. Seems like somethin'
you'd say when you're glad t'see somebody who ain't been home
in a long time.

SAWYER

Don't suppose you made up my room.

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FINN
What room?

SAWYER
My room, dumbass.

FINN
It ain't your room no more.

SAWYER
Ten bucks says different.

FINN
You ain't got ten bucks. You in the army. Ain't nobody make any money in the army.

SAWYER
Be that as it may, I'm sayin' I got a room up there an' I'm just wonderin' if y'all made it up to be so.

FINN
Well... it ain't been your room in a while. Ask ma. She put herself in charge of rooms.

SAWYER
Where is she?

FINN
She's in the house.

SAWYER
She drunk?

FINN
Fuck's it matter?

SAWYER
It don't?

FINN
Don't make no difference. She don't remember nuthin' no more, she's stumblin' around like she's lost... the booze don't make a shit of difference.

SAWYER
(gesturing to flags)
Those her idea?

FINN
She don't get any ideas no more, I told ya.

SAWYER
But ya put her in charge o' rooms?

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FINN

You don't put Ma in charge o' nuthin'. She just does, an' ya git outta the way.

SAWYER

Ya cain't have 'em both up, ya dumbass.

FINN

Why not?

SAWYER

Cuz they fought each other, ya idgit. It's like been on both sides of the same fight. When did ya put up the Betsy Ross?

FINN

'Course we can have two flags. You're dumbern' a bag a' hammers I swear - looks like that war took your brains along with your goddamn hands. Can you drive with those things?

SAWYER

Take 'em down.

FINN

What'd you say?

SAWYER

I said take 'em down, goddammit.

FINN

No. I like 'em, an' we got more important shit to do.

SAWYER

Well, I don't.

(pointing at the Confederate flag)

I don't like that one, and that -

(pointing at the American flag)

Is wrong fuckin' way up, so take 'em down.

FINN

Hey! HEY! You don't get to come in here an' start barkin' orders like Dad now. This ain't been your house in a long time.

SAWYER

Well how long I gotta get all moved in 'fore you take down the goddamn upside down flag, you fuckin' Communist?

FINN

I said like it!

SAWYER

I come home from fighting a goddamn war to protect your ass, I gotta look at a flag like that the second I get back? Do you know how goddamn DISRESPECTFUL that is?

FINN

Communist?

SAWYER

You take that goddamn flag down and put it rightways up or I'll put you wrong way up in that goddamn chair!

BONNIE, hair a bizarre shock of white and a bathrobe in worse condition, enters from the house.

BONNIE

Ya got my pills??

FINN

Ma, go back inside, you'll catch a draft.

BONNIE

What draft this is Alabama! Ain't no drafts in Alabama!

FINN

Well, you'll catch somethin' out here in your bathrobe go inside!

BONNIE locks eyes with SAWYER.

BONNIE

I know you.

SAWYER

Yeah, Ma, you do.

BONNIE

Your hand... you're missin' a hand.

FINN

He's missin' *both* hands, Ma.

BONNIE

No, he's got one good one there.

FINN

No, that one's just a plastic hand. How come you only got one hook?

SAWYER

(re: hook)

It's my good hand.

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FINN

So?

SAWYER

So I can't use the plastic hand, dumbass, so it's for looks.

FINN

Oh. So it's like a decoration.

SAWYER

Might as well put two goddamn fungo bats on the ends of my elbows.

FINN

What's a fungo bat?

SAWYER

Ma?

She's moved to stand in front of the car. She doesn't respond, she just stares at the defunct wreck.

SAWYER

MA!

BONNIE

Do you know when my George is comin' back?

SAWYER looks at FINN.

FINN

Told ya. She's like this all the time.

BONNIE

He's gotta drive me to tha store. I need ta git my pills!

SAWYER

Ma, Dad's dead.

Beat.

BONNIE

Who? Mah gut aches! When is George comin' back? I need a ride!

SAWYER

Ma, I watched his funeral on the fuckin' internet. 'Member? I was in Afghani -

BONNIE

Shhh. I don't what you come by for, Mister, but my George will be back soon, and my boys are upstairs.

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FINN

Sawyer, can you drive that thing with those tentacles?

SAWYER

Ma -

BONNIE

My boy Finn plays football. He's gonna play for Alabama someday. I GOTTA GO GET MY PILLS!!!!!!!

SAWYER

MA, he already played for Alabama. He ain't upstairs, he's right there.

BONNIE

He'll kick your ass if you don't gimme my George back!

SAWYER

That's how he got in that chair. He can't even get upstairs I bet.

FINN

That's why I didn't make up your room, dickhead.

BONNIE

He's a real big boy. An' my oldest boy George is in the Army. With the guns an' everything. You better watch it.

SAWYER

George?

FINN

She mixes 'em all up. I told ya let 'er go.

SAWYER

Finn, take the goddamn flags down.

BONNIE

What's wrong with the flags?

SAWYER

We shouldn't be flyin' a Confederate flag!

FINN

Since when did you start hatin' the ol' Stars n' Bars?! We grew up with tha Stars n' Bars!

SAWYER

Since I went off an' fought a war for a real country and figured out a few things out about the ol' US of A!

BONNIE

We can't take it down. We're in Alabama!

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SAWYER

We're in goddamn *America*!

BONNIE

What's the difference?

SAWYER

What's the - ? There ain't! Alabama's IN America you don't get to fly a flag for - ...got my goddamn hands blown off for THIS goddamned country, I ain't seein' some other flag of some made-up country on my door.

BONNIE

Don't you wave that hook at me I'll call my boys!

FINN

Oh, now it's *your* door?

SAWYER

No, it's HER door, ya jockstrap!

BONNIE

You... you can't take my flag.

SAWYER

Lost your damn mind I can't.

SAWYER reaches up with his hook and snags the Confederate flag and yanks it.

BONNIE grabs the other end before it can fall.

BONNIE

NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

SAWYER

Leggo that fuckin' flag, Ma!

BONNIE

This is my George's flag! He was born in Alabama!

She tugs.

FINN wheels forward and grabs a corner of the flag.

FINN

Yeah! It's parta our heritage!

SAWYER

Well we ain't gotta brag about it, Finn!

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They all struggle with the flag.

FINN

You don't like it on our house anymore you can just go sleep in the barn!

SAWYER

I ain't sleepin' on no damn barn! Goddammit I spent two years in fuckin' Ira -

BONNIE

If I had my pills I'd yank that hook right out of your arm!

FINN starts to get yanked perilously close to the edge of the porch.

SAWYER

I'm sleepin' in a bed in my own damn house!

FINN

I'm slippin', dammit, quit it, you cripple!

SAWYER

You're the cripple, cripple!

BONNIE

This ain't your house this is George's house! He built it with his own two hands!

SAWYER

No he did not he bought it in 1979 when we moved over from Deer Point! I have the pictures!

BONNIE

There ain't no pictures o' George! He wouldn't never let nobody take his picture!

FINN

Gimme Dad's flag!

BONNIE

The camera woulda stole his soul!

SAWYER rips the flag out of their hands. Every one falls - SAWYER backwards, BONNIE forwards, and FINN tumbles out of his chair off the porch. The chair crashes, too.

SAWYER

WHAT?

BONNIE

The camera...

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Ow!

FINN

Woulda stole his soul!

BONNIE

She scurries to trammel up the flag,
which is caught in SAWYER'S hook.

SAWYER

Ma, Dad wadn't no Indian! I saw his funeral on the internet!

FINN

OW!!!!

SAWYER

Oh, shut up, you can't even feel your legs!

FINN

No, it's my fuckin' head...

SAWYER

Aw, quit yer cryin' - my hands got blown off!

FINN

So my head can't hurt?

BONNIE

(tugging at the flag)

This is... my George's flag. He won it at the battle.

SAWYER

Ma, Dad wadn't never in no battle. He drove a truck for the Cola Company.

FINN

My head can't ever hurt?

BONNIE rips the flag from SAWYER's
hook, tearing it.

BONNIE

See what you did?

SAWYER

Ma, it's a bad flag.

BONNIE

(hugging it closely)

No, it's not. It's our flag.

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SAWYER

Ma... No. That ain't our flag. That's a bad flag. I know it makes ya feel good, but it's a bad flag, an' I don't think we should be flyin' it anymore.

FINN

Just one flag?

SAWYER

Yes!

(points at American flag)

THAT flag, if ya get it goin' the right way!

BONNIE

But my George was awarded this flag when he beat them Tigers. At the Battle of the Bulge.

FINN

It was the Iron Bowl.

SAWYER

(to FINN)

That was *you*, dummy. And it was a football game.

(to BONNIE)

And Dad wasn't in the Battle of the Bulge. He was barely in grade school.

BONNIE

Well, it was some battle. Maybe it was Gettysburg.

SAWYER

No...!

FINN

That's where I got hurt!

BONNIE

Lotsa people died at Gettysburg.

SAWYER

No, dammit, Finn! You ain't helpin'! Ya didn't get your back busted in no Gettysburg.

FINN

There were lotsa casualties.

SAWYER

An' Ma, Dad wadn't in no Gettysburg, he wasn't in no battles. He drove a truck for 40 years an' never left the South his whole goddamn life.

BONNIE

Then where'd we get the flag from, smartass?

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SAWYER

I dunno, but you're gonna fuckin' burn it, Ma.

FINN

Don't you curse at my Ma!

FINN claws at SAWYER in vain.

SAWYER

Ma, burn that damn flag!

BONNIE

I WILL NOT! That's illegal!

SAWYER

You can burn flags, Ma, it ain't illegal. Now gimme.

SAWYER tries to grab the flag. BONNIE leaps onto the porch. FINN struggles mightily to get back in his chair.

BONNIE

You wait til George comes back with my pills!

SAWYER

Ma, he ain't comin' back! He's dead! He's DEAD! How can you forget Dad's dead? How can you not remember me? I'm your son!

BONNIE

My son plays football.

SAWYER

I can't even talk to you... Ma Dad's dead, Finn's broke, I'm back. I just wanna go inside, and catch some shuteye, and when I wake up...

Beat.

FINN

What?

SAWYER

I'll figure it out. But Ma...? You may not have any marbles in your head, Finn may not have no legs and my hands may have been left in some ditch in -

BONNIE

You can't have George's flag and that's final! I'd rather die, and I gotta gun inside an' I'll blow your head clean off!

SAWYER

I ain't scared a' no guns, Ma. But I swear to everything I know if I see that flag anywhere but in the garbage or on a smokin' woodpile, I will shit myself crazy thinkin' o' bad shit to do to this house. It's evil.

Pause.

BONNIE

(standing tall)

I'm taking this inside where she can't hear you. And I'm gonna go get my George. Then you're all in big big trouble.

She enters the house.

FINN

Can you put me back in my chair?

SAWYER considers this.

SAWYER

I don't think I can pick you up with these.

(holds up his hands)

What is this about her pills?

FINN

She's sick.

SAWYER

So where's the drugstore?

FINN

Couple towns over.

SAWYER

She can't drive herself?

FINN

Oh, man... she drove that old jalopy inna the ditch last month.

SAWYER

Where's the truck now?

FINN

Still there. We ain't got no money to tow it out.

SAWYER

Ain't the town possess it then?

FINN

Look around ya. You see a town anymore?

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SAWYER

(re: car)

This thing work?

FINN

I dunno. But I cain't work the pedals.

SAWYER

I can't work the gear shift.

SAWYER

Can Ma put you back in the chair?

FINN

Dunno. Never fell out before.

SAWYER

What's this about her pills?

FINN

She's really sick, man. I tried to wheel her inna town, but she kept jumpin' out an runnin' around the highway. I didn't make it moren' a mile before my chair broke down and' I had to turn back.

SAWYER

How long y'all been holdin' on like this?

FINN

Dunno. But we need help. I thought you could drive us inna town and get some supplies and Ma's pills, an' then I heard about yer hands.

SAWYER

Take the flag down, Finn.

FINN

Ain't nothin' workin' right out here.

SAWYER

I said take it down.

FINN

What the hell you care, man?! We're gonna die out here without some help!

SAWYER

I won't have the fuckin' disgrace in, on, or over my house. I rather would die.

FINN

I'd run you over with my chair if it's get me a tank o' gas right now.

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SAWYER
You don't understand. You weren't there.

FINN
Where?

SAWYER
Over there.

FINN
I don't wanna hear it.

SAWYER
No?

FINN
Nobody does. We all got our own problems, if ya hadn't noticed.

SAWYER
How long she been like that?

FINN
I dunno. It kinda snuck up on me. I got pretty beat to hell tryin' to get her some help, Sawyer.

He holds up his bandaged hands.

SAWYER
Jesus... when I was over there, all I could think about was gettin' back home. This ain't exactly what I was picturin'.

FINN
When you were picturin' it ... was I there?

SAWYER
'Course.

When... when you remembered me...

SAWYER
...yeah?

FINN
Did my legs work?

Pause.

SAWYER
Yeah. They did. You were perfect.

FINN smiles.

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FINN

I miss 'em. I miss bein' all right.

SAWYER holds up his hands.

SAWYER

I know the feelin'.

FINN

Ma's gonna get worse.

SAWYER

That possible?

FINN

We gotta help her or she's gonna just disappear, up in that house, or runnin' down the highway... somethin'...

Long pause.

SAWYER

What're we gonna do about that flag?

FINN

Dad put it up. When you left.

SAWYER

Backwards like that?

FINN

Yeah.

SAWYER

How come that way?

FINN

I dunno. Said it was real important that way, though. Said help would come.

SAWYER

Help?

FINN

Yeah. He said somebody would see it, an' help would come.

SAWYER

W'kinda help?

FINN

I dunno. I thought maybe he meant you, but then I heard about your hands and... and he sure as hell couldn'ta meant me.

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(tracing his fingers along the
wobby wheels of his chair)
Fat lotta help I am.

SAWYER
We should take it down. Put it right side up.

FINN
But what if some helps on the way, and the flag ain't the way
Dad left it, and the help thinks we're all ok? We ain't ok!
Lookit us!

Beat.

SAWYER
Well... it just makes me all sad lookin' at it that way.

Beat.

FINN
You ever been to the schoolyard where the flagpole is, when
no one's around? The bell just bouncin' against the pole?

SAWYER
It's called a halyard.

FINN
Yeah. A halyuhh... yep. That's the loneliest sound I ever
heard.

(beat)
BONG... BONG... BONG...

Beat.

SAWYER
I guess it is pretty sad soundin'.

FINN
You put a flag on that pole, and it ain't so sad anymore.

They both look up at the upside down
flag.

FINN
Let's not take it down.

SAWYER
It's the wrong way up.

FINN
Let's leave it. For a bit anyway.

SAWYER
'Til when?

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FINN

'Til help arrives, I guess.

LIGHTS FADE.

END OF PLAY.

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