

Season 1: Episode 1

“Nolan Jones”

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how it ends



NETWORK INTRO

Rusty Quill Presents...

MICAH [Season 1 Intro]

For as long as I can remember, I've suffered from unnerving, recurring dreams and night terrors. The How it Ends podcast is an exploration of daily life, and the imprint it leaves on our memory and consciousness. This podcast is made by me, Micah Jones with some help from my two closest friends, Elia Cabral and Devon Williams. I'm not sure where this journey will take me. So follow along as I try to uncover the meaning of my dreams, and finally get some sleep.

I'm releasing this in real-time. So if you're just joining, please start from the beginning. And thank you for listening.

**[INTRO MUSIC FADE OUT]**

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

MICAH

Hey, so I guess this is my first official episode. That is pretty weird to say. Like I said in the pilot that I put up last week, I'm making this podcast with my two best friends. Devon is our resident tech whiz and he'll be helping me with all the editing and Elia will make an appearance at some point to read my Tarot cards and likely make lots of jokes.

If I'm being real, I'm not really sure how I feel about the whole Tarot thing, but I'm sure it'll be cool. Anyway, I did want to begin each episode with a dream but I don't even remember if I had one last night. I woke up early to drive to New Jersey to visit my mom for Thanksgiving. And here we are.

That being said, this podcast started with me just recording and talking about my dreams. But I've decided to record parts of my daily life too. I think I want to try and make connections to what I'm dreaming. I think that it'll help me in this effort to figure all of this stuff out. But no matter what, I decided that

if I'm going to do this, I have to try and force myself to open up. And sometimes that's really hard for me.

Yeah, so I guess what I'm saying is, thank you for your patience and for taking this journey with me. So here we go.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

AVA

Why are you not sleeping?

MICAH

Work? Stress?

AVA

That's it?

MICAH

Okay. Is that like, not enough for you? Or--

AVA

--You know what I mean.

MICAH

Yeah, well, I don't know. I've also been having a lot of weird dreams lately. They keep me up. So then, you know, I spent all day super exhaustive and it sucks.

AVA

Yo se de que trata esto.

MICAH

No, you don't.

AVA

What are the dreams about then?

MICAH

Lots of things. Sometimes the same thing.

AVA

You're going to tell me? Or no?

MICAH

I've been having this nightmare... A lot. And like, you know something about it... about it feels so familiar. It's sort of... it sort of looks like Duke Island Park.

AVA

You had a dream about Duke Island Park?

MICAH

No, I was saying that like--

AVA

--Oh yes. You used to go there all the time. That's why you're dreaming about it.

MICAH

That's not what I'm even talking about. What I'm trying to say---

AVA

---You and Aimee went there all the time. I saw her mother the other day. When's the last time you saw her?

MICAH

[sarcastic] When's the last time I saw Aimee's mom?

AVA

Micah.

MICAH

I don't know. Maybe this summer after high school. Aimee and I weren't really friends for most of that anyway. And she connected with me on Facebook sometime after that, but I don't use Facebook.

AVA

I remember that time I had to pick the two of you up from Exchange Field because Aimee rode her bike into the back of that van? [chuckles] Ai, pobrecita.

Hello? [snaps fingers]

MICAH

Yeah, sorry. I was. I was thinking about Aimee.

AVA

Si. I know.

MICAH

No, no. I know. It reminded me of something. Do you remember the time that you had to come get me?

AVA

[sighs] Aha. I was just talking about it.

MICAH

No, not that day. Like it was the day that Aimee and I wrote down to Duke Island Park. We were supposed to go on a hike.

AVA

No, you always did things like that. How can I remember one day?

MICAH

You remember the day that she hit the van and bled out all over the place?

AVA

Si, but that was funny. She looked worse than she was. She didn't even need stitches--

MICAH

--Mom!

AVA

--She's screaming like she was dying. Que dramatica, esa.  
[laughs]

[Micah picks up the dinner plates in front of her and Ava and carries them to the kitchen counter. Micah sets them down.]

MICAH

You just reminded me that like this one time that we went there. I think it might have even been around this time of year actually.

AVA

Okay.

MICAH

Yeah. It might have actually been Thanksgiving weekend. I kind of remember being on a school vacation or something. Anyway, she... uh... she promised me she'd walk out to the falls with me. But when she... we got there like she ditched me. You really don't remember this?

AVA

Querida, no. You didn't tell me anything when you were 13.

MICAH

Okay, so Aimee and I, we rode our bikes to the park. She was supposed to go on the walk with me. But when we got there, there was just some boy sitting on one of the picnic tables in the field. All I remember was that he was there to see Aimee, and that he was her boyfriend that she didn't tell anybody about.

AVA

Well, she wasn't supposed to have one.

MICAH

Probably not. We were like 12 years old. Anyway... you know... she left with him. So I went by myself.

AVA

You weren't supposed to do stuff like that alone.

MICAH

Mom. I'm 33. I made it through alive. It doesn't matter anymore.

AVA

Wait a sec. What year was that?

MICAH

I think was right before my 13th birthday.

AVA

Oh, was that the year the Barney balloon got destroyed at the Macy's Parade?

MICAH

Mm-hmm. Yeah, we watched it together.

AVA

Oh my god. That was hilarious.

MICAH

Yeah, embarrassing for everyone at Macy's.

AVA

Your dad would have loved it.

[pause]

MICAH

Anyway. I feel like I was near Bradley Gardens for some reason.

AVA

Well, Bradley Gardens is across from the park.

MICAH

Yeah, it is. But that doesn't explain why I would be there.

AVA

I picked you up from a house on Perry Street once. Was it that day?

MICAH

How do you know what street it was?

AVA

Well, that's Aimee's last name. That's probably why.

MICAH

But why was I there? Do you remember? Like I can't remember anything between Aimee leaving with him and then you picking me up. Did I call you?

AVA

Yes, you did. I remember now. When I got there, you were all scratched up. I assumed you had a fall.

MICAH

Well, what did I say?

AVA

I'm sorry, mija. I don't remember. You were all cut up and had a gash on your forehead so I took you to the ER.

MICAH

Yeah, but did I say anything?

AVA

I don't know. I don't think so. I was more worried about your head.

MICAH

[pleads] Come on Mom, please. Can you just think?

AVA

Micah, I said I don't remember. I'm sorry--

MICAH

[frustrated]

--You're not even trying though. Like you're just saying that you're sorry.

AVA

Why are you asking me this? What does it have to do with anything?



MICAH

[angry]

I don't know. Why can't you just answer me?

AVA

[exasperated]

You just got here and we're arguing.

MICAH

We're not arguing. I just want you to try and remember.

AVA

I did. I picked you up. I took you to the doctor. You were okay. So I brought you home and put you to bed. That's it. That is all.

MICAH

[yells]

Well, that's not good enough!

AVA

No me hables asi.

Are you okay? Talk to me. Por favor.

[Micah gets up from the table and begins to walk away]

Micah, come back here. Sit and talk to me. What is this about? We were having a nice conversation. What happened?

MICAH

Nothing. I'm just gonna go lie down.

AVA

Don't get upset. I have to ask. Is this about your dad?

MICAH

It's not about dad.

AVA

Micah. Please calm down. I just want to make sure you're okay. I'm trying to understand. This time of the year can be--

MICAH

[Yells]

--I'm fine!

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

MICAH

Hey, I feel like I wasn't even totally there in that conversation. I'm an asshole. My mom and I don't even get into it like that. And I can't remember having ever yelled at her. You know, she's always just been pretty cool. But tonight... She just got to me. When she asked if this was about my dad... I don't know. Probably is.

So my dad's name was Nolan. Nolan Jones.

This whole town loved my dad. You know, he grew up here. He knew everyone. Everyone knew us. Every Friday night, me, my mom, and my dad would hang out watching TV. They let me stay up really late to watch TGIF sitcoms and eat junk food and it was my favorite part of every week. And then one Friday night I fell asleep waiting for him to come home. And when I woke up the next morning, my mom told me he had an accident. And I never saw him again.

The anniversary was a couple weeks ago. It's... it's been 25 years. That's a long time. So most of the time I think I'm okay. Like, I get by. I go to work. I hang out with my friends. I go to therapy. I just try to get through the day and ignore the fact that he's not here. But I can't. He went from being a living, breathing person... my favorite person... I can't deal.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

So I'm in the shed. The shed is a building in our backyard that my dad used for a studio. I haven't been in here since he died. He loved working out here. He used to come out here on the weekends and get so caught up in stuff. Sometimes he'd stay out here for so long that he'd pass out and come strolling into the kitchen the next day looking for breakfast. You know, he was... he was always making something.

It looks like, um, my mom has made some changes. She kept the shed how he left it for a long time. But eventually, she said she just needed to let it go. It felt too much like a shrine. She said that she didn't need to be surrounded by his things to remember him. And that she remembers him because he was hers.

Okay, so, um, you basically know nothing about me and I'm talking about some heavy stuff here, so...

Okay, well, I guess you know that I don't sleep and that I have creepy dreams. But um, let's give you a little rundown.

You know that I live in Providence. But I actually grew up here in Somerville, New Jersey. I went to college in Rhode Island to get away from here. You know, my mom really wanted me to stay close to home and go to Rutgers. Her and my dad went there. That's where they met. But I didn't want to do that.

You know after my dad died... I... I hated being here. Everywhere I went, I ran into someone that knew him. And they'd look at me with that face. You know, like the one... You know if one more person said, "Oh, like your Nolan's daughter..." Yeah, I was gonna lose it.

I found a bunch of boxes, and they're all marked "Nolan's stuff." So I guess it's now or never.

[Door opens, papers and boxes rustling]

My dad was one of those people who would try something new and be good at it right away. Like, how infuriating is that right? He loved to be outside, too. That's probably where I get it. He...uh... he used to play guitar for me. He'd try and learn all of

my favorite songs. There was this one time where he learned to play Kris Kross' Jump and he... he rapped it for me. It was so bad. But um... I kind of loved it.

Some of my old books are in here. Charlotte's Web. I love this book.

All right, let's see what's in here.

[Boxes and papers rustling]

I just found a bunch of cassettes and a tape deck. I haven't seen one of these in... Well, if you can see it, you would know how long. But some of the tapes just have dates written on them... Like the one I just picked up says: July 8, 1990. BB PB and K.

And I have no idea what that means. But let's have a listen.

NOLAN [Voiceover]

There's a wonder of nature you may not have seen...

NOLAN & YOUNG MICAH (Together) [Voiceover]

Wow, Papa Bear! We see what you mean!

MICAH

[Voice wavers] I'd forgotten what his voice sounded like. I loved that book. He told me he went out and bought it the day he found out my mom was pregnant with me.

NOLAN [Voiceover]

I bought a bunch of Berenstain Bear books today at a garage sale. I found a few that Kit doesn't have. Oh, and I found...  
[Cassette tape stops]

MICAH

[Voice wavers. Sniffles.] Oh, duh. BB, PB, and K. Berenstain Bears: Papa Bear and Kit. I called my dad Papa Bear and he called me Kit. Like a baby fox. He never called me Micah, ever. I mean, not unless something was really wrong, or I was in trouble or something.

NOLAN [Voiceover]

[Cassette plays] It might fit my camera. And I also found a copy of William Shatner's The Transformed Man.

MICAH

[Laughing] He used to bring home wild stuff like... like from garage sales. Like other people's bowling trophies. And I had no idea what he was going to do with them. But oh my God, did my mom hate it.

You know, I remember this one time... when he came home from a garage sale. We sat out in the yard like going through all of his like weird finds. And you know, he was drinking a beer and I was drinking one of those like Shasta lemon-lime sodas, but this neighborhood dog comes into the yard. And he just sat there like staring up at my dad until my dad finally went inside and grabbed him a snack. And then he just like walked away. After that, anytime we were in the yard, you know, he would show up. It's like he knew that we were going to be out there or something. And then he would just do that same thing. He would sit right in front of my dad waiting for a treat.

You know, my dad called him Fat Freddy, because, you know, who knows? Maybe we were over-feeding him. I don't know. And then one day, Freddy showed up with another dog. He kind of kept showing up with the other dog it was it became a thing. Sometime later the other dog... I forget what we named him, showed up without Freddy. And we didn't see Freddy again.

The weekend after my dad died, I tried to sit by myself in the yard hoping that the other dog would come and sit with me. But he didn't.

There's other stuff in here. Notes. There's some Tom Petty.

What?

NOLAN [Voiceover]

[Cassette tape begins to play. An acoustic guitar song begins to play. Nolan is singing]

You're a superhero  
You're a shining star  
You're a messenger of peace  
I'm the running river, I'm the setting sun  
I'm the wind between the trees  
I'll be watching over you  
I'll be there to chase the shadows away  
Oh, the things that you will do, I'll be watching over you...  
[Cassette tape stops playing]

[Micah sobs]

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

BILLIE

How are you doing Micah?

MICAH

Um, I'm okay. I went home for Thanksgiving. For the first time in a while.

BILLIE

That sounds nice. When was the last time you were home?

MICAH

Last Christmas maybe? No. Yeah, you know, might have been a year before. So yeah, almost two years. It's been a while.

BILLIE

That's a long time to be away from home.

MICAH

Yes, you know, it's not anything bad. You know, me and my mom... you know, we're both busy. And--

BILLIE

--Of course

MICAH

--We talk a lot and we text a lot. You... you know this.

BILLIE

How was the visit?

MICAH

It could have gone better.

BILLIE

What makes you say that?

MICAH

It was... it was a lot.

BILLIE

Yeah. Going home around this time of year is stressful for a lot of people. It's the beginning of the holiday season. But I realize it might be especially difficult for you. What were you feeling during the visit?

MICAH

Yeah, I was... I was on edge for sure. Going back home usually has that effect.

BILLIE

It makes sense. You and your mom have been through a lot.

MICAH

You could say that.

BILLIE

Do you want to talk about your visit a little bit?

MICAH

I found a bunch of his stuff.

BILLIE

Take your time.

MICAH

So I got into a fight with my mom. And after it was over, I meant to go for a walk. But I ended up just going straight out to my dad's shed. And then I slept there that night. You know, I haven't been in there for so long. In the morning when I woke up, I... you know, I kind of poked around and I ended up finding a bunch of things my mom had saved. You know, there's like a guitar and some notebooks. That kind of stuff.

BILLIE

I'm not sure you mentioned that Nolan was a musician. You also play guitar yourself, right?

MICAH

Yeah. Yeah, I do. I also found this like box of cassette tapes that were recordings of him making notes on projects and random thoughts. You know stuff like that. And you know, I actually remember... or remembered, that he used to do that. Like he used to... used to talk to himself and make notes. And, you know, he made this one tape of us reading together. It was a Berenstain Bears book nature guide or something. And, you know... I know I remember loving it when I was a kid. But there was this other tape that I found that was actually a song that he had written for me.

BILLIE

Hearing that after so long must have brought back a lot of memories for you.

MICAH

Yeah, I've never heard it before. And I can't really handle talking about that right now.

BILLIE

Okay, take a breath.

[Micah breathes]



We can come back to that when you're ready. So last time, we talked about you trying to manage your stress in new ways. How's that been going for you?

MICAH

Fine, I guess.

[Laughing] What did I even say that I would do again, like other than keep track of my dreams?

BILLIE

Right? Well, I think we said you try to disconnect from social media a bit more. Maybe turn off your phone at night?

[Micah laughs]

Right? Maybe not watching anything that might cause you to have troubling dreams. Are you still hiking?

MICAH

Yeah, you know, I've been doing a little of that. Yes.

BILLIE

Okay. Let's go back to your visit for a second. You said you got into an argument with your mom?

MICAH

Yeah. You know, I honestly don't even know what happened there. We were having dinner. And it was really nice. We were reminiscing and laughing. You know, my mom is... My mom's funny. And I just, uh... you know, during that conversation, I had this, like, memory start to come back. And I was struggling to fill in the gaps. And I was trying to talk it through with her. But, you know, she... I don't know. I felt like she wasn't taking it seriously. And she wasn't seeing what I was saying. And I lost my temper. But it's fine. You know, we made up before I left. It'll be okay.

BILLIE

What made you think she wasn't taking you seriously?

MICAH

She just thinks that everything is related to my dad dying.

BILLIE

Did she say something specifically?

MICAH

Well, it's just like, she thinks that every bad mood that I'm in, you know, anytime I'm frustrated, that it's related to him. And it's not. Like it's just not. Maybe I'm just in a bad mood.

BILLIE

Right. Have you tried talking to your mom about this?

MICAH

About what? Which part?

BILLIE

About how you feel when she connects the mood you're in to your father?

MICAH

No. You know, we don't really talk about him too much.

BILLIE

Is there something getting in the way of you talking about Nolan?

MICAH

Sometimes I feel like she just doesn't get it. You know, she just doesn't get how I feel about him and trying to explain is just exhausting, you know? So I just don't.

BILLIE

Right. How do you feel?

MICAH

[Laughing] Are you supposed to ask me that?

BILLIE

[Chuckling] What I'm asking you is how you feel about your father?

MICAH

I miss him. Obviously. I hate that he's gone. I don't really know what else there is to say about that.

BILLIE

How about your mom? How does she feel?

MICAH

She has her work friends. She's got the dog, the house. I mean, she's fine. She's tough. She's always been that way.

BILLIE

She sounds tough. But she did lose her husband. I wonder if she might also be having difficulty around this time of year.

MICAH

If she is, she doesn't show it.

BILLIE

It could be hard for her to talk about as well.

MICAH

Yeah, I guess.

BILLIE

Losing someone close to you isn't easy. For anyone. Maybe you could try to get her to understand where you're coming from by asking her how she feels. You may find some unexpected common ground if you try.

MICAH

That feels like it would just be really awkward. Like, what am I supposed to do? Just call her randomly and be like, "Hey, mom, let's talk about dad."

BILLIE

Well, she's your mom. Why not?

MICAH

I don't know. I mean, I guess I could, but...

BILLIE

I think you'll be surprised at the outcome, Micah. I really do.

You mentioned recalling a memory during the conversation with your mom. Can you tell me about that?

MICAH

Yeah. My mom brought up this friend that I had when I was little, Aimee. You know, my best friend, actually. So my mom saw her mom recently. And I don't know, something she said... I can't even remember it now. But it reminded me of this day that Aimee and I rode our bikes to a park in a neighboring town. And I was just trying to remember what happened that day because parts of it are really fuzzy.

BILLIE

When did this happen?

MICAH

I figured it out that it was actually just before my 13th birthday.

BILLIE

Okay, what about this particular day stands out to you?

MICAH

I don't know.

BILLIE

Are you sure?

MICAH

So I can only remember the beginning and the end of that day. The middle is, quite literally, a blank. And when we were talking, I just had this overwhelming sense that I like needed to know. And I thought that maybe my mom could help me. It was

like, if I remember that day and whatever happened, then other things might start to make sense.

BILLIE

What are you trying to make sense of?

MICAH

That recurring dream I've been having. It feels like a lot of what happens in that dream is somehow connected to that day. I don't know. And I guess maybe I was feeling like if I could get some answers if I could make sense of what happened that day and make sense of the dream that maybe this issue with me not sleeping would just stop and I'd get some closure, or something.

BILLIE

That's one way of looking at it. Let's talk through the dream again.

MICAH

So in the dream, I'm on a hike or something in the woods. And you know, all I know is that I feel like I am both familiar with the place that I'm in and not familiar at the same time. And things seem fine until I feel like I am being watched.

**[VOLUME BEGINS TO FADE]**

And when I go to turn around, I wake up and I'm either screaming or in a cold sweat.

And it happens all the time.

**[SCENE TRANSITION]**

**[OUTRO MUSIC]**

Transcription: Evelyn Archer

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