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...And Baby Makes Two

An Adoption Tale

Nanci Christopher

A SAMUEL FRENCH ACTING EDITION

**SAMUEL
FRENCH**
FOUNDED 1830

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...AND BABY MAKES TWO – an adoption tale (then titled B.U.F.A.) had its first reading on April 19, 2006 and a workshop production February 6-21, 2007 both at the Pacific Resident Theatre in Venice, California (Marilyn Fox, Artistic Director). The production was developed and directed by Paul Linke.

The original production of *...AND BABY MAKES TWO – an adoption tale* was a guest production at The Other Space at the Santa Monica Playhouse in Santa Monica, California. It ran from October 12-November 18, 2007, with a three week extension through December 18, 2007.

The production was developed and directed by Paul Linke and co-produced by Racquel Lehrman of Theatre Planners.

Set Design was by Laura Fine Hawkes, Lighting Design was by Jeremy Pivnick, Sound Design was by Robert Arturo Ramirez, Costume Design was by Jacklynn Evans.

Graphic Design was by Szimple Design, Photography was by Ed Krieger and Casey Neidorf.

The Production Stage Manager was Angelica Estevez.

Voiceovers (in order of appearance):

Dick Bell.....	Kevin Kilner
Dad.....	Murray Neidorf
Rabbi.....	Rabbi Jonathan Klein

For more information, video clips and press visit the
...AND BABY MAKES TWO – an adoption tale website:
www.andbabymakestwo-anadoptiontale.com

THE CHARACTER

NANCI – 30-50. She is independent by nature with a deep desire to experience motherhood. She is funny, irreverent and quite comfortable with herself.

THE SETTING

The entire action of the play takes place in Nanci's English garden at the front of her house. There is a brick walkway leading up to the porch where a country style rocking chair sits.

THE TIME

It is spring...present time.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This play would not be what it is without the brilliant guidance and talent of Paul Linke (thank you Mary Lou Belli for introducing us!). As Paul always told me, "Less is more. Just tell your story, Nanci. It is compelling enough to hold its own."

So that is my only "advice"...tell the story simply, connect to the audience whenever you can in an improvised moment and most of all have fun.

I am especially grateful to my friends and family for all their love, support and patience throughout the birth of this "baby" of mine.

Most importantly, I am indebted and blessed by the presence of my real baby and light of my life, Joshua Brandon Neidorf, now almost ten years old...and to Elizabeth Sample Zufelt, his birth mother, who trusted me to raise him.

–N.C.

For

Joshua & Elizabeth

With Love

JOSHUA'S PRE-SHOW WELCOME

Hi Everybody and welcome to my mommy's show which, by the way, is totally interrupting my life. So anyways, I need you to do a couple of things for me before she starts. First, find the exit door just in case of an emergency. Then be sure to turn off your pagers and cell phones. Also, unwrap any candy you might want to eat now. Please, please do these things, because if you make any noise during the show, my mommy might just turn into "psycho mommy" and I can tell you from experience it's not a pretty sight.

That's it...so enjoy the show! Oh, one last thing. If you have any candy leftover, especially chocolate, you can give it to my mom for me...I LOVE CANDY!

(Music plays. As the music fades and a growing wind approaches the lights come up on Nanci standing upstage left. She is in a dripping wet yellow rain slicker [with a hood, of course].)

(Slide/Film/News Report of Charleston, South Carolina, September 13, 1999 as Hurricane Floyd's imminent arrival and frenzy are in full swing.)

Nanci. I'd never been in a hurricane before. I'm a California native, so earthquakes were my forte. Give me a 4.8 or a 5.5 and I'd just roll over and go back to sleep. Yet, there I was 3,000 miles away from home waiting for the hospital to discharge to me my newly adopted baby.

I was absolutely frantic at the thought of us being stranded in a hotel in the middle of the storm so I immediately began channeling the overachieving Girl Scout I used to be. Now, just so you know, I earned ALL 44 badges PLUS Sign of the Arrow AND Sign of the Star. I rushed right out to the local Piggly Wiggly. Don't you just love the sound of that...Piggly Wiggly? There used to be a Piggly Wiggly in Encino where I grew up. Anyway, I bought ridiculously huge supplies of baby formula, diapers, wipes, water and canned goods...anything I could get my hands on. I was so prepared for Floyd I could have earned another badge. Then back at the hotel I had a message from the local adoption attorney I was working with.

(Nanci pushes message button on phone machine.)

DICK BELL. *(voice over)* Nanci, Dick Bell here. This thing is going to hit sooner and harder than we thought. After underestimating Andrew, I am not going to take any chances with Floyd. I know you're supposed to be here for ten days but I want you to get out of Charleston first thing tomorrow morning. After the baby is discharged

we'll go straight to the airport. This is an emergency and I will take full responsibility for whatever fallout there may be.

NANCI. Twenty-four hours after arriving in Charleston my newborn baby and I were being evacuated! (*sound of thunder*) Welcome to my world...

(*NANCI who has already taken her rain slicker off now hangs it on a nearby hook behind the fence upstage left...*)

(*lights change...shift to present time*)

OK, so here's the deal. By the time I hit my mid-thirties my Knight in Shining Armor on a white horse had still not shown up. Shocking, I know. Oh, sure there had been alot of frogs (*low level sounds of many frogs ribetting*), A LOT of frogs...two in particular even wanted to marry me. I seriously considered one of their offers. (*One frog ribets once.*) There he is. However, at the end of the day, I knew it would have been a disaster of epic proportions. I have always said to friends over the years that if I had married that devoutly committed alcoholic I would surely be divorced and quite possibly be in jail for having killed him. So, I have never regretted that decision. But, clearly, I was faced with quite a dilemma because even though I didn't have the guy to live happily ever after with I still desperately wanted to be a mom.

And believe me, I knew I didn't have any time to waste...I mean, I could literally hear my biological clock screaming. So, I decided to look into all the baby options available.

I investigated everything like an over zealous TV detective; artificial insemination via sperm banks, Chinese baby girls, Russian orphans and domestic adoption through private attorneys. I even asked my best friend, Peter, if he'd give me some of his sperm...twice. He said no...twice.

NANCI. (*cont.*) Let me point out here that I was well aware of how fortunate and privileged I was to even be able to consider any of these options. For most people, single or married, the financial cost alone was prohibitive. I was also extremely lucky to be of a generation where adopting a baby as a single woman was allowed and accepted. Not too long ago it had been unthinkable.

I spent two years ruminating over my choices. As for artificial insemination, I decided that I didn't want to create a child and be pregnant by myself. For some women it made a lot of sense but for me it just didn't feel right...mostly because there was this little issue of debilitating mental illness in my family and mental illness is hereditary...which meant swimming around in my gene pool like blood thirsty sharks (think JAWS) were things like severe bi-polar disease, borderline personality disorder, suicide, nervous breakdowns and serious clinical depressions...all the really fun stuff. The thought of passing that legacy on to an innocent child terrified me. I was much more willing to gamble on someone else's genetics than my own.

Oh, don't get me wrong; I wasn't perfect. I certainly was no Betty Crocker. I definitely had "issues" of my own. Ask anyone who has known me for a long time. I was a body obsessed scale-hopping addict among many, many other neurotic things. But after almost twenty years, and yes that's all it took, of intense psychoanalysis and psychotherapy (and OK eventually a little Prozac) I finally felt stable and sane enough to take on motherhood. I just knew there were so many babies in the world that needed a mommy...that needed someone exactly like *me*...a mommy in the making full of love and nurturing to give.

As far as international adoption was concerned, the problem for me personally was that the babies you get are older...usually between nine months to two years old. My thinking was that this would probably be my only child. So, I wanted to have a newborn and experience

motherhood to its fullest from the get-go. To have that, private domestic adoption was the only way to go.

My father was not as convinced as I was.

DAD. (*voice over*) "Nanci, I can find you the sperm."

NANCI. "Dad, I am thirty-seven years old. I know where to find it. Actually, I've been finding it for about twenty years now. Come on, you have got to know that sperm is not the problem here."

DAD. (*voice over*) "Nance, I am not talking about just any old sperm. I am talking about top of the line Jewish lawyer's sperm, the cream of the crop. Then the child is biologically yours and mine." (*beat*) I am not making this up.

NANCI. "Dad, have you really thought about this? I mean, are you seriously going to go to Loeb & Loeb or O'Melveny and Meyers knocking on doors with a little specimen cup in your hand soliciting contributions? Hi, Murray Neidorf. I have a little favor to ask of you. It will only take a minute of your time, I promise. I need some sperm for my single, never-been-married-before daughter. Can you give me a hand? Are you insane?! Look, Dad, I love you, but I don't care about the baby's biology. My mind is made up, OK?"

DAD. (*voice over*) "OK, Nance. Whatever you think is best. Lenore, she won't budge an inch."

NANCI. So, I began my journey. I hired David Radis, a private adoption attorney, *the* "go to guy" in Los Angeles. David outlined the various things that I could do to find the baby girl of my dreams.

(*A slide of a resume and pictures appear behind*

NANCI...)

I started by writing a three-page personal history with pictures of myself, my family, even my cat, Cleo.

(*A slide of all of Nanci's ads appears behind her...*)

Next, I placed ads in various newspapers across the country. David also had ads in the Yellow Pages with an 800 number in these same cities.

NANCI. (*cont.*) Before you knew it I began getting calls. There was Karen from Kansas offering to be a surrogate even though I didn't advertise for one. I was a little puzzled by that at first but thought that it was awfully nice of her to offer. There was Christy in Milwaukee who was not willing to deliver in California or identify the birth father (two of David's deal breakers) and then there was *Kenny* from God knows where with this completely convoluted story. Then another *guy* called from *prison...collect*. Oh, yeah...I was Alice in Wonderland on Mr. Toad's Wild Ride. You can't make this stuff up! Plus there was Cassandra on baby number four, Connie the Liar (there's always a liar) who David caught in like a hundred lies and Leslie from Indiana who was so young and very sweet and just thinking about getting pregnant. I was surprised and disappointed with the results but also equally determined to press on.

A month later David called and I was on my way to Milwaukee to meet Christy who had decided to fully cooperate and was already in the early stages of labor.

I went directly to the hospital and found Christy propped up in bed. "Hi Nanci! Gosh, I'm so glad that you're here. Wait 'til you see him! He's so cute! Oh, I'll get the nurse to bring him in. He's so cute! Oh, I already said that, didn't I?" She seemed a little perky for someone who had just given birth. As I gently picked up this 6lbs. 5oz. blonde, blue-eyed peanut Christy cooed, "The two of you make a good match, don't you think?!" "Yes...yes we do." Hello Austen Beckett...that's in honor of my beloved Grandpa Joe.

The following evening I came back to pick up the baby. Christy asked to speak to me alone, outside, so she could smoke a cigarette. We walked out into the freezing November night. "Listen, Nanci, they're going to release me tonight but keep the baby one more night just as a precaution. (*pause*) You see, the week before the baby was born I smoked a joint. I didn't know that

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