

The Story behind the Name - Naked on a Train

“Composing music means really putting yourself out there, laying bare your soul for everyone to see. It also means letting some of the world in which in turn influences your music. It might simply set the mood or (pardon the pun) strike a chord. Many of my compositions have either been a direct result of things I have experienced or felt as a result of those experiences. All of them are stories I’ve felt were worth telling.

Naked on a Train is one of those...

It was a cold, dark stormy night... Okay, well, it wasn’t, but it might as well have been for all that occurred that bright sunny morning in Los Angeles. As a foreign student at the Musician’s Institute (MI) in Hollywood, I knew I needed to find a job and fast! Thankfully, instead of flipping burgers, I was recruited into an elite team of students who would help set up the stage for the MI graduation ceremonies at the prestigious Wilton Theatre in LA. Whether the graduating artists needed help with their microphones or the legendary guests of honour needed a latte, we had it covered.

The event I’m talking about occurred on one such graduation day. 7:30 a.m. found me bleary eyed on the LA Underground in an almost empty train which was stopped at the corner of Hollywood and Highland. It was a long halt. My colleagues were sitting across the aisle, surprisingly much more awake than I was, chatting away. I was glad to be left alone; maybe I’d manage a nap.

That’s when it all happened. I saw some movement at the far end of the next carriage. Someone was getting in very quickly. Perhaps the train is about to leave was one of my fuzzy thoughts. I heard a bit of a ruckus and looked up. A lady, completely naked except for her Afro, was running at top speed down the aisle through the other carriage towards mine, chased by two cops. That’s a weird scene, even for Hollywood. I was suddenly awake but too stunned to alert my colleagues about what I saw. I sat still in my seat hoping this bizarre act would just pass by me.

No such luck. While the cops, still by the carriage door, were discussing how to handle the situation the protagonist of this story had stopped right next to my seat. She looked at me, jumped over my knees and crouched onto the seat by the window next to me. In case you’re wondering, the carriage was still completely empty other than my colleagues, the cops, the strange naked lady and yours truly. I was naturally in shock. The reason why she chose to jump onto the seat next to me in an almost empty carriage still eludes me.

My associates, sitting about ten miles (as it now felt) away from me across that infernal aisle, had finally noticed that something was wrong. I was looking straight ahead, not blinking and probably had a look of sheer terror on my face. It’s Hollywood and anything can happen. The policemen, noticing my expression, realised their quarry was trying to hide (quite unsuccessfully) on the seat next me, exclaimed theatrically “Look! There she is!”

Cue my co-passenger. She startled up from her position on the seat, looked at me with bloodshot eyes and gave me a crooked grin. And in a flash, she was up, and jumping over my knees was out of the carriage door with the police hot on her heels. The last I saw of her was through the window running up the wrong escalator as the train slowly pulled away.

That incident stayed with me through that entire day, through all of the heavy lifting work we had to do and the excitement of meeting Joe Satriani.

As soon as I got home, after what felt like an eternity at the Wilton, I went straight to my guitar and penned this tune down. It was my way of interpreting the intense events of that morning.

Sometimes, I still think about that day and wonder what happened in the end. Did she get away or did they finally manage to catch her? I hope she got the help she needed and wherever she is, I hope there’s an escalator going the way she wants it to go.”