

# TOUCHE'

By:

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EXT. RURAL TRAILER PARK - DAY

Old, weather-worn trailers haphazardly scattered about.

The ground is dried and overgrown with weeds. The asphalt cracked and bumpy.

A scraggly STRAY DOG rummages through a trash bin.

INT. NATHAN'S TRAILER - DAY

NATHAN CHILDRESS (28), rail thin, pale, shaved scalp, sits at a small table. His eyes laser-focused on a computer screen as he feverishly taps the keyboard.

A KNOCK on the trailer door. Nathan freezes.

EXT. NATHAN'S TRAILER - DAY

The PARK LANDLORD (50), stands by the door, a white envelope in his hand.

The door's an odd one. A small makeshift opening has been cut out about face high. It's covered by a wood panel affixed to the interior of the door.

PARK LANDLORD  
(loud)  
Nathan.

He gives the door another KNOCK.

The wood panel slides open. Nathan's face fills the space.

NATHAN  
Just put it in the box like always.

The Landlord looks down at a small wooden box.

PARK LANDLORD  
Can't. Ain't your bill. It's your rental agreement for the next year.

NATHAN  
In the box.

PARK LANDLORD  
I need you to sign it.

Nathan's eyelids flutter as he contemplates.

NATHAN  
Just a minute.

Nathan disappears from view.

After a moment, Nathan's hand, clad in a surgical glove, creeps through the opening.

NATHAN (O.S.)  
Okay, give it to me.

An eye roll from the Landlord as he places the envelope in Nathan's fingers. Nathan's gloved hand disappears like a mouse escaping into a hole.

The Landlord rises on his tip toes, tries to peer through the opening. He's not quite tall enough - gives up the effort.

Nathan's gloved hand, holding the white envelope, reappears.

NATHAN (O.S.)  
It's signed.

The Landlord takes the envelope. The wood panel slides back covering the opening.

The Landlord shakes his head, walks away.

PARK LANDLORD  
(muttering)  
Fucking nut job.

INT/EXT. NATHAN'S CAR - BURGER KING/DRIVE-THRU - DAY

A beat-to-shit 1995 small sedan. The rough idle and exhaust smoke indicative of maintenance neglect.

Nathan pulls up to the Drive-Thru Window. He's greeted by MARIA (21), plump, Latina - wearing a Burger King Uniform.

MARIA  
(pleasant smile)  
Good morning, Nathan.

Nathan nods as he studies Maria's face.

MARIA  
Seven twenty-five, as usual.

Nathan reaches over to the passenger seat, grabs a small pole with a basket connected to the end. Seven ONE DOLLAR BILLS and one QUARTER rest in the basket.

Using the pole, Nathan extends the basket through his window towards the Drive-Thru window.

Nathan's eyes linger on Maria as she removes the money, drops a fast food bag in the basket.

Nathan pulls the basket towards him, places it on the passenger seat.

NATHAN

Thank you.

An awkward pause.

MARIA

Anything else?

Nathan shakes his head, drives away.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR - (PARKED) CURB SIDE - DAY

Nathan stares at his rear view mirror as he slurps the last of a soda.

He wipes his chin with the sleeve of his shirt, drops the cup in the Burger King bag - tosses it in the back seat. It settles atop dozens of other empty Burger King bags.

Nathan's eyes narrow, his jaw tightens as he adjusts the rear view mirror for a better view.

EXT. SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH - DAY

FATHER O'NEIL (70), clad in a black vestment, and a YOUNG BOY (12) put the finishing touches on a large, black rectangular CHURCH SIGN sign with white changeable letters.

The banner on top of sign: SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH

The daily message spelled out in white letters: "DON'T FORSAKE GOD'S SCRIPTURES"

Father O'Neil closes the glass cover over the sign, then tousles the Young Boy's hair as they admire their handiwork.

INT. NATHAN'S CAR - (PARKED) CURB SIDE - DAY

Nathan's eyes frozen on the rear view mirror. He chest rises and falls as he takes deep, measured breaths.

IN THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR

Father O'Neil, with his hand on the Young Boy's shoulder, escorting him towards the front of the church.

BACK ON NATHAN

Nervous twitches. He runs his hands up and down his arms as if trying to wipe off sand.

INT. MEDICAL OFFICE/WAITING AREA - DAY

A female RECEPTIONIST at a desk.

Nathan stands in the corner of the room, as far away as possible.

RECEPTIONIST  
(pointing at chairs)  
You're sure you wouldn't be more comfortable sitting?

Nathan shakes his head.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Two large fabric chairs across from each other. A small table between them. An office phone on it.

DOCTOR ANDERSON (55), bifocals, silver hair, sits in one of those chairs reading the contents of a manila case folder.

He reaches over, presses a button on the office phone.

WAITING AREA

The Receptionist places a phone receiver back in it's cradle.

She stands, walks to the interior door, grabs the handle.

RECEPTIONIST  
(at Nathan)  
Doctor Anderson is ready for you.

NATHAN  
Please, sit.

RECEPTIONIST  
Pardon?

NATHAN  
I'll get the door myself.  
(off Receptionist's look)  
Please.

The Receptionist walks back, retakes her seat.

Nathan makes a wide arc around her desk as if she had Ebola.  
He reaches the door, turns the handle - pushes it open.

DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Nathan enters, closing the door behind him.

Doctor Anderson glances up, points to the empty chair across from him.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Please, have a seat.

Nathan hesitates - scans the room. Finally, he grabs the back of the chair and drags it to the far corner.

NATHAN  
Here.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Alright. If that makes you more comfortable.

Nathan takes a seat. Doctor Anderson crosses his legs, removes his bifocals, points at the manila folder.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
So, it says here that you're afraid of being touched.

NATHAN  
Or touching.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Anything?

NATHAN  
Anyone.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
What happens when you are touched?  
Do you feel panic?

NATHAN  
I'm never touched. Not anymore.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Never?

NATHAN  
I avoid people.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Hmm.  
(stroking his chin)  
How is it that you make a living then?

NATHAN  
Translation.  
(off Doctor's look)  
People e-mail me documents.  
Manuscripts, contracts - all sorts of things. I transcribe them into English. From home.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Interesting. What language?

NATHAN  
Seven languages. Spanish, German, French --

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Seven?  
(off Nathan's nod)  
How in the world did you manage to learn seven languages?

Nathan's eyes blink rapidly as he contemplates.

NATHAN  
Because of all the time.

A quizzical look from Doctor Anderson.

NATHAN  
The time I don't waste on people.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Nathan, You must have some encounters with people.

Nathan shakes his head.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
What about your family?

NATHAN  
I was a foster child.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Even so, they would --

NATHAN  
I've been on my own since I was  
eighteen.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Well, what about school? You've  
learned seven languages that must  
have --

NATHAN  
Self taught.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Really?  
(off Nathan's nod)  
What about food? Do you go to  
grocery stores? Restaurants?

NATHAN  
Fast food. Drive through. Same  
place. Every day.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Why the same place?

A moment passes. Nathan clicks his teeth.

NATHAN  
I like the girl there.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Okay, that's helpful. Is that why  
you're finally seeking treatment?  
Because you found a person you  
like?

A gentle nod from Nathan. Doctor Anderson scribbles some  
notes in the manila folder.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
When did you first realize you had  
this fear?

NATHAN  
I don't know. As long as I can  
remember.

Doctor Anderson stands. Nathan presses back into the rear of  
his chair - panicked.



NATHAN  
That's close enough.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
I'm just going to my desk. Okay?

Nathan nods. Doctor Anderson, manila folder in hand, goes to his desk, takes a seat. He removes a digital recorder from the desk drawer, brings it to his mouth.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
(low voice - into  
recorder)  
Classic signs of haphephobia.

NATHAN  
What's that?

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
It's the fear of being touched or  
of touching.

NATHAN  
I'm not afraid. I - I just hate it.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
The most common cause is sexual  
abuse.

Nathan's breathing becomes heavy. Beads of sweat dot his forehead. Doctor Anderson leans back in his chair.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Nathan, have you been --

NATHAN  
No! Why would you even say that!?

Nathan feverishly runs his hands over his shaved scalp.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Is that where he first touched you?

Nathan's eyes clamp shut. He bows his head. The knuckles on his fingers whiten as he presses his hands against his scalp.

FLASHBACK - NATHAN REMEMBERS

A YOUNG NATHAN (12) outside Saint Francis Church placing white letters on the Church sign.

A YOUNGER FATHER O'NEIL stands behind Nathan. His hand rests on Nathan's thick head of hair.

FATHER O'NEIL

Good boy.

Father O'Neil's fingers drop to Nathan's ear. He caresses the outer rim of Nathan's ear between his thumb and forefinger.

BACK TO SCENE

DOCTOR ANDERSON

It's why you shave your head - yes?

Nathan looks up.

NATHAN

No. I just don't want anyone cutting it...touching...

Doctor Anderson removes a prescription pad from his desk drawer. Starts to write on it.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

I'm going to write you a prescription for an anti-depressant. It might help until you're really ready to talk. But it won't cure you.

NATHAN

What would?

DOCTOR ANDERSON

That's difficult to say in instances where a patient refuses to provide details.

NATHAN

In general.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

I don't understand.

NATHAN

Say that...say that someone was abused. What would you tell them?

Doctor Anderson leans back, drums his fingers on the arms of his chair - not quite sure the session should go on.

DOCTOR ANDERSON

To confront and forgive.

NATHAN  
(indignant/angry)  
You think it's that simple?

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
No, of course not. But I do know  
that for...  
(a beat)  
Victims of abuse. Confronting the  
abuser is the best way to conquer  
the fear. Forgiving is the best way  
to find contentment once it is  
conquered.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH - NIGHT

The CLICK-CLICK of Nathan's heels echo as he walks down the  
marble aisle of the empty church.

He stops when he reaches the Altar, falls to his knees, makes  
the sign of the cross.

FATHER O'NEIL (O.S.)  
Nathan? Is that you?

Nathan, teary-eyed, turns towards Father O'Neil, in full  
vestment.

FATHER O'NEIL  
Why are you here?

NATHAN  
Confession.  
(ominous pause)  
Yours.

EXT. SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH - LATER THAT NIGHT

Nathan stands at the sign that reads: "DON'T FORSAKE GOD'S  
SCRIPTURES"

One by one, he removes the white letters forming the word  
FORSAKE.

Then the letters spelling GOD'S.

Then he moves on to SCRIPTURES. Removes the S, the C, the...

EXT. RURAL TRAILER PARK - MORNING

The dew on the grass still wet, the sun just rising.

Nathan, wearing a knit beanie sits outside his trailer with the STRAY DOG curled up in his lap. He pets the dog with one hand as he feeds him bits of a burger with the other.

The Landlord's car pulls up. He stops, rolls down the window.

PARK LANDLORD  
(surprised)  
You're outside.

NATHAN  
I am.

PARK LANDLORD  
Hmm.  
(points at dog)  
Well, be careful feeding that. He's  
going to think he lives here.

The Landlord rolls up the window, drives away.

INT/EXT. NATHAN'S CAR - BURGER KING/DRIVE THRU - DAY

Nathan pulls up to the Drive Thru Window. Maria greets him.

MARIA  
Good morning, Nathan. Going to be  
seven twenty-five.

Maria's eyes widen in surprise as Nathan extends a trembling hand through the window and presents a ten dollar bill.

Maria takes the bill.

A moment later, Maria hands Nathan the Burger King Bag. Nathan takes it and places it on the passenger seat.

Maria then extends her hand. Her hand gently touches Nathan's hand as she places the change in his palm.

Nathan flinches at first, then closes his eyes, smiles.

INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Nathan now sits in a chair directly across from Doctor Anderson.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
So, you're feeling better?

NATHAN  
I have touched. But I'm not sure  
I'm getting better.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
I don't understand.

NATHAN  
I confronted.

DOCTOR ANDERSON  
Yes?

Nathan stands, turns and heads towards the door.

NATHAN  
(as he exits)  
I couldn't forgive.

INT. SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH/CONFESSIONAL - MORNING

Father O'Neil's blue-tinted corpse slumped in the dark  
confessional.

The rope from his Vestment wrapped snugly around his neck.

EXT. SAINT FRANCIS CHURCH/CONFESSIONAL - DAY

Shocked PARISHIONERS, various ages and ethnicity, stand on  
the sidewalk staring at a A CORONER'S VAN on the street.

Next to the van, two POLICE CRUISERS, blue and red lights  
pulsating.

An OFFICER holding a roll of crime scene tape approaches the  
Parishioners.

OFFICER  
We're going to need you all to  
clear out.

The Parishioners hesitate a moment then start to disperse.

As they leave, the Church sign behind them comes into view.  
It's large white letters now spell: "DON'T RIP."

FADE OUT.