

Buju Banton

"Atlanta Special"

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Atlanta Special 6:03 Trk 20
Bukka White (Booker T. Washington White)
Recorded: 1963 Memphis, Tennessee
Album: Parchman Farm Blues - Roots RTS 33055

Bukka -spoken:

This is song Atlanta Special, here
Runnin' all down through Georgia
All down through the south
An all through the Gulf of Mexico

When I was a little boy
I was startin' to catchin' this train
And I never forget, I fifteen years old.

I hear'd that train that mo'nin
That 8:45 was hittin' that rail
I had my mule goin' to the field
To do some plowin' for my old grandfather.

But when this train was comin' down the line
She picked up wit' it.

(guitar - comin' down the line)

I say, 'Whoa!'
My mule stopped
I 'cide to leave, I'd try the world

I eased on out there
And I caught the old freight train
That went on down

All down through Gulf of Mexico
And ev'rywhere else.

Oh, I got to thinkin' about Atlanta, Georgia.
I say, 'I b'lieve I go back where my
Old grandmother live at.'

Oh, one night I was sittin' down
Boilin' some corn down on the railroad track.
I thought about what my old grandmother
Told me years ago.
Said son:
'You got to reap what you sew.
If you don't be a good boy, you gon'
Have bad luck.'

I made me a record
(they'll buy it)
(This way Atlanta, Georgia)

This song:

Sings:
I'm sorry, sorry, sorry, left my home
Mm-mm-mm
Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord!

When I fell back in Atlanta, Georgia
Old lady lived, last name Miss Ester.
She said, 'Son, I heard one of your records
About Atlanta, Georgia.
Said, 'Can you play it, now?'

I reached back in my guitar case
And pulled m'old raggedy guitar out.
So glad to get back home
I commenced to playin' this song for Aunt Ester.

Sings:
Lord, oh Lord, Lord, Lord!
Mm-mm-mm
So glad I headed back home

Old lady starts at me, did I want anything to eat?
I was sittin' there lookin' out toward the railroad
Track. I never will forget it, she brought me ham
An egg, an toasted cheese an hot cup-a-coffee.

When that straight line ten mile a-goin' to

I dropped my head an I dropped my food.
I said, 'Now, I got to ride this train back'.
She said, 'Son, what is wrong?'
I said, 'Well, Aunt Ester.'
I said, 'Booker got to go.'

That train was turnin' tight that mo'nin.

(guitar- turnin' tight)

Aunt Ester ask-ed
'Would I know that train if I could hear it?'
She said, 'You're too young, you don't
Know nothin' too much about hoboin'.

I said, 'Well, I tell ya Aunt Ester, if I can
Hear the bell on this train I could tell you
Mo' about it.'

When that train jumped to the fifteen mile
Curve, a bell will give you a toll like this:

(guitar- bell tolling)

Made me thought about when my baby
Got sick n' she died. She's, they called me up.

When she run in her fifteen mile curve
She throw'd on the airbrake for la't ten mile.

(guitar - airbraking)

So, Aunt E. stops me.
She says, 'Where you was born at?'

I said, 'Atlanta, Georgia'

She said, 'That why you can play that ol' guitar, can't
cha!'

While we was talkin' she heard that train comin'
Into that fifteen mile curve.

Two old ladies was on that train, cryin' an supperin'
Pullin' down the blind. A man give him a signal
From the engine to the coach to slow down.
You could hear him chokin' that train 'specially down
Comin' through Lou'siana like this:

(guitar - chokin' train)

When the man throw'd that red light on
Him sho' know it come, that fifteen mile curve.

I ease on off back to the station
I tol' Aunt E stop, thank her for her food.
She said, 'Son, don't forget what your
Mother, now, used to told you
Now, she said, Take life easy.'

I jumped on out there and got in the blind.
That train jumped on outta town.

(I was steady jumpin' down)
(Hauled through Georgia, Lou'siana)

Right on down to a place he called
Port Teht (?)
(That's in Lou'siana)

(They was strippin' sorghum
And ev'rything I done got hauled in)

I get off the freight train
For a job aks the man for me
Somethin' to eat

He said, 'Can you strip sorgham?
I said, I read about it, but I ain't never did it
He said, 'If you eat anything, you gon' strip it!'

I 'cided to do a little piece a-work for him
He went in there an got me sorghum, molasses
Cornbread, toasted cheese, hot cup a-coffee.

My train was in the yard
The train blowed!
When I hear that train blow, gettin' on
I said I'm fixin' to stop t'stripin 'em.

(guitar to end)

~

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