

WHITE MILES

By Rory Quinn

NAME: Rory Quinn

FROM: Summit, NJ.

BIO: Rory Quinn is a recent graduate of Delbarton, where he's participated in the theater program since Freshman year. Next year, he'll be attending USC to pursue a BFA in acting.

What's keeping you positive? Along with the support of my friends and family, the thought of all of the creativity being fostered by our current circumstances comforts me, and knowing there's a silver lining to this uncomfortable situation.

CHARACTERS

CHILI, age 20-30. Burly in stature, with brutish facial features that severely contrast his gentle personality. Of lower intelligence than his brother, but far more in touch with his emotions.

TRAVIS, age 25-35. High IQ, but no ambition. Has always been smarter than the people around him, which has overinflated his ego. This egotism stops him from being well liked in his humble backwoods community.

TIME

The scene takes place in the late 60's, although you wouldn't be able to tell based on the clothing and setting. Really could be anytime after Miles Davis and Where the Red Fern Grows.

PLACE

Middle of Nowhere, U.S.A.

Curtains open on a dilapidated looking house out in the country. The house has a front porch, with two rocking chairs and a short table between them. The table is littered with empty PBR cans, with an ashtray. In the crawlspace underneath the porch, which is also visible to the audience, CHILI can be seen rooting around with a trowel, clearly looking for something. CHILI is wearing a pair of overalls with nothing underneath. After a moment, TRAVIS emerges from the front door, carrying another 6-pack of PBR. He is wearing boots, filthy work pants, and a wifebeater. He looks around for CHILI before sighing and rolling his eyes.

TRAVIS

You still down there?

CHILI

I ain't found it yet.

TRAVIS

CHILI, I already told'ja, y'ain't gon' find shit down there.

CHILI

Well, you see Travis, that's where you're wrong. Shit was the first thing I found.

TRAVIS

Just getch'yer ass back up here and crack one with me.

TRAVIS moves to sit down in his rocking chair.

CHILI

Well Damn, Travis, with an attitude like that you couldn't find a flea on ole yeller's back.

TRAVIS

Would you quit it with your book-talk bullshit? I mean you got half a brain cell, and You're talkin' 'bout ole yeller like it's got any damn thing to do with you rootin' around under our porch!

CHILI

Well Jeez, Travis, I'm sorry for bein' literate.

TRAVIS

Barely.

CHILI

Hell's that s'posed to mean?

TRAVIS

All's I'm sayin' is, only books you read are Old Yeller and Where the Red Fern Grows.

CHILI

So?

TRAVIS

So... Can you even read if it ain't about some dog kickin' the can?

CHILI

Travis, I love you, but that don't make no sense.

TRAVIS

No, I know it dudn't, Chili. I'm just sayin' you gotta broaden your horizons. But first, you gotta get up n' out our goddamn porch.

CHILI

Alright, fine... Dick.

CHILI crawls out from under the porch, and up the stairs at the front. As soon as he's out, he takes off his gloves, lights a cigarette, and looks out toward the audience.

CHILI

Woowhee. Scorcher today, ain't it?

TRAVIS

Been a scorcher every day since I came out the womb, Chili.

CHILI

Yeah, real good one Trav, but I mean it today.

TRAVIS

Yeah, s'pose you're right.

CHILI

Toss me one o' those, will ya'?

TRAVIS tosses a PBR can to CHILI. CHILI seems prepared to catch it, but the can goes straight through his fingers and hits him in the forehead.

CHILI
Ah, Jesus.

TRAVIS
Goddamn Chili, I threw it right to you! You okay?

CHILI
Barely felt it.

TRAVIS
Well that's not a great sign. You shoulda been a pro ball player, ya' know. Got that, uh... increased capacity for brain trauma.

CHILI
Increased what now?

TRAVIS
Forget it.

CHILI chugs the beer at an incredible speed, crushes it on his head, and puts back on his gloves. With a cigarette still in his mouth, he begins to move toward the porch.

CHILI
I'm goin' in.

TRAVIS
Hell you lookin' fer again?

CHILI turns to look at TRAVIS with his hands on his hips, clearly frustrated.

CHILI
Well damn, Travis, I only told'ja six times!

TRAVIS
Well, I was about six brewskis deep 'fore you told me the first time, so, uh... bear with me.

CHILI

My trumpet.

TRAVIS

Trumpet? Hell you want with that?

CHILI

We been over this.

TRAVIS shrugs and shakes his head with uncertainty.

CHILI

Come on, man, you remember. I was a damn prodigy with the thing.

TRAVIS

Well, prodigy might be overstatin' it just a bit.

CHILI

Oh, bull-sheit. I was the goddamn White Miles Davis and you know it.

TRAVIS

Whatever you say, brother.

After a moment of unspoken conflict, CHILI crawls back under the porch. In frustration, Travis whips out a flask filled with moonshine from his back pocket, and pours himself a shot. After taking it and coughing a little, he yells to TRAVIS.

TRAVIS

Listen, brother. I get the whole "no stone unturned" concept, but what the hell makes you think your trumpet's gonna be under the porch? I mean, damn thing's been gone for years, could be in Californ-I-A by now.

CHILI

Well, you remember Lil Rutabaga.

TRAVIS

God bless his lil' canine soul, what about 'im?

CHILI

Well, you know he liked shiny thangs an' all.

TRAVIS

Sure, bud, but I'm failin' to see the connection here.

CHILI

Well, I'm sure you'd also recollect him crawlin' up under here to lay 'imself to rest. Didn't wanna bother us n' all. Poor thing.

TRAVIS

Right, just like your favorite literary genre. You ever thought about writin' a book on it?

CHILI

Yeah, you keep laughin'. When I find this thing I'm gonna be wardin' off the ladies with a stick.

At this, TRAVIS rolls his eyes, and pours himself another shot.

TRAVIS

You know, Chili, y'ain't gon' be happy to hear this, but I don't miss the damn thing. I mean, it was already hard enough to get some shuteye in this house without you bustin' out solos at all hours of the night.

CHILI

Those solos were a gift from God, Travis. You should be grateful.

TRAVIS

See, now that there's the other thing. That God-forsaken instrument gave you one *hell* of an ego. Made you hard to be around.

CHILI

Alright, I won't play the thing after 8:00. Happy?

TRAVIS

That ain't my point, Chili.

CHILI stands up straight, lifting the loosely secured floorboards to make eye contact with TRAVIS.

CHILI

Then what exactly is your point, Travis? I'm tryin' to find this thing, and you're just sittin' up there, ackin' like I'm some kind of idiot for wantin' a little music!

TRAVIS

Music? That's what this is about? Hell, we got the radio inside, why didn't you say so?

CHILI

Nah, that ain't all it is! I want *MY* music, Travis. You gotta understand.

TRAVIS

I'm sorry to say, bud, but I just don't see it.

CHILI

Oh, screw you.

CHILI ducks back under the porch, and continues looking around. Travis pours himself another, larger shot, and downs it in an instant. This one clearly kicked a little harder for him. CHILI sees a glint in the dirt, and excitedly goes at it with his trowel.

TRAVIS

What was that bud?

CHILI

Oh, shit, think I see somethin'.

TRAVIS is clearly surprised by this.

TRAVIS

The hell? Thing's actually down there? How the hell'd that happen?

CHILI

Ah, no, nevermind. Just some trash.

CHILI tosses up a rectangular package wrapped in saran wrap. TRAVIS unwraps the package, and his eyes light up when he realizes it's a thick stack of cash.

TRAVIS

What in Sam hell?

CHILI

What's a matter?

TRAVIS

Nah, you're right, just trash.

TRAVIS quickly shoves the cash into his back pocket

CHILI again emerges from the floorboards.

CHILI

Sure dudn't sound like it's just trash.

TRAVIS

Nah, it was, it's just some cling film, that's all.

CHILI comes up onto the porch, and looks TRAVIS up and down. After a moment, CHILI comes up to TRAVIS, and rustles him down, looking through his pockets. TRAVIS resists, and in the scuffle, the stack of cash falls out of his pocket.

CHILI

AHA! I knew you were holdin' out.

CHILI picks up the stack

CHILI

The hell was this doin' under there?

TRAVIS

Well, you know daddy's whole thing about cash on hand.

CHILI flips through the stack. TRAVIS goes back to his flask, and finishes what's left. He coughs for a moment and pounds his chest.

CHILI

Goddammit, Travis, there's gotta be, like, a thousand in here! You were gonna keep it all fer yourself?

TRAVIS

Hell no, Chili! You know I always take care a' you, it's just...

CHILI

It's just what?

TRAVIS

Well there's a reason I handle the finances, dammit! First thing you'd do with that dough is run out and buy a trumpet, and God knows what else!

CHILI

You're goddamn right I'm gonna buy a trumpet! Why're you tryin' so hard to make me miserable?

TRAVIS

I'm not tryin' to make anyone miserable, Chili.

CHILI

Sure as hell seems like it! Dammit, Travis! That trumpet's the only thing I ever been good for, and you're trying to keep it from me!

TRAVIS

You want your trumpet? You really want it so goddamn bad?

TRAVIS walks to the side of the porch, takes off one of the boards in the wall, and removes the trumpet. He aggressively tosses it to CHILI before slumping back into his rocking chair, arms folded. CHILI is immediately ecstatic.

CHILI

Holy shit, my baby! How the hell'd you...

CHILI pauses for a moment, and a realization dawns on him.

CHILI

How... How'd you know it'd be in there, Travis?

TRAVIS

Take a guess, asshole.

CHILI

I can't believe this. You been keepin' this from me for, Jesus, I don't even know how long.

TRAVIS

(sarcastic)

Oh, and the guilt is just *killin'* me.

CHILI

You... You asshole! This was the one thing I had and you just went and took it. For what? You like seein' me suffer? That what this is?

TRAVIS

Oh, yeah, cuz listenin' to you bitch and moan for weeks was real prime entertainment.

CHILI

Then, Jesus, why the hell'd you do it?

TRAVIS

Already said it, Chili. That damn thing made you think you were king of the world. Ma and Pa kissin' your ass. All the while, *I'm* the only one doin' anything for the progression of this family. And you would shove that thing in my face like you *wanted* me to take it.

CHILI

Well Damn, Travis, it wasn't like that at all!

TRAVIS stands up to confront CHILI.

TRAVIS

Really?! Then what was it like? Enlighten me!

CHILI

Jesus, Travis, all I ever wanted was for you to be proud of me!

TRAVIS

And you tried to do that by pissin' me off to high hell? Hell's a matter with you?

CHILI

Listen, this is the only thing I ever been good at! I mean, you could always do any damn thing you tried, and I was just the village idiot.

TRAVIS

What're you talkin' about, Chili? Everybody loved you, and you know it!

CHILI

Oh yeah, same way everyone loved Old Yeller, til' he gets one little bite...

TRAVIS

Would you shut the hell up about Old Yeller? That shit don't even apply to the sitchiation!

CHILI

Well, sure it does! Sure, Ma and Pa loved me, I never tried to say they didn't. But the way they loved me, it was like I was, I dunno, a puppy or something! Not even, more like a goldfish!

TRAVIS

Hell're you talkin' about? They loved you half to death, and all they ever did was tell me I wasn't tryin'!

CHILI

Well, they took care of me an' all, but they never expected me to do nothin. Not like you, no way. I mean, you - well, you were gonna be an astronaut or a scientist or some shit! But me - they 'spected me to sit at home wastin' away til' I could pass on my genes.

TRAVIS sits back down in his chair.

TRAVIS

Damn. Didn't know you saw it like that.

CHILI

Listen, I just wanted to be more like you! Smart, good talker, good lookin... Hell, you got it all!

TRAVIS

Trust me, Chili, last thing you want is to be like me. I'm just a sadsack do-nothin who never had a chance. But you, hell, you were everyone's best friend! I tell you, if I could trade places...

CHILI sits down in the other rocking chair and thinks for a second.

CHILI

Well, you ask me, that's probably why we stuck together all this time. I mean, we got each other's blind spots. You got what I don't, and I got what you don't. Prolly balances out, don't it?

TRAVIS

Huh. I s'pose you're right. I'm sorry, brother. You know I love you.

CHILI

I love you, brother! That ain't never come into question!

TRAVIS and CHILI look at each other and smile for a second, before they both get up and hug it out.

TRAVIS

So, you gon' give that baby a spin?

CHILI

Really? You mean it? It's gotta be well past 8:00 by now...

TRAVIS

Why the hell not.

CHILI hops in place for a moment out of excitement, before poising himself with the trumpet to his lips in a majestic stance. He lets out a complex, elaborate solo that channels the spirit of Miles Davis. After a moment, TRAVIS stops him.

TRAVIS

How 'bout a lil' compromise. You got anything a little more my speed?

CHILI smiles and prepares himself to play again. This time, he lets out a jazzy rendition of "She'll be comin' round the mountain."

TRAVIS

Thaaat's more like it. Yee Yee!

TRAVIS busts out all of the hick dance moves, and continues whooping over CHILI's song. Curtains close on the image of them dancing together, CHILI still playing all the while.

FIN

