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Family Plays

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

A curious look at life by
John Rawley

WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

Comedy/Drama. By John Rawley. *Cast: 5m., 9w. Whereabouts Unknown*, a curious look at life, chronicles the lives of a handful of promising young people. It opens in their history classroom in the last days of the 1989 school year and ends at the student's high-school reunion 10 years later. In between, the audience watches as the student's lives twist and turn in a collage of experiences: their aspirations, their failures and their successes. It is an engaging examination of the oddities, fickleness and unpredictability of life. In addition to an intriguing plot line, the play taps into the growing interest in the subculture and music of the 1980s that is ever more steadily developing as the passage of time helps to create a sense of nostalgia for days gone by. *Whereabouts Unknown* is a nostalgic play told in one act. *Set: empty classroom with a desk; lights indicate different areas of the stage. Time: 1989 through 1999. Approximate running time: 45 minutes. Code: WE8.*

Family Plays

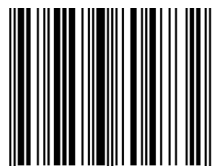
311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098-3308

Phone: (800) 448-7469 / (815) 338-7170

Fax: (800) 334-5302 / (815) 338-8981

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Whereabouts Unknown

Whereabouts **UNKNOWN**

A curious look at life
by **JOHN RAWLEY**

Family Plays

311 Washington St., Woodstock, IL 60098

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JOHN RAWLEY

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About the Play

Whereabouts Unknown chronicles the lives of a handful of promising young people. It opens in their history classroom in the last days of the 1989 school year and ends at the students' high school reunion ten years later. In between, the audiences watches as the students lives twist and turn in a collage of experiences: the dateless prom, the difficulties of finding a job, the quirks in relationships, alcoholism, splitting up, reuniting, and much more. It is an engaging examination of the oddities, fickleness, and unpredictability of life. In addition to an intriguing plot line, the play taps into the growing interest in the 1980's subculture and music that is ever more steadily developing as the passage of time helps to create a nostalgia for days gone by.

The cast of 5m, 9w may be reduced with doubling, and a simple set provides for easy staging.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

Whereabouts Unknown was first presented by the Plano East Senior High Theater Department, Plano, Texas, on September 10, 1998. It was directed by Lisa Hale. The cast was:

Linda/Counselor	Melissa Collins
Melissa	Stacy Odom
Vanessa	Andrea Jennings
Jodie	Meredith Thompson
Scott	Mason York
Chuck	Shawn Moreland
Brian	Nick Watson
Jeff	Eric Korstvedt
Shannon	Izehi Agboaye
Beth	Christy Martin
Karen/Mom	Ginger Morby
Terry	Riann Portnoy
Molly	Nicole Ambler
Coach/Dad	David Moyer
Matt	Sean Linehan

Time: 1988-1998

Place: High School and Beyond

PRODUCTION NOTES

Properties

Whistle; Textbook—teacher/coach

Pen—Shannon

Letter—Beth

2 Letters—Brian

Towel or ice pack—Vanessa

Letter—Karen

Beer can; Whiskey bottle—Brian

Costumes

In the beginning of the play, the students are in 1980's clothing appropriate for school. They enter the classroom with backpacks and/or textbooks, purses, etc. For the graduation speech **Terry**, **Beth**, and **Jeff** are in graduation cap and gown. For the first sleepwalking scene, **Linda** is in a bathrobe. **Linda** and **Beth** are both in pajamas for the second sleepwalking scene. For the wedding scene, **Molly** has a wedding gown and/or veil; **Linda** and **Shannon** are in bridesmaid's attire; **Jeff**, **Scott**, and **Chuck** wear sport jackets. For the reunion scene, all should wear outfits which would be suitable for the evening portion of the class reunion—dressy dresses, suits or coats and ties.

Whereabouts Unknown

BY JOHN RAWLEY

[The stage is an empty classroom. LINDA enters, finds her way to her desk, sits, puts her head down, and sleeps. MELISSA enters and sits at her desk. After a beat, STUDENTS enter; they are talking and waiting for the teacher]

STUDENTS. *[Dialogue overlapping ad lib]*

There's a new guy in my geometry class that is like so cute.

What's on the menu for lunch?

I can't believe I'm like flunking English.

That guy's a jerk.

Where is the teacher?

How did you do on that quiz last period?

TERRY. High school sucks!

ALL. High school sucks! *[They freeze]*

SCOTT. Jodie.

CHUCK. Vanessa.

JODIE. What?

VANESSA. Huh?

SCOTT. Would you like to go out with me?

CHUCK. You want to go to a hockey game? I got tickets.

VANESSA. I'm not a big hockey fan.

JODIE. Sure.

CHUCK. It won't kill you to try something new, will it?

SCOTT. I've got your number.

VANESSA. I guess not.

CHUCK. Great.

SCOTT/CHUCK. So we're going out?

VANESSA/JODIE. Yes.

[The TEACHER, who is also a coach, enters. He blows his whistle. The STUDENTS unfreeze and start to sit at their desks]

COACH. Settle, people! Settle. *[STUDENTS take their seats]* Okay, listen up, children. I just came from a teachers' meeting. The bells are not working today. So, I will tell you when you can leave our class. I repeat there will be no bell.

BRIAN. Coach, it's not fair to us that the bell system is not functioning properly. I think we should get the day off.

COACH. Don't get cute with me, Jeff.

BRIAN. I'm Brian.

COACH. Your name is going to be crap if you don't sit down and shut up!

MATT. *[Enters]* Sorry I'm late, Mr. Coach. There was no bell, and I was in the cafeteria...

COACH. Shut up, crap! *[STUDENTS make fun of MATT as he sits]* Settle, people. Settle. Today we're going to discuss the United States' involvement in WWII. There are lots of interesting books on the subject. But we got this one. *[Holding up a textbook]* It's real boring, and I'm going to read straight out of it. It was written by some crusty old British professor. Pay attention. *[Reading]* "It was in...in...inev... *[SHANNON drops her pen]* inevitable that the United States would join forces with Allied Europe."

SHANNON. *[Bends over to pick up her pen and falls over. The COACH stops reading]* Sorry, I dropped my pen.

COACH. *[Continuing]* "The U.S. brought much needed support to the Allies against the German, Japan, and Italian forces." *[Stops reading]* Any questions?

[MELISSA raises her hand]

COACH. Yes...? *[HE can't remember her name]* Little girl?

MELISSA. *[Stands]* Why did it take so long for the U.S. to get involved in the war? *[The STUDENTS stare at her, and quietly make fun of her]*

COACH. That's a good question. You see war is like football. Sometimes you keep your best player on the bench until you need him. That's what happened...I think. Now I remember this one time, my boys were down fourteen to seven...

[MUSIC up. LIGHTS change. MUSIC fades. JODIE and SCOTT are saying goodnight to each other]

JODIE. I had a good time tonight.

SCOTT. Me, too.

JODIE. I didn't know miniature golf could be so much fun.

SCOTT. You're a natural. You handled that windmill beautifully.

JODIE. It's all in the timing. *[She tries to kiss him on the cheek, but he turns his head and awkwardly kisses her on the mouth]*

SCOTT. Wow.

JODIE. You can say that again.

SCOTT. Wow.

JODIE. I hate to break this up, but I need to get inside, or my folks will flip.

SCOTT. Okay. *[JODIE turns to exit]* Wait one second. I just want to know something. I like you. I think you like me. I kiss you, and I...well, you...

JODIE. I understand.

SCOTT. Good. My point I guess is this: I would like to see you more...exclusively.

JODIE. *[Pause]* I don't want, need, nor do I have time for a relationship.

SCOTT. Well, thank you for being so...honest.

JODIE. No problem.

SCOTT. *[Extends his hand]* I had a lovely time. *[She doesn't take it. He realizes he's making a fool out of himself and retracts his hand]*

JODIE. Me, too. Call me. *[Exits]*

SCOTT. *[Calling after]* Sure... *[Aside]* When Hell freezes over.

[SCOTT exits, as JEFF enters]

JEFF. I'm planning on getting out of here. I'm not sure if I'm going to college or not. My buddy Brian and I, we're kind of a comedy duo. We're always cracking ourselves up, and we think we can make it as comedians. We're talking about going out to New York next year. Brian might be going to NYU. He auditioned for their drama department. It's supposed to be really good. I might try and get in, too. I think I missed the deadline, but I can always take a year off. We want to put together a comedy troupe. Get our own show, or end up on Saturday Night Live *[or some similar TV show]*. I don't know. We're keeping our options open. We might just say the hell with school, and go out to L.A., and form a band. We both play guitar, and Brian can sing. We've played at a couple of parties and everyone thinks we're pretty good. *[Pause]* I may just go to State and get a degree in business or something. I don't know. We'll see.

[LIGHTS change. MUSIC up. JEFF exits as CHUCK and VANESSA enter. MUSIC fades]

CHUCK. Did you like the hockey game?

VANESSA. No, not really. I'm not into full-contact sports. I like tennis. Do you like tennis?

CHUCK. No. I think it's kind of a prissy sport. And you can't yell in the stands while you're watching.

VANESSA. And you like to yell.

CHUCK. You bet I do. Is your headache gone?

VANESSA. Yes. Thank you. You were just a little loud.

CHUCK. *[Grabs her]* I'm glad your headache is gone.

VANESSA. Oh, Lord.

CHUCK. *[Pulls her close]* I want to make you scream.

VANESSA. *[Breaks free]* You're going to right now if you don't get your hands off me.

CHUCK. Oh, come on Vanessa. Watching those sweaty guys didn't turn you on?

VANESSA. No.

CHUCK. It turned me on. *[Grabs her]*

VANESSA. Gross! *[Breaks free. He moves towards her]* Chuck, I was... *[Pushes him away. He moves towards her]* Just get the... *[Pushes him away. He moves towards her]* Good-bye, Chuck! *[She pushes him, hard]*

CHUCK. Man, you're frigid. *[Starts to exit]* I didn't get nothing! *[Exits]*

VANESSA. I feel dirty. I need a shower.

[LIGHTS change. MUSIC up. VANESSA exits. BRIAN, MOLLY, SHANNON, a COUNSELOR, a MOM, and a DAD enter. They are paired off on different parts of the stage. MUSIC fades.]

COUNSELOR. What do you want to be when you grow up?

MOLLY. I don't know.

DAD. What do you want to be when you grow up?

SHANNON. I haven't given it much thought.

MOM. What do you want to be when you grow up?

BRIAN. I have to grow up?

COUNSELOR. You sure need to think about it?

BRIAN. I know.

DAD. I'm sure there's something you want to do?

SHANNON. Yeah.

MOM. Something you want to be?

MOLLY. Yes.

ADULTS. Well?

MOLLY. You'll think it's silly...

BRIAN. Dumb...

SHANNON. Stupid.

MOM. No.

COUNSELOR. Not me.

DAD. No way.

MOLLY. I want to be a writer.

COUNSELOR. A writer? *[ADULTS move around Molly]*

DAD. Why would you want to do that?

MOLLY. I like to write. I get A's on all my English papers.

MOM. But you failed Algebra!

COUNSELOR. You need Algebra to graduate.

DAD. You don't want to be a writer.

MOM. You can't make any money writing.

COUNSELOR. Writers live in roach-infested one-bedroom apartments..

MOM. ...In bad neighborhoods...

DAD. ...And eat box after box of Kraft macaroni and cheese.

ADULTS. You don't want to be a writer.

BRIAN. I want to be a musician.

ADULTS. A musician! *[ADULTS move around Brian]*

COUNSELOR. No way!

MOM. No how!

DAD. No sir!

MOM. Musicians are scum.

COUNSELOR. They're all alcoholics, and addicts.

DAD. I didn't know you had anything to sing about.

MOM. I've heard you play...

COUNSELOR. You're not that good.

DAD. You'll probably get some young groupie pregnant.

ADULTS. You don't want to be a musician.

SHANNON. I want to be an actor.

COUNSELOR. Oh, my God! *[ADULTS move around Shannon]*

MOM. Your grandmother is probably rolling over in her grave!

DAD. You think you can handle living in a tough town like New York?

COUNSELOR. A tough city like L.A.?

MOM. You're just a kid.

COUNSELOR. You need to go to college.

DAD. Once you get out in the real world, you'll understand.

ADULTS. You don't want to be an actor. *[Pause]* So, what do you want to be?

MOLLY. I don't know.

SHANNON. What do you think I should be?

COUNSELOR. Oh, honey...

MOM. Sweetheart...

DAD. Darling...

COUNSELOR. You can be whatever you want to be.

MOM. As long as you put your mind to it...

DAD. ...You can do anything!

[LIGHTS change. MUSIC up. BRIAN, MOLLY, SHANNON, COUNSELOR, MOM, and DAD exit. MELISSA enters. MUSIC fades]

MELISSA. I am seventeen years old, and I want to kill myself. I have no stability. I have no support. I can't do anything right. It's like I have the Midas Touch. Except what I touch doesn't turn to gold, it falls apart. My whole life is a mess. I am going nowhere. I come home from school. The house is deserted. I'm alone. I want to reach out one last time. I want to pick up the phone, and call a friend. But I don't have any friends. I make up my mind. I walk into my father's study. That's where his gun case is. I know it's locked, so I pick up a paperweight off his desk, and I throw it. The glass doors smash into a thousand pieces. I walk to the case, pick up a .22 caliber pistol, and load one bullet. I put the gun under my chin, place my finger on the trigger, close my eyes, take a deep breath, and...

[BLACKOUT. A SCHOOL BELL rings. LIGHTS up on BETH in a hall at school]

SCOTT. *[Enters]* Beth!

BETH. Scott.

SCOTT. Hey, how's it going?

BETH. Good. How are you?

SCOTT. I'm as happy as a virgin on prom night.

BETH. Okay.

SCOTT. Anyway, I want to apologize for not calling you this weekend. I had to go see my grandparents on Sunday, and I got home too late to call.

BETH. That's all right.

SCOTT. I wanted to call you. I need to talk to you about something.

BETH. Really? What is it?

SCOTT. I had a great time with you Friday night.

BETH. I had a good time too. I didn't know miniature golf could be so much fun.

SCOTT. You're not the first person to...discover that talent.

BETH. The trick to the windmill is timing.

SCOTT. Wow! You're good-looking, fun to be around, and you understand the physics and mechanics of putt-putt. You're a catch! *[Pause]* What I wanted to talk to you about on Sunday was... Well, I wanted to know if... Would you like to go to the prom with me?

BETH. I'd love to, Scott.

SCOTT. Great.

BETH. But I can't.

SCOTT. Why not?

BETH. Todd McAllen already asked me out, and I said yes.

SCOTT. Todd McAllen, huh?

BETH. Yeah, he called me, and asked me out on...Sunday. *[The BELL rings]* Oh, great there's the bell. We're late for class. I have got to go. Call me. *[Exits]*

SCOTT. Yeah. Sure. *[He exits, passing LINDA as she enters]*

LINDA. This school is one big sedative. I can't keep my eyes open. I go to first period, Geometry, and it's so boring, I sleep. Then I go to second period English, and sleep. After that I go to Geology or Geography... It's some class that starts with "G." You can tell I'm never awake for that. Fourth period is lunch. I stay awake for lunch. I sleep during all my other classes. One day I decided to stay awake. Fifteen minutes into first period, I noticed I was the only student awake. Everyone else was crashed out. I said forget this, and went to sleep.

[MUSIC up. LIGHTS change. LINDA exits. CHUCK enters and sits. SHANNON and BETH enter on the opposite side. BETH hands a letter to SHANNON]

BETH. Read this. *[SHANNON starts to read]*

CHUCK. Beth, I just can't stop thinking about you. I close my eyes and there you are lighting up the darkness in my mind. I think about what it would be like to hold you in my arms. I think about what I'll do to you, and what you'll do to me. First, I'll rip your blouse off. You'll squeal with delight as I grab your huge undulating...

SHANNON. *[Stops reading]* Oh, my goodness!

BETH. "Huge undulating?"

SHANNON. Yes. What is this, a letter to Penthouse magazine?

BETH. Basically. Yeah. Here. Skip down to the fourth page. You see where I've highlighted. This is funny. *[SHANNON reads again]*

CHUCK. After we make love till we can make love no more, you and I will lie together naked in satin sheets.

SHANNON. *[Stops reading]* Satan sheets?

BETH. He misspelled "satin." Keep reading.

CHUCK. We will lock ourselves in an embrace that will seem like a lifetime. When the dawn comes, I'll awaken you by stimulating your generous quivering...

SHANNON. *[Stops reading]* Oh, my gosh!

BETH. "Generous quivering?"

SHANNON. Yes.

BETH. Skip the next five paragraphs.

SHANNON. Five paragraphs?

BETH. Yeah.

CHUCK. After we make love for the eighth time, you get hungry. So, I'll make you breakfast in my shorts, and I'll wait on your hand and your foot. Then you have to leave because my parents will be waking up soon. If this erotic adventure sounds like fun to you, give me a call. Sincerely, Chuck. *[CHUCK exits]*

SHANNON. *[Hands the letter back to Beth]* Have you gotten a restraining order yet?

BETH. Not yet. The police told my parents that three incidents need to be documented in order to do that.

SHANNON. Well this letter is one.

BETH. No. This is the first of two. He decided to serenade me last night.

SHANNON. Creepy.

BETH. Actually, it was rather funny. He went to the wrong house, and ended up playing guitar and singing to a nine-year-old boy. The boy's parents were not impressed.

[LIGHTS change. MUSIC up. SHANNON and BETH exit. BRIAN enters]

BRIAN. I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't care. I just got this today. *[Holds up a piece of paper]* It's my notice from NYU. They rejected me. *[He rips up his notice]* I don't know why they didn't accept me. I did my best. If my best isn't good enough for them...screw 'em! I

don't know. I may go out there, or I may head out to L. A. and play music. Jeff's going to State. Says his dad wants him to be an accountant, or something. Jeff's an idiot, and a sellout. I don't know. I may go to State, too. I don't know. We'll see.

[LIGHTS change. MUSIC up. BRIAN exits as VANESSA and MATT enter. VANESSA holds a towel with ice wrapped up in it to her face. MUSIC fades]

MATT. That was a pretty cool concert.

VANESSA. The best.

MATT. Yeah, Mutilation H is known for delivering quality shows and the rowdiest mosh pits. Hey, how's your face?

VANESSA. Great. Matt, here's a dating tip: Alert the girl at the beginning of the evening that you plan to endanger her life.

MATT. I guess I should have forewarned you about how wild their shows get.

VANESSA. I would have worn a helmet.

MATT. Here, let me see. *[He tries to examine her face, but she jerks away]*

VANESSA. Stop it.

MATT. Come on. Let me see. *[VANESSA takes her hand away.]* Oh, man! I mean... It's not that bad. Wow, you can see the tread marks from that guy's boot.

VANESSA. What kind of an idiot are you? It's our first date, and you take me to the front row of some derelict rock-n-roll concert. Three beats into that awful racket those talentless dweebs were trying to pass off as music, I get trampled by a bunch of goons. I get myself back on my feet only to be kicked in the head by a kamikaze stage-diving skinhead.

MATT. Before you go on, and say something that you'll regret, I need to ask you a question.

VANESSA. Fire away!

MATT. You really think that the guys in Mutilation H are talentless dweebs?

VANESSA. Yes I do. With all my heart.

MATT. Well, this is the last time we're going out. I could never get involved with anyone that disrespects the music that defines me. *[Starts to exit]*

VANESSA. Whoa! You are not rejecting me! I'm the one that's... Oh, who cares! Reject me! I'm scum! Mutilation H sucks! Go away!

MATT. I'll call you tomorrow. We'll work this out.