

FROM WHITE PLAINS

BY MICHAEL PERLMAN

IN COLLABORATION WITH:
CRAIG WESLEY DIVINO, KARL GREGORY,
JIMMY KING, and AARON ROSSINI



DRAMATISTS
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FROM WHITE PLAINS was originally commissioned and produced by Fault Line Theatre (Aaron Rossini and Craig Wesley Divino, Co-Artistic Directors). A workshop production was produced at Teatro LATEA, New York City, in June 2012. It was directed by Michael Perlman; the set design was by Tristan Jeffers; the lighting design was by John Eckert; the sound design was by Chad Raines; and the stage manager was Kevin Clutz. The cast was as follows:

JOHN.....Craig Wesley Divino
ETHAN.....Aaron Rossini
DENNIS.....Karl Gregory
GREGORY.....Jimmy King

A full production was then produced at the Pershing Square Signature Center in January 2013. The creative team was the same, except as follows: The costume design was by Jessica Wegener Shay, assisted by Ashley Rose Horton; the line producer was Melanie Hopkins; the production manager was Jamie Steffen; the assistant director was John Bezark; and the stage manager was Brooke Redler. The cast was the same.

CHARACTERS

JOHN

ETHAN

DENNIS

GREGORY

A NOTE ON STAGING AND PACING

This play was written to be staged as fluidly as possible, with little to no break between scenes.

The one exception we found in the original production was between Scenes 6 and 7 — it seemed necessary to have a longer transition there to give the audience a chance to absorb everything that had come before.

Much of the dialogue is quite fast, but it's important to take time in the slower moments. These are characters who are used to relying on words and are finding words failing them, and so the periods of not speaking are the moments these characters change the most.

References to dates can be updated as needed.

FROM WHITE PLAINS

Scene 1

Ethan and John sit on a couch facing an unseen TV, which has been turned off. They are silent. In shock.

JOHN. I ...

ETHAN. Did that really just ...

JOHN. I think it did.

ETHAN. You saw it too, right?

JOHN. Oh I saw it.

ETHAN. You saw it.

JOHN. I saw it.

ETHAN. So did I.

JOHN. Yeah. *(Ethan's phone rings.)* Do you want me to ...

ETHAN. No.

JOHN. Do you want to get ...

ETHAN. No.

JOHN. 'Kay. *(Lifts the remote to the TV.)*

ETHAN. What are you doing?

JOHN. I'm — I was going to rewind it.

ETHAN. What?

JOHN. To hear it again.

ETHAN. Just ... just ... give me a minute

JOHN. Okay.

ETHAN. Please

JOHN. Okay! *(Silence. Ethan's phone rings. He silences it. Then a text. Then another. Then another.)*

ETHAN. What the fuck?

JOHN. Ethan.

ETHAN. What the fuck is this movie they're talking about?

JOHN. It's an indie film.
ETHAN. An indie film?
JOHN. Yeah. An independent —
ETHAN. And who is that guy? The writer. (*John grabs his phone and begins typing.*)
JOHN. I think it was Solomon. Solomon? Simpson? (*Phone rings.*)
Can't you ask someone?
ETHAN. Ask someone?
JOHN. Yeah. From high school.
ETHAN. I don't talk to anyone from high school
JOHN. Facebook? I don't know. Okay, uh, yeah, IMDB says, um, Dennis, oh, Sullivan. Wrote — and, well, just won an Oscar for — *White Plains*
ETHAN. Dennis O'Sullivan?
JOHN. Just Sullivan
ETHAN. What?
JOHN. Dennis Sullivan. (*Ethan goes to check his computer.*) It's about, um, a bunch of kids at White Plains High. There's, uh, a, uh, bully, there's a kid who's, he's bullied ... uh, bullied kid was ... gay. It looks like there's a love story? Maybe? It's based on a true story.
ETHAN. What story?
JOHN. That's all it says.
ETHAN. Well it's not.
JOHN. Okay.
ETHAN. What does it say about me? (*Phone rings.*)
JOHN. It doesn't say anything about you. Your name isn't —
ETHAN. Well he said "Ethan Rice," right?
JOHN. Yeah.
ETHAN. He said "Ethan Rice."
JOHN. Ethan Rice.
ETHAN. Ethan Rice.
JOHN. Ethan, listen —
ETHAN. From White Plains?
JOHN. He didn't say "White Plains."
ETHAN. It's the name of the fucking movie!
JOHN. Shit! Right! Kind of a brilliant title.
ETHAN. How do you know?
JOHN. What do you mean?
ETHAN. You haven't seen it. How do you know it's a brilliant title?

JOHN. Just based on what it's about.
ETHAN. "Brilliant title."
JOHN. It is! (*Phone rings.*)
ETHAN. Asshole.
JOHN. What the fuck?
ETHAN. You're an asshole.
JOHN. What? I'm not allowed to have opinions about movie titles?
ETHAN. Not that movie!
JOHN. I didn't say it's a good movie! I said it's a good title!
ETHAN. It's the name of a fucking city.
JOHN. A normal suburb.
ETHAN. Right.
JOHN. With plain white people.
ETHAN. Whatever.
JOHN. And what they do to people who aren't just white and plain.
ETHAN. I know what it's about! (*Phone rings.*) After that fucking speech I do.
JOHN. Ethan. Listen.
ETHAN. What?
JOHN. Do you know what he's, what he's referring to?
ETHAN. What? No! I mean — who remembers high school? I mean — his friend — who was his friend? What was his name?
JOHN. I think he said.
ETHAN. Does anyone even see these independent films?
JOHN. Well, it just won an Oscar. (*Ethan gives a look.*) I'm just saying
ETHAN. Great. Now everyone knows about it. Fucking Oscar-winning film.
JOHN. I'm sorry.
ETHAN. Gay Oscar-Winning Film.
JOHN. Ethan.
ETHAN. What?
JOHN. Maybe you shouldn't ... you know.
ETHAN. What? (*Phone rings.*)
JOHN. Look, if you're not gonna answer —
ETHAN. What?
JOHN. Just turn the phone off.
ETHAN. I can't just turn it off.
JOHN. Then answer it!
ETHAN. There's been no one I want to talk to!
JOHN. Then turn it off!

ETHAN. I'm waiting for Jenna to call! (*Beat.*) Jenna still hasn't called.

JOHN. She hasn't?

ETHAN. No. (*Beat.*)

JOHN. I mean — maybe she hasn't seen it. (*Ethan gives John a look.*) You can call her?

ETHAN. Yeah. (*Beat.*) I'm not that guy.

JOHN. I know.

ETHAN. I'm not that guy he said I was.

JOHN. I know you're not.

ETHAN. I'm not a —

JOHN. You're not.

ETHAN. A bully. I'm not a bully

JOHN. No.

ETHAN. I'm not a bully. I don't care what he says about me. And who the fuck —

JOHN. Yeah

ETHAN. Who the fuck gave him the right to go on national television and lie about me like that? Are people just allowed to say whatever they want? And what does he want? Does he want some, like, some, fucking mob to come to my house with torches or whatever? Who's the bully? Right?

JOHN. Totally.

ETHAN. And who is he? I mean — No, I mean who is he? I don't know him. How do I know he knows me?

JOHN. You don't remember him?

ETHAN. No. I've never seen him before.

JOHN. You sure?

ETHAN. Yes. I mean. I think. I don't ... know

JOHN. Well, here's a, wait, here's a picture of him.

ETHAN. No.

JOHN. Nothing?

ETHAN. No. I mean, John. What if he made the whole thing up? What, if like, he, he, he

JOHN. Why would he make it up?

ETHAN. I don't know. But that would be illegal, right? I mean — I could sue him. Right?

JOHN. I don't know, Ethan.

ETHAN. It's just that a lot of people watch the Oscars, you know.

JOHN. Um, yeah.

ETHAN. A lot of people. And, and, and it's not right. It's not

right. That all those people think — that they think that I'm — that I'm an asshole. I'm not. And, and, and, you know, a lot of people watch the Oscars. A lot.

JOHN. Yeah.

ETHAN. I mean, way more than saw his gay movie.

JOHN. Ethan.

ETHAN. What?

JOHN. "Gay."

ETHAN. What?

JOHN. You keep using "gay."

ETHAN. What? No!

JOHN. I'm not saying —

ETHAN. No — that doesn't count. I meant it. It's a gay movie. It's a movie about gay people. That doesn't make it bad! It's a fact! You can't hate me just because I'm repeating a fact.

JOHN. Ethan! I don't hate you.

ETHAN. I meant it as gay. Not, you know, "gay."

JOHN. Okay.

ETHAN. That's not fair!

JOHN. Yeah.

ETHAN. You're supposed to be on my side, man.

JOHN. I am on your side. Which is why I'm saying maybe you shouldn't use that word. In that way. So that people don't ... think you're — So that you don't hurt anyone. *(Beat.)*

ETHAN. Right. *(Beat.)* You're right. *(Beat.)* I don't want to hurt people. Anyone. I never have.

JOHN. I know, Ethan. *(Silence. Phone rings. Ethan just sits there quietly. John glances at it.)* Ethan. *(No response.)* It's — *(Nothing.)* It's Jenna, Ethan. *(Beat.)*

ETHAN. Just let it go.

JOHN. Ethan.

ETHAN. I'll call her back.

JOHN. Ethan. *(Phone stops ringing. John watches Ethan.)* Are you — are you okay? *(No answer. John puts his hand on Ethan's back. They stay there for a minute.)* Call her back?

ETHAN. Yeah. *(No movement.)* I need a drink. *(Ethan gets up and heads to the kitchen.)*

JOHN. Ethan?

ETHAN. What? *(John hands Ethan his phone.)* Thanks. *(Ethan exits. John pauses. He looks at the TV. He picks up the remote. Looks towards*

FROM WHITE PLAINS

by Michael Perlman

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In an emotional Academy Awards acceptance speech, Dennis Sullivan publicly denounces Ethan Rice, the high school bully Dennis believes pushed his gay best friend Mitchell to suicide, and who, fifteen years later, inspired the screenplay that garnered the Oscar. As the speech rapidly escalates from internationally-televised to viral, a now more mature Ethan must confront what he did as a teenager. As the two men are thrust into the court of public opinion, their closest relationships begin to unravel. When old actions have unforgivable consequences, how can the world be expected to move forward, and does anyone ever outgrow who they were in high school?

“This briskly moving play ... bristles with suspense. There are lives hanging in the balance here, playing out in arenas both painfully intimate and glaringly public. ... The emotions coursing through these men are gripping, as are the more complex sociopolitical issues FROM WHITE PLAINS courts.”

—**The New York Times**

“As thoughtful as it is passionate ... FROM WHITE PLAINS poses tough questions about responsibility, maturity, and forgiveness that you’ll likely be pondering long after it’s over.”

—**Backstage**

“A poignant and balanced look at the psychic bruises of teenage cruelty ... [FROM WHITE PLAINS] makes powerful points about the persistence of damage.”

—**Time Out (New York)**

ISBN 978-0-8222-3242-1



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