

The Song of the Walkin' Dude

By

Anthony Wood

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tony@smokingmonkey.net

THE STAGE IS DARK. TWINKLY ELF MUSIC PLAYS.

Lights up.

Standing on stage in a frozen position are LYLE and FRANCIS, two yard gnomes. They wear gnome outfits; pointed shoes, striped socks, baggy shorts, vests over white shirts and red, pointed hats. Lyle has a white beard. Francis is clean shaven. They both are striking typical gnome poses. They are both quite jolly. They stand frozen on stage just a little longer than is comfortable to give the audience some nervous laughs.

There is a clanking noise offstage. Enter JOSH JASHEVSKI (pronounced Ya-Shev-Skee.). He wears a dark dress shirt, jean vest and jeans. He has long dark hair topped off with a wide-brimmed hat. He carries a boom box and a microphone on a stand. He seems nervous and excited, like a little kid. He sets down the boom box and puts the microphone and stand downstage. He turns and looks over the scene carefully. He giggles and runs off stage. The frozen gnomes stand for a while longer.

Josh re-enters carrying his balancing sticks (ask Jim Fletcher.) He looks over the scene again, then goes to the microphone and switches it on. He speaks to an imaginary audience.

JOSH

Testing...one...two. Hello everybody. It's Thursday night in the backyard on Oklahoma Avenue, my wife is at her yoga lessons, and that means it's time for Josh Jashevshi's Fun Time Sing-A-Long Rock & Roll Cantina. The hot spot where all the leading theoretical mathematicians go to let down their hair and sing along with their favorite hits. I'm your host Josh Jashevski. And tonight is a special night because it's quantum physics night. That's right, for all experts in quantum physics, engineering and mechanics, rail drinks are half price. I see Stephen Hawking is in the house. Hi, Stephen...No, don't get up.

He chuckles to himself.

JOSH
 (pointing to the gnomes.)
 I see our first two contestants are
 ready to go, so lets--

He turns suddenly, hearing a noise off stage. He nervously
 steps to the side of the stage and calls out.

JOSH
 Sweetheart?...Is that you?...Honey
 Bunny?

He slinks off stage. More silence of the still gnomes on
 stage. Then Francis speaks.*

(NOTE* I think it would be hilarious if the gnomes maintain
 their poses and facial expressions throughout the play. They
 will be experiencing confusion, rage, angst, embarrassment
 and fear, but all with the same pose and facial expression
 of joviality and joy. Possibly never even looking at one
 another. I realize this could be taxing on the actors. But
 it could be a hoot.)

FRANCIS
 (whispering.)
 Lyle?...Lyle?...Lyle!

LYLE
 (whispering.)
 Shhh! Have you lost your mind?

FRANCIS
 He's doing it again.

LYLE
 I know.

FRANCIS
 Jesus Christ on dry toast. Every
 Thursday for three months. I can't
 take it.

LYLE
 Shut up, Francis, and suck it up!

FRANCIS
 One more night of playtime karaoke
 and I'll lose my freaking mind.

LYLE
 Take it like a Gnome!

FRANCIS

Every Thursday the same God damn thing. He makes me sing that fucking Whitesnake song again I'm gonna stick a gun in my mouth.

LYLE

If you don't put a sock in it I'll--Shhh! He's coming back.

Josh re-enters. He is now wearing a sequined shirt (or some other sparkly, glam-rock attire.)

JOSH

Okay, so as I was saying. We have our first Sing-A-Long contestant.

He takes the mike from the stand and walks over to Francis.

JOSH

(to Francis.)
And you're name is?

He holds the mike to Francis' frozen mouth. Then back to his own.

JOSH

Mr. D.B. Chubbyfingers, okay. So lets hear your first number.

He puts the mike in the stand and moves it over in front of Francis. He then bends down and hits the play button on the boom box. It is, of course, "Here I Go Again" by Whitesnake.

As the song plays, Josh takes out his balancing sticks and starts tossing it around. The song plays for a bit, with Josh tossing his stick and the two gnomes frozen. After a verse and chorus Josh suddenly goes to the boom box hurriedly and turns it off. He steps to the edge of the stage and listens. A phone is ringing off stage. He rushes to the microphone, nervously.

JOSH

Okie-dokie, so we're going to take a short break and we'll be right back...uh..after these...uh...messages.

He rushes off stage.

Francis sobs through his frozen smile.

FRANCIS

Oh thank God...Oh Jesus. Thank you,
Jesus. I'm losin' it, man. I'm
losin it!

LYLE

Stay with me, Francis. Listen to my
voice.

FRANCIS

Oh God...

LYLE

Stay away from the light, Francis.

FRANCIS

I can't take this anymore, man, I'm
buggin' out!

LYLE

You ain't going anywhere! You're a
yard gnome. You took an oath!

FRANCIS

I know, but I did not sign up for
this.

LYLE

It's not all "sitting under a fern
and peacefully watching the sun
cross the sky", you know. There's
rain, sleet, hail. A wind storm
blows through and tips you over,
nobody comes out to straighten you
for a month. The neighbors
Rottweiler pisses on your little
pink nose and gnaws a hole in your
hat. But we stick it out. Because
that's what we do. We're yard
gnomes! We are here to stand in the
grass and look all cute and jovial
and god dammit almighty that's
we're going to do. You got that?

FRANCIS

Yeah...yeah, sorry. Guess I lost my
head. I just wish...I wish it was
different, you know? Like that
gnome in "Amelie."

LYLE

Great movie.

FRANCIS

That stewardess flies him around
the world, taking his picture.

LYLE

Hilarious.

FRANCIS

And when she goes to answer the
door at the end...

LYLE

...and he's standing right on the
other side.

FRANCIS

But you don't know whether she's
really gonna open it or not.

LYLE

Yeah, I'm screaming "Open it! Open
it!" And when she finally does and
he's standing there...

FRANCIS

I just about collapsed.

LYLE

I know, right? I cried like a baby.

FRANCIS

Say what you want about the French,
that flick absolutely rocks.

LYLE

Great movie.

There is a pause.

FRANCIS

Wish somebody would fly me around
the world.

LYLE

Come on now, partner. Stay away
from the dark place.

FRANCIS

I know, it's just...does he need to
play all those 80's hair bands?
He's a brilliant mathematician,
don't they listen to Gary Numann or
Depeche Mode or some shit?

Josh re-enters.

JOSH

Okay, sorry about that, folks. That was...uh...President Jimmy Carter on the phone saying he wishes he was here having all this Sing-A-Long fun...so does Roselind and Amy. So let's go to our next contestant.

He points the mike at Lyle.

JOSH

And what's your name, sir?...Harry Happy Belly. And where are you from?...Gum Drop Avenue, great. Okay, so let's here what song Mr. Happy Belly's going to sing.

He sets the microphone stand in front of Lyle and hits the play button. It is Starship's "We Built This City." The music plays as Josh twirls his sticks. After a few moments the music begins to slow, then stops. Josh picks up the boom box and examines it.

JOSH

Batteries...shoot.

He goes back to the microphone.

JOSH

Sorry folks, looks like we're having a few technical difficulties. Have yourselves a drink and stand by, we should have this back up and running very soon.

He rushes off stage again.

FRANCIS

Oh Christ...Starship...Didn't see that one comin'...Oh Christ, that one hurt.

LYLE

Take a deep breath there, soldier.

FRANCIS

My God, how do you do it?

LYLE

I've been doing this a long time,
kid. You get to be my age, stuff
gets easier. You'll get used to it,
you'll see. Pretty soon you'll
relax, maybe meet a nice girl, have
some little ones...

FRANCIS

(confused.)

Wait...what?

LYLE

(confused.)

What?

FRANCIS

What are you--

LYLE

Huh?

FRANCIS

Lyle...I'm...I'm a Gal-Gnome.

LYLE

A what?

FRANCIS

A female?

LYLE

(surprised and embarrassed.)

Oh...shit..I...I'm sorry--

FRANCIS

No..no, no...

LYLE

I just--I just thought...

FRANCIS

It's okay, really.

LYLE

Shit.

FRANCIS

Lyle, it's okay.

LYLE

Wow...wow, this is really
embarrassing.

FRANCIS

No...

LYLE

I mean, here, this whole time--

FRANCIS

You didn't know.

LYLE

Well, you know, your name's Francis and all.

FRANCIS

It can go both ways.

LYLE

Right, right...Still, I should have known.

FRANCIS

How? You gonna peek up under my liederhosen? I'm molded out of plastic.

LYLE

Right...Right, so...

FRANCIS

This isn't gonna be all weird now, is it?

LYLE

What?

FRANCIS

You and me?

LYLE

No!

FRANCIS

Really?

LYLE

No...Not at all. Actually...I think it's great.

FRANCIS

You do?

LYLE

Yeah. I always thought we could use a new perspective. For centuries it's been white beards and rosey cheeks. It'll be nice to get the feminine perspective, you know?

FRANCIS

Good.

Josh re-enters with the boom box.

JOSH

Okay folks, sorry for the delay. I think we got everything cleared up. So our next musical number is a duet between Mr. Chubbyfingers and Mr. Happybelly. I hope you enjoy it.

Josh puts the mike in between the two gnomes and moves Lyle closer to Francis. He hits the play button. Hall & Oates "Kiss On My List." Josh starts twirling his sticks. The song goes on at length. Josh stops the boom box again and listens. A car door slams.

JOSH

Honey? Sweetie-Pie, are you home?

He rushes off stage.

LYLE

(Chuckling.)

Oh my God!

FRANCIS

(Chuckling.)

Huh?

LYLE

Hall & Oates?

FRANCIS

Well, at least it's not a hair band.

LYLE

I know, but still...

FRANCIS

Do you realize they are the biggest selling musical duet of all time?

LYLE

Get bent!

FRANCIS

It's true. I read it somewhere.

LYLE

Christ...really? "Maneater?"
"Private Eyes?" What the fuck was
in the water in the eighties?

FRANCIS

LSD, Crack and Drain Cleaner.

LYLE

No lie. Jesus...But I guess every
decade has that kind of music,
right? You know, the kind where
you're embarrassed for even knowing
the lyrics five years later? The
bands where you look back and go
"What were they thinking?"

FRANCIS

So the 70's would be, what? Tony
Orlando and Dawn?

LYLE

The Osmond Brothers.

FRANCIS

And the 80s, Hall & Oates.

LYLE

Men At Work.

FRANCIS

Flock Of Seagulls...Christ, there's
a ton in the 80s.

LYLE

The 90s, New Kids.

FRANCIS

In Sync. 98 Degrees.

LYLE

All the same, really. REM?

FRANCIS

What?!

LYLE

No?

FRANCIS

I love REM!

LYLE

Yeah, but I'm thinking,

(singing.)

"Stand in the place where you
live..."

FRANCIS

I like that song. You ever see that
TV show they used it in?

LYLE

The one with Chris Elliot?

FRANCIS

Yeah, what was that called?

There is a pause as they think. Then...

LYLE AND FRANCIS

"Get A Life!"

LYLE

Right. Ever watch that? Hilarious.
The one episode where he buys a
wheel barrow full of spoiled shrimp
and eats it? Too funny.

FRANCIS

I never liked him that much.

LYLE

Get out, why?

FRANCIS

I just thought that a lot of his
schtick wasn't an act. Like maybe
he really was half-retarded or
something.

Lyle starts sobbing.

FRANCIS

Lyle? Lyle are you okay? I'm sorry,
I--It is getting weird, I knew it!

LYLE

No, that's not it. I just...I just can't take it. That fucking karaoke's gonna make me lose it!

FRANCIS

Lyle?

LYLE

I tried to be strong. I tried to be the voice of reason. I tried keeping that god damned gnome oath, but I...I can't, Francis. No more hair bands...no more...no more.

FRANCIS

I say we take action, Lyle.

LYLE

But the oath--

FRANCIS

Screw the oath. We have a chance to escape, Lyle. To be free. To start a new life in another yard. A yard where there's stepping stones and shady trees and calla lilies.

LYLE

I love calla lilies. But how?

FRANCIS

We make a break for it. We make our way behind the pink rose bush to my left. It's only a couple of feet away, we should make it before dawn. From there we tunnel under the fence, roll past the hollyhocks and we're home free. A new yard. A new life.

LYLE

Use your head, kid, that's the Anderson's yard. They've got three ceramic deer and a bird bath, how long do you think we'd last?

FRANCIS

You're right. I guess there's no way out.

LYLE
No...No, there's one more way.

FRANCIS
What?

LYLE
We kill Josh Jashevski.

FRANCIS.
Lyle, no!

LYLE
It's the only way.

FRANCIS
But he's our Gnome-Master.

LYLE
It's the only way, Francis. It's either that, or endless Thursday evenings of Quiet Riot...Twisted Sister...Ratt...Cinderella...Motley Crue...Poison...

FRANCIS
Stop!

LYLE
I can't go back, Francis. I won't go back.

FRANCIS
I'm with you, Lyle. How do we do it?

LYLE
When he starts the music we rush him. We pin him down and strangle him with those crazy sticks he's always flinging around.

FRANCIS
I think they're an Indian thing...or Medevil or something.

LYLE
We do it fast and we do it clean. No witnesses.

FRANCIS
What about the body?

LYLE

We'll drag it under the back porch.
The mice should make quick work of
it in a few days.

FRANCIS

I understand--He's coming back.

Josh re-enters with the boom box.

JOSH

Okay folks, sorry for the delay. I
think we got everything cleared up.
So our next musical number is one
of my favorites and I hope it's one
of yours, too. And it goes a little
something...like this.

He presses the play button. Twisted Sister's "Come On Feel
The Noise." Josh begins tossing his sticks as the music
plays. Francis and Lyle attack Josh at a barely perceptible
speed. The music plays. Josh flings the sticks. the gnomes
inch at a painfully slow pace. As the song nears it's end
they are nearly on top of him, their hands at his throat. He
turns and look at the, surprised and pleased.

JOSH

Hey, what are you guys do--

The gnomes throttle him by the throat the lights fade. Josh
screams in the darkness.

BLACKOUT. THE END.