

Truck Stop Chili

By Matt Myers

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Truck Stop Chili

- 2 -

DEDICATION

To Kellie, my magical unique of happiness.

SYNOPSIS OF PLAY

Deep in the heart of West Virginia, there's a little hillbilly town called Gizzard, and in that town you'll find Leroy's Clip n' Dip ...the world's first beauty parlor/auto garage. Now, a few years ago, folks in Gizzard weren't exactly beating the Clip n' Dip's door down, so to pass the time, Otis Hooper and his mechanic buddies, Crisco, Clyde and Floyd, started a band called Truck Stop Chili.

Otis's sweetheart Clementine and her beauty parlor pals, Mazola, Darlene and Helga, used to all grit their teeth, cover their ears and tolerate the racket, until the day Hollywood director Milo Van Zandt blew into town. Milo wanted to use Gizzard as the location for his next masterpiece, *Robot Rain 2*, and he thought Otis would be perfect for a lead role!

What happens when a hillbilly mechanic and cowbell player like Otis "fergits who he is" and tries to become a Hollywood movie star? And why does everything taste like chicken? These are the questions that *Truck Stop Chili* asks, and the answers come only after the audience gets taken for a wild n' crazy ride through the hills of Gizzard, West Virginia. An optional epilogue adds even more humor.

RUNNING TIME: About 90 minutes.

PREMIERE PERFORMANCE

Truck Stop Chili was first performed by the More Cowbell Players on November 16 & 17, 2007, at Rotolo Middle School in Batavia, IL.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: Inside Leroy's Clip n' Dip.

Scene 2: Inside the Clip n' Dip, two weeks later.

ACT II

Scene 1: Inside the Clip n' Dip, three weeks later.

Scene 2: Inside the Clip n' Dip, the next night.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(19 characters, approx. 7 M, 5 W, and 7 Flexible. Extras as desired.)

OTIS HOOPER: Simple but earnest hillbilly, plays cowbell in band, likes Clementine.

CRISCO PEABODY: Hillbilly pal of Otis, plays banjo in band, Mazola's brother.

CLYDE HYDE: Hillbilly pal of Otis, plays guitar in band.

FLOYD SMUCKERS: Hillbilly pal of Otis, plays tambourine in band.

CLEMENTINE DUVALL: Pretty, sweet young stylist, likes Otis.

MAZOLA PEABODY: Fiesty, short-tempered stylist, Crisco's sister.

DARLENE PICKLER: Sarcastic and funny nail stylist.

HELGA VON HELMETTSCHMITT: Eager-to-please Austrian masseuse.

DOYLE GRUNDY: Dirty and foul-smelling bully.

BUFORD BIGSBY: Dim-witted sidekick of Doyle, likes to repeat things.

LEROY MILLER: Stressed-out owner of the Clip n' Dip.

UNCLE CYRUS PEABODY: Eccentric old amateur scientist, inventor of Cornola. (Can double role with Ray Butterbean.)

BIANCA SNOW: Professional, no-nonsense assistant to Milo.

MILO VAN ZANDT: Loud, fast-talking and impatient Hollywood director.

CHUCK EVANS: Irritable but loyal cameraman.

SAM CASH: Spoiled and pampered Hollywood movie star.

MIRANDA PRYCE: Snobby and arrogant Hollywood movie star, a total "diva."

WHITNEY STORM: Self-absorbed entertainment journalist for cable TV channel.

RAY BUTTERBEAN: Slick and shady talent agent, has a secret. (Can double role with Uncle Cyrus.)

TOWNFOLK: Can be played by your backstage crews. May give the optional epilogue.

FLEXIBLE CASTING: *LEROY, MILO, BIANCA, CHUCK, WHITNEY, UNCLE CYRUS and RAY are all flexible roles. Also, the roles of Uncle Cyrus and Ray can be played by the same actor.*

Truck Stop Chili

- 4 -

SETTING: The setting is the interior beauty shop side of Leroy's Clip n' Dip, a beauty salon/auto garage in the dusty little hillbilly town of Gizzard, West Virginia. There is a door SR that's the entrance to the Clip n' Dip, and a swinging "batwing" door SL that's the entrance to the garage. CS should be two salon-style chairs. (These can be borrowed from any local salon or simply created using large desk chairs). Closer to the SL door should be some stacks of old tires to suggest a garage nearby. There should be a large, beaten-up sign or banner on the CS wall that says "Leroy's Clip n' Dip." The rest of the set can be filled out with tables and countertops holding various hair care and nail care products, as well as an assortment of other "hillbilly" decorations. For Act I, Scene 2, there are two director's chairs placed near the SR door (For Milo and Bianca) and those remain for Act II, Scene 1. For Act II, Scene 2, a large platform is moved DSC for Truck Stop Chili to stand on for the wrap party concert, and the salon chairs are moved USR. There is also a banner hanging on the C wall that says "That's a Rap."

MUSIC: Bluegrass and Appalachian music is recommended for scene changes. For the songs that Truck Stop Chili "play" on stage, a banjo/guitar CD can be used, and the actors simply pretend to play their instruments along with that. If done right, Crisco will seem to be playing banjo and Clyde will seem to be playing guitar. Otis and Floyd, however, will really make noise with their cowbell and tambourine, respectively.

PROPS: Please see end of script for complete list by scene.

SPECIAL EFFECTS:

WASHBOARD TIE: A small washboard-shaped necktie that clips on your collar or neckline. Can be purchased.

CORNOLA CANS and SPRAY BOTTLES: Create and attach a "Cornola" label to a plastic spray bottle.

BOOM MICROPHONE: Attach a black foam paint roller to the end of a painter's extension pole.

ROBOT RAIN 2 GUN PROPS: Spray paint metallic silver two plastic toy guns to achieve the "futuristic" effect.

MOVIE CAMERAS: Two bulky, old VHS video camcorders (The kind that use actual VHS tapes.)

FAKE MONEY: Any kind of board game money works well, or you can purchase fake money.

ROBOT RAIN 2 COSTUMES: Shiny fabrics and bright wigs work well.

Truck Stop Chili

- 5 -

Act I

Scene 1

(AT RISE: Wild hillbilly music is heard. CLEMENTINE, DARLENE, MAZOLA and HELGA stand a bit off to the right, holding their ears. The BOYS in Truck Stop Chili are whaling away on their instruments. They are stomping their feet and dancing wildly.)

OTIS: Yeah, Crisco, yeah!! Git up thar!! Git! Whoo hoo!!

(CRISCO'S blowing into his harmonica with amazing enthusiasm but little skill.)

CLYDE: Yeeeeee-hawwww!!! More cowbell, Otis! More cowbell, boy! Do it to it!

FLOYD: Whoooo-Weeee!! Yeah! Yeah!!

(The song closes down with a big rock n' roll finish, and the BOYS just stand there for a few seconds, breathing hard. CLEMENTINE claps weakly.)

OTIS: Thank ya, thank ya kindly. That's mah main man Crisco on the banjo over thar; Clyde's pluckin' away on the geetar; this fella right here holdin' the tambourine is Floyd. I'm Otis...and we are Truck Stop Chili!! *(There is an awkward pause.)*

FLOYD: *(To the GIRLS.)* So...whadja think?

DARLENE: *(Scowling.)* I thank I want the last two minutes a' mah life back.

OTIS: Aw come on now, Darlene. Don't be rude. It wasn't that bad, now was it?

DARLENE: Nah, it wasn't that bad...it was worse.

OTIS: Ah nuts. Clementine, what'd you thank?

CLEMENTINE: It was nice, Otis – I liked it. What's that one called?

OTIS: Well, that was a lil' love song called "Grandpa Shot the Dawg."

HELGA: *(Covering ears.)* Mine ears feel to be bleeding...

CLYDE: Aw shewt, Helga, you ain't bleeding outta yore ears. Them ears is mighty purdy, by the way...*(Grins like a moron.)*

HELGA: *(Ignores HIM and points to CRISCO.)* Ze man maken ze screeching noise widdis finga.

CRISCO: Well now, screechin ain't how I'd describe the most incredible banjo solo in the history a' the world, Helga.

Truck Stop Chili

- 6 -

MAZOLA: Ah knock it off, Crisco – you stank. I reckon you'd sound better pluckin' a chicken than that thing...

CRISCO: Mazola, yore jest jealous cuz Mama always encouraged mah musical ambitions...and you never even finished beauty school, didja? Didja now, sis?

MAZOLA: Shh! Pipe down, ya idiot! Cain't have Leroy findin' out I'm a beauty school dropout.

FLOYD: More like beauty school reject, I reckon. *(BOYS crack up.)*

MAZOLA: Floyd, you wanna find out what that thar tambourine tastes like?

FLOYD: Sounds risky. But I already know...tastes like chicken. *(Puts it in his mouth, and there is an awkward pause.)* Hey, Clyde, why's everthang always taste like chicken?

CLYDE: I got me a better question: Why're ya always putting thangs in yer mouth, Floyd?

FLOYD: *(Shrugs.)* Jest curious I guess. N'maybe a little hungry too...

CLYDE: Yeah well, ya best be keepin' yer lips away from mah geetar, that's fer dang sure.

OTIS: *(Pulls his cowbell and drumstick close.)* Yeah, and ya better not be nibblin' on my drumstick here, neither.

FLOYD: Ah, zip it Otis – the onliest drumsticks I like is the ones whut made from chicken. Kernel Sanders style, know whut I mean? Extra crispy...

CLEMENTINE: So, boys...Truck Stop Chili got any other songs, or is yer band a one-hit wonder?

OTIS: Well shewt...we got another one for ya. This one's a little ballad we like ta call "Keep Yer Gol Dang Hands Offa Mah Horse." All right, boys, let's do this thang. One, two, three, four!

(THEY start bashing away in exactly the same manner as before, and the GIRLS cover their ears again. Suddenly DOYLE and BUFORD enter right; the music to stops when the band sees them.)

DOYLE: Well, well, well...lookie whut we got here...If'n it ain't the Crisco Kid and his band o' losers.

BUFORD: *(Softly.)* Band o' losers...

DOYLE: We can hear yore racket alla way down the street. I says to Buford here, I says to him, "Sounds like they stranglin' some cats in thar!" *(Starts laughing obnoxiously.)*

BUFORD: Ya shore did, Doyle. Ya shore did say that. It was a good un.

End of Freeview

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