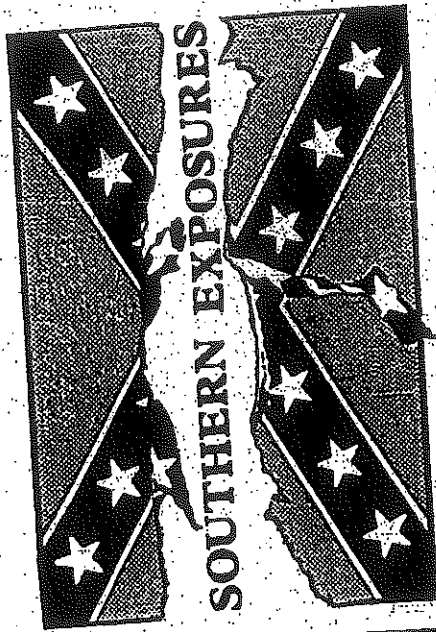




Five Plays About Life in the South

by

Jason Milligan



SAMUEL FRENCH, INC.

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE

CAN'T BUY ME LOVE was first produced in New York City at American Theatre of Actors on November 19, 1984, with the following cast:

AMY Lorraine Morgan
 SANDY Jeanne Smith
 ELLEN Amy Marcs

The production was directed by Cash Tilton

CHARACTERS

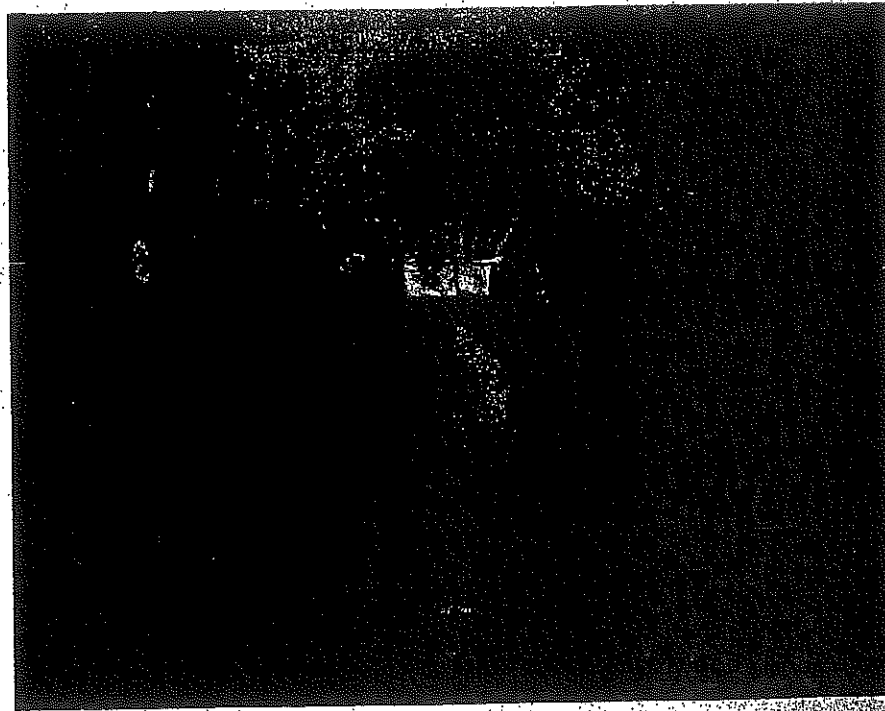
AMY, 16, the dreamer
 SANDY, 17, the peacemaker
 ELLEN, 18, the know-it-all

SETTING:

The action takes place in Amy's bedroom in Batesville, Mississippi on a warm night in August, 1984, or thereabouts.

"William Davis, author of *The Rich: A Study of the Species*, says that McCartney makes \$40 million a year. Other estimates ... place the annual figure at \$48 million to \$60 million. If a conservative figure of \$45 million is used, McCartney makes \$5,000 every single hour of the year and is richer by at least a couple of hundred dollars since you started this article."

PEOPLE Weekly
 November 14, 1983



SCENE: Stage LIGHTS come up on Amy's bedroom: a bed, a stereo, a television, stuffed animals, lots of record albums, and quite a few Paul McCartney and Beatles posters.

AT RISE: AMY, ELLEN, and SANDY are discovered onstage, all looking extremely bored.

ELLEN. (Sighing.) So. What do y'all wanna do?
SANDY. I dunno.

AMY. I dunno. Wanna watch TV—?

ELLEN. Not really. (Pause.) We could go drivin' around. Go up to the Square?

SANDY. That's all we EVER do is drive around and around like a buncha fools!

AMY. Lookin' at guys—

SANDY. —that DON'T look back—

AMY. —an' if they do, they laugh at us. I hate gettin' laughed at.

SANDY. Y'know, it's a wonder we haven't been arrested for disturbin' the peace, as loud as we play that car stereo of yours!

ELLEN. Well don't gang up on me. It was just an idea. (Pause.) I hate this town. (Pause.) There's nothin' I hate more'n small towns. There is never anything to do.

AMY. There's always TV.

ELLEN & SANDY. Pu-leeaaasse!

ELLEN. Or—we could go to the bowlin' alley—
AMY & SANDY. Pu-leeaaasse!

ELLEN. Well, Nick and David are gonna be there, and—

SANDY. Nick! Is that why you wanna go down there so bad?

ELLEN. Maybe ...

SANDY. Just because he's been to Northwest for a year you think he's so hot!

ELLEN. So?

SANDY. He's still as dumb as a two-by-four.

ELLEN. Well, at least he had the sense to get outta this place. I can't wait till I get outta this place.

AMY. What day are you leavin'?

ELLEN. Sunday. Rush starts on Sunday.

AMY. Rush?

ELLEN. Sorority Rush.

AMY. Oh. *(Short pause.)* Which one did you say you're gonna be in?

ELLEN. Tri Delta.

AMY. Wow.

SANDY. But she has to go through rush first.

ELLEN. Yeah, but they GOTTA take me. Mom was a Tri-Delt.

SANDY. Twenty years ago.

ELLEN. They wouldn't forget.

SANDY. *(Mocking her.)* "They wouldn't forget."

ELLEN. *(Pause.)* So what do y'all wanna do?

AMY. I dunno. *(Pause.)* We could see what's on TV.

ELLEN. Why do you keep talkin' about TV?

AMY. I dunno. There might be somethin' on ...

ELLEN. Nothin' worth watchin'.

(AMY cuts on the TV. We hear canned LAUGHTER.)

SANDY. What is this? Saturday Night Live?

ELLEN. I've seen this one, this is a bad one.

(As AMY changes channels.)

SANDY. What are you lookin' for?

AMY. Nothin'. Oh! LOOK WHAT'S ON!

ELLEN. What?

AMY. *Hard Day's Night!* I all ever see this?

ELLEN. *(In a bored monotone.)* No.

SANDY. I think so. I saw it with you, didn't I? On the late show or somethin'?

AMY. Uh-huh. Last Christmas. Gosh, I LOVE this movie. It's their best, y'know.

(THEY all watch the television.)

AMY. Look, aren't they cute?

ELLEN. They're all dead.

AMY. Not they're not. Just John.

ELLEN. You are so weird, Amy. Nobody cares about the Beatles anymore!

AMY. I do.

ELLEN. That was, like, 40 years ago!

AMY. No it wasn't!

ELLEN. They're Ancient History now!

SANDY. Leave her alone, El!

ELLEN. I swear, she's like a fish outta water.

SANDY. C'mon, now.

ELLEN. I swear she is ...

(Pause. THEY all watch the television.)

SANDY. *(Pointing at the screen.)* Oh! That one! Is that—?

AMY. *(Dreamy.)* It's Paul.

SANDY. Paul. Oh, yeah. Your man.

ELLEN. Looks like a fairy.

SANDY. Oh, c'mon, El. Quit bein' so negative all the time. You know how Amy likes him.

AMY. (To Sandy.) He's rich, you know. People Magazine said he is the richest man in show business.

SANDY. Really?

AMY. Yeah.

ELLEN. He's a 'has-been.

AMY. He is not! (To Sandy.) He raises his kids just like they were regular people. Doesn't spoil 'em, or anything.

ELLEN. Sounds like a nut.

SANDY. How much is he worth?

AMY. Guess.

SANDY. I dunno.

AMY. C'mon, try and guess.

SANDY. Oh, I dunno. Five million dollars.

AMY. No.

SANDY. No? Higher or lower?

AMY. Higher.

SANDY. Okay ... ten million.

AMY. Gosh, not! Lots higher!

SANDY. You're kiddin' me. How much?

AMY. You give up?

SANDY. Yes.

AMY. Ellen? You wanna guess?

ELLEN. Seventy-five cents.

AMY. No!

SANDY. Well?

AMY. You give up?

SANDY. Yes! Yes, I give up! How much?

AMY. Six hundred million dollars.

(Dead silence.)

AMY. No, it's true. And he saves it all for his kids but they all live just like regular people.

ELLEN. What a line of ... Where'd you hear that?

AMY. I can prove it. Read this. (SHE digs out a scrapbook labeled "No. 10" and leafs through it until SHE finds the desired page, hands it to Sandy.) There it is. Right there.

ELLEN. (In disbelief.) A SCRAPBOOK?

AMY. Yeah. I collect clippings and stuff.

ELLEN. Oh, Paul McCartney?

AMY. Yeah.

ELLEN. Why?

AMY. Because ... because it's PAUL.

AMY. (Reading.) God, listen to this: it says here, he makes five thousand dollars every hour of the year, and—LISTEN—"He's richer by at least a couple of hundred dollars since you started this article."

ELLEN. Lemme see that. (Takes the scrapbook.)

SANDY. Wow. That is a LOT of money. I mean, he could give away a million dollars to one of us and never even miss it!

AMY. Wouldn't that be somethin'?

SANDY. We oughta call him and ask him for it.

AMY. Wonder what he'd say?

SANDY. (In her best Liverpool accent.) "Sure, darling. There's a check in the mail."

(SANDY and AMY laugh. THEY all watch TV. Silence.)

SANDY. He IS cute.

AMY. I know. I've got all his records. You've seen all my records.

(Silence. *THEY* watch TV.)

ELLEN. Let's call him.

SANDY. What?

ELLEN. Let's call him. Paul. Let's call him up.

SANDY. You mean, now?

ELLEN. Why not?

SANDY. They have people that answer the phone for him, we could never get ahold of him.

ELLEN. No, I bet we could. It says here that he lives on some farm with his family. Just like regular people. So he's probably at home. We could really ask him for the money.

SANDY. Are you serious? No, you're not.

ELLEN. I am. Really. Worst thing he could say would be, "Go to hell."

AMY. He wouldn't say *THAT*.

SANDY. We can't call Europe on this phone.

AMY. My parents would kill me when the bill came.

ELLEN. For a third of a million dollars you could call him every night.

SANDY. A third of a million?

ELLEN. WE call and WE ask for the money. If he says yes, WE split it. Three ways.

(Pause as AMY and SANDY exchange looks.)

ELLEN. What do you say? We gonna call him or not?

AMY. How?

ELLEN. Where is this farm of his?

AMY. England.

ELLEN. Where in England?

AMY. Sussex.

ELLEN. Call information.

AMY. Information?

ELLEN. Ask for overseas information.

AMY. There's no such thing.

ELLEN. Yes there is. There's no charge either. It's just like regular information. My dad used it the other night. He called Paris or somewhere to get a number he'd lost. (*Snaps fingers.*) Like that! Go ahead. Call.

AMY. What do I dial?

ELLEN. O. for Operator.

AMY. What do I say?

ELLEN. Let me do it.

AMY. I'll let you do it. (*Hands over phone.*) I get butterflies in my stomach when I have to make long-distance calls.

(Pause as ELLEN dials the phone and waits for an answer.)

ELLEN. Yes. Operator? I'd like to get overseas information. In England. Sussex. Yes, thank you. (*To girls.*) She's doin' till

AMY. Oh, gosh! I'm gonna die! I can't believe we are really doin' this!

ELLEN. Shhh! Shhh! Yes. Uh ... this is somebody from the United States of American calling, and I would like to get somebody's number, somebody's phone number, over there with you. Yes. Mr. Paul McCartney. McCartney, yes. No, I don't have the address. (*To girls.*) She's lookin'! Gimme a pen!

SANDY. What?

ELLEN. A pen! Get me a pen! (*Into phone.*) Yes. Yes mam. You—it is? Oh. I see. Thank you. (*Hangs up. Silence.*)

AMY. Well?

ELLEN. It's unlisted. "Unclassified," she told me.

SANDY. Oh, well.

AMY. Shoot.

ELLEN. Well, we tried.

SANDY. Yeah.

AMY. Yeah.

(Pause. *THEY watch TV.*)

SANDY. (Lost in thought.) Ricky Blinder.

AMY. What?

SANDY. Ricky. Ricky Blinder. You 'member him? I dated him last year.

AMY. The one who loved movies?

ELLEN. That creep who wore the nerdy black glasses? Lenses about this thick?

SANDY. He wasn't a creep. He just hadn't dated a whole lot. Anyway, he was REALLY into movies and he had this big collection of movie star autographed pictures. And he would actually write the stars and ask for the pictures.

AMY. Really?

SANDY. Oh, yeah, don't you remember, I told you about that. He had Richard Gere and Christopher Reeve—

ELLEN. So what does that have to do with anything?

SANDY. Well, there are places that sell these lists with 'movie stars' names, addresses, and phone numbers. And he would buy these lists. He had a bunch of 'em. All kinds a stars listed on 'em.

ELLEN. So?

SANDY. So, I bet Paul is on there.

AMY. Really?

SANDY. Bruce Springsteen was. I could call Ricky and get him to look on his lists for Paul's phone number.

AMY. Oh, that's a great idea!

SANDY. You got the phone book?

(ELLEN picks it up.)

SANDY. Look him up.

ELLEN. What's his last name?

SANDY. Blinder. B-L-I-N-D-E-R.

ELLEN. Uh ... there's three. A.T. Blinder, on Taylor Road?

SANDY. No.

ELLEN. John L., Laughton Drive ...

SANDY. That MAY be it, I don't know—

ELLEN. K.L. Blinder, Highway Seven—

SANDY. That's it! That's the one! What's the number?

ELLEN. Uh ... 221 ...

SANDY. 221?

ELLEN. Yeah ... 6 ... 4 ... 0 ... 6.

SANDY. (Dialing.) ... 0 ... 6. Okay. (Pause.) It's ringing. Hello? Mrs. Blinder? Is Ricky there? Oh, well, this is Sandy. Fine. Just fine. No, no, I'm at 221-0161. Okay. Thanks. Bye. (SANDY hangs up.)

ELLEN. Well?

SANDY. He's in the BATHROOM. He's gonna call back.

(Silence. *THEY all sit, motionless, watching the phone for quite some time.*)

AMY. I wish he'd hurry. What's takin' him so long?

ELLEN. Maybe he's in the bathroom, [REDACTED]

(SANDY looks at Ellen. THEY both laugh.)

SANDY. [REDACTED]

AMY. Ooh, yuck!

SANDY. I wish held hurry. I gotta pee.

ELLEN. Great. When he calls back, YOU'LL be in the bathroom.

(Pause. THEY stare at the phone.)

SANDY. I'm kinda—what am I gonna say to this guy? I haven't seen him in nine months.

ELLEN. Just tell him whatcha want.

SANDY. Aw, that's kinda mean, doncha think? I don't want him to feel like I'm usin' him.

ELLEN. Relax, he's a creep. He won't know what to say, either.

SANDY. Well that's a snide thing to say.

ELLEN. Well excuse me for tryin' to help us get rich here.

SANDY. Excuse me for breathin' the same air you breathe for a minute.

AMY. Anybody want a coke?

ELLEN. What?

AMY. A coke? Y'all want a coke?

ELLEN. Yeah, I guess so.

SANDY. Yeah. Diet.

AMY. Okay. Be right back. (Goes. Silence.)

ELLEN. Look, don't sulk. All I meant was—

SANDY. Yeah, I KNOW what you meant. You been actin' like you're so much better since you graduated.

And since you came back from that pre-college thing, you think you're Queen of the [REDACTED] Nile.

ELLEN. I do not.

SANDY. Yes you do!

ELLEN. No I don't!

SANDY. Yes you do. All of a sudden, whoever you go out with is perfect and who ever I go out with, you always gotta find somethin' wrong with 'em.

ELLEN. Don't get so upset. I don't mean nothin'; anyway, Amy's the one we oughta worry about. I mean, nobody EVER asks her out. I'm thinkin', we're gonna have to fix her up with somebody before I leave. Maybe David.

SANDY. David? Oh, c'mon, El. All he wants to do is get laid.

ELLEN. Well, Amy has gotta learn sometime.

SANDY. I don't think that's such a good idea.

ELLEN. Why not?

SANDY. I just—just leave her alone, okay?

ELLEN. But she's such an introvert. My grandmother has a more excitin' social life. I mean, Amy needs to take a field trip over to see me at Ole Miss or somethin'. Learn what life is all about.

SANDY. Look, you're leavin' day after tomorrow. So just be nice to her. She's gonna miss you. Be nice, please?

ELLEN. S'what you get for draggin' me over here.

(The PHONE rings.)

SANDY. It's HIM! Oh, God! (SHE answers.) Hello?

Hi, Ricky. Yeah, well it ... it has been a long time. Oh, nothin'. Yeah. Yeah. Hey, listen Ricky. I got kinda a favor to ask. Well, you 'member those movie star lists you used to show me? The ones with all the phone

numbers an' everything on 'em? Could you look up somebody for me on 'em? (*Goes pale.*) NO! When? Well, wouldja look? (*In a panic, to Ellen.*) He stopped collecting pictures!

ELLEN. Does he still have the lists?

SANDY. He doesn't know! He's lookin'.

ELLEN. Where did he say they are?

SANDY. He thinks he threw 'em all away! (*Back to phone.*) What? Oh, good. (*Nods and sighs relief to Ellen.*) Well, look an' see if you can find Paul McCartney. Yeah. Yeah. No, just the number. (*To Ellen.*) Get me a pen!

(*ELLEN does.*)

SANDY. Okay. Yeah. Got it... got it. Thanks, you're a sweetheart. Yeah, well, call me sometime. Okay. Bye. (*SHE hangs up. Then, waving the number victoriously.*) We are in business!

AMY. (*Rushes in with the cokes.*) Don't call without me!

ELLEN. Without you? It's your turn. YOU get to call Paul.

(*Hands the phone to Amy, who does not take it. Just stares at it.*)

ELLEN. Well, WE got the number. YOU call.

AMY. I can't.

ELLEN. Sure you can. (*Offers phone again.*) Here.

AMY. No, I mean ... I CAN'T. I won't know what to say. I'll crack up, or somethin'.

ELLEN. No, you won't. He's just like everybody else.

AMY. (*Perhaps hugging the scrapbook for security.*) No he's NOT! He's PAUL!

ELLEN. My God.

SANDY. Look Amy, you don't have to call him if you don't want to.

ELLEN. Yes she does. If she doesn't learn to talk to guys now, she never will. And what better way to break her in than talking to Paul? Her idol. Give me the number.

AMY. (*Grabbing the number from Sandy.*) No! I'll eat the number! I'll swallow the number and then we can't call him!

ELLEN. Then Sandy will just call Ricky and get it back again.

SANDY. No I won't.

ELLEN. Then I will.

SANDY. Look, if she doesn't want to call Paul, I'll call Paul.

ELLEN. Let HER do it. She needs to. She has a problem with guys, and this'll solve it.

AMY. I don't have a problem with guys.

ELLEN. Yes you do, Amy. Nobody'll ask you out. Isn't that right?

AMY. NO! Guys—guys ask me out.

ELLEN. Now don't lie, Amy. I know for a fact you haven't been on a date since last summer.

SANDY. This is gettin' kinda cruel, El.

ELLEN. So? She needs to hear this.

SANDY. I don't think you know what she needs.

ELLEN. She need us to fix her up with somebody. Tell you what, Amy. You call Paul, and we'll get somebody to ask you out.

AMY. I don't wanna call Paul, and I don't want anybody to ask me out!

ELLEN. You are SO weird! Why not?

AMY: They ASK me! Then guys ASK me!
ELLEN: No they don't. Nobody ever asks you out, Amy.

AMY: Yes they do. I got—they did last week.

ELLEN: Who? Who asked you out?

AMY: (*Realizing she's said too much.*) Nobody.

ELLEN: Who? Who asked you out?

AMY: Nobody!

ELLEN: Tell me who asked you out!

AMY: NICK!

ELLEN: (*Pause.*) Nick? Nick asked you out? When?

AMY: I told you! Last week!

ELLEN:

AMY: He did! He asked me to go to that Fish Fry thing on Saturday!

ELLEN: Now, you are lyin'. He was gonna ask me to that! I've been waitin' for him to call ME for that!

AMY: Well, he has asked me! And David and Ronny and Eddie! And I told 'em all NO! NO!

ELLEN: Why?

AMY: It's none of your business!

ELLEN: I'm dialing the phone. You are gonna talk to him.

AMY: Who, Nick?

ELLEN: PAUL!

AMY: NO!

ELLEN: You got no choice! I'm dialin' the phone, and you're gonna talk to Paul!

AMY: (*In one breath.*) No, I can't. You don't understand. I CAN'T do this. When I get up in speech class to make a speech, I get faint. When I have to interview for a job, I get sick. I—I have worshipped Paul McCartney since I was six years old! I can't DO THIS! I WILL GO TO PIECES! DON'T MAKE ME DO

THIS! DON'T MAKE ME TALK TO HIM! I'M IN LOVE WITH HIM! I'M IN LOVE WITH PAUL MCCARTNEY!

(*Silence.*)

ELLEN: Jesus Christ.

SANDY: That's why you turned Nick down?

AMY: (*Quietly.*) Yes.

SANDY: And all those other guys?

AMY: Yes.

SANDY: Poor thing. (*To Ellen.*) Y'see? Now will you back offa her?

ELLEN: Okay, okay. I'll call him myself, since everybody's so scared. (*SHE dials. Pause.*) It's ringing.

AMY: I'll talk to him.

SANDY: You don't have to—

AMY: I know. I want to. Give me the phone. GIVE ME THE PHONE.

(*ELLEN does, surprised.*)

AMY: I don't want your words to tarnish his ears. (*Pause.*) It's ringing. (*Pause.*) Still ringing. (*Pause.*) There's nobody home. I—Hello? Uh ... I this P-Paul? Well, is he there? Paul. Uh ... Okay. (*Weakly, to others.*) Th-they're gettin' him.

SANDY: It's not too late to hang up, Amy. You don't have to go through with it.

AMY: I know. I want to.

SANDY: You sure?

AMY: Yeah. (*To phone.*) Hello? Is this ... is this Paul? Uh, hi. This—I'm—this is Amy Miller. I—I live in America. And I ... I just wanted to call and tell you that I respect your work and I enjoy your music and could

you please send me a million dollars since you'll never miss it, and I've been in love with your for ten years but I never told you. (*Silence. SANDY and ELLEN cringe.*) You do? I—I can? What? I—God, I'm sorry. I didn't—Oh, God, yes. Oh, that's okay. Yes. Thank you. Thank you. 'Bye. (*SHE hangs up, numb. A long silence.*)

SANDY. Well?

ELLEN. What'd he say?

AMY. He said, it was four in the morning there. And I woke him up.

ELLEN. What about the money?

AMY. The what?

ELLEN. The money. What'd he say when you asked him for the money?

AMY. Oh. He said no.

ELLEN. Oh.

AMY. But he told me—I said I loved him, y'know, did you hear me? And he said—he said he loved me too. He said it: "I love you too, dear."

ELLEN. (*Pause.*) But he wouldn't give you the money?

AMY. Who CARES about money? Don't you understand? Paul knows who I AM now! (*Long pause. THEY drink their cokes.*)

ELLEN. So. What do ya'll wanna do now?

SANDY. I dunno.

AMY. I don't care....

ELLEN. (*Pause.*) That's what I hate about small towns. Not a damn thing to do.

BLACKOUT

The Play is over.

