

All Together At Last

A Play by

Philip Middleton Williams

Contact:

Philip Middleton Williams

16600 SW 77th Avenue

Palmetto Bay, FL 33157

pmw@barkbarkwoofwoof.com

www.pmwplaywright.com

CHARACTERS:

PAUL HENDERSON: Mid-sixties.

ADAM CONNOLLY: Early sixties. Paul's husband.

P.J. HENDERSON-CONNOLLY: Fifteen. Paul and Adam's grandson.

WILL KURTZ: Seventeen. P.J.'s boyfriend.

DOROTHY HENDERSON: Nineties. Paul's mother.

FOX HENDERSON-CONNOLLY: Forty. P.J.'s father, Paul and Adam's son.

GENE KURTZ: Late thirties. Will's father.

PLACE and TIME:

A home in suburban Miami. Memorial Day weekend, fifteen years after the action in "All Together Again" and twenty-five years after "All Together Now."

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All Together At Last

Scene 1

The scene is the living room of the home of PAUL HENDERSON and ADAM CONNOLLY. It is a comfortable place in suburban Miami. It is open and airy. The furnishings are a mixture of antique and contemporary furniture, tastefully done but not extravagant. Upstage right is the kitchen area, open to the rest of the room, with a breakfast table nearby. Upstage left is a dining area with a table and chairs for six. Downstage right is a comfortable couch, chairs, and coffee table. Downstage left is a reading area with bookshelves and a small desk with a laptop computer and a printer (unseen) under the desk. Off stage right is an exit to the rest of the rooms of the house; the front entry hall is stage left. The back wall has a large sliding glass doors and sidelights leading out to a patio and garden area visible to the audience. It is lush with plants and hanging orchids.

At rise, it is dawn, the room dimly lit from the sunlight coming in from the patio. PAUL HENDERSON, a man in his mid-sixties, is standing next to the kitchen table. He is wearing a t-shirt, jeans, and flip-flops. He is in decent shape for a man of his age. He is talking on a cell phone.

PAUL: Thank you for everything you did for him. We really appreciate it. ... We'll be down later. ... All right, thank you. Goodbye.

(Clicks phone off, puts it on the table, closes his eyes, and heaves a sigh. After a beat, ADAM CONNOLLY enters. He is five years younger than PAUL, in a t-shirt and boxers, bare feet. He is still in good shape; well-muscled and trim for a man of sixty.)

ADAM: He's gone?

PAUL: In his sleep. About twenty minutes ago.

(ADAM embraces PAUL and they hold each other.)

ADAM: You okay?

PAUL: Yeah. I was ready for it, I guess. They already called Mom and told her.

ADAM: They say how she took it?

PAUL: Oh, you know her. She apologized to the nurse for making her work on a holiday weekend.

ADAM: Yeah. Did you call Fox?

PAUL: It's four-thirty in Santa Fe. Might as well let him sleep in a little. Nothing he can do from there anyway.

ADAM: Think he'll come?

PAUL: I'm sure he will. If I know Fox, he's already got a go-bag packed and ready. One call to the airline and he'll be here before dinner. *(Beat.)* Meanwhile, I'm gonna go get some coffee. Herbal tea isn't going to cut it this morning.

(PAUL digs his car keys out of his pocket and heads for the front door. ADAM follows.)

ADAM: Hey.

(They stop and embrace again, this time we hear a sob from PAUL.)

ADAM *(cont'd)*: He had a good life. And making it to ninety; that's pretty damn good in my book.

PAUL: Yeah. I should live so long.

ADAM: Twenty-five more years.

PAUL: Except for him the last ten really sucked.

ADAM: Can't have everything.

PAUL: You want anything?

ADAM: The usual.

PAUL: Tall Pike Market with a shot of cream.

ADAM: And a green stopper stick so it doesn't spill.

PAUL: Got it. *(Nods in the direction of the bedrooms.)* Think P.J. will want anything?

ADAM: Let him sleep.

PAUL: Okay. Back in a bit.

(PAUL opens the door.)

ADAM: Love you.

PAUL: Love you.

(PAUL exits. ADAM watches him go, then goes to the patio and slides open the door, looking out to the garden.)

ADAM *(to the plants)*: Morning, guys, how're you doing?

(ADAM goes out onto the patio and starts to inspect and tend to the orchids. As he does, P.J. enters stealthily from the bedrooms. He is a tall, well-built boy of fifteen, wearing only boxers. He looks into the living room and kitchen, not seeing ADAM out on the patio. Thinking he is alone he beckons to someone off-stage. WILL enters. He too is a well-built young man with wire-rimmed glasses, wearing a wrinkled shirt, jeans, and sneakers that are untied. He looks like he dressed in a hurry. He and P.J. start to cross to the front door. ADAM sees them but does nothing. When

P.J. and WILL get to the door, P.J. gives WILL a quick hug, whispers something, and starts to open the door. ADAM steps inside.)

ADAM: P.J., if Paul and I taught you anything, it's to offer your date some breakfast the next morning.

(P.J. and WILL stop in their tracks.)

P.J.: Shit.

WILL (*sotto voce*): Busted.

ADAM: If it's any consolation, I heard you come in last night.

P.J. (*embarrassed*): Did G-Dad hear?

ADAM: No, he was conked out. None the wiser. Yet.

P.J.: Where is he?

ADAM: Went for coffee. So, are you gonna introduce me?

P.J.: Oh, yeah, sorry. This is Will. Will, this is my granddad. One of them. I call him G-Pop.

ADAM: You can call me Adam.

WILL: Okay. Wow. You don't look like a grandfather.

ADAM: Thank you. Come on back in, you guys. P.J., go put on some clothes.

(P.J. exits to bedroom. WILL smiles tentatively at ADAM, who smiles back. WILL is definitely uncomfortable, but he tries to mask it. ADAM chuckles.)

ADAM: Relax, Will. We're cool.

WILL: Okay.

ADAM: I remember the time I almost got busted sneaking out of my boyfriend's house. I was about your age. Did you ever try putting on a pair of jeans in the dark with a pocketful of change with parents in the next room? It's not easy.

WILL: Oh, yeah...

ADAM: So, how'd you know P.J.?

WILL: From school.

ADAM: So, you're how old?

WILL: Um, sixteen.

(ADAM fixes his gaze on him. WILL gulps, ducks his head.)

ADAM: Sixteen?

WILL: Um...

(ADAM again fixed his gaze on him.)

WILL *(cont'd)*: Okay. *(Beat.)* Seventeen. Just. My birthday was last week.

ADAM *(deadpan)*: Happy birthday.

WILL: Thank you.

ADAM: I take it you know that P.J. is fifteen.

WILL *(whispered)*: Yessir.

ADAM: A very mature fifteen.

WILL: Yessir. We're in the same class. And on the wrestling team.

ADAM: But still fifteen.

WILL: Look, Mr. Connolly –

ADAM: Adam.

WILL: Adam. We've been friends since we were kids, and he and I... We...

ADAM: Relax, Will. P.J. came out to us when he was twelve. How about a glass of orange juice?

WILL *(relaxing)*: Sure, thanks.

(ADAM goes to the refrigerator, gets the orange juice carton and a glass. Pours it, hands the glass to WILL.)

ADAM: He can be both very charming and persuasive, a trait he gets from his father.

WILL: I know his mom and dad.

ADAM: Oh, you do? Funny how he's never told us about you.

WILL: Well....

ADAM: So, I take it he's told you why he's living with us.

WILL: Yeah, his parents are in New Mexico working on an Indian reservation this year.

ADAM: That's right. It's a package deal. His dad is a school counselor, his mom is a veterinarian. They both take care of kids, so to speak. P.J. wanted to stay behind and go to school here in Miami. Now I understand at least one reason why.

WILL *(shy grin)*: Uh, yeah.

ADAM: Paul and I have some experience raising a teenager. Did he tell you about how his dad showed up on that doorstep all the way from Santa Fe at the age of fifteen? Instant family on Paul's fortieth birthday, no less.

WILL: He said something about that.

ADAM: We've always been a pretty close family. We look out for each other. So, let me ask you: what are your intentions towards P.J.?

WILL (*flustered*): I'm sorry?

ADAM: Are you guys just friends with benefits, or are you serious about each other?

(*WILL is stunned for a moment, then screws up his courage a little.*)

WILL: Well, yeah, we're serious. I mean, I am. About him. But we've never –

(*P.J. re-enters. He is now wearing jeans and t-shirt.*)

P.J.: So, what're you guys talking about?

ADAM: Oh, just getting acquainted.

(*P.J. sizes up the situation and goes to WILL.*)

P.J. (*to WILL*): Third degree?

(*WILL starts to answer, but ADAM cuts him off.*)

ADAM: Just some polite conversation.

P.J.: Okay.

(*P.J. takes WILL aside and whispers to him. At first WILL shakes his head, but P.J. gets determined and WILL reluctantly nods. ADAM watches all of this with bemusement.*)

ADAM: You guys want to be alone... again?

P.J.: G-Pop, Will has something he wants to ask you.

WILL (*to P.J.*): Not just me.

P.J.: Okay, we have something we want to ask you.

ADAM: I'm all ears.

(*P.J. squares his shoulders, screwing up his courage, then deflates a little.*)

P.J.: Um...

(*P.J. looks at WILL, who nods his head and smiles tentatively as if to say "Go on, you can do it."*
P.J. looks back at ADAM.)

P.J. (*cont'd*): Okay. (*Deep breath.*) Will wants to move in with me.

WILL: It was your idea.

P.J.: But you want to, don'tcha?

WILL: Yes, but –

ADAM (*interrupting*): Hold it. Back the truck up.

P.J. (*to WILL*): Whaddaya mean, “Yes, but...”?

WILL: What I mean is –

P.J.: You said you want to.

WILL: I know. I do.

P.J.: So? What's the problem?

WILL (*glancing at ADAM*): Nothing. It's just –

P.J.: Seriously?

WILL: P.J....

P.J.: Will...

ADAM (*loudly*): Hey! Cool it.

(*P.J. and WILL subside. Beat while ADAM looks at them both.*)

ADAM (*cont'd*): All right. Start over. Why, aside from the obvious reasons, do you want Will to move in with you.

P.J.: Because we love each other.

(*P.J. looks at WILL, who, after a second, shrugs and nods in agreement.*)

ADAM: Um, okay. I'm pretty sure Will's parents might have something to say about it, though.

P.J.: They're divorced. His mom took off for Oregon a long time ago. He lives with his dad. Or he did.

ADAM: Why the past tense?

WILL: Because I don't live there anymore.

ADAM: How come?

P.J.: Because –

WILL: Don't –

ADAM: Because...?

(P.J. takes WILL over to a corner of the living room, whispering. WILL shakes his head, looks at ADAM, shakes his head again. P.J. becomes insistent. Finally...)

P.J.: Show him.

(Reluctantly WILL goes over to ADAM and lifts up his t-shirt, revealing several fist-sized bruises on his abdomen and several scrapes.)

P.J.: His dad did that.

(ADAM examines the bruises. WILL drops his shirt.)

ADAM: When did that happen?

WILL: Last night. We were –

P.J. *(interrupting)*: We were sitting out on the back patio at Will's dad's place. We were just talking, not holding hands, not doing anything. Just talking. Then all of a sudden, his dad comes out all shitfaced and starts yelling at us, calling us faggots and all sorts of names and he gets in my face for "seducing" Will and saying me and my whole faggot family did this to him, and he starts to take a swing at me –

ADAM *(interrupting)*: Did he hit you?

P.J.: No, but then he starts to go after Will and he –

WILL *(interrupting)*: I hit him back.

P.J.: Knocked him down.

WILL: Pretty easy when he's drunk.

ADAM: Are you all right?

WILL: I'm a wrestler. Been hit worse.

P.J.: So, his dad starts yelling, "Get the fuck outta my house, don't wanna see your sorry faggot ass ever again."

WILL: So, we left.

P.J.: And came here.

(Pause as ADAM absorbs all of this.)

ADAM: Where were you going? This morning when you were leaving?

WILL: My cousin has an apartment over by the university. I was gonna crash on his couch until...

P.J.: See, that's why I want him to move in here.

ADAM: Has he hit you before?

(WILL hesitates.)

P.J.: Tell him.

WILL: Couple of times.

ADAM: Have you told anyone?

WILL: Like who?

ADAM: Well, your school counselor? A doctor?

P.J.: I told him to.

WILL: No.

ADAM: Why not?

WILL: Just haven't. Not a lot anyone can really do. I mean, a drunk's a drunk, and he's a mean one. That's why Mom left.

ADAM: I know what you're going through.

P.J.: So, it's okay?

(Beat as ADAM thinks, his fists clenched.)

ADAM: I have to talk it over with Paul. *(Sigh.)* And I'm sorry to have to tell you, but there's something a little more pressing right now.

P.J.: What?

ADAM: Jim died this morning.

P.J. *(shocked)*: Grampy?

ADAM: He went in his sleep.

(P.J. goes to ADAM and embraces him, holding him, and we hear P.J. sob. WILL looks uncomfortable.)

ADAM: He had a good life. He loved you.

(P.J. is now crying openly.)

WILL: I should go.

P.J.: No. Please don't.

(P.J. goes to WILL and hugs him, which WILL accepts hesitantly, then welcomes it. They hold each other. P.J. then turns to ADAM.)

P.J.: Does my dad know?

ADAM: We haven't called him yet. It's two hours earlier there. Paul will call them later.

P.J.: Okay. Aw, Grampy...

(PAUL enters from the front door carrying a cardboard Starbucks tray with two paper cups. P.J. sees him and goes to him, hugging him tightly, nearly knocking over the tray. PAUL awkwardly comforts P.J. as he looks around the room, taking in ADAM and does a slight double-take when he sees WILL.)

PAUL *(to ADAM)*: You told him, I take it.

ADAM: Yeah.

(PAUL sets the tray down somewhere and properly hugs P.J.)

PAUL: He had a good life, and he had people who loved him. That's all that matters.

P.J.: I know.

PAUL *(to WILL)*: Hello.

WILL: Hi.

P.J.: G-Dad, this is Will.

PAUL: Nice to meet you. You're a friend of P.J.'s?

WILL: Yessir.

PAUL: Okay. *(Gets coffee, hands cup to ADAM.)* If I'd known we were having company, I'd have gotten more coffee.

WILL: That's okay. I should be going anyway.

PAUL: Well, nice to meet you, Will.

WILL: You too.

(WILL starts to head for the door, but P.J. stops him. Once again, they get into an intense whispered discussion as PAUL and ADAM look on, trading looks.)

P.J.: Where're you going?

WILL: My cousin's. I'll call you.

P.J.: What about...?

WILL: Not now.

P.J.: When, then?

WILL: I don't know. But not now.

P.J.: It's too late. We already told G-Pop. (*Turns to PAUL.*) G-Dad, I want Will to move in here with us, okay?

(*Classic double-take from PAUL.*)

PAUL: I'm sorry, what?

P.J.: I want Will to move in here.

PAUL (*to ADAM*): You know about this?

ADAM: They just told me.

P.J.: His life sucks at home, his dad's a drunk –

PAUL: Hold it, I don't need the whole backstory right now. Just...

ADAM: Déjà vu, huh?

PAUL: Twenty-five years later another stray kid shows up on our doorstep.

ADAM: Let's go out on the patio and I'll fill you in.

WILL: I should go.

ADAM: No, you two just sit tight, okay? We'll get this figured out and then we'll talk and then... Well, we've got other things to think about, but it's not like Jim's going anywhere at the moment.

PAUL: Thanks for reminding me.

(*ADAM and PAUL take their coffee cups and go out to the patio, closing the door behind them. We see them sit on the bench and start talking.*)

WILL: I really should go. My timing sucks.

P.J.: No, G-Pop said to wait.

WILL: For what?

P.J.: They said they'd figure something out.

WILL: Yeah, some way of getting me back in with my dad. "It's for the best," or some lame shit line like that. (*Beat.*) I'll call you later. Sorry about your... what was he, your great-granddad?

P.J.: Yeah. G-Dad's dad. He was here when my dad showed up here. G-Mom wanted him to go to some boarding school, but Grampy and Grammy talked them into letting him stay. At least that's what my dad says.

WILL: You have funny names for them: G-Dad, G-Pop, Grampy, Grammy.

P.J.: What do you call your grandparents?

WILL: Nothing. They're all dead. All I've really had was my mom and dad. So, anyway, I'll see you later.

(WILL gets to the door.)

P.J.: Hey, wait up.

(WILL stops.)

P.J.: Do you remember the first time we met?

WILL: Third grade. Mrs. Edward's class.

P.J.: Yep. I knew right then.

WILL: You knew what right then?

P.J.: That you and I were... kindred spirits. That we were meant to be together.

WILL: Aw, c'mon. You were eight. You didn't know about...

P.J.: About being gay? No, I didn't. But I knew. You were this shy kid with glasses but a great build –

WILL: I was nine. Nobody has muscles when they're nine.

P.J.: Maybe not, but.... And you were nice to me. I mean, here I was, this goofy kid raised by Quakers with the vegetarian lunches and –

WILL: Your "FREE NELSON MANDELA" t-shirts –

P.J.: Which were hand-me-downs from my dad. But I just knew.

WILL: Yeah. Me too.

P.J.: I meant it back there, y'know. I do love you.

WILL: Yeah. I know. *(Sheepish grin.)* And I love you too.

P.J.: 'Bout time.

WILL: Hey, you know I do. I just don't...

P.J.: Yeah, I know. It comes easy in my family. We're always saying it.

WILL: Never got much of that.

P.J.: Gonna try to fix that.

WILL: You think they're gonna go for it? I mean, we kinda sprang it on 'em, and then your ... Grampy....

P.J.: We'll get them to see that it's just like you're gonna be spending the night, that's all. For the next two years until we graduate from high school. A long-time houseguest. And now with Grampy gone, maybe they'll be more –

WILL: Oh, you're gonna do that guilt trip shit on them. That's just....

P.J.: No. They'd see through it in a second, and besides, I don't need to. All you have to do is tell them about life with your dad. Shit, my dad would probably go over there and pack your stuff himself.

WILL: If you say so.

P.J.: Yeah, I do.

(P.J. goes over to WILL, gently embraces him, and after a discreet glance out to the garden, kisses him. WILL returns it, and they start to get into it. Then WILL breaks it off.)

WILL: Yeah, okay, I'm getting kinda...

P.J.: Yeah, me too.

WILL: And we promised...

P.J.: I know...

(They separate reluctantly, trading smiles, maybe an affectionate cuff on the arm or something. The patio door slides open and PAUL and ADAM re-enter.)

PAUL: All right, guys, here's what we've come up with. Will, you can stay here this weekend. We're going to reach out to your father and see if we can't work out some kind of reconciliation between you two –

WILL (*interrupting*): He won't go for it –

ADAM: You don't know that.

WILL: Yeah, I do.

PAUL: Well, be that as it may, we need to do everything we can to somehow work things out between you two. Meanwhile –

P.J. (*interrupting*): Meanwhile, let's go make some room for you in my room. Thanks, G-Dad; thanks, G-Pop.

WILL: Yeah, thank you.

(P.J. grabs WILL by the hand, and they go off to the bedrooms leaving ADAM and PAUL alone.)

PAUL: Well, shit.

ADAM: Yeah, no shit.

End of Scene 1.

The play is not over. To find out how it ends, contact the playwright at pmw@barkbarkwoofwoof.com.