

# The Kids Don't Stand a Chance

By

Craig Elias

The scene opens in MILES' father's bedroom. The room is lightly furnished. There are bed stands on both sides of the large bed that sits center stage. MILES, a boy no older than eight, runs on stage from left and ducks behind the bed.

DUSTIN, a boy of similar age, can be heard counting from offstage.

DUSTIN

26, 27, 28, 29, 30! Ready or not, here I come!

DUSTIN runs on stage but stops short of the bed. He makes a melodramatic display of searching the room for his friend. He inspects all of the furnishings that could be hidden behind and also the ones that can't. He slowly creeps around the bed to where MILES is hiding. As DUSTIN creeps, MILES crawls on his hands and knees around the foot of the bed to the opposite side.

When DUSTIN lifts the comforter to check under the bed, MILES tries to crawl quietly offstage. He makes it halfway before DUSTIN stands up and discovers him.

DUSTIN

Gotcha!

MILES

Aw, man.

DUSTIN

Kay. My turn to hide.

MILES flops down on the bed.

MILES

This game is boring, let's do something else.

DUSTIN

Like what?

MILES

I dunno.

DUSTIN

I brung some Play-Doh. I got it downstairs in my backpack.

MILES

Play-Doh's for girls.

DUSTIN

We could go outside and get sticks.

MILES

What do I want with a crummy old stick?

DUSTIN

You know; we'll make ninja weapons.

MILES

I guess.

DUSTIN

You don't like ninjas?

MILES

Ninjas are kinda rad, but not as rad as guns.

DUSTIN

I got a gun at home.

MILES

Do not.

DUSTIN

Yes-huh.

MILES

I never seen it.

DUSTIN

It's 'cause my Mom just got it for me.

MILES

What kind?

DUSTIN

It's a Super Soaker. It shoots like 500 feet. No fake.

MILES

Not squirt guns. I like real guns.

DUSTIN

I never seen a real gun. Well, just the one time when I snuck downstairs when my Dad was watching Rambo. I hid behind the couch.

MILES

My Dad lets me watch Rambo. And I got a gun.

DUSTIN

A for-real one?

MILES

Yep.

DUSTIN

Like with bullets and stuff?

MILES

Uh-huh.

DUSTIN

Yeah, right.

MILES

I do.

DUSTIN

Liar.

MILES

I do have one. I do.

DUSTIN

You swear?

MILES

Cross my heart.

DUSTIN

Cross your heart?

MILES

And hope to die. Stick a needle in my eye.

DUSTIN

No way. *(mockingly singing and dancing)* Liar. Liar.  
Pants on fire. Nose is longer than a telephone wire.

DUSTIN'S *singing slight* causes MILES to leap to  
attention on the bed.

MILES  
Knock it off.

DUSTIN *continues to dance.* MILES *jumps from the bed onto DUSTIN. They both go to the ground and tussle around a bit. No real punches are thrown. DUSTIN ends up on top of MILES and pins MILES' arms to the floor.*

DUSTIN *(in singsong fashion)*  
Liar. Liar. Pull your eyes out with pliers!

MILES  
I'm not a liar. Let me up.

DUSTIN  
Nope.

MILES  
Let me up or I'll punch your face off.

DUSTIN  
Huh-uh.

MILES  
If you let me up, I'll show you the gun.

DUSTIN  
Really?

MILES  
Honest.

DUSTIN  
You promise?

MILES  
I promise.

DUSTIN  
Then swear the oath.

MILES  
If I break my word to my pal Dustin, may I be left in a forest to starve to death. And when I am weak and ready to die, may a bear eat my flesh and pick his teeth with my bones. And when the bear poops me out, may the worms in the earth dance in my remains.

DUSTIN *nods approvingly, gets up and helps MILES to his feet.*

DUSTIN  
Where is it?

MILES  
You gotta be quiet for a minute.

DUSTIN  
Why?

MILES  
You just gotta.

MILES *walks over to stage left, but doesn't leave. He just acts as if he's looking around and listening closely.*

MILES *(he calls offstage)*  
Mom?

MILES *listens again, but receives no answer.*

MILES *(he calls offstage again, but louder this time)*  
Mooooooooom?

MILES *still doesn't get an answer. Satisfied, he walks back over to DUSTIN.*

MILES  
Okay, you really wanna see it?

DUSTIN  
Yeah.

MILES  
Alright, but you gotta close your eyes.

DUSTIN  
For what?

MILES  
'Cause those are the rules. You wanna see it or not?

DUSTIN  
Fine.

DUSTIN *makes a production of closing his eyes and covering his face with his hands.*

MILES *reaches into the bottom drawer of the nightstand to the right of the bed and retrieves a small, black revolver. He points it directly at DUSTIN.*

MILES

Okay. You can open 'em.

DUSTIN *uncovers his face and his eyes are as wide as saucers.*

DUSTIN

Awesome!

MILES

Shhhhhh.

DUSTIN *scrambles around to MILES' side of the bed.*

DUSTIN

Can I hold it?

MILES

Yeah, I guess. But be careful.

MILES *hands DUSTIN the gun barrel first. DUSTIN holds it with both hands. He points it all over the room and pretends to shoot things.*

DUSTIN

Pshhew. Pshhew. Pshhew.

DUSTIN *makes believe that he is firing at MILES. MILES ducks and rolls to avoid the imaginary bullets. DUSTIN chases MILES around the room pretending to shoot at him. At one point, DUSTIN trips and falls, but does not drop the pistol. He just gets up and the boys continue playing. MILES successfully avoids the fake fire for a minute or so, but finally succumbs to the attack. He pretends to die an agonizing, bullet-riddled death.*

*The boys are quickly tired of this game.*

DUSTIN *(pointing the barrel towards his face and looking into it)*

Is it loaded?

MILES  
I don't know.

DUSTIN *aims the weapon directly at MILES' chest. He tries his hardest to squeeze the trigger, but isn't strong enough. He grunts as he exerts his maximum effort.*

MILES  
Here. Lemme see.

DUSTIN *hands the firearm back to his friend.*

MILES  
This is how you do it.

MILES *places two hands on the pistol and points it at his playmate. He squeezes the trigger smoothly and confidently. The gun clicks audibly. MILES "shoots" his way around the cylinder, but the gun's hammer hits nothing.*

DUSTIN  
Do you have any bullets?

MILES  
Yeah.

DUSTIN  
Can you put 'em in?

MILES  
I think so. I mean I know how, but my Dad doesn't let me do it alone.

DUSTIN  
I knew it.

MILES  
Knew what?

DUSTIN  
You don't have a gun for real.

MILES  
What's this?

DUSTIN  
Your Dad's.



MILES  
It's mine *and* his.

DUSTIN  
It's his.

MILES  
We share.

DUSTIN  
Just like my Dad and I share the TV in the basement. Then Saturday afternoon comes. No cartoons. No video games. Just stupid football.

MILES  
No. We share. Honest we do.

DUSTIN  
Then how come you can't put bullets in it?

MILES  
I can. I just didn't wanna.

DUSTIN  
No fake?

MILES  
No fake.

DUSTIN  
Prove it.

MILES  
We should go see about that Play-Doh. This game is lame.

DUSTIN  
I thought Play-Doh was for girls.

MILES  
We could get some sticks then. You know, make some ninja weapons.

DUSTIN  
Why would we make stick weapons when we got a real one right here?

MILES  
Whatever.

DUSTIN  
If you're chicken, just "buck" like a chicken.

MILES  
I'm not chicken.

DUSTIN (*flapping his arms*)  
Buck, buck, buck.

MILES  
I said I'm not a chicken.

DUSTIN (*singing*)  
I feel like chicken tonight, like chicken tonight.

MILES  
Oh, yeah? I'll show you who's chicken.

MILES *reaches into the same drawer that held the gun and pulls out a handful of bullets. DUSTIN watches as MILES loads the revolver one bullet at a time. MILES' hands are shaking noticeably as he works.*

DUSTIN  
Be careful. Don't drop it.

MILES  
I'm fine.

MILES *puts the last bullet in and slaps the cylinder back into place.*

MILES  
Who's chicken now?

MILES *points the gun at DUSTIN. DUSTIN shies away from the barrel.*

DUSTIN  
C'mon, man. Don't point it at me.

MILES (*following DUSTIN around the room*)  
Why not?

DUSTIN  
Quit it out.

MILES  
Why? You scared?

DUSTIN  
No.

MILES  
Yes you are.

DUSTIN  
Am not.

MILES  
Fraidy cat.

DUSTIN  
Just quit pointin' it at me.

MILES (*lowers the gun*)  
Fine.

DUSTIN  
Can I hold it now?

MILES *gives DUSTIN the gun. DUSTIN feels the added weight in his hands.*

DUSTIN (*pointing the gun at MILES*)  
Here. How do you like it?

MILES  
Hah. You're not strong enough to make it shoot.

DUSTIN  
I'm strong enough to twirl it.

DUSTIN *points his index finger straight up in the air and spins the gun around it like a basketball.*

MILES  
That's not how you do it. Gimme it back.

MILES *tries to snatch the gun, but DUSTIN pulls it back. MILES closes the distance and manages to get two*

hands on the weapon. The two boys tug back and forth, twisting, and grunting until MILES finally wrestles it away from DUSTIN.

MILES  
Watch this.

MILES draws the gun from a make believe holster, pretends to shoot it, blows the imaginary gunsmoke away, twirls it and returns it to the holster.

DUSTIN  
Cooooool. Do it again.

MILES repeats the process. This time, he botches the twirl and the gun hits the ground with a loud thud but does not discharge.

Both boys stare at the gun for a second and then at each other as they come to the realization that they have narrowly escaped a disaster.

DUSTIN  
I'm telling.

MILES  
You made me twirl it.

DUSTIN  
I'm telling.

DUSTIN attempts to walk past MILES.

MILES (MILES steps in front of him.)  
You spun it first.

DUSTIN  
Move. I'm telling.

MILES  
Don't tell. My Dad'll kill me.

DUSTIN  
I said "move."

MILES (Looks past DUSTIN and eyes the loaded gun.)  
C'mon, man. You played with it too. You think they'll let you off just 'cause you finked?

MILES' MOM (*a woman's voice from offstage*)  
Boys. What are you doing up there?

MILES *leaves the gun on the floor and runs over to stage left.*

MILES (*his voice is nervous and cracking as he shouts his response offstage*)  
Nothing, Ma. Just playing.

MILES *looks back at DUSTIN, waiting to see if DUSTIN contradicts him. DUSTIN looks at the gun, then at MILES. DUSTIN walks over to stage left.*

DUSTIN  
Yeah, Mrs. F. We're just messin' around.

MILES' MOM (*from offstage*)  
Well it's about time for Dustin to be heading home.

MILES (*to DUSTIN*)  
Hey, you wanna eat over?

DUSTIN  
What are you having?

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
Mom, what's for din?

MILES' MOM (*from offstage*)  
Chicken on the grill.

MILES *glances inquisitively at DUSTIN.*

DUSTIN (*shrugging his shoulders*)  
Yeah. Okay.

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
Hey, Mom?

MILES' MOM (*from offstage*)  
What?

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
Can Dustin please eat over?

MOM (*from offstage*)  
How much homework do you have?

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
Not much.

MILES' MOM (*from offstage*)  
That's fine. Tell him to call his Mom and let her know  
that he's staying.

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
Thanks, Mom.

DUSTIN (*yelling*)  
Yeah. Thanks, Mrs. F.

MILES' MOM (*from offstage*)  
You're both welcome. Now come down and set the table.

MILES (*to MOM offstage*)  
'Kay. Be right there.

MILES *picks up the gun from off of the floor and  
sticks it back into the drawer.*

DUSTIN  
You know what'd be funny?

MILES  
Huh?

DUSTIN  
If we put Play-Doh on everybody's plate and made it look  
like ing purple mashed potatoes.

MILES and DUSTIN *walk offstage together.*

MILES: Or if we took it and made it into a giant mouth and  
fed it chicken...

**CURTAIN**

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# From the Cell of Craig Elias

March 29, 2013

Safe Streets Arts Foundation  
2512 Virginia Avenue NW  
# 58043  
Washington, DC 20037

**RE: Prison-to-the-Stage Submissions.**

Dear Sir or Madam:

Enclosed are a pair of plays, *Yinzers* and *The Kids Don't Stand A Chance*, that I am submitting for presentation at your next Prison-to-the-Stage show. Thank you for your time and consideration of my work.

Sincerely,



Craig Elias  
FR 1993

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