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Along for the Ride is about two smart asses and a corpse. No, it's not a Weekend at Bernie's remake. It's something a lot more serious, satisfying, and, in actuality, funny.

Adapted from the award-winning play by Randall Wheatley to the screen by Jim Moores, *Along for the Ride* eloquently charts out the physical and emotional odysseys of two estranged brothers who retrieve the body of their recently dead father in Mexico. The brothers Terry (Randall Batinkoff, *As Good as it Gets*) and Vance (Dylan Haggerty, *ConAir*) have nothing in common, except perhaps their mutual resentment of each other and love of baseball. Their conversations, sometimes tender, sometimes heated, always comic, get them through the night as they drive their dead father to the nearest mortuary three hours away. Long car drives on the open road are sometimes the best way of focusing and reflecting on one's own situation, and *Along for the Ride* aptly uses film to capture all the nuances inherent in finding oneself and dis-

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covering one's place in the scheme of things.

In a year full of *Mummy Returns* and *Pearl Harbors*, it's reassuring to know that movies as heartfelt as *Along for the Ride* can be made in only 13 days and for \$150,000. Award-winning Bryan Simon's direction is clean and pithy and frees the story of all traces of its origin in the theater, no easy tasks when adapting good plays to film. And the film proves once again that wonderful movies can be made sans CGI and gratuitous language/nudity.

*Along for the Ride* is a triumph for Independent Cinema, and a model from which commercial cinema can take some lessons.

It's quite an extraordinary antidote to the mediocre mainstream.