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SF PERUSALS

American Buffalo

A Drama in Two Acts

by David Mamet

A Samuel French Acting Edition



SAMUELFRENCH.COM

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this play is dedicated to
Mr. J. J. Johnston,
of Chicago, Illinois

THE CAST

AMERICAN BUFFALO, by David Mamet. Directed by Ulu Grosbard; setting by Santo Loquasto; lighting by Jules Fisher; production stage manager, Herb Vogler. Presented by Edgar Lansbury and Joseph Beruh; Nan Pearlman, associate producer. Opening night was February 16, 1977 at the Ethel Barrymore Theater, 243 West 47th Street.

DONNY DUBROW ..... KENNETH MCMILLAN

BOBBY ..... JOHN SAVAGE

WALTER COLE (TEACHER) ..... ROBERT DUVALL

CHARACTERS

DONNY DUBROW, *a man in his late forties. The owner of Don's Resale Shop.*

WALTER COLE, called TEACHER, *a friend and associate of* DONNY.

BOBBY, DONNY's gopher.

THE SCENE:

Don's Resale Shop. A junkshop.

THE TIME:

One Friday. Act One takes place in the morning, Act Two starts around 11:00 that night.

American Buffalo

ACT ONE

Don's Resale Shop. Morning. DONNY *and* BOBBY *are sitting.*

DON. So? (*Pause.*) So what, Bob? (*Pause.*)

BOB. I'm sorry, Donny. (*Pause.*)

DON. Alright.

BOB. I'm sorry, Donny. (*Pause.*)

DON. Yeah.

BOB. Maybe he's still in there.

DON. If you think that, Bob, how come you're here?

BOB. I came in. (*Pause.*)

DON. You don't come in, Bob. You don't come in until you do a thing.

BOB. He didn't come out.

DON. What do I care, Bob, if he came out or not? You're sposed to watch the guy, you watch him. Am I wrong?

BOB. I just went to the back.

DON. Why? (*Pause.*) Why did you do that?

BOB. 'Cause he wasn't coming out the front.

DON. Well, Bob, I'm sorry, but this isn't good enough. If you want to do business . . . if we got a business deal it isn't good enough. I want you to remember this.

BOB. I do.

DON. Yeah, *now* . . . but later, what? (*Pause.*) Just one thing, Bob. Action counts. (*Pause.*) Action talks and bullshit walks.

BOB. I only went around to see he's coming out the back.

DON. No, don't go fuck yourself around with these excuses. (*Pause.*)

BOB. I'm sorry.

DON. Don't tell me that you're sorry. I'm not mad at you.

BOB. You're not?

DON. (*Pause.*) Let's clean up here. (BOB *starts to clean up the debris around the poker table.*) The only thing I'm trying to teach you something here.

BOB. Okay.

DON. Now lookit Fletcher.

BOB. Fletch?

DON. Now Fletcher is a standup guy.

BOB. Yeah.

DON. I don't *give* a shit. He is a fellow stands for something—

BOB. Yeah.

DON. You take him and you put him down in some strange town with just a nickel in his pocket, and by nightfall he'll have that town by the balls. This is not talk Bob, this is action. (*Pause.*)

BOB. He's a real good cardplayer.

DON. You're Fucking A he is, Bob, and this is what I'm getting at. Skill. Skill and talent and the balls to arrive at your own *conclusions*. The fucker won four hundred bucks last night.

BOB. Yeah?

DON. *Oh* yeah.

BOB. And who was playing?

DON. *Me* . . .

BOB. Uh huh . . .

DON. And *Teach* . . .

BOB. How'd Teach do?

DON. Not too good.
BOB. No, huh?
DON. No. . . . and Earl was here . . .
BOB. Uh huh . . .
DON. And Fletcher.
BOB. *How'd* he do?
DON. He won four hundred bucks.
BOB. And who else won?
DON. Ruthie, she won.
BOB. She won, huh?
DON. Yeah.
BOB. She does okay.
DON. *Oh* yeah . . .
BOB. She's an okay cardplayer.
DON. Yes, she is.
BOB. I like her.
DON. Fuck, I like her, too. There's nothing wrong in that.
BOB. No.
DON. I mean she treats you right.
BOB. Uh huh. How'd she do?
DON. She did okay. (*Pause.*)
BOB. You win?
DON. I did alright.
BOB. Yeah?
DON. Yeah. I did okay. Not like *Fletch* . . .
BOB. No, huh?
DON. I mean, Fletcher, he plays *cards.*
BOB. He's real sharp.
DON. You're goddam right he is.
BOB. I know it.
DON. Was he born that way?
BOB. Huh?
DON. I'm saying was he born that way or do you think he had to learn it?

BOB. Learn it.

DON. Goddam right he did, and don't forget it. Everything, Bobby: it's going to happen to you, it's *not* going to happen to you, the important thing is can you *deal* with it, and can you *learn* from it. (*Pause.*) And this is why I'm telling you to stand up. It's no different with you than with anyone else. Everything that I or Fletcher know we picked up on the street. That's all business is . . . common sense, experience, and talent.

BOB. Like when he jewed Ruthie out that pigiron.

DON. What pigiron?

BOB. That he got off her that time.

DON. When was this?

BOB. On the back of her truck.

DON. That wasn't, I don't think, her pigiron.

BOB. No?

DON. That was *his* pigiron, Bob.

BOB. Yeah?

DON. Yeah. He bought it off her. (*Pause.*)

BOB. Well, she was real mad at him.

DON. She was.

BOB. Yup.

DON. She was mad at him?

BOB. Yeah. That he stole her pigiron.

DON. He didn't steal it, Bob.

BOB. No?

DON. No.

BOB. She was *mad* at him . . .

DON. Well, that very well may be, Bob, but the fact remains that it was *business*. That's what business *is*.

BOB. What?

DON. People taking *care* of themselves. Huh?

BOB. No.

DON. 'Cause there's business and there's friendship,

Bobby . . . there are many things, and when you walk around you *hear* a lot of things, and what you got to do is keep clear who your friends are, and who treated you like what. Or else the rest is garbage, Bob, because I want to tell you something.

BOB. Okay.

DON. Things are not always what they seem to be.

BOB. I know. (*Pause.*)

DON. There's a lotsa people on this street, Bob, they want this and they want that. Do anything to get it. You don't have *friends* this life . . . You want some breakfast?

BOB. I'm not hungry. (*Pause.*)

DON. *Never* skip breakfast, Bob.

BOB. Why?

DON. Breakfast . . . Is the most important meal of the day.

BOB. I'm not hungry.

DON. It makes no earthly difference in the world. You know how much nutriative benefits they got in coffee? Zero. Not one thing. The stuff eats *you* up. You can't live on coffee, Bobby. And I've told you this before. You cannot live on cigarettes. You may feel *good,* you may feel *fine,* but something's getting overworked, and you are going to pay for it. Now: What do you see me eat when I come in here every day?

BOB. Coffee.

DON. Come on, Bob, don't fuck with me. I *drink* a little coffee . . . but what do I *eat?*

BOB. Yoghurt.

DON. Why?

BOB. Because it's good for you.

DON. You're goddam right. And it wouldn't kill you to take a vitamin.

BOB. They're too expensive.

DON. Don't worry about it. You should just take 'em.

BOB. I can't afford 'em.

DON. Don't worry about it.

BOB. You'll buy some for me?

DON. Do you need 'em?

BOB. *Yeah.*

DON. Well, then, I'll get you some. What do you *think?*

BOB. Thanks, Donny.

DON. It's for you own good. Don't thank *me* . . .

BOB. Okay.

DON. I just can't use you in here like a zombie.

BOB. I just went around the back.

DON. I don't care. Do you see? Do you see what I'm getting at? (*Pause.*)

BOB. Yeah. (*Pause.*)

DON. Well, we'll see.

BOB. I'm sorry, Donny.

DON. Well, we'll see. (TEACHER *appears in the doorway and enters the store.*) Good morning.

BOB. Morning, Teach. (TEACHER *walks around the store a bit in silence.*)

TEACH. Fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie, fuckin' Ruthie.

DON. What?

TEACH. Fuckin' *Ruthie* . . .

DON. . . . yeah?

TEACH. I come in to The Riverside to get a cup of *coffee,* right? I sit down at the table Grace and Ruthie.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. I'm gonna order just a cup of coffee.

DON. Right.

TEACH. So Grace and Ruthie's having breakfast, and

they're done. *Plates* . . . *crusts* of stuff all over . . . So we'll shoot the shit.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Talk about the *game* . . .

DON. . . . yeah.

TEACH. . . . *so* on. Down I sit. "Hi," hi." I take a piece of toast off Grace's plate . . .

DON. . . . uh huh . . .

TEACH. . . . and she goes "Help Yourself." Help myself. I should help myself to half a piece of toast it's four slices for a quarter. I should have a nickel every time we're over at the game, I pop for coffee . . . cigarettes . . . a *sweetroll,* never say word. "Bobby, see who wants what." Huh? A fucking *roast-beef* sandwich. (*To* BOBBY.) Am I right? (*To* DONNY.) Ahh, shit. We're sitting down, how many times do I pick up the check? But—No!—because I never go and make a big *thing* out of it—it's no big thing—and flaunt like "This one's on me" like some bust-out asshole, but I naturally assume that I'm with friends, and don't forget who's who when someone gets *behind* a half a yard or needs some help with—huh?—some fucking rent, or drops enormous piles of money at the track, or someone's *sick* or something . . .

DON. (*To* BOB.) This is what I'm talking about.

TEACH. Only—and I tell you this, Don. Only, and I'm not, I don't think, casting anything on anyone: from the mouth of a Southern bulldyke asshole ingrate of a vicious nowhere cunt can this trash come. (*To* BOB.) And I take nothing back, and I know you're close with them.

BOB. With Grace and Ruthie?

TEACH. Yes.

BOB. I like 'em.

TEACH. I have always treated everybody more than

fair, and never gone around complaining. Is this true, Don?

DON. Yup.

TEACH. Someone is *against* me, that's their problem . . . I can look out for myself, and I don't got to fuck around behind somebody's back, I don't like the way they're treating me. Or pray some brick *safe* falls and hits them on the head, they're walking down the street. But to have that shithead turn, in one breath, every fucking sweetroll that I ever ate with them into GROUND GLASS—I'm wondering were they eating it and thinking "This guy's an idiot to blow a fucking *quarter* on his friends" . . . this hurts me, Don. This hurts me in a way I don't know what the fuck to do. (*Pause.*)

DON. You're probably just upset.

TEACH. You're fuckin A I'm upset. I am *very* upset, Don.

DON. They got their problems, too, Teach.

TEACH. *I* would like to have their problems.

DON. All I'm saying, nothing *personal* . . . they were probably, uh, *talking* about something.

TEACH. Then let them talk about it, then. No, I am sorry, Don, I cannot brush this off. They treat me like an asshole, they *are* an asshole. (*Pause.*) The only way to teach these people is to kill them. (*Pause.*)

DON. You want some coffee?

TEACH. I'm not hungry.

DON. Come on, I'm sending Bobby to The Riverside.

TEACH. Fuckin' joint . . .

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. They harbor *assholes* in there . . .

DON. Yeah. Come on, Teach, what do you want? Bob?

BOB. Yeah?

DON. (*To* TEACH.) Come on, he's going anyway. (*To* BOB, *handing him a bill.*) Get me a Boston, and go for the yoghurt.

BOB. What kind?

DON. You know, plain, and, if they don't got it, uh, something else. And get something for yourself.

BOB. What?

DON. Whatever you want. But get something to *eat,* and whatever you want to drink, and get Teacher a coffee.

BOB. Boston, Teach?

TEACH. No?

BOB. What?

TEACH. Black.

BOB. Right.

DON. And something for yourself to eat. (*To* TEACH.) He doesn't want to eat.

TEACH. (*To* BOB.) You got to eat. And this is what I'm saying at the Riverside. (*Pause.*)

BOB. Black coffee.

DON. And get something for yourself to eat. (*To* TEACH.) What do you want to eat? An English muffin. (*To* BOB.) Get Teach an English muffin.

TEACH. I don't want an English muffin.

DON. Get him an English muffin, and make sure they give you jelly.

TEACH. I don't want an English muffin.

DON. What do you want?

TEACH. I don't want anything.

BOB. Come on, Teach, eat something. (*Pause.*)

DON. You'll feel better you eat something, Teach. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. (*To* BOB.) Tell 'em to give you an order of Bacon, real dry, real crisp.

BOB. Okay.

TEACH. And tell the broad if it's for me she'll give you more.

BOB. Okay.

DON. Anything else you want?

TEACH. No.

DON. A cantaloupe?

TEACH. I never eat cantaloupe.

DON. No?

TEACH. It gives me the runs.

DON. Yeah?

TEACH. And tell him he shouldn't say anything to Ruthie.

DON. He wouldn't.

TEACH. No? No, you're right. I'm sorry, Bob.

BOB. It's okay.

TEACH. I'm upset.

BOB. It's okay, Teach. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Thank you.

BOB. You're welcome. (BOB *starts to exit.*)

DON. And the plain if they got it.

BOB. I will. (*Exits.*)

DON. He wouldn't say anything.

TEACH. What the fuck do *I* care . . . (*Pause.*) Cunt. (*Pause.*) There is not one loyal bone in that bitch's body.

DON. How'd you finally do last night?

TEACH. This has nothing to do with that.

DON. No, I know. I'm just saying . . . for *talk* . . .

TEACH. Last night? You were here, Don. (*Pause.*) How'd *you* do?

DON. Not well.

TEACH. Mmm.

DON. The only one won any money, Fletch and Ruthie.

TEACH. (*Pause.*) Cunt had to win two hundred dollars.

DON. She's a good cardplayer.

TEACH. She is *not* a good cardplayer, Don. She is a mooch and she is a locksmith and she plays like a woman. (*Pause.*) *Fletcher's* a cardplayer, I'll give him that. But *Ruthie* . . . I mean, *you* see how she fucking plays . . .

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. And always with that cunt on her shoulder.

DON. Grace?

TEACH. Yes.

DON. Grace is her partner.

TEACH. Then let her *be* her partner, then. You see what I'm talking about? Everyone, they're sitting at the table and then Grace is going to walk around . . . fetch an *ashtray* . . . go for *coffee* . . . *this* . . . and everybody's all they aren't going to hide their cards, and they're going to make a show how they don't hunch *over,* and like that. I don't give a shit. I say the broad's her fucking partner, and she walks in back of me I'm going to hide my hand.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. And I say anybody doesn't's out of their mind. (*Pause.*) We're talking about money for chrissake, huh? We're talking about cards. Friendship is friendship, and a wonderful thing, and I am all for it. I have never said different, and you know me on this point. Okay. But let's just keep it *separate* huh, let's just keep the two apart, and maybe we can deal with each other like some human beings. (*Pause.*) This is all I'm saying, Don. I know you got a soft-spot in your heart for Ruthie . . .

DON. . . . yeah?

TEACH. I know you like the broad and Grace and, Bob, I know he likes 'em, too.

DON. He likes 'em.

TEACH. And I like 'em too. I know, I know. I'm not averse to this. I'm not averse to sitting down. I know we *will* sit down. These things happen, I'm not saying that they don't . . . and yeah, yeah, yeah, I know I lost a bundle at the game and blah blah blah. (*Pause.*) But all I ever ask—and I would say this to her face—is only she remembers who is who and not to go around with *her* or Gracie either with this attitude. "The Past is Past, and this is Now, and so Fuck You." You see?

DON. Yes. (*Long pause.*)

TEACH. So what's new?

DON. Nothing.

TEACH. Same old shit, huh?

DON. Yup.

TEACH. You seen my hat?

DON. No. Did you leave it here?

TEACH. Yeah. (*Pause.*)

DON. You ask them over at the Riv?

TEACH. I left it here. (*Pause.*)

DON. Well, you left it here, it's here.

TEACH. You seen it?

DON. No. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Fletch been in?

DON. No.

TEACH. Prolly drop in one or so, huh?

DON. Yeah. You know. You never know with Fletcher.

TEACH. No.

DON. He might drop in the *morning* . . .

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. And then he might, he's gone for ten or fifteen days you never know he's gone.

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. Why?

TEACH. I want to talk to him.

DON. (*Pause.*) Ruth would know.

TEACH. You sure you didn't *see* my hat?

DON. I didn't see it. No. (*Pause.*) Ruthie might know.

TEACH. Vicious dyke.

DON. Look in the john.

TEACH. It isn't in the john. I wouldn't leave it there.

DON. Do you got something up with Fletch?

TEACH. No. Just I have to talk to him.

DON. He'll probably show up.

TEACH. Oh yeah . . . (*Pause. Indicating objects on the counter.*) What're *these?*

DON. Those?

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. They're from 1933.

TEACH. From the thing?

DON. Yeah. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Nice.

DON. They had a whole market in 'em. Just like anything. They license out the shit and everybody makes it.

TEACH. Yeah? I knew that.

DON. Just like now. They had *combs,* and *brushes* . . . you know, brushes with the thing on 'em . . .

TEACH. Yeah. I know. They had . . . uh . . . what? Clothing too, huh?

DON. I think. Sure. Everything. And they're guys they just collect the stuff.

TEACH. They got that much of it around?

DON. *Shit* yes. It's not that long ago. The thing, it

ran two years, and they had (*I* don't know) all kinds of people every year they're buying everything that they can lay their hands on that they're going to take it back to Buffalo to give it, you know, to their Aunt, and it mounts up.

TEACH. What does it go for?

DON. The compact?

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. Aah . . . *You* want it?

TEACH. No.

DON. Oh. I'm just asking. I mean, *you* want it . . .

TEACH. No. I mean somebody walks *in* here . . .

DON. Oh. Somebody walks *in* here . . . This shit's fashionable . . .

TEACH. I don't doubt it.

DON. . . . and they're gonna have to go like fifteen bucks.

TEACH. You're fulla shit.

DON. My word of honor.

TEACH. No shit.

DON. Everything like that.

TEACH. A bunch of fucking thieves.

DON. Yeah. Everything.

TEACH. (*Snorts.*) What a bunch of crap, huh?

DON. *Oh* yeah.

TEACH. Every goddam thing.

DON. Yes.

TEACH. If I kept the stuff that I threw *out* . . .

DON. . . . yes.

TEACH. I would be a wealthy man today. I would be cruising on some European Yacht.

DON. Uh huh.

TEACH. Shit my father used to keep in his *desk* drawer.

DON. My Father, Too.

TEACH. The *basement* . . .

DON. Uh huh.

TEACH. Fuckin' toys in the back*yard,* for chrissake . . .

DON. Don't even talk about it.

TEACH. It's . . . *I* don't know. (*Pause.*) You want to play some gin?

DON. Maybe later.

TEACH. Okay. (*Pause.*) *I* dunno. (*Pause.*) Fucking *day* . . . (*Pause.*) Fucking *weather* . . . (*Pause.*)

DON. You think it's going to rain?

TEACH. Yeah. I do. Later.

DON. Yeah?

TEACH. Well, *look* at it. (BOBBY *appears carrying a paper bag with coffee and foodstuffs in it.*) Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, Bobby, Bobby.

BOB. Ruthie isn't mad at you.

TEACH. She isn't?

BOB. No.

TEACH. How do you know?

BOB. I found out.

TEACH. How?

BOB. I talked to her.

TEACH. You talked to her.

BOB. Yes.

TEACH. I asked you you weren't going to.

BOB. Well, she asked me.

TEACH. What?

BOB. That were you over here.

TEACH. What did you tell her?

BOB. You were here.

TEACH. Oh. (*Looks at* DON.)

DON. What did you say to her, Bob?

BOB. Just Teach was here.

DON. And is she coming over here?

BOB. I don't think so. They had the plain.

DON. (*To* TEACH.) So? This is alright. (*To* BOB.) Alright, Bob. (*Looks at* TEACH.)

TEACH. That's alright, Bob. (*To self.*) Everything's alright to *some*one . . . (DON *takes bag and distributes contents to appropriate recipients. To* DON.) You shouldn't eat that shit.

DON. Why?

TEACH. It's just I have a feeling about healthfoods.

DON. It's not healthfoods, Teach. It's only yoghurt.

TEACH. That's not healthfoods?

DON. No. They've had it forever.

TEACH. Yoghurt?

DON. Yeah. They used to joke about it on *My Little Margie.* (*To* BOB.) Way before your time.

TEACH. Yeah?

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. What the fuck. A little bit can't hurt you.

DON. It's *good* for you.

TEACH. Okay, okay. Each one his own opinion. (*Pause. To* BOB.) Was Fletcher over there?

BOB. No.

DON. Where's my coffee?

BOB. It's not there?

DON. No. (*Pause.*)

BOB. I told 'em specially to put it in.

DON. Where *is* it?

BOB. They forgot it. (*Pause.*) I'll go back and get it.

DON. Would you mind?

BOB. No. (*Pause.*)

DON. You gonna get it?

BOB. Yeah. (*Pause.*)

DON. What, Bob?

BOB. Can I talk to you? (*Pause.* DON *goes to* BOB.)

DON. What is it?

BOB. I saw him.
DON. Who?
BOB. The guy.
DON. You saw the guy?
BOB. Yes.
DON. That I'm talking about?
BOB. Yes.
DON. Just now?
BOB. Yeah. He's going somewhere.
DON. He is.
BOB. Yeah. He's puttin' a suitcase in the car.
DON. The guy, or both of 'em?
BOB. Just him.
DON. He got in the car he drove off??
BOB. He's coming down the stairs . . .
DON. Yeah.
BOB. And he's got the suitcase . . . (DON *nods.*) He gets in the car . . .
DON. Uh huh . . .
BOB. He drives away.
DON. So where is she?
BOB. He's goin' to pick her up.
DON. What was he wearing?
BOB. Stuff. Traveling clothes.
DON. Okay. (*Pause.*) Now you're talking. You see what I mean?
BOB. Yeah.
DON. Alright.
BOB. And he had a coat too.
DON. Now you're talking.
BOB. Like a raincoat.
DON. Yeah. (*Pause.*) Good. (*Pause.*)
BOB. Yeah, he's gone.
DON. Bob, go get me that coffee, do you mind?
BOB. No.

DON. What did you get yourself to eat?

BOB. I didn't get anything.

DON. Well, get me my coffee, and get yourself something to eat, okay?

BOB. Okay. Good. (*Exits. Pause.*)

DON. How's your bacon?

TEACH. Aaaahh, they always fuck it up.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. This time they fucked it up too burnt.

DON. Mmmm.

TEACH. You got to be breathing on their neck.

DON. Mmmm.

TEACH. Like a lot of things.

DON. Uh huh.

TEACH. *Any* business . . .

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. You want it run right, *be* there.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Just like you.

DON. What?

TEACH. Like the shop.

DON. Well, no one's going to run it, I'm not here. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. No. (*Pause.*) You have to be here.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. It's a one-man show.

DON. Uh huh. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. So what is this thing with the kid? (*Pause.*) I mean, is it anything, uh . . .

DON. It's nothing . . . *you* know . . .

TEACH. Yeah. (*Pause.*) It's *what* . . . ?

DON. You know, it's just some *guy* we spotted.

TEACH. Yeah. Some *guy*.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Some guy . . .

DON. Yeah. (*Pause.*) What time is it?
TEACH. Noon.
DON. Noon. Fuck.
TEACH. What? (*Pause.*)
DON. You parked outside?
TEACH. Yeah.
DON. Are you okay on the meter?
TEACH. Yeah. The broad came by already. (*Pause.*)
DON. Good. (*Pause.*)
TEACH. Oh, yeah, she came by.
DON. Good.
TEACH. You want to tell me what this thing is?
DON. (*Pause.*) The thing?
TEACH. Yeah. (*Pause.*) What is it?
DON. Nothing.
TEACH. No? What is it, jewelry?
DON. No. It's nothing.
TEACH. Oh.
DON. You know?
TEACH. Yeah. (*Pause.*) Yeah. No. I don't know. (*Pause.*) Who am I, a *police*man . . . I'm making conversation, huh?
DON. Yeah.
TEACH. Huh? (*Pause.*) 'Cause you know I'm just asking for talk.
DON. (*Moves phone to slider.*) Yeah. I know. Yeah, okay.
TEACH. And I can live without this.
DON. (*Reach for phone.*) Yeah. I know. Hold on, I'll tell you.
TEACH. Tell me if you *want* to, Don.
DON. I want to, Teach.
TEACH. Yeah?
DON. Yeah. (*Pause.*)
TEACH. Well, I'd fucking *hope* so. Am I wrong?

DON. No. No. You're right.

TEACH. I *hope* so.

DON. No, hold on; I gotta make this call. (*Dialing.*)

TEACH. Well, alright. So what is it, jewelry?

DON. No.

TEACH. What?

DON. Coins.

TEACH. Coins.

DON. Yeah. Hold on. (DON *hunts for a card, dials telephone. Into phone.*) Hello? This is Donny Dubrow. We were talking the other day. Lookit, sir, if I could get ahold of some of that stuff you were interested in, would you be interested in some of it? (*Pause.*) Those *things* . . . *Old,* yeah. (*Pause.*) Various pieces of various types. (*Pause.*) Tonight. Sometime late. Are they *what* . . . !!?? Yes, but I don't see what kind of a question is that—at the prices we're talking about . . . (*Pause.*) No, hey, no, I understand *you* . . . (*Pause.*) Sometime late. (*Pause.*) One hundred percent. (*Pause.*) I feel the same. Alright. Goodbye. (*Hangs up.*) Fucking asshole.

TEACH. Guys like that, I like to fuck their wives.

DON. I don't blame you.

TEACH. Fucking *jerk* . . .

DON. I swear to God . . .

TEACH. The guy's a collector?

DON. Who?

TEACH. The phone guy.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. And the other guy?

DON. We spotted?

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. Him, too.

TEACH. So you hit him for his coins.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. —And you got a buyer in the phone guy.

DON. Asshole.

TEACH. The thing is you're not sitting with the shit.

DON. No.

TEACH. The guy's an asshole or he's not, what do you care? It's business. (*Pause.*)

DON. You're right.

TEACH. The guy the suitcase, he's the mark.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. How'd you find him?

DON. In here.

TEACH. Came in here, huh?

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. No shit. (*Pause.*)

DON. He comes in here one day, like a week ago.

TEACH. For what?

DON. Just browsing. So he's looking in the case, he comes up and with this *buffalohead* nickel . . .

TEACH. Yeah . . .

DON. From nine*teen*-something. I don't know. I didn't even know it's there . . .

TEACH. Uh huh . . .

DON. . . . and he goes, "how much would that be?"

TEACH. Uh huh . . .

DON. So I'm about to go "two bits," jerk that I am, but something tells me to shut up, so I go "you tell me."

TEACH. Always good business.

DON. *Oh* yeah.

TEACH. How wrong can you go?

DON. That's what I mean, so then he thinks a minute, and he tells me he'll just *shop* a bit.

TEACH. Uh huh . . .

DON. And so he's *shopping* . . . What?

TEACH. Some cops.

DON. Where?

TEACH. At the corner.

DON. What are they doing?

TEACH. Cruising. (*Pause.*)

DON. They turn the corner?

TEACH. (*Waits.*) *Yeah.* (*Pause.*)

DON. . . . And so he's shopping. And he's picking up a beat-up *mirror* . . . an old *kid's* toy . . . a *shaving* mug . . .

TEACH. . . . right . . .

DON. Maybe five, six things, comes to eight bucks. I get 'em and I put 'em in a box and then he tells me he'll go fifty dollars for the nickel.

TEACH. No.

DON. Yeah. So I tell him—get this—"not a chance."

TEACH. Took balls.

DON. Well, what-the-fuck . . .

TEACH. No, I mean it.

DON. I took a chance.

TEACH. You're goddam right. (*Pause.* DON *shrugs.*)

DON. So I say "not a chance," he tells me eighty is his highest offer.

TEACH. I knew it.

DON. Wait. So I go "ninety-five."

TEACH. Uh huh.

DON We settle down on ninety, *takes* the nickel, leaves the box of shit.

TEACH. He pay for it?

DON. The box of shit?

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. No. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. And so what was the nickel?

DON. *I* don't know . . . some rarity.

TEACH. Ninety dollars for a nickel.

DON. Are you kidding, Teach? I bet it's worth five *times* that.

TEACH. Yeah, huh?

DON. Are you kidding me, the guy is going to come in here, he plunks down ninety bucks like nothing. *Shit* yeah. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Well, what the fuck, it didn't cost you anything.

DON. That's not the point. The next day back he comes and he goes through the whole bit again. He looks at *this,* he looks at *that,* it's a nice *day* . . .

TEACH. Yeah . . .

DON. And he tells me he's the guy was in here yesterday and bought the buffalo off me and do I maybe have some other articles of interest.

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. And so I tell him "not offhand." He says that could I get in touch with him, I get some in, so I say "sure," he leaves his card, I'm sposed to call him anything crops up.

TEACH. Uh huh.

DON. He comes in here like I'm his fucking doorman.

TEACH. Mmmm.

DON. He takes me off my coin and will I call him if I find another one.

TEACH. Yeah.

DON. Doing me this favor by just coming in my shop.

TEACH. Yeah. (*Pause.*) Some people never change.

DON. Like he has done me this big favor by just coming in my shop.

TEACH. Uh huh. You're going to get him now.

DON. You know I am. So Bob, we kept a lookout on his place, and that's the shot.

TEACH. And who's the chick?

DON. What chick?

TEACH. You're asking Bob about.

DON. Oh yeah. The guy, he's married. I mean—*I* don't know. We *think* he's married. They got two names on the bell . . . Anyway, he's living with this chick, *you* know . . .

TEACH. What the hell.

DON. . . . and you should see this chick.

TEACH. Yeah, huh?

DON. She is a knockout. I mean, she is *real* nice lookin', Teach.

TEACH. Fuck *him* . . .

DON. The other day, last Friday like a week ago Bob runs in, lugs me out to look at 'em, they're going out on bicycles. The ass on this broad, un-be-fucking-lievable in these bicycling shorts sticking up in the air with these short handlebars.

TEACH. Fuckin' *fruits* . . . (*Pause.*)

DON. So that's it. We keep an eye on 'em. They both work. . . . Yesterday he rode his bicycle to work.

TEACH. He didn't.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. (*Snorts.*) With the three-piece suit, huh?

DON. I didn't see 'em. Bobby saw 'em. (*Pause.*) And that's the shot. Earl gets me in touch the phone guy, he's this coin collector, and that's it.

TEACH. It fell in your lap.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. You're going in tonight.

DON. It looks that way.

TEACH. And who's going in? (*Pause.*)

DON. Bobby. (*Pause.*) He's a good kid, Teach.

TEACH. He's a great kid, Don. You know how I feel about the kid. (*Pause.*) I *like* him.

DON. He's doing good.

TEACH. I can see that. (*Pause.*) But I gotta say something here.

DON. What?

TEACH. Only this—and I don't think I'm *getting* at anything—

DON. What?

TEACH. (*Pause.*) Don't send the kid in.

DON. I shouldn't send Bobby in?

TEACH. No. Now, just wait a second. Let's siddown on this. What are we saying here? Loyalty. (*Pause.*) You know how I am on this. This is great. This is admirable.

DON. What?

TEACH. This loyalty. This is swell. It turns my heart the things that you do for the kid.

DON. What do I do for him, Walt?

TEACH. Things. Things, you know what I mean.

DON. No. I don't do anything for him.

TEACH. In your mind you don't but the things, I'm saying, that you actually go *do* for him. This is fantastic. All I mean, a guy can be too loyal, Don. Don't be dense on this. What are we saying here? Business. I mean, the guy's got you're taking his high-speed blender and a Magnavox, you send the kid in. You're talking about a real *job* . . . they don't come in right away and know they been *had*. . . . You're talking maybe a safe, certainly a good lock or two, and you need a guy's looking for valuable shit, he's not going to mess with the stainless steel silverware, huh, or some digital *clock*. (*Pause.*) We both know what we're saying here. We both know we're talking about some job needs more than the kid's gonna skin pop go in there with a *crowbar* . . .

DON. I don't want you mentioning that.

TEACH. It slipped out.

DON. You know how I feel on that.

TEACH. Yes. And I'm sorry, Don. I admire that. All that I'm saying don't confuse business with pleasure.

DON. But I don't want that talk, only, Teach. (*Pause.*) You understand?

TEACH. I more than understand, and I apologize. (*Pause.*) I'm sorry.

DON. That's the only thing.

TEACH. Alright. But I tell you. I'm glad I said it.

DON. Why?

TEACH. Cause it's best for these things to be out in the open.

DON. But I don't want it in the open.

TEACH. Which is why I apologized. (*Pause.*)

DON. You know the fucking kid's clean. He's trying hard, he's working hard, and you leave him alone.

TEACH. Oh yeah, he's trying *real* hard.

DON. And he's no dummy, Teach.

TEACH. Far from it. All I'm saying, the job is beyond him. Where's the shame in this? This is not jacks, we get up to go home we give everything back. Huh? You want this fucked up? (*Pause.*) All that I'm saying, there's the least *chance* something might fuck up, you'd get the law down, you would take the shot, and couldn't find the coins *whatever:* if you see the least chance, you cannot afford to take that chance! Don? *I* want to go in there and gut this motherfucker. Don? Where is the shame in this? You take care of him, *fine.* Now this is loyalty. But Bobby's got his own best interests too. And you cannot afford—and simply as a *business* proposition—you cannot afford to take the chance. (*Pause.* TEACH *picks up a strange object.*) What is this?

DON. That?

TEACH. Yes.

DON. It's a thing that they stick in dead pigs keep their legs apart all the blood runs out. (TEACH *nods. Pause.*)

TEACH. Mmmm. (*Pause.*)

DON. I set it up with him.

TEACH. "You set it up with him" . . . You set it up and then you told him. (*Long pause.*)

DON. I gave Earl ten per-cent.

TEACH. Yeah? For what?

DON. The connection.

TEACH. So ten off the top: forty-five, forty-five. (*Pause.*)

DON. And Bobby?

TEACH. A hundred. A hundred fifty . . . we hit big . . . *whatever.*

DON. And *you* what?

TEACH. The *shot.* I *go,* I go *in* . . . I bring the stuff *back*—or wherever . . . (*Pause.*)

DON. And what do I do.?

TEACH. You mind the Fort. (*Pause.*)

DON. Here?

TEACH. Well, yeah . . . this is the Fort. (*Pause.*)

DON. You know, this is real classical money we're talking about.

TEACH. I know it. You think I'm going to fuck with Chump Change? (*Pause.*) So tell me.

DON. Well, hold on a second. I mean, we're still talking.

TEACH. I'm sorry. I thought we were done talking.

DON. No.

TEACH. Well, then, let's talk some more. You want to bargain? You want to mess with the points?

DON. No. I just want to think for a second.

TEACH. Well, you think, but here's a helpful hint.

Fifty percent of some money is better than ninety percent of some broken *toaster* that you're gonna have, you send the kid in. Which is providing he don't trip the alarm in the *first* place. . . . Don? You don't even know what the *thing* is on this. Where he lives. They got alarms? What *kind* of alarms? What kind of *this* . . . ? And what if—god forbid—the *guy* walks in? Somebody's nervous, whacks him with a tablelamp—you wanna get touchy—and you can take your ninety dollars from the nickel shove it up your *ass*—the good it did you—and you wanna know *why?* And I'm not *saying* anything . . . because you didn't take the time to go first-class. (BOBBY *re-enters with a bag.*) Hi. Bob.

BOB. Hi, Teach. (*Pause.*)

DON. You get yourself something to eat?

BOB. I got a piece of pie and a Pepsi. (BOB *and* DON *extract foodstuffs and eat.*)

DON. Did they charge you again for the coffee?

BOB. For your coffee?

DON. Yes.

BOB. They charged me this time. I don't know if they charged me last time, Donny.

DON. It's okay. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. (*To* BOB.) How is it out there?

BOB. It's okay.

TEACH. Is it going to rain?

BOB. Today?

TEACH. Yeah.

BOB. I don't know. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Well, what do you think?

BOB. It might.

TEACH. You think so, huh?

DON. Teach . . .

TEACH. What? I'm not saying anything.

BOB. What?

TEACH. I don't think I'm saying anything here. (*Pause.*)

BOB. It *might* rain. (*Pause.*) I think *later.*

TEACH. How's your pie?

BOB. Real good. (TEACH *holds up the dead pigs leg spreader.*)

TEACH. You know what this is? (*Pause.*)

BOB. Yeah.

TEACH. What is it?

BOB. I know what it is.

TEACH. What?

BOB. I know. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Huh?

BOB. What?

TEACH. Things are what they are.

DON. Teach . . .

TEACH. What?

DON. We'll do this later.

BOB. I got to ask you something.

TEACH. Sure, that makes a difference

DON. We'll just do it later.

TEACH. Sure.

BOB. Uh, Don?

DON. What? (*Pause.*)

BOB. I got to talk to you.

DON. Yeah? What?

BOB. I'm wondering on the thing that maybe I could have a little bit up front. (*Pause.*)

DON. Do you *need* it?

BOB. I don't *need* it . . .

DON. How much?

BOB. I was thinking that maybe you might let me have like fifty or something. (*Pause.*) To sort of *have* . . .

TEACH. You got any cuff links?

DON. Look in the case. (*To* BOB.) What do you need it for?

BOB. Nothing.

DON. Bob . . .

BOB. You can trust me.

DON. It's not a question of that. It's not a question I go around trusting you, Bob . . .

BOB. What's the question?

TEACH. Procedure.

DON. Hold on, Teach.

BOB. I got him all spotted. (*Pause.*)

TEACH. Who?

BOB. Some guy.

TEACH. Yeah?

BOB. Yeah.

TEACH. Where's he live?

BOB. Around.

TEACH. Where? Near here?

BOB. No.

TEACH. No?

BOB. He lives like on Lake Shore Drive.

TEACH. He does.

BOB. Yeah.

TEACH. (*Pause.*) What have you got, a job cased?

BOB. I just went for coffee.

TEACH. But you didn't *get* the coffee. (*Pause.*) Now, did you?

BOB. No.

TEACH. Why?

DON. Hold on, Teach. Bob . . .

BOB. What?

DON. You know what?

BOB. No.

DON. I was thinking, you know, we might hold off on this thing. (*Pause.*)

BOB. You wanna hold *off* on it?

DON. I was thinking that we might.

BOB. Oh.

DON. And, on the money, I'll give you . . . forty, you owe me twenty, and, for now, keep twenty for spotting the guy. (*Pause.*) Okay?

BOB. Yeah. (*Pause.*) You don't want me to do the job?

DON. That's what I *told* you. What am I telling you?

BOB. I'm not going to do it.

DON. Not *now*. We aren't going to do it now.

BOB. We'll do it later on?

DON. (*Shrugs.*) But I'm giving you twenty just for spotting the guy.

BOB. I need fifty, Donny.

DON. Well, I'm giving you forty.

BOB. You said you were giving me twenty.

DON. No, Bob, I did not. I said I was giving you forty, of *which* you were going to owe me twenty. (*Pause.*) And you go *keep* twenty.

BOB. I got to give back twenty.

DON. That's the deal.

BOB. When?

DON. Soon. When you got it. (*Pause.*)

BOB. If I don't *get* it soon?

DON. Well, what do you call "soon"?

BOB. I don't know.

DON. Could you get it in a . . . day, or a couple of days or so?

BOB. Maybe. I don't *think* so. Could you let me have fifty?

DON. And you'll give me back thirty?

BOB. I could just give back the twenty.

DON. That's not the deal.

BOB. We could *make* it the deal. (*Pause.*) Donny? We could *make* it the deal. Huh?

DON. Bob, lookit. Here it is: I give you fifty, next week you pay me back twenty-five. (*Pause.*) You get to keep twenty-five, you pay me back twenty-five.

BOB. And what about the thing?

DON. Forget about it.

BOB. You tell me when you want me to do it.

DON. I don't know *that* I want you to do it. At this point. (*Pause.*) You know what I mean? (*Pause.*)

BOB. No.

DON. I mean, I'm *giving* you twenty-five, and I'm saying forget the thing.

BOB. Forget it for me.

DON. Yes.

BOB. Oh. (*Pause.*) Okay. Okay.

DON. You see what I'm talking about?

BOB. Yes.

DON. Like it never happened.

BOB. I know.

DON. So you see what I'm saying.

BOB. Yes. (*Pause.*) I'm gonna go. (*Pause.*) I'll see you later. (*Pause, looks at* DON.)

DON. Oh. (*Reaches in pocket and hands bills to* BOB. *To* TEACH.) You got two fives?

TEACH. No.

DON. (*To* BOB.) I got to give you . . . thirty, you owe me back thirty.

BOB. You said you were giving me fifty.

DON. I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Bob, you're absolutely right. (*Gives* BOB *remainder of money. Pause.*)

BOB. Thank you. (*Pause.*) I'll see you later, huh, Teach?

TEACH. I'll see you later, Bobby.

BOB. I'll see you, Donny.

DON. I'll see you later, Bob.

BOB. I'll come back later.

DON. Okay. (BOB *starts to exit.*)

TEACH. *See* you. (*Pause.* BOB *is gone.*) You're only doing the right thing by him, Don. (*Pause.*) Believe me. (*Pause.*) It's best for everybody. (*Pause.*) What's done is done. (*Pause.*) So let's get started. On the thing. Tell me everything.

DON. Like what?

TEACH. . . . the *guy* . . . where does he *live* . . .

DON. Around the corner.

TEACH. Okay, and he's gone for the weekend.

DON. We don't know.

TEACH. Of course we know. Bob saw him coming out the door. The kid's not going to lie to you.

DON. Well, Bob just saw him coming *out* . . .

TEACH. He had a suitcase, Don, he wasn't going to the A & P . . . He's going for the weekend . . . (*Pause.*) Don, can you cooperate? Can we get started? Do you want to tell me something about coins? (*Pause.*)

DON. What about 'em?

TEACH. A crashcourse. What to look for. What to take. What to *not* take . . . this they can trace—that isn't *worth* nothing . . . (*Pause.*) What looks like what but it's more *valuable* . . . *so* on . . .

DON. First off, I want that nickel back.

TEACH. Donny . . .

DON. No, I know, it's only a fuckin' nickel . . . I mean big deal, huh? But what I'm saying is I only want it back.

TEACH. You're going to get it back. I'm going in there for his coins, what am I going to take 'em all

except your nickel? Wake up. Don, let's plan this out. The *spirit* of the thing? (*Pause.*) Let's not be loose on this. People are *loose,* people pay the price . . .

DON. You're right.

TEACH. And I like you like a brother, Don. So let's wake up on this. (*Pause.*) Alright? A man walks in here, well-dressed . . . With a briefcase?

DON. No.

TEACH. Alright. . . . comes into a junkshop looking for coins. (*Pause.*) He spots a valuable nickel hidden in a pile of shit. He farts around he picks up this, he farts around he picks up that.

DON. He wants the nickel.

TEACH. No shit. He goes to check out, he goes ninety on the nick.

DON. He would of gone five times that.

TEACH. Look, don't kick yourself. Alright, we got a guy knows coins. Where does he keep his coin collection.

DON. Hidden.

TEACH. The man hides his coin collection, we're probably looking the guy has a *study* . . . I mean, he's not the kind of guy to keep it in the *basement* . . .

DON. No.

TEACH. So we're looking for a study.

DON. A den.

TEACH. And we're looking, for, he hasn't got a *safe* . . .

DON. Yeah . . . ?

TEACH. . . . he's probably going to keep 'em . . . where? (*Pause.*)

DON. I don't know. His desk drawer.

TEACH. You open the middle the rest of 'em pop out?

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Maybe. Which brings up a point.

DON. What?

TEACH. As we're moving the stuff tonight, we can go in like Gangbusters, huh? We don't care we wreck the joint up. So what else? We *take* it, or leave it?

DON. . . . well . . .

TEACH. I'm not talking *cash,* all I mean, what other stuff do we take . . . for our *trouble* . . . (*Pause.*)

DON. I don't know.

TEACH. It's hard to make up rules about this stuff.

DON. You'll be in there under lots of pressure.

TEACH. Not so much.

DON. Come on, a little, anyway.

TEACH. That's only natural.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. It would be unnatural I wasn't tense. A guy who isn't tense, I don't want him on my side.

DON. No.

TEACH. You know *why?*

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. Okay, then. It's good to talk this stuff out.

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. You *have* to talk it out. Bad feelings, misunderstandings happen on a job. You can't get away from 'em, you have to deal with 'em. You want to quiz me on some coins? You want to show some coins to me? *list* prices . . . the bluebook . . . ?

DON. You want to see the book?

TEACH. Sure. (DON *hands large coinbook to* TEACHER.)

DON. I just picked it up last week.

TEACH. Uh hum.

DON. All the values aren't *current* . . .

TEACH. Uh huh . . .

DON. *Silver* . . .

TEACH. (*Looking at book.*) Uh huh . . .

DON. What's a *rarity* . . .

TEACH. Well, that's got to be fairly steady, huh?

DON. I'm saying against what *isn't.*

TEACH. Oh.

DON. But the book gives you a general idea.

TEACH. You've been looking at it?

DON. Yeah.

TEACH. You got to have a feeling for your subject.

DON. The book can give you that.

TEACH. This is what I'm *saying* to you. One thing. Makes all the difference in the world.

DON. What?

TEACH. Knowing what the fuck you're talking about. And it's so rare, Don. *So* rare. What do you think a 1929 S. Lincolnhead penny with the wheat on the back is worth? (DON *starts to speak.*) Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! Ah! We got to know what *condition* we're talking about.

DON. (*Pause.*) Okay. What condition?

TEACH. *Any* of 'em. You tell me.

DON. Well, pick one.

TEACH. Okay, I'm going to pick an easy one. Excellent condition 1929 S.

DON. It's worth . . . *about* 36 dollars.

TEACH. No.

DON. More?

TEACH. Well, guess.

DON. Just tell me is it more or less.

TEACH. What do you think?

DON. More.

TEACH. No.

DON. Okay, it's worth, I gotta say . . . eighteen-sixty.

TEACH. No.

DON. Then I give up.

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