

## **Speed the Plow**

By David Mamet

INT. GOULD'S OFFICE. MORNING.

Boxes and painting materials all around. AT RISE: BOB GOULD is sitting, reading. Novels, magazines and scripts are all thrown about the table. CHARLIE FOX enters. Gould, a recently promoted Hollywood executive. Charlie Fox is a business colleague (ranking below Gould) who brings in a movie script that is connected to a hit-making director.

GOULD: When the gods would make us mad, they answer our prayers.

FOX: Bob...

GOULD: I'm in the midst of the wilderness.

FOX: Bob...

GOULD: If it's not quite "art" and it's not quite "entertainment", it's here on my desk. I've inherited a monster.

FOX: ...Bob...

GOULD: Listen to this...(reads) "How are things made round? Was there one thing which, originally, was round...?"

FOX: ...Bob...

GOULD: (Leafing through the Book he is reading, reads) "certain frankness came to it..." (He leafs) "The man, downcast, then met the priest, beneath the bridge which stood for so much, where so much had transpired since the radiation."

FOX: ...Yeah, Bob, that's great...

GOULD: Listen to this,"...and with it brought grace. But still the questions persisted... that of the radiation. That of the growth of animalism, the decay of the soil." And it said "Beyond terror. Beyond grace ...and caused a throbbing... machines in the void..." (He offers the book to FOX) Here: take a page.

FOX: I have to talk to you.

GOULD: Chuck, Chuck, Chuck... Charles, you get too old, too busy to have 'fun' this business; to have 'fun', and then what are you...?

FOX: ...Bob...

GOULD: What are you?

FOX: What am I...?

GOULD: Yes.

FOX: What am I when?

GOULD: What are you, I was saying, if you are just a slave to commerce?

FOX: If I am just a slave to commerce?

GOULD: Yes.

FOX: I'm nothing.

GOULD: No.

FOX: You're absolutely right.

GOULD: You got to have fun. You know why?

FOX: Okay, why?

GOULD: Because or else you'll die, and people will say "he never had any fun."

FOX: How close are you to Ross?

GOULD: How close am I to Ross...? I don't know. How close should I be?

FOX: I have to ask you something.

GOULD: (pause) Go ahead, Charl.

FOX: You wanna greenlight a picture? What's your deal, what's your new deal?

GOULD: What's my new deal, that's all you can talk about?

FOX: What's your new deal?

GOULD: All right. Over ten mil I need Ross' approval. Under ten mil I can greenlight it, so what? (Pause)

FOX: This morning, Bob.

GOULD: ...Yes...?

FOX: This morning a man came to me.

GOULD: ...a man came to you. Whaddayou, already, you're here to "promote" me...?

FOX: Bob...

GOULD: When everybody in this jolly town is trying' to promote me, do you wanna see my messages...?

FOX: Bob.

GOULD: "Get Him While He's Hot"...

FOX: Yes, yes, but...

GOULD: My good, my "good" friend, Charles Fox...

FOX: Bob...

GOULD: That's why we have "channels."

FOX: Uh huh.

GOULD: All these "little" people out there that we see. Y'Unnerstand? Fellow asks, "What are they there for?" Well, Charl, we don't know. But we think, you give the thing to your boy, gives it to my boy, these people get to eat, they don't have to go beg, and get in everybody's face at the airport the whole time. This morning the phone won't stop ringing. Do you know who's calling? Everybody says they met me in Topeka, in 1962(2002), and do I want to make their movie. Guys want me to do remakes of films haven't been made yet.

FOX: Uh huh...

GOULD: I'm drowning in "coverage" (He picks up a script and reads.) "The Story of a Horse and the Horse Who Loved Him". (he drops the script)... Give me a breather from all those fine folk suddenly see what a great "man" I am. 'N when I do return my calls, Charl, do you know what I tell those people?

FOX: No.

GOULD: I'm going to tell them, "Go through the channels." This protects me from them. And from folk, fine as they are, like you, Charl, when you come to me for favors. Or did you come up here to congratulate me on my new promotion?

FOX: Congratulations.

GOULD: Do I deserve it?

FOX: Yes. You do, Bob.

GOULD: Why?

FOX: Because you're a prince among men and you're Yertle the Turtle.

GOULD: All right then, that's enough. What did you bring me?

FOX: This morning, Bob.

GOULD: Yes?

FOX: This morning Doug Brown came to me.

GOULD: ...Doug Brown.

FOX: (pause) He came to my house, Bob. How would you like... How would you like for Doug Brown to "cross the street" to do a picture for us? (Pause) Bob? How would you like, a script that I got him. He's nuts for it, he's free, we could start to shoot next month, I have his word and he'll come to the studio, and do the film for us. Doug Brown will cross the street and do a film for us next month.

GOULD: (picks up the phone) Get me Ross. (Pause)

FOX: ...Do you see what I am telling you?

GOULD: ...he came to your house...

FOX: Can you believe what I am saying to you...?

GOULD: Douggie Brown. (Into phone) Ross (Pause) Richard Ross... no, no, no, don't look in the book... there's a button on the console... Richard R... just push the button on the... (Pause) There's a button on the console... Richard Ross... Just... Thank you. (Hang up the phone.) (Pause) Are you alright?

FOX: I'm fine. I am fine, I just need coffee.

GOULD: We'll get it for you. Tell mmm...

FOX: Alright, I, this is some time ago.

GOULD: ...Uh huh...

FOX: That I get the script to Brown...

GOULD: What script?

FOX: You don't know it, a prison script...

GOULD: (simultaneously with script) One of ours...?

FOX: I found it in the file. I loved it...all the time I'm thinking...

GOULD: Uh huh...

FOX: How do we do this script, I, one day...

GOULD: Uh huh...

FOX: ...so...

GOULD: So, you give the script to Brown...

FOX: Not "him". His...

GOULD: Uh huh...

FOX: ...his...

GOULD: ...I know...

FOX: His "guy".

GOULD: Yes.

FOX: Gives Doggie the script... (phone rings. GOULD picks up the phone.)

GOULD: (into phone) Yes. Thank you. (Hangs up) Ross'll get back to us...

FOX: His guy gives Douggie the scri...

GOULD: He gives Douggie the script.

FOX: Yes.

GOULD: Mmm...

FOX: Months ago, alright? I don't know. Today, alright...? Today. (Pause) I'm having coffee...

GOULD: Umm hmmm...

FOX: Who drives up?

GOULD: ...Coffee at your house...

FOX: Who drives up?

GOULD: Douggie Brown.

FOX: Douglas Brown drives up to my house. (Pause) He says, "I want to do your script. I've got this other thing to deal with, and we will settle it tomorrow. Call me ten o'clock tomorrow morning. I'll come in and sign up." (Phone rings)

GOULD: Hello... Who? No calls. No calls. Just Richard Ross? And we need coffee... Okay? Got it...?

FOX: ...Cross the street to shoot it...? And he says "why not?" (Pause)

GOULD: ...huh...

FOX: Huh...?

GOULD: ...He'd come over here to shoot it...

FOX: Sonofabitch like out of some damned fairytale.

GOULD: ...he drove to your house...

FOX: I'm looking out the window...

GOULD: ...son of a bitch...

FOX: Douglas Brown drives up...

(The phone rings. GOULD picks it up.)

GOULD: (into phone) Hello? Yes. Richard... (Pause) Yes. Put him... Hello, Richard. Fine, just fine. They're painting it. Well thank you. Thank you. Listen, Richard. Do you need some good news...? (Pause) Well, it's a surprise that I've got for you. No, I want to tell you in person. Do you have five mi... (Checks watch) We'll be there. (Pause) Charlie Fox... Charlie came in with a... (Pause) Right. Right. We'll be there. Right. (Hangs up) Well. We see him in ten minutes.

FOX: Yessir. I just need some coffee.

GOULD: Oh, Jesus, what's the...

FOX: What...?

GOULD: The, what's the story? Tell me the...

FOX: I can tell it. No, you're right. You tell it.

GOULD: Gimme the broad outl...

FOX: Yes, yes.

GOULD: Just sketch me the broad ...

FOX: Yes, yes, the thing, of course is...

GOULD: Douggie, Brown, of course, the thing...

FOX: "A Douggie Brown Picture"

GOULD: A Douggie Brown Picture...

FOX: Eh? A buddy...

GOULD: A *Buddy* picture.

FOX: Duggie and...

GOULD: "Watch this space", I got it...

FOX: Right.

GOULD: The Flavor of the Month... okay, now, what's the story?

FOX: Doug's in prison.

GOULD: ...Prison...

FOX: Right. These guys, they want to get him.

GOULD: Black guys...

FOX: Black guys in the prison.

GOULD: (into the phone) Coffee, quickly, can you get some coffee in here? (Hangs up)

FOX: And the Black guys are going to rape his ass.

GOULD: Mmmm.

FOX: Okay. Now. "Now, you could," he goes, "you could have your 'way' with me, all of you...?"

GOULD: Uh huh, what? Ten or twenty guys...

FOX: "...and you could do that. But I'd have to, you see? Here's the thing of it. Unless you killed me, I would..."

GOULD: Uh huh...

FOX: "...have to come back and retaliate, sometime, somehow, because..."

GOULD: ...okay...

FOX: "I couldn't..."

GOULD: ...uh huh...

FOX: ...live with that.

GOULD: ...the degradation...

FOX: "So whynt you skip all the middle shit, kill me right now."

GOULD: ...he throws it in their face.

FOX: You got it.

GOULD: ...uh huh...

FOX: "Or..." (Pause) or...

GOULD: ...yes...

FOX: "If you could use a friend, why not allow me this? To be your friend..."

GOULD: He teams up with the guys...

FOX: "To side with you...?"

GOULD: Yes.

FOX: "and together..."

GOULD: ...and...

FOX: ...and they become friends. They teach him the...

GOULD: ...he learns the prison ways...

FOX: They blah, blah, so on...

GOULD: Uh huh...

FOX: Now. Eh? Now. With this, his knowledge of computers, so on, with his money...

GOULD: ...yeah...

FOX: His links to the outside...

GOULD: A girl...?

FOX: Ah. Now that's the great part, I'm telling you, when I saw this script...

GOULD: ...I don't know how it got passed us...

FOX: When they get out of prison, the head convict's sister...

GOULD: ...A buddy film, a prison film, Dougie Brown, blah blah, some girl...

FOX: Action, a social...

GOULD: Action, blood, a social theme...

FOX: (simultaneously with "theme") That's what I'm saying!

**~SCENE~**