

AMERICAN BUFFALO
by David Mamet

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From: *Contemporary Scenes for Student Actors*

TEACH: What time is it?

DON: It's midnight.

TEACH: I'm going out there now. I'll need the address.

DON: What's that?

TEACH: What?

DON: That.

TEACH: This gun?

DON: Yes.

TEACH: What does it look like?

DON: A gun.

TEACH: It IS a gun.

DON: I don't like it.

TEACH: Don't look at it.

DON: I'm serious.

TEACH: So am I?

DON: We don't need a gun, Teach.

TEACH: I pray that we don't, Don.

DON: We don't. Tell me why we need a gun.

TEACH: It's not a question do we need it. Need. Only that it makes me feel comfortable. Okay? It helps me to relax. So, God forbid, something inevitable occurs. And the choice is. And I'm saying God forbid. It's either him. Or us.

DON: Who?

TEACH: The guy. I'm saying God forbid the guy. Or somebody comes in. He's got a knife. A cleaver from one of those magnetic boards ...

DON: Yeah?

TEACH: With the two strips?

DON: Yeah?

TEACH: And whack. And somebody's bleeding to death. This is all. Merely as a deterrent. All the preparation in the world does not mean shit. The path of some crazed lunatic sees you as an invasion of his personal domain. Guys go nuts, Don. You know this. Public officials. Ax murderers. All I'm saying, look out for your own.

DON: I don't like the gun.

TEACH: It's a personal thing, Don. A personal thing of mine. A silly personal thing. I just like to have it along. Is this so unreasonable?

DON: I don't want it.

TEACH: I'm not going without it.

DON: Why do you want it?

TEACH: Protection of me and my partner. Protection, deterrence. We're only going around the fucking corner for chrissake.

DON: I don't want it with.

TEACH: I can't step down on this, Don. I got to have it with. The light of things as they are.

DON: Why?

TEACH: Because of the way things are. Hold on a second.

DON: Fletcher?

TEACH: Cops.

DON: What are they doing?

TEACH: Cruising.

DON: They turn the corner?

TEACH: Hold on. Yes. They have the right idea. Armed to the hilt. Sticks, mace, knives. Who knows what the fuck they got. They have the right idea. Social customs break down. Next thing everybody's lying in the gutter.