

SCHEIDER. If this is going to be such a turkey, why did you sign up?

DREYFUSS. Oh, (*Laughs.*) I fucked up, is what happened. I shot this thing last year—*The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*...serious drama, and I thought "This is it, baby, this is the big time. This is gonna make you a star!" but...I saw the premiere up in Montreal and, fuck, man I stink in it.

But I was the same with *American Graffiti*. So I'm watching the rough cut, right?—I go clammy cold. All of a sudden, I'm seeing me...and I'm shaped like Smokey the Bear, and I've got this awful monotonal, nasal voice and I'm the worst, right? George Lucas sees me and says "What do you think?" and I say "Well, George, it's a nice movie...and I've already figured out how you can cut me out." Lucas told me I was crazy.

SCHEIDER. You were terrific. It's a great movie. You know, when I signed, Dick let slip that the studio wanted Charlton Heston for Brody!

DREYFUSS. Yeah? Well, you know who they wanted for Hooper? Jon Voight—you know, that big, blond son of a bitch. How the hell did they end up with us?

SCHEIDER. Maybe Steven doesn't like big stars.

DREYFUSS. Doesn't like big stars? Why the hell not?

SCHEIDER. I don't know, but I would guess for reasons of realism.

DREYFUSS. Realism? They got a shark out there the size of a truck and they're worried about realism?!

SCHEIDER. Well maybe this is a new kind of movie. I mean, you saw *2001*, right? The Kubrick film? No big names in that.

DREYFUSS. Yeah! That movie made absolutely no sense whatsoever.

SCHEIDER. You know, Robert told me that Kubrick offered him a lead role in it.

DREYFUSS. Really? What, one of the astronauts?

SCHEIDER. No. Actually he wanted him to play the lead monkey...

DREYFUSS. Hahahaha! Wait, really?

SCHEIDER. Robert turned him down. He said "You're not going to make a monkey out of me!"

SHAW. Damon Runyon.

DREYFUSS. Who's that?

SHAW. Christ, the lights are on but nobody's home. One of your compatriots, but far superior.

SCHEIDER. Richard, you must have heard of Damon Runyon.

DREYFUSS. Must I? You can't expect me to know everything.

SHAW. I think our mistake is expecting you to know anything.

Pause.

DREYFUSS. So Roy, what does the *Times* have to say about Nixon today?

Scheider finds the page.

SCHEIDER. "Almost forgotten, by the time Mr. Nixon tendered his resignation, were his days of glory only two years ago, when he began dismantling the cold war that had dominated American politics for a quarter century, with his dramatic journeys to Peking and Moscow and the signing of the first limitation on the deadly nuclear arms race. Almost forgotten were his successes in ending American involvement in the bitterly divisive Vietnam War and in halting the draft. Gone was the sweeping mandate Mr. Nixon had won from the American electorate in November, 1972, when he carried forty-nine states (all but Massachusetts plus the District of Columbia)—with the help of what he liked to call (*Imitating Nixon.*) 'The silent majority'—the middle-class Americans of the suburbs and small towns and farms. Gone were the dreams of an historic realignment that would make the Republicans the majority party by stripping blue-collar workers and Southerners from Franklin D. Roosevelt's coalition."

SHAW. (*Imitating Nixon.*) I am not a crook!

DREYFUSS. Jesus, that makes him sound like a saint. Fuck him!

SHAW. The man appalls me, but I can't help feeling some curious sort of pity for him.

DREYFUSS. You pity him? Why?

SHAW. I think he hates himself.

SHAW. To cope with smart-arses like you, Richard.

DREYFUSS. No. Seriously.

Shaw offers Scheider a dram.

SHAW. Roy?

SCHEIDER. Uh...just a finger.

Shaw pours a finger.

SHAW. I'm English. I have to drink—to cope with the climate. If the English didn't drink we'd have died out years ago.

DREYFUSS. Nah, I don't buy that. I've known plenty of Brits that don't hit the bottle. I want the real reason—what, is it the “artistic temperament” shtick?

SHAW. Why does anyone drink? Why do you smoke that stuff that makes you giggle? Why'd you snort that powder that makes your eyes water? I've seen you coming out of the boghouse red-eyed, sniffing like a dog. Now why would you do that?

DREYFUSS. I'm not gonna deny I like getting high occasionally.

SHAW. Yes. I suppose that's how it starts. My god, I loved to drink when I was young. It was such pleasure going to the pub and getting smashed after a show. People talk about there being a cultural pressure to drink in England, but as a young man it felt natural, wonderful, it freed us up. We talked about art, politics, we were theatrical revolutionaries, we were going to change the world!... Working with George Devine at the Royal Court, doing *The Long and The Short and The Tall* with Peter O'Toole... Heaven.

SCHEIDER. I think you did change the world. It's just that the world tends to revert to type.

SHAW. Bless you, Roy. Anyway...we were competitive. We'd pride ourselves on still being able to function after a tidal wave of booze! Still standing, like a bull peppered with banderillas. I don't know at what point drink became a part of me...perhaps even before I was born. My father was an alcoholic, you know. A *real* alcoholic, not just a barroom brawler, or a dilettante drinker like O'Toole; a proper, hollow-legged drunkard... Trouble is, these days I find that it interferes with my writing. I tried to quit last year...but I found myself with a drink in my hand as a reward for a week of not drinking.