



DAVID WILLIAMSON is Australia's best known and most widely performed playwright. His first full-length play *The Coming of Stork* was presented at La Mama Theatre in 1970 and was followed by *The Removalists* and *Don's Party* in 1971. His prodigious output since then includes *The Department*, *The Club*, *Travelling North*, *The Perfectionist*, *Sons of Cain*, *Emerald City*, *Top Silk*, *Money and Friends*, *Brilliant Lies*, *Sanctuary*, *Dead White Males*, *After the Ball*, *Corporate Vibes*, *Face to Face*, *The Great Man*, *Up For Grabs*, *A Conversation*, *Charitable Intent*, *Soulmates*, *Birthrights*, *Amigos*, *Flatfoot*, *Operator*, *Influence*, *Lotte's Gift*, *Scarlet O'Hara at the Crimson Parrot*, *Let the Sunshine* and *Rhinestone Rex and Miss Monica*, *Nothing Personal* and *Don Parties On*, a sequel to *Don's Party*. His recent *When Dad Married Fury* had its world premiere in Perth at the Metcalfe Playhouse and *At Any Cost?* co-written with Mohamed Khadra opened at the Ensemble Theatre in July 2013. His latest, *Rupert*, premiered at Melbourne Theatre Company in August 2013.

His plays have been translated into many languages and performed internationally, including major productions in London, L.A., New York and Washington. *Dead White Males* completed a successful UK Production in 1999. *Up For Grabs* went on to a West End production starring Madonna in the lead role. In 2008 *Scarlet O'Hara at the Crimson Parrot* premiered at the Melbourne Theatre Company starring Caroline O'Connor and directed by Simon Phillips.

As a screenwriter, David has brought to the screen his own plays including *The Removalists*, *Don's Party*, *The Club*, *Travelling North* and *Emerald City* along with his original screenplays for feature films including *Libido*, *Petersen*, *Gallipoli*, *Phar Lap*, *The Year of Living Dangerously* and *Balibo*. The adaptation of his play *Face to Face*, directed by Michael Rymer, won the Panavision Spirit Award for Independent Film at the Santa Barbara International Film Festival.

David was the first person outside Britain to receive the George Devine Award (for *The Removalists*). His many awards include 12 Australian Writers' Guild AWGIE Awards, five Australian Film Institutes' Awards for Best Screenplay and, in 1996 The United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Award. In 2005 he was awarded the Richard Lane Award for services to the Australian Writers' Guild. David has received four honorary doctorates and been made an Officer of the Order of Australia.

David has been named one of Australia's Living National Treasures.

DAVID
WILLIAMSON'S **THE
REMOVALISTS**



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The Removalists was first presented at the Cafe La Mama, Melbourne, on 22 July 1971, with the following cast:

SERGEANT DAN SIMMONDS	Peter Cummins
CONSTABLE NEVILLE ROSS	Bruce Spence
KATE MASON	Kristin Green
FIONA CARTER	Fay Byrne
KENNY CARTER	Paul Hampton
ROB, THE REMOVALIST	David Williamson

Director, Bryce Spence

CHARACTERS

SERGEANT DAN SIMMONDS

CONSTABLE NEVILLE ROSS

KATE MASON

FIONA CARTER

KENNY CARTER

ROB, THE REMOVALIST

ACT ONE

The play opens in a small inner suburban police station, built fairly recently, but already having an air of decrepit inefficiency. SERGEANT DAN SIMMONDS, fat and fiftyish, lounges at a battered old desk from which he surveys CONSTABLE NEVILLE ROSS, as if he were auditioning him for a crucial role in some play. ROSS is twenty. There is a long Pause.

ROSS: Well. What would you like me to do, Sarge?

SIMMONDS: For a start you could stop bouncing up and down on your bloody toes.

Pause.

D'you think they'll stop your pay cheque if you're caught standing still.

ROSS: [*nervously*] The pay's not too bad these days, is it?

SIMMONDS: [*looking at a crossword puzzle he has been doing*] Magician in six letters, Ross.

Pause.

It's all right. I've got it.

He writes something.

The money is not good, Ross. The money could be good if you happened to be in the right place but this isn't one of them. No pay-offs here, boy. A few perks, but no pay-offs.

ROSS: A recruit under twenty-one gets full adult pay these days. Did you know that?

SIMMONDS: How old are you, Ross?

ROSS: Twenty.

SIMMONDS: Money's not important, boy.

ROSS: You've got to consider it.

SIMMONDS: You've got to consider your arsehole too. What's your old man do for a crust?

ROSS: My old man?

SIMMONDS: Is he still alive?

ROSS: Yes.

SIMMONDS: What's he do?

ROSS: [*embarrassed*] Er ... I'd rather not say.

SIMMONDS: [*irritated by ROSS's reticence*] God, he must be a nightman or something. Slinging shit.

ROSS: He's a carpenter.

SIMMONDS: What's wrong with that? Christ was a carpenter. Shouldn't be ashamed of your old man because he's a carpenter.

ROSS: I'm not ashamed of him.

SIMMONDS: No? I thought I noticed a little bit of hesitancy in your voice, boy. I thought it sounded as if you were ashamed of him.

ROSS: I'm not ashamed of him.

SIMMONDS: Is he in the building trade?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: That's a pity. M'son's looking for a carpenter. He's sub-contracting his house. Are you going steady?

ROSS: Sort of.

SIMMONDS: Well, when you get married make sure you don't go to a project builder.

ROSS: Why not?

SIMMONDS: Well, just look at your project builder. What is he? Really?

ROSS: Dunno.

SIMMONDS: He's just a sub-contractor. Get me?

ROSS: I suppose he is.

SIMMONDS: Your project builder just hires your tradesman, and he isn't very particular about who he hires, either. No offence to your old man, Ross, but they've got carpenters working contract who couldn't drive a nail into a lump of fresh horse shit. M'son's worked it out that as well as being able to pick your tradesmen you can save yourself upwards of a grand.

ROSS: Sounds like a good move.

SIMMONDS: Like I say. It's better to save the stuff than to have to earn it. Pity your old man's not in the building game.

ROSS: Yeah.

SIMMONDS: Most of the carpenters I know are in the building game. Does he make furniture?

ROSS: [*thinking*] Er ... no. Not exactly.

SIMMONDS: That's a pity. M'daughter's husband's looking for someone to knock up a few cupboards for him. They need 'em too. Five kids in seven years. Bastard's a mick. She's not but he's pretty strict. Ought to be kneed in the balls. So what if he's got to face the priest. She's the one who's got to have 'em. Can't stand micks. You a mick?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: My wife's a mick. It's not her fault and I respect her point of view.

Pause.

They're taking over the force, you know. Salmon sandwiches on Friday if you want to get to be a sergeant, Ross. I told m'daughter not to marry the bastard but she couldn't afford to be choosy. Not bad looking, mind you, and a good arse, but she's an irritable bitch. Her mother all over again.

Pause.

Pity your old man doesn't make furniture.

ROSS: Yes.

Pause.

SIMMONDS: If he doesn't make houses and he doesn't make furniture, then what in the hell does he make?

ROSS: Why... er... did you want to know?

SIMMONDS: Is he the one that gave you this thing of yours about money?

ROSS: I haven't got a thing about money.

SIMMONDS: Then why were you carrying on about the pay?

ROSS: I wasn't carrying on about the pay. I just said that you've got to consider it.

SIMMONDS: [*looking at ROSS as he takes a roll of notes out of his pocket*] See that?

ROSS: Yes.

SIMMONDS: What is it?

ROSS: Money.

SIMMONDS: Where did it come from?

ROSS: I don't know.

SIMMONDS: I can walk out of this station tonight, grab m'self a cray and half a dozen tubes, get home, sit m'self down in front of the box and watch the wrestling.

He waves the money.

D'you know where it came from?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: From my pay packet. That's where it came from. No pay-offs. No nothing. From my pay packet. D'you know why I'm never short of a dollar, Ross?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: Because I've never been stupid enough to mortgage m'self up to the hilt. Bought m'self a little weatherboard in Box Hill nineteen years ago. Know what my repayments are?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: Five dollars a week.

ROSS *whistles in admiration.*

Don't chase your arse, boy. Get me? There's a lot more to be got out of life than chasing your arse. There's a good life here for you in the force if you know how to organise yourself.

ROSS: It's a pretty good life, is it?

SIMMONDS: If you know how to organise yourself and get your priorities straight.

Pause.

Stuff the rule book up your arse. That's the first thing you've got to learn. Get me? Life's got its own rules.

ROSS: [*vaguely uncomfortable*] I... er... suppose this is a pretty busy station?

SIMMONDS: It could be if you let it be.

ROSS: How do you mean?

SIMMONDS: Just what I said. This district has got the highest incidence of crime in the metropolitan area.

ROSS *whistles.*

All your underworld is within a two-mile radius of this station.

ROSS *whistles again.*

Tough as nails around here, mate. I'd hate to think of the number of stiff's lying in shallow graves in the Dandenongs, courtesy of this district, boy.

ROSS: [*wide-eyed*] Really?

SIMMONDS: [*nodding*] I reckon this'd be about your city's geographical centre of crime.

ROSS *purses his lips*.

That's why they opened up this sub-branch.

Pause.

To help the main station.

Pause.

And we do.

Pause.

But there's only two of us here. Right?

ROSS *nods*.

And we can't handle anything big. Get me?

ROSS *nods doubtfully*.

Get me?

ROSS *nods doubtfully*.

We can't handle anything big because there's only two of us.

Pause.

We can handle anything small, but then again it's hardly worth the effort if it's small.

Pause.

The workload around here is very much a matter of how we see things, Ross. Something doesn't have to be very big before it's too big for us and, likewise, something doesn't have to be all that small before it's not worth worrying about. This is the best posting in the city, boy. Think yourself lucky.

ROSS: What do we do, then?

SIMMONDS: Anything that looks interesting. And if there's nothing interesting [*pointing to a television set*] we watch the midday movie.

There's an old Errol Flynn on today. Like Errol Flynn?

ROSS: How often do you get something that looks interesting?

SIMMONDS: Depends what sort of mood you're in. Some days just about anything's interesting. I thought perhaps your arrival might have been interesting.

ROSS: [*embarrassed by his lack of interest*] Oh, I... er...

SIMMONDS: Just joking, Ross.

Pause.

Got one boy posted out here who walked in and said, 'I've heard about you, you great fat heap of shit'. That was interesting.

ROSS: Why did he say that?

SIMMONDS: I hope you're not a young smart-arse, Ross, because there's no room for that here. There's one person in authority here and that's me. Do you understand, Ross?

ROSS: Yes.

SIMMONDS: Let's get that straight right at the outset.

Pause.

What's your father do?

ROSS: [*uncertain*] I don't think it's any of your business.

SIMMONDS *gets up and circles* ROSS.

SIMMONDS: I thought we just had this out. Who's in authority here?

ROSS: I just don't think it's any of your business.

SIMMONDS: [*loudly*] Look, Ross. I'm in authority here and I'll decide what's my business and what isn't my business.

Pause.

You're a bit of a rebel in your own quiet way. Aren't you? Makes you feel good?

ROSS: [*defensively*] No.

SIMMONDS: Doesn't make you feel good?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: What? You just like being a rebel for the sake of being a rebel?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: [*ominously*] I hope you're not going to turn out to be a smart-arse, Ross. You'll go for a row of shitcans if you try anything smart with me, boy.

ROSS: [*surlily*] I just didn't think it was any of your business what my father does.

Pause.

SIMMONDS: How long have you been in the force, boy?

ROSS: A year.

SIMMONDS: Not in training. In the force. In it.

ROSS: This is my first posting. You know that.

SIMMONDS: [*looking at his watch*] Half an hour. That's how long you've been in the force, boy. That's how long. Half an hour and you think you know what's my business and what's not.

ROSS: I don't think that at all.

Pause.

SIMMONDS: Fail your Leaving?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: We're starting to get a lot in who failed their Leaving. Got your Inter?

ROSS: [*embarrassed*] Got my Leaving.

SIMMONDS: [*raising his eyebrows*] Is that a fact? Don't get many who've got their Leaving. [*Sarcastically*] You'll rocket to the top, boy. You'll be a sergeant by the time you're fifty-five. Why'd you join the force?

ROSS: Don't really know.

Pause.

I just thought I'd like to be a policeman.

SIMMONDS: So you joined the force? That's pretty smart, Ross. I can't think of many better ways of becoming a policeman than joining the force. I can see why you got your Leaving. [*Pause.*] You don't come from a broken home, by any chance?

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: Last bloke who came here with his Leaving was from a broken home. Had a bit of trouble with him. [*Stating*] You're not from a broken home.

ROSS: No.

SIMMONDS: Yes. If your father's a carpenter he'd be pretty stable. People who work with their hands are always pretty stable. It's us bastards who work with our heads that go off.

Pause.

Yes. I tend to find that there are two types who join the force, Ross.