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AMERICAN BUFFALO

The Samuel Goldwyn Company

CAST: Dustin Hoffman
Dennis Franz
Sean Nelson

CREDITS:

Producer Gregory Mosher
Executive Producer John Sloss
Director Michael Corrente
Screenwriter David Mamet

Based on his stage play

"AMERICAN BUFFALO" brings together an award-winning ensemble of cast and filmmakers who have a rich tradition in film and theatre. Two-time Academy Award-winner DUSTIN HOFFMAN ("Kramer vs. Kramer," "Rain Man") and recent Emmy-winner DENNIS FRANZ ("NYPD Blue") star as men who attempt to con a friend - with powerful consequences. SEAN NELSON, who electrified audiences with his acting debut in "Fresh," co-stars as their young apprentice in crime.

Director Michael Corrente achieved international acclaim for his debut feature film, "Federal Hill." Gregory Mosher, a multiple Tony Award-winning producer and director is producer. He has directed twenty-three of Mamet's plays, marking one of the longest writer-director collaborations in the American theatre.

Release Date: September 13, 1996

MPAA Rating: R

Running Time: 88 minutes

AMERICAN BUFFALO

Production Information

AMERICAN BUFFALO brings together a company of legendary names and brilliant newcomers.

Dustin Hoffman (Teach) has played some of the most memorable characters in American cinema since his astonishing debut as Benjamin Braddock in THE GRADUATE. From there to Rizzo in MIDNIGHT COWBOY, and on to STRAW DOGS, PAPER MOON, ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN, MARATHON MAN, STRAIGHT TIME, TOOTSIE and many more, including his Academy Award-winning performance in RAIN MAN, no other contemporary actor has played a wider range of comedy and drama. His performance in the part of Teach marks another milestone in his remarkable career.

It was a part Hoffman almost turned down. He was at the top of a short list prepared by producer Gregory Mosher and director, Michael Corrente. They were debating how to approach the star when Corrente recalled that writer Murray Schisgal, Hoffman's

partner at Punch Productions, had earlier approached Corrente about a project for Hoffman. Corrente called Schisgal about Hoffman playing Teach, and Schisgal said he'd go to Hoffman with the idea.

Hoffman had seen - and loved - Corrente's first film, FEDERAL HILL, and of course he was familiar with Mamet's play. But the actor was caught up in preparations for the release of OUTBREAK and was unable to focus for the moment on what his next picture would be. On the day of the OUTBREAK opening, he called Corrente personally to say "thanks but no thanks." Corrente wasn't having any of that and told Hoffman he'd be over in twenty minutes to hear it in person. As a bemused Hoffman welcomed the young director, Corrente made a passionate pitch. Hoffman told him, "Twenty years ago I heard from another crazy Italian filmmaker about a cab driver in New York City, and I didn't pay much attention to it. I don't think I'll make that mistake again."

Hoffman asked Corrente if he had plans for the evening, and a few hours later Corrente and his wife found themselves sitting at

Hoffman's table at the OUTBREAK premiere party, listening to the star tell everyone his next project would be AMERICAN BUFFALO.

Co-starring with Hoffman is Dennis Franz, as the junkstore owner. Franz is best known for his role as Detective Andy Sipowicz in the hugely popular TV series "NYPD Blue," for which he won both the Emmy and Golden Globe awards.

Franz got his start in Chicago theater, along with Mamet and Mosher, and he knows the world of AMERICAN BUFFALO like the back of his hand. Once they knew Franz was interested Mosher and Corrente never considered anyone else for the part and built the shooting schedule around Franz's break from "NYPD BLUE." Franz never hesitated, but he did have one little problem. He had recently married his longtime girlfriend, and they were supposed to have a honeymoon when the television series broke for the summer hiatus. But they both knew this was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity and packed their bags for that hallowed show business tradition -- "honeymoon on location."

It was Mamet's idea to cast a teenager in the part of the gofer Bobby (traditionally played by a twenty-something actor) and preparations for a high profile "search" were made. Meanwhile, Mosher's long time casting director Billy Hopkins suggested Sean Nelson, who had made such a sensational debut in the independent film FRESH, when he was twelve years-old. Nelson turned up for his first meeting with the director and producer. He read for twenty minutes and was so right that neither Corrente nor Mosher could think of anything to say that would improve on an already terrific performance. The two men knew they had found their Bobby, the search was called off, and they hired him on the spot. Nelson celebrated his fifteenth birthday by attending the first AMERICAN BUFFALO rehearsal with Hoffman and Franz.

Gregory Mosher directed and produced the theatrical premiere of AMERICAN BUFFALO in 1975. It was his second professional production, and he went on to become Mamet's foremost interpreter, directing and producing more than twenty Mamet premieres, including GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS.

SEAN NELSON

(Bobby)

Sean Nelson returns to the big screen in AMERICAN BUFFALO, after having made his film debut as the title character in the critically acclaimed FRESH, earning a Special Jury Prize at the 1994 Sundance Film Festival and a 1995 Independent Spirit Award for Best Debut Performance.

Television audiences may recognize the 14-year-old actor from his guest appearances on the series, "New York Undercover," "Homicide," "Law and Order," or as one of the ensemble performers on the ABC Weekend Special, "The Red Booth." Earlier this year, Nelson made his Broadway debut in the all-star revival of Michael Cristofer's "The Shadow Box," starring opposite Mary Alice, Marlo Thomas, Estelle Parsons and Mercedes Ruehl.

His theater credits also include "On The Open Road" at the New York Shakespeare Festival, "Conrack" and "Hey Little Walter" at Playwrights Horizon, as well as "Gramercy Park is Closed to the Public."

Nelson lives with his parents in New York City.

MICHAEL CORRENTE

Director

Michael Corrente received international acclaim for his feature film directorial and screenwriting debut, FEDERAL HILL. The film, a critical success, received the 1994 Berlin Film Festival Audience Award, and was a hit at film festivals around the world. In fact, it was the film's screening at the Hamptons Film Festival that led to his being chosen to direct AMERICAN BUFFALO.

After seeing the film at the Festival, AMERICAN BUFFALO producer Gregory Mosher waded through the crowd surrounding the first-time director to give him his compliments on the film. Later that evening Corrente sought him out, and asked him if he knew David Mamet. When Mosher said he did, Corrente asked Mosher to tell Mamet that the characters in AMERICAN BUFFALO had changed his life: "I just had no idea you could put those guys in a play; they're my guys!" "I know," said Mosher. "I just saw your movie - why don't you direct the movie of AMERICAN BUFFALO?" Of course, that had been Corrente's fantasy for many years, and it finally came true, and the reality has surpassed the dream.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island, Corrente graduated from Trinity Rep Conservatory in 1981. Upon moving to New York in 1984, he founded the drama group, Theater B, where he directed more than 25 productions, including Mamet's AMERICAN BUFFALO.

FEDERAL HILL was based on his one-act play - later adapted to a feature-length screenplay - which was premiered at the Sanford Meiser Theater in New York in 1986. AMERICAN BUFFALO is Corrente's second feature film.

GREGORY MOSHER

Producer

One of American theater's most prolific producer-directors,

Gregory Mosher makes his filmmaking debut as producer of AMERICAN BUFFALO. Mosher first worked with Mamet in 1974, when he directed the premiere of AMERICAN BUFFALO. Since then, he has directed the first productions of nearly all of Mamet's plays.

Many of his plays debuted at Chicago's Goodman Theater, where

Mosher was artistic director from 1978 to 1985. It was then that he accepted former New York City Mayor John V. Lindsay's invitation to revive the theater program at Lincoln Center. During the course of seven seasons, the theater produced 37 plays and musicals, most of which were world or American premieres.

Among the most celebrated productions were Mamet's "Speed the Plow," with Ron Silver, Joe Mantegna and Madonna; the Mike Nichols production of "Waiting for Godot," with Steve Martin and Robin Williams; John Guare's "Six Degrees Of Separation," with Stockard Channing; the revival of Cole Porter's "Anything Goes;" and "Our Town," which received the 1989 Tony Award for Best Revival.

During his tenure at Lincoln Center, Mosher received virtually every major American Theatre award, including two Tony Awards.

Upon leaving Lincoln Center Theater in 1992, Mosher directed the Broadway revival of "A Streetcar Named Desire," starring Alec Baldwin and Jessica Lange. In 1993, he produced the Emmy-nominated TNT production of Mamet's "A Life In The Theater," starring Jack Lemmon and Matthew Broderick. It's an apt title for a man who has been involved with some of the most important works ever presented in American theater, a man who finally brings his talent to the movies.