



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 latest *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 2012.

His plays have been translated into many languages and performed internationally, including major productions in London, Los Angeles, 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 twelve 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.



the club

(PLAYERS)

DAVID WILLIAMSON



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Contents

The Greatest Game of All, Lou Richards vii

Winners and Losers, Ian Turner x

THE CLUB

Act One 1

Act Two 36

The Play in the Theatre, Rodney Fisher 62

the Club

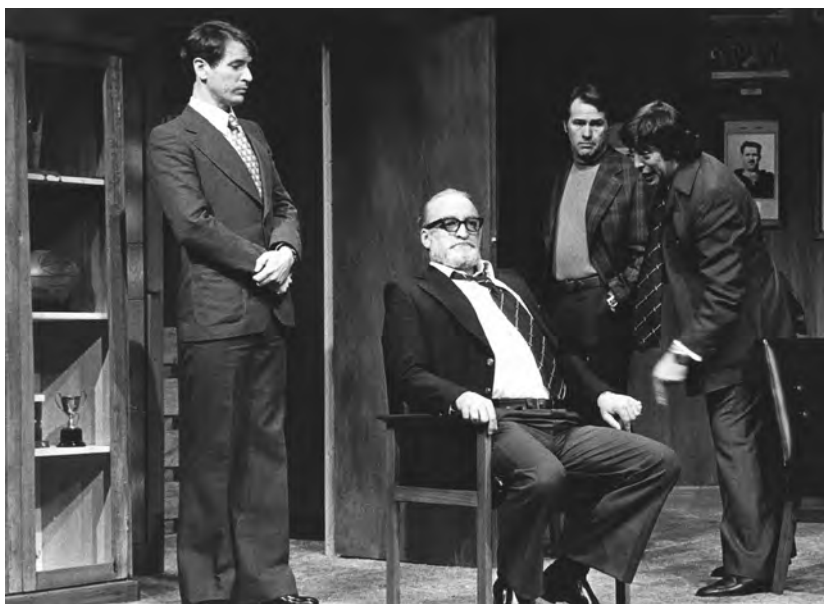


Above: Gerard Maguire as Gerry, Frank Wilson as Jock and Frank Gallacher as Ted in the Melbourne Theatre Company production, 1977. Below: Frank Gallacher with Terence Donovan as Laurie. Photos: David Parker.





Above: Terence Donovan as Laurie and John Walton as Geoff in the Melbourne Theatre Company production. Below: Gerard Maguire, Frank Wilson, Terence Donovan and Frank Gallacher. Photos: David Parker.





John Walton and Frank Wilson. Photo: David Parker.

The Club was first performed by the Melbourne Theatre Company at the Russell Street Theatre, Melbourne, on 24 May 1977 with the following cast:

GERRY

TED

LAURIE

DANNY

JOCK

GEOFF

Gerard Maguire

Frank Gallacher

Terence Donovan

Harold Hopkins

Frank Wilson

John Walton

Setting design, Shaun Gurton

Director, Rodney Fisher

CHARACTERS:

GERRY COOPER

TED PARKER

LAURIE HOLDEN

DANNY ROWE

JOCK RILEY

GEOFF HAYWARD

SETTING:

The action of the play takes place in the committee room of a top professional football club. A formal committee table surrounded by chairs is seen towards the back of the stage. Lounge chairs and a coffee table dominate the downstage area. It is in this area that most of the action takes place. Large, framed head-shots of former club champions adorn the walls. A door on the left leads to the general and recreational areas of the club building, while to the right a door leads to a private bar used by committee members.

ACT ONE

GERRY COOPER, *lean, alert, in his middle thirties, sits on the table smoking, a folder in one hand.* TED PARKER *enters from left. He is small, pudgy, manic, nervous, in his early forties.*

TED: Good.

GERRY: Good what?

TED: Good that you're early.

GERRY: Always early.

TED: Going to be tough.

GERRY: What?

TED: (*more clearly*) Going to be tough.

GERRY: Who? Laurie?

TED: No. The whole business. Going to be awkward. It'll have to be handled carefully. My first impulse is to blast hell out of him. Really blast hell out of him. He's hurt me, Gerry, and I'm angry. Really angry, but I think it's much better if I stay cool. Don't you think so? Better to stay cool?

GERRY: If you stay as cool as you are now we're all in trouble. Calm down.

TED: Sometimes it takes more courage to hand out the olive branch than to jump in boots and all. I'm not going to smile and pretend that it didn't happen mind you, but I'm going to stay cool.

GERRY: Calm down.

TED: I could use a drink.

GERRY: Grab a bottle of Scotch from next door.

TED *nods and goes out, right.*

TED: (*off*) How's June?

GERRY: Sick.

TED: (*off*) That's great. Sick?

GERRY: Mmm.

TED *re-enters with a bottle of Scotch and two glasses.*

TED: What's she got?

GERRY: 'Flu.

TED: There's going to be a new 'flu strain in the next ten years that's going to wipe out nine tenths of the world population.

GERRY: Yeah?

TED: I read it in the Sunday papers.

GERRY: That'll test Medibank.

TED pours them each a whisky. The left door opens and LAURIE HOLDEN comes in. LAURIE is a tall well-built man in his middle forties. There is an awkward silence. TED inclines the whisky bottle towards LAURIE. LAURIE declines.

TED: I'm sorry it's come to this, Laurie.

LAURIE: So am I.

There is another awkward pause.

June better yet, Gerry?

GERRY: Improving, thanks, Laurie.

LAURIE: Give her my love.

GERRY: Will do.

TED: Thanks for coming, Laurie. The Committee thought it might be better if we tried to thrash this out privately before tonight's meeting.

LAURIE: Fine.

TED: The Committee wants to see if you and I can settle our differences, Laurie. They don't want to accept your resignation.

GERRY: I thought I'd come along to see if I can act as an impartial sounding board for you both. Jock was going to come along and lend a hand too, but as usual he's late.

LAURIE: Jock? Lend a hand?

GERRY: His idea, not ours, but once he gets an idea in his head he's a little hard to discourage. We'll go if you two get to a point when you'd rather talk things through yourselves.

TED: The Committee's unanimously of the opinion that they don't want to lose you, Laurie. You're one of the best coaches we've ever had and you've given the Club great service.

GERRY: We'd find it very hard to replace you, Laurie.

There is another pause.

TED: The Club's going through a slump but nobody blames you.

LAURIE: I should bloody well hope not.

TED: (*exploding*) Holy Jesus, Laurie. There's no need to be totally self righteous. When a football club performs as badly as ours has over the last five weeks, most coaches would be honest enough not to try and absolve themselves of *all* the blame. It really makes me wonder whether there's any point to this exercise when I come to you in a spirit of conciliation and you jump down my throat at the first opportunity. I was hurt by what you said about me in the press, deeply hurt. It took all my self control to be pleasant to you when you walked in that door.

GERRY: I think I should tell you that the Committee took a pretty dim view of your press statements, Laurie. If you had any grievances you should have come to us.

LAURIE: The press asked me if it was true I was handing in my resignation, so I said yes, and they asked me why, so I told them.

GERRY: How did they know about your resignation before we did?

LAURIE: I don't know.

GERRY: Did you tell the players you were about to resign?

LAURIE: Yes. I felt I owed it to them.

TED: You must have known they'd take it to the press.

LAURIE: I thought it was a possibility. I didn't ask them to.

GERRY: It puts the Committee in a hell of a position when you criticise the Club President in the press, Laurie.

TED: What's my sin, Laurie? What's my crime? All I could get out of the article was some vague accusation that I was autocratic. What exactly were you trying to say? That I have opinions? All right. I'm guilty. That on occasions I express them? All right. Guilty again. Just what am I expected to do, might I ask? Go away and hide in a corner? I'm the Club President, Laurie. I was elected by the members to lead this Club and I'll bloody well lead it, and if anybody tries to stop me I'll crush them. No, Gerry. I'm sick of pussyfooting around. I'm going to speak my mind. He's called me autocratic so he just better come up with some evidence.

LAURIE: I wouldn't know where to begin.

There is a knock at the door and DANNY ROWE enters. He is twenty-eight, small and nuggetty.

TED: What do you want?

DANNY: I want to know what's happening.

LAURIE: It's all right, Danny. I can handle it.

DANNY: (*to* GERRY) The players want their point of view heard before the committee makes any decision about Laurie.

TED: The players can go to hell.

DANNY: They always could as far as you were concerned, Parker, but we'd just like the Committee to know that we're a hundred percent behind Laurie.

TED: Well, you can just go and tell the players that the Committee are a hundred percent behind me.

DANNY: Then perhaps the Committee had better roll up and play tomorrow's match.

TED: What's that supposed to mean?

DANNY: It means that if that bloody Committee of yours gives Laurie the boot tonight, then we don't play tomorrow.

LAURIE: Come off it... (*Danny*).

TED: This is lovely. Really delightful. A strike threat.

LAURIE: Danny. Go home and calm down.

TED: A strike threat.

DANNY: It's no threat. We mean it. You sack Laurie tonight and you won't have a team tomorrow.

TED: Sack him? What do you mean sack him? He's bloody well resigned. We're not sacking anyone. Did you hear that, Gerry? A strike threat? (*To* DANNY) You won't find me bending under that sort of pressure, my boy.

LAURIE: There'll be no strike whether I'm here or not.

TED: I should bloody well hope not. There's more than enough industrial anarchy in the community at large without us copping it on the football field. Next thing you know they'll be holding a stopwork meeting every time the umpire blows his whistle louder than fifty decibels.

DANNY: Very funny. You'll be sneering on the other side of your face tomorrow.

GERRY: Danny, if you'd just clear off we'll get this whole thing sorted out.

TED: Laurie offered his resignation and we're treating it seriously.

What else do you expect us to do?

DANNY: He only offered to resign because you bloody well drove him to it. How could any coach run a team with you sticking your nose in everywhere?

TED: Sticking my nose in?

LAURIE: I appreciate this, Danny, but you're doing me more harm than good. Go home and calm down.

DANNY: Someone's got to tell him.

TED: What do you mean sticking my nose in?

DANNY: It's not your job to pick the bloody team.

TED: I don't. I'm not even on the Selection Committee.

DANNY: No, but you take two thirds of 'em up to the bar and talk for four hours every Wednesday night.

TED: Jock and Tony? So what? The team is barely discussed.

DANNY: That's not what I heard.

TED: Then you'd better rap your spies over the knuckles because the team is barely discussed. Laurie, have you ever thought I've tried to influence the selection of the team?

LAURIE: Yes.

TED: When?

LAURIE: This week.

TED: That's a lie.

LAURIE: You told Jock and Tony that Geoff Hayward wasn't to be dropped.

TED: I didn't *tell* them any such thing. I expressed an opinion that he shouldn't be dropped and they happened to agree with me. Aren't I allowed to express an opinion? Am I supposed to go around this place with adhesive tape over my mouth. I might have known that Geoff Hayward was at the bottom of all this. What have you all got against him? He's struggling for form at the moment but he's an absolute champion. What have you got against him?

LAURIE: Nothing. He's playing badly and should be dropped to the reserves.

TED: That's your opinion, but the other two selectors happen to agree with me. Tough luck. Don't try and make a conspiracy out of that. In my opinion it's no wonder the lad's a bit out of touch. The team's made him feel as welcome as a blowfly at a butcher's picnic.

DANNY: I'm sorry. We were all going to give him a big kiss, but we thought he'd be in a hurry to get home and count his money.

TED: We're not still back on that issue, surely? The Club did not pay a hundred thousand for him as reported in the press—

DANNY: I know. You paid eighty.

TED: How did you know?

LAURIE: I told him.

TED: Thanks. That was meant to be confidential. Geoff didn't get it all. His club got the bulk of it. My God, if what you're trying to tell me is that the team's playing badly because it's still sulking over a little bit of money that went into the pocket of a legitimate champion then I'm disgusted.

DANNY: There are a lot of legitimate champions in this club, Parker, and all we got for joining was a guernsey and a pat on the back. I've given the Club ten years of my life and all I've got in the bank is eighty dollars.

TED: Well you must be a hell of a fast spender, Rowe. You're on a bloody good contract and you're due for your provident fund when you retire.

DANNY: I can hardly wait. I'm taking my two best friends out to a Pizza Palace and putting the other half in the bank.

TED: You've done pretty well out of the Club, Rowe. If you can't organise your finances then that's your fault.

DANNY: What's that meant to mean, Parker?

TED: Nothing more than what I said.

GERRY: This is all beside the point. We've spent the money on Hayward and there's nothing much we can do about it. If you don't think he's worth his place in the team you're entitled to want him dropped, Laurie, but if Jock and Tony vote against you it's scarcely a reason to go running to the press.

LAURIE: The press came to me. I didn't go to them.

GERRY: All right, but you didn't have to talk to them. Could we steer this discussion back to more fruitful areas? Danny. I think we've got the players' point of view now, thank you.

DANNY: We want to know the outcome.

GERRY: All right. Wait outside.

DANNY moves reluctantly to the left door and goes outside, closing it after him.