

Glengarry Glen Ross –

Pages to read at interview - for Auditionees

CHARACTER- SHELLY - Scene 1

SHELLY: John...John...John. Okay. John. John.

Look:

(pause)

The Glengarry Highland's leads, you're sending Roma out. Fine. He's a good man. We know what he is. He's fine. All I'm saying, you look at the board, he's throwing...wait, wait, wait, he's throwing them away, he's throwing the leads away. All that I'm saying, that you're wasting leads. I don't want to tell you your job. All that I'm saying, things get set, I know they do, you get a certain mindset... A guy gets a reputation. We know how this...all I'm saying, put a closer on the job. There's more than one man for the... Put a...wait a second, put a proven man out...and you watch, now wait a second--and you watch your dollar volumes... You start closing them for fifty 'stead of twenty- five...you put a closer on the...

WILLIAMSON: Shelly, you blew the last...

LEVENE: No. John. No. Let's wait, let's back up here, I did...will you please? Wait a second. Please. I didn't "blow" them. No. I didn't "blow" them. No. One kicked out, one I closed...

WILLIAMSON: ...you didn't close...

LEVENE :...I, if you'd listen to me. Please. I closed the cocksucker. His ex, John, his ex, I didn't know he was married...he, the judge invalidated the...

WILLIAMSON: Shelly...

LEVENE:...and what is that, John? What? Bad luck. That's all it is. I pray in your life you will never find it runs in streaks. That's what it does, that's all it's doing. Streaks. I pray it misses you. That's all I want to say.

CHARACTERS - SHELLY Or WILLIAMSON

ACT 2

SHELLY: you're scum, you're fucking white- bread.
You be as cold as you want. A child would know it,
he's right. (pause) You're going to make something up;
be sure it will help or keep your mouth closed.
(Pause.)

WILLIAMSON: Mmm.

LEVENE: Now I'm done with you.
(Pause.)

WILLIAMSON: How do you know I made it up?

LEVENE:(pause) What?

WILLIAMSON: How do you know I made it up?

LEVENE: What are you talking about?

WILLIAMSON:You said, "You don't make
something up unless it's sure to help." (pause) How
did you know that I made it up?

LEVENE:What are you talking about?

WILLIAMSON:I told the customer that his contracts
had gone to the bank.

LEVENE:Well, hadn't it?

WILLIAMSON:No. (pause) It hadn't.

LEVENE:Don't fuck with me, John, don't fuck with
me...what are you saying?

WILLIAMSON:Well, I'm saying this, Shel: usually I
take the contracts to the bank. Last night I didn't. How
did you know that? One night in a year I left a contract
on my desk. Nobody knew that but you. Now how did
you know that?(pause) You want to talk to me, you
want to talk to someone else...because this is my job.
This is my job on the line, and you are going to talk to
me. Now how did you know that contract was on my
desk?

LEVENE:You're so full of shit.

WILLIAMSON:You robbed the office.

LEVENE:(laughs) Sure! I robbed the office. Sure.

WILLIAMSON:What'd you do with the leads?
(*pause, points to the Detective's room*) You want to go in there? I tell 'em what I know, they're going to dig up something...You got an alibi last night? You better have one. What did you do with the leads? If you tell me what you did with the leads, we can talk.

LEVENE:I don't know what you are saying.

WILLIAMSON:If you tell me where the leads are, I won't turn you in. If you don't, I am going to tell the cops you stole them, Mitch and Murray will see that you go to jail. Believe me they will. Now, what did you do with the leads? I'm walking in that door--you have five seconds to tell me: or you are going to jail.

LEVENE: I...

WILLIAMSON:I don't care. You understand? Where are the leads? (*pause*) Alright.

LEVENE: I sold them to Gerry Graff.

CHARACTER - ROMA – scene 1

ROMA :...all train compartments smell vaguely of shit. It gets so you don't mind it. That's the worst thing that I can confess. You know how long it took me to get there? A long time. When you die you're going to regret the things you don't do. You think you're queer...? I'm going to tell you something: we're all queer. You think that you're a thief? So what? You get befuddled by a middle-class morality...? Get shut of it. Shut it out. You cheated on your wife...your husband? You did it, live with it. (*pause*) There's an absolute morality? Maybe. And then what? If you think there is, then be that thing. Bad people go to hell? I don't think so. If you think that, act that way. A hell exists on earth? Yes. I won't live in it. That's me.

ROMA: You ever take a dump made you feel you'd just slept for twelve hours...?

LINGK: Did I...?

ROMA: Yes.

LINGK: I don't know.

ROMA: Or a piss...? A great meal fades in reflection. Everything else gains. You know why? 'Cause it's only food. This shit we eat, it keeps us going. But it's only food. The great fucks that you may have had. What do you remember about them?

LINGK: What do I...?

ROMA: Yes.

LINGK: Mmmm...

ROMA: I don't know. For me, I'm saying, what is is, it's probably not the orgasm. Some broads, forearms on your neck, something her eyes did. There was a sound she made...or, me, lying, in the, I'll tell you: me lying in bed; the next day she brought me café au lait. She gives me a cigarette. Eh? What I'm saying, what is our life? (pause) It's looking forward or it's looking back. And that's our life. That's it. Where is the moment? (pause) And what is it that we're afraid of? Loss. What else? (pause) The bank closes. We get sick, my wife died on a plane, the stock market collapsed...the house burnt down...what of these happen...? None on 'em. We worry anyway. What does this mean? I'm not secure. How can I be secure? (pause) Through amassing wealth beyond all measure? No. And what's beyond all measure? That's a sickness. That's a trap. There is no measure. Only greed. I want to show you something. (pause) It might mean nothing to you...and it might not. I don't know. I don't know anymore.

(He takes out a small map and spreads it on a table)

What is that? Florida. Glengarry Highlands. Florida. "Florida. Bullshit." And maybe that's true; and that's what I said: but look here: what is this? This is a piece of land. Listen to what I'm going to tell you now.

ROMA- Scene 2

CHARACTER- ROMA:

ROMA: I'm going to have your job, shithead. I'm going downtown and talk to Mitch and Murray, and I'm going to Lemkin. I don't care whose nephew you are, who you know, whose dick you're sucking on. You're going out, I swear to you, you're going...

BAYLEN : Hey, let's get this done...

ROMA : Anyone in this office lives on their wits...
(to Baylen) I'm going to be with you in a second.
(to Williamson) What you're hired for is to help us-- does that seem clear to you? To help us. Not to fuck us up...to help those who are going out there to try to earn a living. You fairy. You company man...I'll tell you something else. I hope you knocked the joint off, I can tell our friend here something might help him catch you. You want to learn the first rule you'd know if you ever spent a day in your life...you never open your mouth till you know what the shot is. (pause) You fucking child..

CHARACTERS - MOSS / AARONOW – ACT 1

MOSS: Twenty-five hundred apiece. One night's work, and the job with Graff. Working the premium leads.

(Pause.)

AARONOW: A job with Graff.

MOSS: Is that what I said?

AARONOW He would take you on. Yes.

(Pause.)

AARONOW: Is that the truth?

MOSS :Yes. It is, George. (pause) Yes. It's a big decision. (pause) And it's a big reward. (pause) It's a big reward.

(MOSS cont')

MOSS: But it's got to be tonight.

AARONOW: **What?**

MOSS: What? What? The leads.

AARONOW: You have to steal the leads tonight?

MOSS: That's right, the guys are moving them downtown. After the thirtieth.

Murray and Mitch. After the contest.

AARONOW: You're, you're saying so you have to go in there tonight and...

MOSS : You...

AARONOW :I'm sorry?

MOSS :You.

(Pause.)

AARONOW: Me?

MOSS :You have to go in.(pause) You have to get the leads.

(Pause.)

AARONOW :I do?

MOSS: Yes.

AARONOW:I...

MOSS: It's not something for nothing, George, I took you in on this, you have to go. That's your thing.

I've made the deal with Graff. I can't go. I can't go in,

I've spoken on this too much. I've got

a big mouth. (pause) "The fucking leads" et cetera,

blah blah blah "...the fucking tight ass company..."

AARONOW: They'll know when you go over to Graff...

MOSS: What will they know? That I stole the leads? I didn't steal the leads, I'm going to the movies

tonight with a friend, and then I'm going to the Como Inn. Why did I go to Graff? I got a better deal.

Period. Let 'em prove something. They can't prove anything that's not the case.

(Pause.)

AARONOW :Dave.

MOSS :Yes.

AARONOW :You want me to break into the office tonight and steal the leads?

MOSS :Yes.

(Pause.)

AARONOW :No.

MOSS :Oh, yes, George.

AARONOW :What does that mean?

MOSS :Listen to this. I have an alibi, I'm going to the Como Inn, why? Why? The place gets robbed, they're going to come looking for me. Why? Because I probably did it. Are you going to turn me in? (pause) George? Are you going to turn me in?

CHARACTER : BLAKE

SPEECH.

Blake: Can I have your attention for a moment! So you're talking about what? You're talking about...bitching about that sale you shot, some son of a bitch that doesn't want to buy, somebody that doesn't want what you're selling, some broad you're trying to screw and so forth. Let's talk about something important. Let's talk about something important! Put that coffee down!! Coffee's for closers only. Do you think I'm fucking with you? I am not fucking with you. I'm here from downtown. I'm here from Mitch and Murray. And I'm here on a mission of mercy. You call yourself a salesman, you son of a bitch?

You don't have to listen to this, 'Cause the good news is -- you're fired. The bad news is you've got, all you got, just one week to regain your jobs, starting tonight. Starting with tonights sit.

Oh, have I got your attention now? Good. 'Cause we're adding a little something to this months sales contest.

As you all know, first prize is a Cadillac Eldorado. Anyone want to see second prize? Second prize's a set of steak knives. Third prize is you're fired. You get the picture? You're laughing now? You got leads. Mitch and Murray paid good money. Get their names to sell them! You can't close the leads you're given, you can't close shit, you ARE shit, hit the bricks pal and beat it 'cause you are going out!!! 'The leads aren't weak. You're weak. I've been in this business fifteen years. What's my name? FUCK YOU, that's my name!! You know why, 'Cause you drove a Hyundai to get here tonight, I drove a eighty thousand dollar BMW. That's my name!! And your name is "you're wanting." And you can't play in this game. You can't close them. And you go home and tell your wife your troubles. Because only one thing counts in this life! Get them to sign on the line which is dotted! You hear me, you fucking faggots? A-B-C. A-always, B-be, C-closing. Always be closing! Always be closing!! A-I-D-D-A. Attention, interest, decision, action. Attention -- do I have your attention? Interest -- are you interested? I know you are because it's fuck or walk. You close or you hit the bricks! Decision -- have you made your decision for Christ?!! And action. A-I-D-A; get out there!! You got the prospects comin' in; you think they came in to get out of the rain? Guy doesn't walk on the lot unless he wants to buy. Sitting out there waiting to give you their money! Are you gonna take it? You wanna know why I'm coming down here and wasting my time on a bunch of bums?

(Blake takes off his gold watch) You see this watch? This watch cost more than your car. I made \$970,000 last year. How much you make? You see, pal, that's who I am. And you're nothing. Nice guy? I don't give a shit. Good father? Fuck you -- go home and play with your kids!! You wanna work here? Close!!

You think this is abuse? You think this is abuse, you cocksucker? You can't take this -- how can you take the abuse you get on a sit?! You don't like it -- leave. I can go out there tonight with the materials you got, make myself fifteen thousand dollars! Tonight! In two hours! Can you? Can you? Go and do likewise! A-I-D-A!! Get mad! You sons of bitches! Get mad!! You know what it takes to sell real estate? It takes brass balls to sell real estate. Go and do likewise. The money's out there, you pick it up, it's yours. You don't--I have no sympathy for you. You wanna go out on those sits tonight and close, close, it's yours. If not you're going to be shining my shoes. Bunch of losers sitting around in a bar. **(in a mocking weak voice)** "Oh yeah, I used to be a salesman, it's a tough racket." **(he holds up a stack of red index cards tied together with string)** These are the new leads. These are the Glengarry leads. And to you, they're gold. And you don't get them. Why? Because to give them to you is just throwing them away. They're for closers. I'd wish you good luck but you wouldn't know what to do with it if you got it. Why am I here? I came here because Mitch and Murray asked me to, they asked me for a favor. I said, the real favor, follow my advice and fire your fucking ass because a loser is a loser.

DAVID MAMET - AUTHOR

David Mamet was born in Chicago in 1947. He attended Goddard College in Vermont, and there discovered his passion for theater. He trained as an actor under the famed acting teacher Sanford Meisner, whose emphasis on practical, outward techniques—rather than "method" internalization—influenced Mamet's philosophy of acting as well as his writing. After college, Mamet held a number of unglamorous jobs: he drove a taxi, cleaned offices, and worked at a truck factory and a canning plant. In 1969 he got a job as an office manager at a real estate sales office. The position was the inspiration for Williamson's job in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, and the other salesmen Mamet observed in the office would later serve as the basis for the play's other characters.

Mamet returned to Vermont to teach acting, first at Marlboro College and then at his alma mater, Goddard College, where one of his students, actor William H. Macy, went on to become Mamet's frequent collaborator. Around this time, Mamet started writing plays and putting them on with his students. In 1972, he returned to Chicago and founded a small theater company. His play *Sexual Perversity in Chicago* achieved some local notoriety in 1973. Some critics embraced it, but others were put off by its incessant profanity—a feature that has since become somewhat of a Mamet trademark. A few early critics came to the conclusion that Mamet infused his use of slang with musicality. This early characterization of Mamet as a "sound poet" has gained momentum since, remaining the dominant theme of critical work on Mamet, occasionally at the expense of critical attention to the moral issues that Mamet's plays address.

GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS – BACKGROUND INFORMATION and PLOT

What is the message of *Glengarry Glen Ross*?

Glengarry Glen Ross is a modern morality play, an abrasive attack on rapacious business cultures and a withering depiction of people whose values are twisted by a world in which they must lie, cheat, and even steal in order to survive.

Glengarry Glen Ross is the story of four real estate salespeople—Levene, Roma, Moss, and Aaronow—and their supervisor, Williamson, who work together selling undesirable real estate at inflated prices. The play takes place at the end of a month in which the unseen bosses of the company, Mitch and Murray, have declared a "sales contest": The winner who clears a certain high dollar amount will win a Cadillac, and those who don't 'cut it', will be fired.

The title *Glengarry Glen Ross* refers to the names of two real estate tracts, Glengarry Highlands and Glen Ross Farms, in which the salesmen are trying to get their leads to invest. Labelling the properties as idyllic Scottish locations makes the tracts seem desirable despite the Florida swampland where they are located.

The four salespeople in *Glengarry Glen Ross* are well aware of the scam they're running, but they feel like they don't have much choice. Unemployment is on the rise, which means other jobs are hard to come by, and taking a moral stand against dishonest business practices doesn't put food on the table. They are desperate people in desperate times, preying on each other's weaknesses to survive.

Glengarry Glen Ross is set in the early 1980s—a time in which the country was hampered by two back-to-back economic recessions or downturns. Though rising oil prices were a factor, the recession was mostly spurred by the monetary policy of the Federal Reserve, the central bank of the United States.

As 1980 dawned, inflation, or the increasing prices of goods and services, was rising rapidly. The dollar didn't have as much buying power as it used to. A gallon of milk cost roughly \$0.95 in 1965. In early 1980 that same gallon of milk was priced at \$2.37. Money was tight for most people, not just those who had lost their jobs. Home sales—an indicator of economic confidence—plummeted in the early 1980s. Yet most people remained optimistic about their financial futures. This gulf between economic reality and perception is what made so many middle-class Americans prime targets for investment property schemes like the one in *Glengarry Glen Ross*. Not many people had extra money floating around. Those who did liked the idea of investing a little now for a much larger payday later. They believed the economy was going to recover and the value of their property would increase.

Investment Property Schemes

Consumers got part of it right—the economy did eventually recover—though there were inflation scares throughout the mid-1980s. The properties they had purchased, however, rarely increased in value, mostly because they weren't worth much in the first place. Investment property schemes became popular in the 1960s and continue to persist, albeit in different forms. The schemes follow a standard formula: A person, partnership, or other type of company purchases the rights to sell a group of land parcels, which are usually located in places perfect for vacationing or retirement, such as Florida, Hawaii, or Arizona. The salesperson shows the prospective buyer a map of the area and sometimes provides a list of the property's promised features. The names of the properties—Golden Gate Estates, Sky Station, University Highlands, Devonwood—evoke daydream-worthy images of idyllic locations. Customers aren't just buying land—they're purchasing rose-tinted visions of comfort, luxury, and financial security.

The reality of these property schemes is harsh. Located in swamps, deserts, or even on the sides of volcanoes, most of these plots of land have no roads, no amenities, and no plans for future development. Some don't even have a logical space in which to place a house. The customers usually pay more than the land's actual value, so they will lose money if they ever decide to sell.

Not that there would be any buyers—without the ability to develop the land, it's nearly worthless.

That's why it's crucial for the real estate sales to take place far away from the land itself. Buyers must be sold on the idea of the land without ever actually seeing the property. Companies involved in these types of property schemes often target blue-collar workers, immigrants, and the elderly—people who may not have the means to travel halfway across the country to investigate their future purchases. People who do eventually visit their properties often walk away completely—they stop making payments and forfeit the money they've already invested. That can lead to lawsuits, legal fees, and even threats of losing any other properties they already own.

Speech as Mode of Action

David Mamet is famous for his attention to detail in dialogue. All the characters in *Glengarry Glen Ross* have very specific speech patterns. Words are often left out of sentences, and the grammar, though rarely "proper," always makes intuitive sense. For example, Mamet will have a character say "should of" instead of the grammatically correct "should have," because, first and foremost, Mamet is trying to reflect the way he believes his characters would actually talk. Moreover, Mamet believes that the way people speak influences the way they behave, rather than vice versa. Every comma, every stutter, every emphasis—note that single syllables are often placed in italics—in the play is as Mamet expects it to be performed. The stage directions, however, are so sparse as to be nearly non-existent. Mamet does not specify how the set looks and almost never specifies what the characters' physical actions may be. These physical details are irrelevant to the drama that Mamet is creating, which is all in the talking.