

An excerpt from

## **BIG BOYS**

a comedy by Rich Orloff

### *Characters*

VICTOR, 50's-60's, the boss  
NORM, 30's-40's, an executive

### *Setting*

Victor's office. The present.

**BIG BOYS** takes place in the office of VICTOR, the head of a very large and very successful company. In the first scene, after some very odd tests, Victor decided to hire NORM, a self-described "decent person". As they shook hands, Norm said, "I just want to tell you how very pleased I am to be working here. Victor replied, "And I just want to tell you, I already have severe doubts about my decision."

## **ACT ONE, SCENE TWO**

Victor is on the phone. He's furious.

VICTOR

I don't care!... I said I don't care!

Norm sticks his head in the door during the above. He holds a report.

NORM

You said you wanted to discuss...

As Victor continues his call, he motions for Norm to enter. Norm enters. Victor motions for Norm to sit. Norm sits.

VICTOR

You know, I could destroy you if I wanted to!  
A couple of well-placed calls, and you wouldn't  
have any air left to breathe! Nobody would lend  
you a penny. People would rather kill themselves  
than do you even the smallest favor. Is that  
the kind of hell you want?! Is it?!... I didn't  
think so. Then promise me you won't yell at me  
next time I forget to call you on Mother's Day...

(cont'd)

VICTOR (cont'd)

Fine. I'm glad we could talk this out, Mom...  
Well, you know, communication, it's the key  
to intimacy... Love 'ya.

(Victor hangs up. To Norm:)

Mothers. You can never do enough for them.

NORM

I know.

VICTOR

Is your mother still alive?

NORM

Uh-huh.

VICTOR

Would you like me to have her killed?

NORM

No, thanks.

VICTOR

You're a good son.

NORM

As you asked, I looked over the game  
plan regarding Amalgamated, and –

VICTOR

I'm really not in the mood to  
discuss business at the moment.

NORM

Would you like me to come back later?

VICTOR

No, no.

Victor motions for Norm to sit again. Norm sits.

VICTOR (cont'd)

So how are things?

NORM

Things are fine.

VICTOR

You got your health?

NORM

My health's fine.

VICTOR

Did you do any fornicating last weekend?

NORM

Excuse me?

VICTOR

Did you dock your boat into any harbors?  
Did you slide your warhead into any silos?  
Did you insert your detective into any mysteries?

NORM

If it's okay with you, sir, I'd, I'd rather  
not discuss my sex life.

VICTOR

Oh. Sorry. I didn't know you were  
one of them.

NORM

I'm not one of them.

VICTOR

One of whom?

NORM

Them.

VICTOR

Who's them?

NORM

The them you think I'm one of.

VICTOR

You most certainly are.

NORM

I am not. And if you ever hear any rumors  
I *am* one of them, I'd appreciate it if  
you let me know.

VICTOR

You said yourself you were one of them.

NORM

When?

VICTOR

You just said to me you were one of them:  
people who don't discuss their personal lives.

NORM

Oh... I'm sorry. I thought "them"  
meant homosexuals.

VICTOR

What dictionary are *you* using?

NORM

I meant –

VICTOR

Every time two or more people who aren't "us"  
get together, you assume they're homosexual?

NORM

No.

VICTOR

This is very strange, Goo.\*

(In the first scene, Victor began calling Norm "Gustav" and then "Gooie".)

NORM

Sir, I thought *you* thought I was a homosexual.

VICTOR

What about you would make me think that?

NORM

Nothing.

VICTOR

Are you trying to tell me something?

NORM

No.

VICTOR

Do you fantasize about me naked?

NORM

No. It was just a misunderstanding.

VICTOR

Glad to hear it. Because I hate homosexuals.  
Don't you?

NORM

I'd rather not –

VICTOR

They're always saying "Jesus says this"  
and "Jesus says that" and you should  
always go to church on Sunday.

(off Norm's confused look:)

Oh, I'm sorry. I always confuse homosexuals  
and Presbyterians... So what do you think  
of Presbyterians?

NORM

I'd really rather not discuss it.

VICTOR

Of course. You're one of them.

NORM

I'm not –

VICTOR

No, no, don't apologize. I wanted to build a  
relationship that was more than just business.  
I was trying to relate to you; to connect to you.  
But if that's not you want, I'll respect that.

NORM

No, I didn't do any fornicating last weekend.

VICTOR

Too bad. It's fun.

NORM

I'm just not seeing anyone at the moment.

VICTOR

You think I see someone every time I fornicate?  
Hell, half the time the only way I can get it up is  
if I keep my eyes shut. So why aren't you seeing  
someone? Is it because you're one of them?

NORM

No, no, I'd like to see someone.

VICTOR

Good for you.

NORM

I did meet someone last weekend at a party.

VICTOR

Really? What's she like?

NORM

Well, she seemed very sweet, and friendly.

VICTOR

How were her nipples?

NORM

I don't know, sir.

VICTOR

You know, Goo, I've been hearing excellent things about you the last few months, excellent. It makes me think either you're doing a superior job, or that you're bribing and blackmailing people to say good things about you... So which is it?

NORM

I assure you it's the former, sir.

VICTOR

Well, I'm glad to hear it, because if you *were* engaged in bribery and blackmail, I might be forced to give you a raise. You know, Goo, I've got my eye on you.

NORM

You do, sir?

VICTOR

Yes, I do. That's why I asked you to look over the draft of our game plan for taking over Amalgamated.

NORM

I'm honored, sir.

VICTOR

So tell me, what do you think of it?

NORM

Well, sir, I examined the draft in great detail and –

VICTOR

Yes?

NORM

To be honest, I, I think the course of action the report suggests is... is – ill-advised.

VICTOR

You do?

NORM

Yes. The key components are completely based on self-serving projections, tenuous data, strategic inconsistencies, and simply weak logic.

VICTOR

I put my heart and soul into that report.

NORM

You wrote this?

VICTOR

Yes, I did.

NORM

Is this another test, sir?

VICTOR

No, it's not.

NORM

Promise?

VICTOR

I'd swear on a Bible, but I'm using it to prop up a table leg. So what do you think?

NORM

Well, if you want, I could look at the report again.

VICTOR

I want to know what you think *now*.

NORM

Well, I, I guess I think the course of action you want is, well, too risky, and uh, unsupported by the criteria which one uses to support... risks.

VICTOR

I see.

NORM

You didn't hire me to be a yes man, did you?

VICTOR

Sure, I did.

NORM

You did?

VICTOR

It's not clearly stated in your contract?

NORM

No, it's not.

VICTOR

Well, yes. That's what I want. So what do you think of the plan now?

NORM

This is another test, isn't it?

VICTOR

I absolutely promise you this is not a test.

NORM

If it were a test, would you tell me?

VICTOR

Not necessarily.

NORM

Oh, well then, I'm a little confused here. If you want to see whether or not I have integrity –

VICTOR

When my headhunter spoke to you about your position, did you ever hear the word "integrity"?



NORM

No, but –

VICTOR

I didn't hire you for integrity. When I want integrity, I hire a public relations person.

NORM

You actually want me to look you in the eye, lie through my teeth, and tell you I think this is a good plan?

VICTOR

I don't want you to *lie*.

NORM

Oh, good.

VICTOR

I want you to believe you're telling the truth whether you are or not.

NORM

Well... if that's what you want... I think this is a superb plan in every way, shape and form.

VICTOR

Great. I'm putting you in charge of it.

NORM

What?!

VICTOR

I'm sure you'll do a wonderful job, and if the plan doesn't work, you'll get total blame.

NORM

But I don't want to be in charge of it!

VICTOR

A minute ago you were so enthusiastic.

NORM

But the plan's stupid!

VICTOR

Stupid?

NORM

I meant –

VICTOR

Stupid?! *Stupid?! I'll tell you what's stupid. The crusades, they were stupid.*

NORM

The crusades?

VICTOR

And what have you done about them? Nothing.

NORM

I wasn't even alive then.

VICTOR

So we're just supposed to ignore the past, huh? Sweep it under the carpet and keep making the same mistakes. If I called you tomorrow and said, let's rescue the Ottoman Empire from the Turks, you'd probably say "Fine".

NORM

No, I wouldn't.

VICTOR

Well, I'm glad to hear it. I was afraid you were the type who could plunge this company into a thousand-year war with Constantinople. So you think the plan is unadulterated slime, do you?

NORM

I never said that.

VICTOR

You think I'm incapable of ferreting meaning?

NORM

No, sir, I –

VICTOR

I can ferret meaning as well as, well, better than a ferret.

NORM

I'm sure you can, sir.

Victor opens the door.

VICTOR  
Blanche, get me a ferret! I want  
to prove something to Goo!

Victor shuts the door.

NORM  
That isn't necessary, sir.

VICTOR  
Yes, it is.

NORM  
I believe you can ferret, sir.

VICTOR  
Do you think I can badger?

NORM  
Oh, yes.

VICTOR  
Squirrel?

NORM  
Definitely.

VICTOR  
How about beaver?

NORM  
Pardon me?

VICTOR  
What do you think of my beaver skills?

NORM  
Sir, although I'm often confounded by this  
company's operating strategy, for this company  
to have gotten where it is today, I know  
you must have a multitude of talents.

VICTOR  
Well, I'm glad we got that straight,  
you little weasel.

Victor opens the door.

VICTOR (cont'd)  
Blanche, cancel the ferret!

Victor shuts the door.

VICTOR (cont'd)  
Now listen, Goo, this plan is foolproof.

NORM  
But –

VICTOR  
The man who can make this plan work  
will have a bright future in this company.

NORM  
But –

VICTOR  
Do you want the assignment or not?

NORM  
(thinks, then:)  
I'll do my best, sir.

VICTOR  
Is that a yes?

NORM  
Yes, it is.

VICTOR  
Good. You're learning.

The lights fade.