

Dreyfuss audition

DREYFUSS. Well, my dad wanted me to be a lawyer. I know-typical Jewish family, you gotta be a lawyer, or a doctor. You may find this difficult to believe but I was kind of an irritating kid ...

SHAW. No,no!

DREYFUSS. Yeah, yeah ... short, scrawny, overconfident... I saw *The Great White Hope* on Broadway. I didn't like the play, didn't like the direction, but in two scenes Jane Alexander and James Earl Jones got me so badly, so deeply, that I was not only crying, I was snorting gracelessly down my face! Beyond hope! But when it ended, I leapt into the air-I was wearing my little bar mitzvah suit on a trip to the city-and I was shaken to my core. So later I was sitting with my mother at the kitchen table and I told her I want to be an actor and she said" Well, don't just talk about it, do it!" So I got up, and I auditioned for a play at the West Side Jewish Community Center.

(Beat)

Dad was not happy. But you should hear him now on the subject of "My son, the famous actor."

SCHEIDER. Yeah, my dad's the same-when I was nominated for *French Connection*, he wouldn't even come to the phone, but now he gets a real kick out of it!

(Beat).

Your father still around, Robert?

SHAW. No ... He killed himself when I was twelve.

SCHEIDER. Shit.

DREYFUSS. Really?