

## Directors' Statement: *By Hook or By Crook*

Dodge: "There was Martin and Lewis and a girl, then Butch and Sundance and a girl."

Howard: There was Joe Buck and Ratso. And no girl.

Dodge: Now there's Shy and Valentine and a girl. That's how to view it. They're guy friends."

Dodge: "This is definitely not a crime flick. It's not an action adventure, a mystery, or a thriller. It's an emotional thriller. I guess I want people to know coming in to theater, that they're about to watch a movie about love, really. All different kinds of love. About friendship and finding connection in an alienated world."

Howard: "Right. Which is funny because we initially set out to write a gritty, bad-cop action movie. The script was fun, but in the end lacked soul. We started all over again, giving ourselves permission to go at it from a more personal angle, to write about things that really mattered to us."

Dodge: "We wanted to make a film about people with big ideas and big dreams, who end up dealing with the shadowy subtleties of human life. Not subtle as in insignificant. But as in vulnerable, fallible, and plain in the face of god, or the larger mystery."

Dodge: "The movie has a quite a few layers, one is a redemption story. At the start Shy feels like a failure, a failed super-hero, having not been able to rescue his chronically ill father. He's incredibly frustrated by poverty and shut down with grief. And so a bit nihilistic when he makes a loosely-framed plan to head to California and rob a grocery store. I always imagined he sort of wants to get caught, he has that insane urge to go all the way down, cuz you know how George Orwell says, "The one good thing about finally going to the dogs is you no longer have to worry about going to the dogs."

Howard: "I love it when you quote Mr. Orwell, man. How long ago did we read that book? At any rate, yes, Shy's driven by a lack of emotion, intuiting a way out of a terrible rut. And then he meets Valentine, who is full of vitality, living on the outskirts of 'normalcy.' Here's someone who *has* accepted himself. A person with too much spirit in a world easily threatened by difference, and yet he's lucid and insightful, living very close to his imagination and quick intuition. I think Valentine inspires Shy to trust himself, trust his own eccentricities, trust the strength and resilience of his own heart. And Shy kind of pulls Val up by the scruff of the neck too, to say 'C'mon man, get it together.'"

Dodge: Exactly. Also Valentine—later in the movie—gives Shy the opportunity to fully realize that superhero alter-ego of his. Actually Valentine supplies quite a few ways for Shy to feel his own impact on the planet. To make a difference. To be somebody. Which is all anyone wants anyway. That and to be loved.

Howard: And Stanya did a wonderful job writing and portraying Billie, Valentine's girlfriend, who rides both worlds. We wanted her to be able to mediate between the poetry of Val's world and the harsher more demanding reality of Shy's world. Billie is deeply gentle, but she's got this powerful spirit and sturdy backbone. She really carries a lot of the emotion of the film. It's the clarity of the love between her and Valentine that really influences Shy. "

Dodge: "One of my favorite elements is Shy's ongoing pivotal decision-making process wherein he keeps deciding to stick by Valentine, this guy who is going to be a handful, someone who's a little crazy. We keep wondering what he'll do but Shy remains loyal throughout. It's a very appealing trait. He doesn't necessarily realize it consciously, but when they meet, something in his gut wakes up and knows this friendship is important."

Howard: "Ironically, our characters are full of humor, pride, bravado, but they take these humble little steps that in the end, feel heroic and, in fact, are."

