

**THE UNAVOIDABLE
DISAPPEARANCE OF
TOM DURIN**

BY STEVEN LEVENSON



**DRAMATISTS
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INC.**

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Commissioned and originally produced by Roundabout Theatre Company, New York, NY
Todd Haimes, Artistic Director

For Whitney, always.

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THE UNAVOIDABLE DISAPPEARANCE OF TOM DURNIN was presented by Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director) at the Laura Pels Theater, Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theater in New York City, opening on May 27, 2013. It was directed by Scott Ellis; the set design was by Beowulf Boritt; the costume design was by Jeff Mahshie; the lighting design was by Donald Holder; the original music and sound design were by Obadiah Eaves; the production stage manager was Davin De Santis; and production management was provided by Aurora Productions. The cast was as follows:

JAMES DURNIN Christopher Denham
KAREN BROWN-CANEDY Lisa Emery
KATIE NICHOLSON Sarah Goldberg
TOM DURNIN David Morse
CHRIS WYATT Rich Sommer

CHARACTERS

TOM DURNIN, 58

JAMES DURNIN, 26

CHRIS WYATT, 35

KATIE NICHOLSON, 25

KAREN BROWN-CANEDY, 53

PLACE

The American exurbs.
Sam's Clubs and SUVs and Caribou Coffee and the eerie,
shuttered windows of foreclosed strip malls.

TIME

June 2009.
A gray and endless rain-soaked month.

NOTE

/ indicates a point of overlapping speech.

THE UNAVOIDABLE DISAPPEARANCE OF TOM DURNIN

Scene 1

The day is just beginning.

A dreary gray morning in the middle of June.

A neighborhood of miniature sun-bleached American flags flown from car antennas and mailboxes, the big-toothed and affable grins of handsome realtors beckoning from For Sale signs, and scattered pockets of green that are actually empty lots.

A humble one-floor house with an unfinished basement on a treeless cul-de-sac.

The den.

Old furniture and bare walls.

A very fine, almost invisible layer of dust has accumulated and settled on the surfaces of the room.

Tom sits on a sofa with a backpack and a duffel bag at his feet.

James stands.

Silence.

TOM. I've started doing crossword puzzles. That's sort of my new thing. Hobby. *(Beat.)*

JAMES. OK.

TOM. They're good for your brain, apparently. I've been reading. *(Beat.)* They help in terms of, supposedly things like memory or ... *(Beat.)* I love the house.

JAMES. Thank you.

TOM. It's just the one floor?

JAMES. There's a basement, but it's mostly storage.

TOM. That's all you need. *(Beat.)* It's a great area. You've got the grocery store right there. Starbucks.

JAMES. The prices have pretty much tanked.

TOM. Well, once the economy picks back up.

JAMES. Most of the other houses are empty. It's like a ghost town, the whole subdivision.

TOM. A house like this, though. The backyard ... *(Beat.)* It's a great backyard.

JAMES. I'm actually going to need to get going pretty soon, so.

TOM. You're still working for the, uh...?

JAMES. Medical supplies.

TOM. And you still like it?

JAMES. I've never liked it.

TOM. So at least it's stayed consistent. That's good. *(Beat.)* People always need medical supplies. Doctors. Hospitals.

JAMES. You could have called first.

TOM. I've been calling for two weeks, buddy.

JAMES. Well, it's been a busy month. I've been working non-stop.

TOM. I left messages.

JAMES. They fired half my division. I'm doing three people's jobs right now.

TOM. I didn't hear anything. Crickets.

JAMES. So you just showed up.

TOM. I wanted to see the house.

JAMES. This is the house.

TOM. I thought maybe I could see Addison.

JAMES. So now you've seen the house. Welcome to the house. This is the house.

TOM. Is Addison ... is she already...?

JAMES. Addison doesn't live here anymore, unfortunately. So.

TOM. Oh. *(Beat.)* Where does she live?

JAMES. Elsewhere, Dad. Not here.

TOM. This all happened, was this recently?

JAMES. I'd rather not talk about it, actually. If we don't have to.

TOM. I had no idea, Jamie.

JAMES. I don't know why you would.

TOM. But you're doing OK/ at least?

JAMES. / I really don't want to talk about it, please. I'm sorry but I just.

TOM. Sure. Sure. (*Beat.*) So. Medical supplies. That's sort of your X-ray machines? Heart monitors?

JAMES. Stethoscopes. We specialize in stethoscopes.

TOM. I bet it's interesting. Talking to different people. Different kinds of people.

JAMES. Where are you living?

TOM. Just on Radnor. There's a house.

JAMES. On Radnor?

TOM. With the church there. They have a little house in the back. Nine guys in bunk beds. I'm the only white guy.

JAMES. OK.

TOM. There are two of us, actually. I lied. Me and Scott. Scott's a crackhead. Former crackhead. So, I'm one of two white guys.

JAMES. Is that supposed to, like...? I don't understand the relevance of that.

TOM. Most of these guys are gang bangers, Jamie.

JAMES. "Gang bangers"?

TOM. They have bullet holes in them. Track marks down their arms, their legs.

JAMES. I would assume after five years in jail, you'd be pretty used to all that. Bunk beds, roommates.

TOM. I can't sleep. The sheets smell bad. The air smells bad. People crying in their beds all night, talking to themselves. I'm scared one of these days I'm going to look at somebody the wrong way and get cut up into little pieces. You'll find me in a suitcase.

JAMES. Maybe you should go to a hotel.

TOM. How am I going to pay for a hotel? With my good looks?

JAMES. You could stay with Uncle Russ.

TOM. Uncle Russ? Russ doesn't even — Emma screens the calls, they don't even answer the phone anymore. Your sister won't speak to me. She cursed me out, hung up, she never wants to hear my voice again, she never wants to see me again. And then your mother is ... she won't

even ... (*Tom shakes his head.*) Who knows. Who knows. (*Beat.*)

JAMES. What do you want?

TOM. This isn't easy for me. OK?

JAMES. Because I know that you're asking me for something, I just can't figure out what it is yet.

TOM. If you had any idea how hard it is for me to be sitting here right now, Jamie.

JAMES. What do you want, Dad? (*Beat.*)

TOM. If I could get two thousand dollars, I could put a security deposit on an apartment. I can pay you back by the end of the year.

JAMES. So that's why you're here. You need money.

TOM. No. I'm here because I want to see you.

JAMES. All this time, five years, you show up and you expect me to just, I'm supposed to just hand you money?

TOM. Hey, if you wanted to see me, you could have seen me. That was your decision.

JAMES. I don't have any money, Dad. I can't give you any money. Two thousand dollars?

TOM. All right. Then, fine. That's all you needed to say.

JAMES. I have the mortgage. Addison left me with the mortgage, car payment, car insurance. The siding is all screwed up. I tried to fix it myself, I made it worse. A lot worse actually.

TOM. Fine. That's fine. I shouldn't have asked.

JAMES. I really have to go to work now. I'm late.

TOM. Is there a spare room?

JAMES. No.

TOM. A guest room?

JAMES. It's a one-bedroom house. There are no other rooms.

TOM. I can sleep in the basement. What about the basement?

JAMES. It's unfinished. It's concrete.

TOM. I'll put a blanket down. I'll get a sleeping bag. A pillow.

JAMES. Please stop.

TOM. I need a month, Jamie. I can pitch a Kmart tent in the backyard. I don't care.

JAMES. Please just stop.

TOM. A few weeks, just to get things back together. I'll pay rent. I'll pay utilities. I can take a look at the siding. I'll do the siding.

JAMES. No. Thank you.

TOM. I'll go down to Home Depot, see if I can save you some money. I'm a wizard with a drill, Jamie./ You know that.

JAMES. / Please don't make me keep repeating myself, Dad. Please don't do that.

TOM. So then say yes. Just say yes. All you have to do is say yes.

JAMES. No.

TOM. (*Almost exploding.*) You lived in my house for eighteen years. I am asking you for one month, Jamie. That is all I am asking for. For heaven's sake. (*Pause.*) I just need a month, Jamie.

JAMES. Can you stop calling me that? It makes me feel like I'm six years old.

TOM. Your mother, she doesn't...?

JAMES. James. She calls me James. Everybody calls me James.

TOM. OK. James. (*Beat.*)

JAMES. One month. That's it. This can't turn into a permanent —

TOM. I agree.

JAMES. You can't tell Mom about it either. Or Annie.

TOM. I'll just swing by tonight after work?

JAMES. I have class tonight. I won't be home until ten.

TOM. What's the class?

JAMES. I'm taking a class. It's for work.

TOM. You really can't do tonight?

JAMES. This is a little sudden.

TOM. That's, no. Tomorrow's fine. I can do one more night. I think. Fingers crossed.

JAMES. OK, I'm leaving now. I have to leave now, Dad.

TOM. Do you think you could maybe give me a ride to the bus? If it's on your way.

JAMES. Where are you going?

TOM. Just over to the mall. Viewmont.

JAMES. You're going shopping?

TOM. I work at the bookstore. The Borders. The cafe there. I'm uh, I'm the barista.

JAMES. Oh.

TOM. I'm looking for other things. Obviously. But in the meantime. (*Beat.*) I don't have to wear a funny hat or anything. Hairnet. That was something I was a little worried about. I have an apron. Not thrilled about the apron.

JAMES. I can take you to the mall.

TOM. No no. The bus is great. It's a straight shot.

JAMES. I'm not going to drop you off at the bus, Dad.

TOM. I can get you a free coffee. Free latte. On the house.

THE UNAVOIDABLE DISAPPEARANCE OF TOM DURNIN

by Steven Levenson

3M, 2W

Tom Durnin did the time for his white-collar crime. Now, he's determined to win back the respect he believes he deserves — even if that means ripping apart the new life his family has so carefully put together in his absence. Tom's son warily allows his father to camp out on his couch, hoping the man who let everyone down has finally turned a new page. After a lifetime of empty promises, can Tom find a place in a family that has worked so hard to move on without him? Steven Levenson gives us this funny, raw, and moving play about the price we pay for defaulting on those we love.

"... smartly engrossing ... unfolding the profound disorientation of people ruined by his decisions. Is the man delusional or just a desperate liar? Does he really cherish the vivid memories of happier times, or is he just playing them to get what he wants? Can he be all of the above?"
—**Newsday**

"... the electricity in the room is palpable ... Levenson's dialogue is lean, dynamic and flows naturally."
—**Time Out New York**

"Set against the timely backdrop of this tough economic environment, Levenson's touching new play lays out a frank picture of an ordinary American family dealing with some clotted yet unhealed wounds of its own."
—**TheaterMania.com**

"Harrowing ... riveting theater."
—**Bloomberg.com**

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