



BLOODSHOT

BY
ELINOR T VANDERBURG



DRAMATISTS
PLAY SERVICE
INC.



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To the ones who let the sadness in

BLOODSHOT premiered on January 23, 2020, at the Doxsee at Target Margin Theater. It was presented by the Exponential Festival and co-presented by Target Margin Theater. It was produced by underlords. It was directed by Sanaz Ghajar, the production design was by David Tennent, the costume design was by Elinor T Vanderburg, the lighting design was by Rachel Fae Szymanski, the original music was by The Mombs, the choreography was by Ben Hobbs, the intimacy direction was by Nancy-Claire Cantine, the production stage manager was Kat Norton, the assistant stage manager was Marianna Hoitt-Lange, the assistant director was Ray Johnson, the production tech was by Yve Carruthers, the production assistants were Marianna Hoitt-Lange and Grace Traynor, and mentorship was by Nic Adams. The cast was as follows:

RJ REAVER Fedly Daniel
DETECTIVE BELLA MARJORIE Morgan McGuire
NARRATOR / BARTENDER Ben Holbrook
BAILEY SUNSHINE Cristina Pitter
JULIANNE MAYERSON / DR. CONEY Ray Johnson
RON ROLAND, THE MATTRESS BARON /
RON ROLAND THE SECOND / JAMES /
THE NAKED MAN Cashton Tate Rehkla
VICTOR PISTACHIO Soren Stockman
MUSICIANS The Mombs: Matt Gliva, Robert Jensen,
Cheikh Proctor, and Drew Vanderburg

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The Exponential Festival
Fear in the Western World
Fresh Ground Pepper
Studio Dave
Chez Gliva
New Georges
440 Studios
New York Theatre Workshop
RiseBoro Community Partnership
The Brick
Art Cube
Aesthetic Movement
Alex Crawford
Cynthia McDonough
Maxine
Huey
Drew
and Phyllis Thompson, always

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In the early hours of Black Friday, 2015, I was working at a shop on a high floor in a landmark retail destination, which opened its doors to thousands of shoppers at 6 P.M. on Thanksgiving Day. During the thirty-six hour capitalist marathon that followed, I witnessed a man's explosive meltdown over placemats that did not match. I saw two separate sets of EMTs come to assist customers who gave new meaning to the term "shop till you drop." I saw a young boy distraught over having been separated from his mother, who would not retrieve him for fear of losing her place in line at the checkout: There was a special on popcorn makers, and she had her hands on the last one in the store.

"That's Black Friday for you," a veteran coworker shrugged to me when I expressed my horror, "people lose their minds." She then added: "It's not about the stuff they're buying, either."

I didn't understand her in 2015, but the last several years have brought on a profound reevaluation of our country's values, a detachment from a world we thought we knew, a lot—a *lot*—of sleepless nights—and with them, the anxiety-ridden, disassociative, insomniac world of BLOODSHOT. This play is not about working long retail hours, or politics, or even placemats, but instead offers a portrait of weariness—inherited, emotional exhaustion—in a landscape collapsing beneath the weight of its own design. What happens when it all becomes too much? What happens when too much becomes *everything*?

I hope BLOODSHOT energizes you, makes you curious and maybe even a little vexed—and inspires you to share those feelings with the people and places you hold close. I do not know how to make this world feel better, but I am grateful that I am still around to talk it out—and try.

So, here's to the ones who let the sadness in. We need you, and we're glad you're here today.

—ETV

January 2020

The Doxsee at Target Margin Theater

CHARACTERS

(in order of appearance)

NARRATOR

Sameish age as Reaver, Black

RJ REAVER, Coroner

30s–50s, Black

BAILEY SUNSHINE, Radio Host

Timeless, Black

DETECTIVE BELLA MARJORIE, TCPD

30s–50s, Black

JULIANNE MAYERSON, Self-Help Author

50s, White

RON ROLAND, THE MATTRESS BARON

60s, White

VICTOR PISTACHIO

Forever young, White

JAMES / THE NAKED MAN

20s, American

RON ROLAND THE SECOND

30s, White

DR. CONEY

100, or maybe 44, White

BARTENDER

as well as various DENIZENS, REVELERS, CORPSES,
MOURNERS, STUDIO CREWS, ANGELS, and PATRONS

*Suggested doubling: NARRATOR and BARTENDER; MAYERSON
and CONEY; RON ROLAND and RON ROLAND THE SECOND.
For questions about casting, please contact Dramatists Play Service.*

SETTING

Various locations in and around
the fictional-but-familiar city of The City.

The population has not slept in three years.

NOTES

Any line with a / indicates that the following line commences at that break.

All music indicated in the script is by The Mombs. These songs are not required for production. Please contact Dramatists Play Service for information on the availability of the original music—or interpret these musical moments as you see fit.

ALSO

This is not a yawning sleeplessness: The prevailing mode in this world is physical, emotional, spiritual, and temporal weariness. You've been there, and how fortunate you are that you can escape it every once in a while when you slip away to dreamland.

BLOODSHOT

Scene 1 Brake, Break

Reaver on a subway platform. He races, scrambled, desperate and frenzied, for the train. He races in slow motion.

The Narrator is at his station. It is set up to his liking, with the essential accoutrements on a table at his side—a bottle of bourbon with a glass that is elegant in its simplicity and rarely empty. A radio. Perhaps a telephone. Perhaps a script. The Narrator addresses the audience.

Music: “The Stitching.”

NARRATOR. Welcome back to the first of the year
The City That Never Sleeps is being put to the test.
Tonight makes three years since The City last saw natural slumber
Three years since we got drunk off Auld Lang Syne, and curiously
found ourselves still wide awake as the first January sun crept
through the skyline.
This was the beginning of the Great Wake.
At first, reveler’s tenacity made us proud. Who doesn’t want more
hours in the day?
But one all-nighter rolled into another, and another, and another,
and another
And we found ourselves strange and curiously conscious
Prisoners of our restlessness.
Eyes tired and wide,
We memorized the cracks in the ceiling while we chased rest that
would not come
This is no normal insomnia:

It churns in our guts. It creeps up our spines, climbs into the backs
of our eyes,
We are nauseated, cold,
Consumed by our body's longing for sleep.
We try to sleep. We
Lock ourselves in soundless chambers, we
Breathe deep, we
Count every sheep, we
Have memorized a sequence of ten thousand numbers in reverse
We shut out the sun
To no avail
Eternal days become eternal nights with all their horrors
But without their peace
Ours is a city of unread storybooks
Bedtime prayers that never leave our lips and
Lonesome thoughts that do not dissipate in dreams
And we, dependent protoplasm, distract ourselves from endlessness
by devouring all we can
Drugs, money, power, pain—anything that beckons us away from
the misery of unfettered waking
And we use
And we take
And we use
And we take
And we take
It is the malady of the infinite
We call it Bloodshot
Now, this is not a mystery in the traditional sense
Wherein the clues point to the killer and the killer tries to run, no:
In our tale, the killer and the victim are one and the same
And the mystery may never be resolved, a simple question:
Could this happen to you?
Stay with me awhile
We have everything to unpack
And so little time

*The action ruptures into real time.
A baby carriage escapes through the surging crowd and charges*

towards the edge of the tracks as a subway train screams into the station. The infant inside wails.

REAYER. Somebody catch it it's going over the edge

Brake

Break

BREAK

A splattering, shattering collision. The train shrieks through, unstopping.

A rattle flies from the tracks.

The wailing has ended. Alone, Reaver peers over the edge of the platform.

NARRATOR. Life as we know it is unsustainable

Scene 2 **Sunshine After Dark**

Music: "Sunshine at Night."

A radio. Bailey Sunshine's radio program, Sunshine After Dark, begins its broadcast.

Denizens tune in from various spots in The City: a lonesome security desk; a tollbooth; a meal for one.

SUNSHINE. Are you having trouble sleeping?

Do your thoughts about the future frighten you?

Do your retirement plans make you uneasy?

Do you have a retirement plan at all?

Have you started your taxes?

It's eleven o'clock: Do you know where your children are?

Are you frightened that you are going to die alone?

Are you one of forty million Americans who suffers from depression?

Are you frightened of your suicidal thoughts?

You don't want to be here but you don't want to be anywhere

You do not like where you are living

Are you afraid of the dark?

Are you afraid of your father?

Have you stopped beating your wife?
Have you called your mother lately?
Are you afraid that she is going to die alone?
Are you concerned about climate change?
Are you concerned about the president?
Do you know where you will get your next paycheck?
Does the company or organization you work for represent your values?
Are you a cog in their machine?
Are you a cog in your family's machine?
Are you putting in all this effort just so that you can become a machine?
Are you afraid that your ideas are unoriginal and plain? How will you
ever be as good machines as those who came before you?
Does that wonder make you a narcissist?
Are you getting enough protein?
Does high blood pressure run in your family?
Does dementia run in your family?
Do you know where your children are?
Have your siblings lost their minds?
Do you overindulge? Do you smoke? Do you drink? Do you love
sex and drugs and breaking hearts?
Or does someone that you love?
Why do you knowingly kill yourselves?
Why can't you stop?
Why can't you stop?
Why can't you stop?
Why can't you stop yourself?
Is your computer watching you?
Do you live in fear of the technocracy?
Has the war begun?
Are you out of touch with the times?
Are you out of touch with the younger generation?
Are you as terrible as the generation that created you says you are?
Are you doing everything you can do? For the planet? For the future?
For your dog?
Are you *really* feeding your cat what's best for her?
Is domestication imprisonment?
And after everything you know how can you still have such com-
plicated feelings about the prison system?

Are you overweight?
Are you underweight?
Do you think constantly about your weight?
Are you constantly reminded that
You have fallen, and you can't get up?
You have fallen, and you can't get up?
You can't get up? Get it up? You can't get it up?
Does this really happen to everyone?
Are you looking for hot singles in your area?
Lonely milfs that want to fuck?
Daddies who are ready to risk it all?
Are you satisfied with your sex life?
Is the stuff inside your walls making you and your family sick?
Is your smartphone making you dumber?
Have you seen the news?
Have you seen the news?
Have you seen the news?
So what are you doing tonight?
Let's talk about it
This is Bailey Sunshine and you're tuned in to *Sunshine After Dark*
I'm here. I'm listening.
And tonight, I'm wishing The City a happy New Year.
Stay warm out there. I'm holding your hand through these radio waves.
You know the show. If you find yourself on the edge, I'm here to talk
you down. Life is precious: Don't throw yours away.
Sit tight: I'll be back in just a minute with our first caller.
But first, our sponsor would like to get things rolling. Don't snooze.
Get yourself a Mattress Baron.
I'll feel you after the break.

Scene 3

Happy Crappy New Year

Reaver above ground.

NARRATOR. It's 12:31 A.M.

Subway service is undeterred by the collision at the station, and my train has finally groaned its way from Over The River to the heart of The Island—The City's crown jewel.

That's me: slapped together, clutching two cups of joe like they're the reins on a diving horse.

I feel like kitchen plumbing after Thanksgiving dinner. But that's nothing new.

My heart is beating in my throat and the sound of metal is stitched into my eardrums

The train's screeching. The wheels of the baby carriage and that raw wail

It is unrelenting

Music: "The Stitching."

Tonight's crime scene is located on Pope Street, smack center of the ritziest zip code in town. Detective Bella Marjorie is there; she's the one who interrupted my New Year's Eve tradition of doing nothing to come here.

Anything for Marjie. She's one of the good ones.

She's waiting for me in front of a jewel-box skysrise, no doubt for longer than she'd have liked.

Detective Bella Marjorie, TCPD. She smokes a cigarette while she waits, considering the skyscraper and the clean concrete below it.

MARJORIE. Well look who's back

REAVAR. Sorry I'm late.

MARJORIE. It's a crime scene. Coroners are always late
That for me?

She receives one of the coffees.

Fuck, it's ice cold

REAYER. There was an accident at Canal. A baby carriage got loose, skidded through the crowd, went straight off the platform just as a train came through the station. It didn't stop. It hit the carriage head-on.

MARJORIE. Yikes.

REAYER. There was a baby inside. It was pulverized, Marjie. Bloody clothes torn up in the rails. Little hand still clutching a rattle. After it happened, I thought there'd be parents, a nanny, *someone* there at the tracks, but nobody came to claim it. Nobody on the platform even stopped.

MARJORIE. Disgusting. Tragic

REAYER. I know. What the hell is happening to us?

MARJORIE. I mean the coffee. Tastes like you milked a sponge
I'm sorry about your commute. Doesn't sound like that baby deserved what it got.

You gonna be okay?

REAYER. Yeah.

MARJORIE. Good. Because no matter what happened to you on the way here, your night's about to get a helluva lot worse.

REAYER. Who's our client?

MARJORIE. Don't shit: This is the Pistachio Penthouse.

REAYER. *Pistachio?* As in *Victor Pistachio*?

MARJORIE. Hey! I told you not to shit.

NARRATOR. In a moment we're flying skyward to the home of Victor Pistachio. He'd built his fortune on cosmetic injections in the twenty-tens and he'd seen his business quadruple in this new era of sleeplessness. His Botox magic turned tired clients as lacquered and wrinkle-free as a candy apple. But you know what they say about apples: They rot from the core.

Up we go, one hundred and thirteen stories above the pavement.

Elevator ping.

Amidst the misery of the everyman,
High society rages on

Revelers.

We encounter a New Year's bash in full throttle.

Music: "The Happy Crappy New Year Dance."

It is a maximalist's buffet

Bass reverberates in the floors and tickles my feet.

Confetti is mid-drift, giving the impression of being in a life-sized
snow globe

And the hall glitters with sparkle people

Decadent bodies with coupe stems tangled in their fingers

Must be three hundred people here. I recognize some—

Julianne Mayerson, an heiress turned motivational speaker who'd dominated the *New Age slash Self Help slash Get Your Shit Together* market since her son had killed the rest of her family in a quadruple murder-suicide, must have been about six months into the Great Wake. I don't know a single person who didn't give, or receive, a copy of her best seller, *Rest for the Wicked*, when it came out last Christmas, myself included.

Mayerson, center stage at the end of a sold-out show on her book tour.

MAYERSON. And that's why, in forgiving Junior, I could finally forgive myself. I'll never hold him, or myself, accountable for anything ever again!!!

Uproarious applause.

NARRATOR. I keep the book under the short leg of my dresser.

And over there is the Mattress Baron, from the commercials. What's his name. Ron Roland. His ads have been on the air since I was a kid. God, I haven't thought about him in...forever.

The Mattress Baron jingle.

RON ROLAND, THE MATTRESS BARON. Don't snooze—
Get yourself...zzzzz...rah!
Get yourself a Mattress Baron!

NARRATOR. The whole schtick was that the Mattress Baron was always dozing off before he could deliver the full slogan because his mattresses were so comfortable. In person, he seemed anything but: he was high-wired—all sweat and thirst and useless hands that fondled each other like horny teenagers. It was a lot. Of course, the last three years had hit him hard—people not sleeping and all—but

old money always seems to find a way.
Money as far as the eye could see.
I feel something toward them that is not exactly hatred, but something like it.
Maybe envy, even though my impression of who they are is not who I want to be
Still, and I'm ashamed to admit it—I'm a little starstruck.
REAVER. Sheesh, Marjie, how'd you score us an invite to a bash like this?
MARJORIE. Don't thank me, thank him:
NARRATOR. The revelers make way for a well-moisturized man in the nicest pajamas I've ever seen
He moves through the crowd like an upright stingray, silk rippling against his guests
The patent plump smile injected into his face
It is the one and only Victor Pistachio

Victor Pistachio enters, slippery and shimmering.

PISTACHIO. Welcome back, friend
Is this? The uhmmm
MARJORIE. Mr. Pistachio, this is RJ Reaver, TCPD / Coroner—
PISTACHIO. —shhhh sh sh
...I'm very grateful you're here. Indeed, something rather doleful has occurred—did she tell you?...
REAVER. I'm here to assess the situation for myself, Mr. Pistachio.
PISTACHIO. Yes—it's most curious and I suppose rather difficult to describe
Come, Timothy
NARRATOR. A stressed-out looking chicken trots up to Victor, who scoops it into his arms.

Victor reveals a rubber chicken, Timothy.

PISTACHIO. Mmm, Timothy, my sweet sweet girl
Let's go
NARRATOR. He brings us to a large wooden door, but hesitates
PISTACHIO. And um—perhaps it goes without saying, but I would appreciate your um

What's the word

Discretion

REAYER. Always.

NARRATOR. Victor opens the door.

Scene 4 It's a Doozie

REAYER. Oh, *no*.

NARRATOR. I am instantly whiplashed by the stench of blood.
Blood slicks the wallpaper, blood saturates the ivory carpet beneath
our feet

It's everywhere.

My job exposed me to all manner of gore, but never anything as
grisly as this.

REAYER. Jesus. Looks like the inside of a break-room microwave
in here.

MARJORIE. Mama's lasagna.

REAYER. I was gonna say beans and franks.

MARJORIE. American or Italian, looks like somebody's hamburger
got helped.

REAYER. Uh-oh, spaghetti-o.

PISTACHIO. Please—a woman has perished

REAYER. Where's the body?

PISTACHIO. This...*is* the body

She...seems to have...

Exploded

BLOODSHOT riff.

REAYER. Exploded?

BLOODSHOT riff.

MARJORIE. Exploded.

BLOODSHOT riff.

NARRATOR. My guts revolt, surging for my throat. I suppress them
Victor strokes his chicken. He's still smiling, and I realize now that
his face is stuck like that
But his eyes are as wide and frightened as two moons, daunted and
bewildered.

MARJORIE. Why don't you give Mr. Reaver the rundown?

PISTACHIO. Mmyes. Well,
I decided to take a D break before the party,
So I called her.

MARJORIE. Your girlfriend?

PISTACHIO. She's not my girlfriend
I just...call her sometimes

MARJORIE. And does she have a *name*?

PISTACHIO. I...don't remember. What?
I'm in it for the oral, not the history
I call her when I'm in need. She's always right on time.
Tonight we touched each other's naked bodies as is the consensual
and transactional nature of our relationship
When I was done, I began to prepare for the evening
But when I stepped out of my dressing room, I heard a hissing—
raw and wicked like a pit of angry snakes

I turned around and there she was, contorted and
Clawing at her face like she was trying to rip herself apart at the seams
REAVER. Sounds like an overdose, maybe?

PISTACHIO. What kind of overdose leaves you dripping from the
walls?

I approached her, tried to mollify her episode—she
Pushed me away
So unlike her—no tenderness, no warmth. She
Sputtered like a powder keg, turned bright red, and *burst*

MARJORIE. A spontaneous eruption, he says.

PISTACHIO. Yes, I do say
Blood and guts and ruptured brains splattered on me like I had
front-row seats to an aquatics show
I had to change my party clothes.

MARJORIE. You went ahead with your party even after your girlfriend exploded?

PISTACHIO. *She's not my—*

...Every one-percenter in the city is here tonight
I had to host. Besides...I panicked

Patter.

NARRATOR. A drop of blood hits the nape of my wrist.

Patter.

I look up

Patter.

I see

A thick trail of bloody prints that lead up the wall and to the
...Ceiling?

Tracked from one end to the other, above us, and down the opposite wall
As if a demon scrambled on all fours
To a window—where the trail ends

Patter. Reaver examines the window. It glows. Reaver moves closer, lured.

Marjorie and Victor do not see.

And from this window, I see

Bodies

They are falling slowly from the sky

MARJORIE. But you say you were here alone when it happened.

PISTACHIO. Yes. Guests arrived only moments after this occurred,
so I just shut the door

MARJORIE. Are you sober, Mr. Pistachio?

PISTACHIO. God, no. How could a person be sober at a time like this

NARRATOR. I see myself in the glass, or...through it
I cannot tell

*Reaver and the Narrator watch themselves fall from the sky.
They gasp.*

MARJORIE. ...RJ?

NARRATOR. But I'm imagining things.
The world flickers into focus.

REAYER. ...What?

MARJORIE. I said, any hot takes?

REAYER. The corpses I analyze aren't usually pollocked across the wall...

No, I've never seen anything like this before

I'd like to collect the remains and conduct a full autopsy

And um, open up an inquest, I guess

MARJORIE. Yeah, we're definitely gonna need an inquest.

NARRATOR. Marjie's phone chimes.

MARJORIE. That's the DA. Downstairs. Holiday's got us a little out of order

RJ, make sure he doesn't run off

PISTACHIO. "Run off"? What are you implying?

Marjorie exits. Reaver preps for his examination, removing baggies, petri dishes, and other coroner tools from his bag. He puts on gloves.

NARRATOR. My eyes roam the room:

On the corner of the rug, a bangle glints from a little mound of pulp:

This was the victim's ear

I spy a finger on the nightstand, nestled between a matchbook and a symphony of pill bottles. Her nails were painted green tonight

A snag of hair is mixed up in a thick clump that has slid down the wall and settled by the baseboard

...I'm gonna need backup.

I set my satchel down and get to work.

Victor lingers in his silk sleeves like a low-hanging fruit.

Victor squeezes Timothy.

PISTACHIO. She believes *I* could have done this?

REAYER. Don't take it personally. It's Detective Marjorie's job to be suspicious.

PISTACHIO. What about you? Is that your job?

REAYER. My job is to gather evidence and determine the cause of death. It doesn't matter what I believe.

NARRATOR. I pluck a blob of tissue from where it's landed on the bed and I stick it into an evidence bag.

I notice a small package beneath the pillowcase.

Reaver finds a pert, square gift box.

It is a prettily wrapped box with a tag addressed to “V?”

Reaver picks it up.

Suddenly, Victor grabs my arm—the plush from his robe brushes my bare wrist and sends a ripple down my spine

Victor takes Reaver’s arm. The box pulses—beats, beats, beats.

PISTACHIO. That’s—nothing. Just a little gift she gave me
I call her sometimes, as I said, and I suppose she felt it befitting to
Offer me a gift.

With the new year and all

But I—

I couldn’t bring myself to—accept

Beats, beats, beats.

You understand

It’s a difficult gift to receive and

God what if it were misinterpreted

What if I changed my mind and didn’t want it anymore?

She called me selfish

She had no right

She’s *not* my girlfriend, after all

I just...I just call her sometimes

NARRATOR. He is squeezing my arm. He makes a sound—it is
ghastly and heavy

I realize that he is trying to cry

PISTACHIO. *UghhhHH*

What is this *feeling*

I—I need a favor from you, friend

You mustn’t tell anyone that you have seen me this way

REAVAR. What way?

PISTACHIO. So affected

We sparkle people do not adhere to Sadness

When it comes through the door, scraped and bruised and seeking
tenderness, we

Do not kiss it on the head. We do not hold it in our arms, no

Our shine keeps us unsoft, untender and impermeable. At best, we
Douse Sadness in antiseptic and swath its broken skin in plastic strips
Before sending it back to the very landscape that caused it woe,
Unfixed and unattended
What would they think of me were they to see me weeping?
What's more: If I can feel this way, any of them could, too
Sentiment is the death of Power
I don't think mankind would survive it

Marjorie enters. Victor releases Reaver.

MARJORIE. Come on, Mr. Pistachio—you're gonna answer some questions for me at the station

PISTACHIO. Can't I stay until the end of my party?

MARJORIE. You can if you wanna explain to your friends why guys in bloody hazmats are carting your girlfriend out by the bucketful. Biomed's been notified, RJ—maybe they'll, uh, lend you a hand.

REAVER. Better make it a couple.

MARJORIE. There's my funny guy.

(To Victor.) Let's go, sir.

REAVER. I'm sorry again for your, uh, loss.

PISTACHIO. L o s s

It sounds the way it feels, doesn't it?

Victor out.

MARJORIE. Happy New Year, right?

REAVER. Nothing new about it. Same old horror show as the last. Good luck out there.

MARJORIE. You too.

No more baby strollers, okay?

REAVER. ...It was a pram

The hood was up

That baby didn't see what was coming

Marjorie out. Reaver takes photographs. He collects samples.

NARRATOR. I work carefully, steadily

Taking notes and photographs and

Harvesting this woman from the ceiling, walls, floors and furniture

Getting to know her one piece at a time

*Reaver photographs the ceiling.
The Narrator refreshes his drink.*

Two hundred and thirty-two samples later, it's done
Biomed'll have to handle the rest
I head out, witnessing the dregs of the guests who are so loaded
that they have not yet noticed that their host is gone
Something tells me I'll never be this high above the ground again
I step into the elevator
I begin the fall

Music: "The Happy Crappy New Year Outro Dance."

I'm lost in thought on my way back downtown to the lab.
The train is stalled at the station. I board the rear car, which is empty,
save a man who sits at the far end amidst garbage bags that smell
like stale piss
Whose hand coerces a lump inside his trousers
He looks my way. His face is sad.
Eventually,
...I avert my gaze.

Music: "Wakelessness Interlude."

Scene 5

James

NARRATOR. It's quiet at the morgue. I mean, one would hope, right?
It's just after four in the morning when I arrive.
I flick on the lights. They hum to me
Welcome home

*The morgue. Reaver puts his case on a table at the center of
the room. Opens it and begins to sort samples he's taken from
the penthouse.*

I spend a lot of time here. Almost as much as the cadavers
I work in a negative-temperature facility, so I see a lot of J Does
Folks who're waiting to be remembered and get put on ice in the
meantime

BLOODSHOT

by Elinor T Vanderburg

5 men, 2 women, 1 n/s (doubling, flexible casting)

A city that never sleeps.

A bloody New Year's surprise.

A lonesome coroner on the brink.

Auld Lang Syne, 12:31 A.M. The party rages on, in spite of The City's insomniac epidemic—and the exploded body dripping down the walls in the next room. Naturally, Detective Marjorie and I are on the case, but with frazzled, sleepless denizens bursting to bloody bits faster than I can get those bits back to my morgue, I'm feeling a little...disconnected from myself. Still, there's work to be done: Those walls aren't gonna clean themselves. There I go.

BLOODSHOT is a vicious psychocaper that pits the deprived against the deprived in a peace-starved, pulp-inspired mystery. Unreliably narrated with an acerbic funny bone and a vibrant, twisted cast of characters, BLOODSHOT confronts audiences with an unraveling network of the self, inviting them to venture through the hotbed of a very human meltdown—and beyond.

"...a neo-noir dark comedy about nonstop anxiety gnawing at a fictional New York City where no one has been able to sleep for three years. While there was nothing comforting about this darkest timeline, T Vanderburg's play was carefully crafted, with vivid language and imagery... It cracked with sharp repartee...and a creeping sense of mystery mixed with smart self-awareness."

—American Theatre

"...Seeing BLOODSHOT...introduced me to the sizzling writing of playwright Elinor T Vanderburg. Her pulp fiction world was situated around a bone-tired Black man trying to get to the bottom of a mystery... The relentless exhaustion she portrayed was both a colorful storytelling device and a powerful metaphor. ...I want to know what she can do with a bigger budget, more resources, and, if theaters put their BLM statements where their budgets are, a theater world willing to confront head-on the myriad experiences of Black people in America."

—ExeuntNYC.com

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