

BULL

A short play

by

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BULL

CHARACTERS

COP ONE
COP TWO
YOUNG WOMAN

TIME

3 a.m.

PLACE

Bowling Green in New York City

BULL

A bare stage except for two police security barriers, one on either side of the stage, that enclose the central playing space. It's 2.a.m. Two uniformed New York cops stand guard over Arturo DiModica's famous statue of a charging bull outside the New York Stock Exchange. We do not see the statue. COP ONE sips a cup of coffee. COP TWO stands with his arms folded, eyes averted from the bull. He is intensely preoccupied. A small cooler sits on the ground nearby. Several moments of silence. COP ONE starts to whistle. COP TWO turns and shoots him a look. He stops whistling. A pause.

COP ONE

Are you mad at me or something?

COP TWO shakes his head.

So what's up?

(Beat.)

Jesus. This is going to be a long night.

(A pause, he sips his coffee)

It's Sylvia, isn't it?

COP TWO

No, it is not fucking Sylvia.

COP ONE

What then?

COP TWO jerks his thumb at the bull.

The bull? What about him?

COP TWO

I hate him.

COP ONE

You hate the bull.

COP TWO nods.

COP ONE (CONT)

This guy here?

COP TWO

Do you see another bull?

COP ONE

Since when do you hate the bull? You love the bull.

COP TWO

I hate the bull, okay?

COP ONE

Sure you do. You never stop singing his praises. The Charging Bull of Wall Street is an icon. A work of art. Magnifico.

COP TWO

Yeah, well, things have changed.

COP ONE

Like what?

(No response)

You're just fucking bored, man. I'm bored, too. Seven months guarding a fucking sculpture. I don't know how those museum guys do it, I really don't. At least they're inside, they can go to the bathroom.

(Beat. He sips his coffee.)

It's not his fault, poor guy. He never asked to be a symbol of anything good or bad, did ya? Huh?

(He pats the bull. Beat)

Come on, you don't hate him.

COP TWO

I HATE THE FUCKING BULL, OKAY!?

COP ONE

OKAY! Jesus.

(Slight pause.)

Now me, I can't hate animals. I eat 'em but I don't hate 'em, you know, I respect them like the Indians do. Except for pigeons. I could do without pigeons. Unsanitary little shits. And talk about aggressive. Mario down at the precinct told me he once arrested three pigeons for assault. And he wasn't kidding. I thought you liked animals.

COP TWO

It's a statue.

COP ONE

Want a coffee?

COP TWO shakes his head.

Remember how impressed we were with his balls?

(He bends down and cups a hand around the bull's testicles.)

That first night we were here, it was like, whoa, will you look at these fucking monsters, imagine what you could do with equipment like that! And we did. We imagined. We let our imagination run fucking wild! Right?

(He chuckles. COP TWO is unmoved. Beat.)

Too bad for the tourists. Clicking away with their cameras, climbing on his back, caressing his big cozones for luck. For luck! Jesus. And what a fucking zoo, eh? At least we don't have to deal with that shit.

COP TWO says nothing. He crosses to a small lunch cooler and pulls out a compact time bomb.

What the fuck is that?

COP TWO

What does it look like?

COP ONE

(Flippantly)

It looks like a bomb.

COP TWO

It is a bomb.

COP ONE

Oh yeah right.

COP TWO

Set to explode in thirty minutes.

COP ONE

Really?

COP TWO

I told you, I hate it.

COP ONE

You're kidding me right?
(Beat, no response)
Danny, tell me you're kidding me.

COP TWO

It's time.

COP ONE

Have you lost your fucking mind?

He makes a move towards COP TWO.

COP TWO

Stay right there or I'll blow us both to bits right now.

COP ONE

What is this? Why you doing this?

COP TWO

It's gotta go.

COP ONE

Why?

COP TWO

I told you, I hate the bastard. I can't stand being anywhere near it. It makes me physically sick.

COP ONE

So does my Uncle Ted's bad breath, but I'm not going to blow him up.

COP TWO

Now they'll have to re-assign us.

COP ONE

Danny, this is crazy. Our job is to protect this statue not destroy it.

COP TWO

It's the only way.

COP ONE

To do what? This is terrorism.

COP TWO

It is not terrorism.

COP ONE

Oh really? What would you call blowing up a statue in Manhattan in the middle of the night?

COP TWO

Don't tell me you're not fucking desperate.

COP ONE

I'm desperate for a piss. Why are you doing this? Why?

COP TWO

I hate this miserable fucking beast with every fiber of my being. Okay? I mean, look at it! It's ugly, it's angry, it smells—

COP ONE

A statue does not smell.

COP TWO

It's a dead decomposing animal, it stinks to high heaven and I'm going to take it out. And you are not going to stop me.

(Beat.)

COP ONE

We gotta talk.

COP TWO shakes his head.

COP ONE

I know you've been in pain, man, I've seen it, okay? I thought it was, like, something at home, you know? And I don't like people being in my business, so I didn't say nothing. But we need to talk, man. You need to talk.

(No response.)

Turn it off.

(Beat)

Danny, turn off the timer. Five minutes, that's all, so we can talk.

(Beat)

This is not just you, this is me too.

.

COP TWO

Three.

COP ONE

Three minutes. Fine.

COP TWO flips a switch to stop the timer.

COP ONE (CONT)

So why do you hate this thing?

COP TWO

Don't be my fucking shrink.

COP ONE

I gotta know why.

COP TWO

I don't know.

COP ONE

Oh sure, no motivation. You're a cop, for Chrissakes.

COP TWO

It's disgusting.

COP ONE

Why is it disgusting?

COP TWO

It's not what you think. You think I'm still mad about what happened – the Wall Street assholes who crashed the economy and the bank bailouts and people losing their homes and savings and all that shit, well, that's not it, that's not what this is about.

COP ONE

What is it about?

COP TWO

Control.

COP ONE

Control?

COP TWO

I don't have control over anything.

COP ONE

What? What the fuck are you talking about?

COP TWO

You think you do. Everyone says you do. Your parents, teachers, priests, politicians, the whole fucking crew. This is America, freedom and opportunity, you can make your life whatever you want. It's bullshit.

COP ONE

Oh come on, you got control. You're here with me, this uniform, you're on the job. A job you chose, a job you love. And you got Sylvia...okay, but you got the kids, a roof over your head, season tickets for the Knicks, a beer when you want it. How are you not in control?

COP TWO

Yeah, yeah, everything's hunky-dory.

COP ONE

Sounds good to me.

COP TWO

Oh, it sounds good, everything always sounds good. We're dead, man. We're fucking dying here. I mean, look at you, you're no different. You got college debt up to your eyeballs. You got a mortgage even your kids won't be able to pay off. And you lose your job and your health insurance and a tree falls on you, you're bankrupt before you can fucking blink.

COP ONE

And that's all going to change if you blow up this bull?

COP TWO

It'll make me feel better.

COP ONE

It'll put us in jail for ten years.

COP TWO

That bull has got to go.

COP ONE

Danny—

COP TWO

I'm not having that fucking thing charge at me any more. Because it does, okay? It charges at me and it charges through me twenty-four seven. It tramples on me. It gores me. It stomps on me. I am being ground in the dust by that miserable fucking beast, and it has to stop.

(Beat.)

COP ONE

You need to get some help, man. You know that, right?

COP TWO

Who's going to help me? Huh? We're all in the same fucking boat, only no one admits it, we all pretend it's not happening. Why? Because it's fucking scary is why. I mean, what you gonna do?

(Indicating the bomb)

No. This is all the help I need.

COP ONE

Let's go get some coffee.

COP TWO picks up the bomb. COP ONE makes a move towards him.

COP TWO

GET AWAY FROM ME!

COP TWO cradles the bomb to his chest as it were a baby and starts to sob. COP ONE goes to comfort him, but he moves away. COP TWO recovers his composure. COP ONE offers him the open cooler, and COP TWO slowly and carefully places the bomb back inside it. COP ONE picks up the cooler; COP TWO raises no objection.

COP ONE

Let's go.

COP TWO

Where?

COP ONE

Take a walk.

COP TWO

Walk off the job.

COP ONE

Yeah.

COP ONE shifts a barrier to one side and they exit. After a moment, COP TWO rushes in wielding his nightstick. With a primal roar, he flails at the invisible statue.

COP TWO

AAAAAAAARGH!

The YOUNG WOMAN enters.

YOUNG WOMAN

(From behind the security barrier)

No, no, stop, please! Stop!

COP ONE rushes in and restrains COP TWO.

You don't have to be afraid.

COP ONE

Listen, lady—

YOUNG WOMAN

I was mad, too. When I was in Zuccotti Park with Occupy, I was so mad I wanted to beat on him, too. I wanted to do more than that. I wanted to blow him up. Can you believe that? I wanted to put a bomb under that thing even though I'm, like, non-violent. But I came to understand where all my anger came from. Fear. That was it. I was afraid.

She starts to push past the barrier.

COP ONE

Hey, you can't come in here—

COP TWO

No, no, it's okay.

YOUNG WOMAN

(Entering the space)

If I could confront that fear – own it – I could see things in a different way. Different possibilities, you know? Like with our friend here.

(She lovingly strokes the flank of the bull)

He's beautiful. He has all this creative energy. And he doesn't have to be aggressive and evil. He can be whatever you want him to be. Do you see the butterflies? Look at the butterflies. They're all around him. A canopy of butterflies. Do you see them? Look.

COP TWO turns and looks at the bull. He sees the butterflies.

COP TWO

Who are you?

YOUNG WOMAN

No one in particular.

She crosses to the security barrier and grips one end of it.

Can you help me?

COP ONE

Wait a minute, you can't—

COP TWO halts the objection with a raise of his hand. He takes hold of the other end of the barrier. He and the YOUNG WOMAN move the barrier to one side. They cross to the other barrier, clearly intent on doing the same.

Danny! What the fuck are you doing?

COP TWO and the YOUNG WOMAN complete the job. They look at each other. She exits. COP TWO smiles at COP ONE and strokes the bull.

Lights fade.

END OF PLAY