

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

Synopsis: Two cops guard the statue of the iconic Wall Street bull, and it's a hate/love relationship.

BULL

A bare stage except for two police security barriers, one on either side of the stage, enclosing the central playing space. It's 3.a.m. Two uniformed New York cops stand guard over Arturo DiModica's famous statue of the 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 is on the ground nearby. Several moments of silence. COP ONE starts to whistle. COP TWO turns and shoots him a look. COP ONE 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

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, the pride of New York. Magnifico.

COP TWO

Yeah, well, things have changed.

COP ONE

Yeah, the Occupy thing is over, everyone's gone home, and we're still here on the graveyard shift guarding this stupid sculpture and getting bored out of our fucking minds. But you can't blame him, it's not his fault. He never asked to be a symbol of anything. Did ya, huh?

(He pats the bull affectionately)

It's okay, he don't hate ya—

COP TWO

I HATE THE FUCKING BULL, OKAY!?

COP ONE

OKAY! Jesus.

(Slight pause.)

Me, I can't hate animals. I eat 'em but I don't hate 'em. I'm like the Indians, the animals give their lives for me, I respect them. Except for pigeons. So fucking unsanitary. And aggressive, Jesus! Mario down at the precinct – you know about this, right? – he once arrested three pigeons for assault. 'Course, the DA wouldn't go for it, no sense of humor.

(Beat)

Want a coffee? I'll get you a coffee.

(COP TWO shakes his head. Beat)

Hey, remember how impressed we were with his balls?

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

That first night, it was like, whoa, will you look at these cohonos, imagine what you could do with equipment like that! And the fucking tourists caressing them for luck.

(Patting the bull)

But you got off on it, right, pal?

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
It looks like a bomb is what it looks like.

COP TWO
It is a bomb.

COP ONE
Oh yeah?

COP TWO
Set to explode in thirty minutes.

COP ONE
Finally some action around here.

COP TWO
I am going to blow this fucker away.

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 we both die 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, makes me physically sick.

COP ONE

So does my grandpa's bad breath, but I'm not about to blow him up. Danny, our job is to protect this statue not destroy it, remember? This is fucking crazy, man—

COP TWO

No—

COP ONE

This is terrorism.

COP TWO

It is not terrorism!

COP ONE

Oh yeah? 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 desperate.

COP ONE

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

COP TWO

I told you, I hate this miserable fucking beast, okay? It's mean, it's ugly, it smells—

COP ONE

A statue does not smell.

COP TWO

And I am going to take it out.
(Beat.)

COP ONE

We gotta talk.

COP TWO shakes his head.

COP ONE (CONT.)

Look, man, I know you're in pain, okay? I know that. I thought it was something at home but, you know me, I don't get into people's business unless they ask. But now, I mean...

(No response.)

Turn it off.

(Beat)

Danny, turn off the timer and we'll talk. Five minutes, that's all.

(Beat)

This is not just you, bro, this is your family, me, everyone.

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COP TWO

Three minutes.

COP ONE

Three minutes.

COP TWO stops the timer.

Why?

COP TWO

It's not what you think, okay? You think I'm still mad about what happened – the 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 nothing, man, and neither do you. Oh, you think you do. Everyone says you do. Your parents, teachers, priests, politicians, the whole fucking crew. This is America, freedom and opportunity, do what you want, be who you want to be. It's bullshit.

COP ONE

What are you, a liberal now?

COP TWO

No, I'm telling you—

COP ONE

Don't give me that shit, man. You got control. You're here with me, this uniform, you're on the job, a job you love. And you got Sylvia...okay, but you got the kids, a roof over your head, food on the table, a beer when you want it. You got season tickets for the Knicks, for Chrissakes.

COP TWO

We are dying here, Bill. We are right on the edge and we are dying. Your mortgage takes half your pay check, you can barely pay your bills, right? And college for your kids, I mean that's a fucking joke, and if you lose your job, you lose your health insurance and a tree falls on you, you're bankrupt before you can fucking blink. That's us, man. That's our American dream.

COP ONE

And that's all going to change if you blow up the 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 stomp on me anymore, okay? I am being ground in the dust by that miserable fucking beast twenty-four-seven, and it stops right here right now.

(Beat.)

COP ONE

You need to get some help, man.

COP TWO

Who's going to help me? Huh? We're all in the same boat, and we all pretend it's not happening. Why? Because it is fucking scary and there is no way out.

COP TWO (CONT.)

(Indicating the bomb)

This baby 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 THE FUCK 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

Coffee shop.

COP TWO

It's closed.

COP ONE

So we'll take a walk.

COP TWO nods. They exit. After a moment, COP TWO rushes back 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, please! Stop! Don't do that! Stop, stop! Please!

COP ONE rushes in with the cooler. He puts it down hastily and restrains COP TWO.

COP ONE

Danny, Danny, Danny—Jesus!

YOUNG WOMAN

(Overlapping)

Don't hurt him!

COP ONE

Stay out of this, lady—

YOUNG WOMAN

(Starting to push past the barrier)

Let him go, please—

COP ONE

Stay where you are!

She does so.

COP TWO

(Reassuring COP ONE, who releases him)

It's okay. I'm okay.

YOUNG WOMAN

I know how you feel.

COP TWO

Sure you do.

YOUNG WOMAN

When I was in Zuccotti Park with Occupy, I wanted to blow him up, too. I did. Even though I'm like non-violent and vegan and everything. But then, after a while, I figured out why.

COP TWO

Why?

YOUNG WOMAN

Fear. Fear about the future. About everything.

(Again starting to move past the barrier)

But you know what?

COP ONE

Hey, hey, I told you—

COP TWO

Let her through.

YOUNG WOMAN

(Entering the space)

I had this like,... awakening, I guess you'd call it. Not a religious thing, spiritual maybe, I don't know, but it was just...I didn't have to be afraid. I could look beyond that and see something that wasn't fear. Or the fear of fear. I mean, take this guy.

(She lovingly strokes the flank of the bull)

You don't want to mess with him, right? He's mean, he's powerful, he'd gore you to death as soon as look at you. At least that's what they want you to see. Only it's not...I mean, you can look at him another way. Like, "Wow, what a beautiful creature." Because he is, he is beautiful. Okay, so those bastards and their evil shit are still there, but you get to see another possibility.

(She beckons to COP TWO)

COP TWO hesitates and then crosses to her.
She gestures towards the bull.

You see them?

COP TWO

What?

YOUNG WOMAN

The butterflies.

COP TWO

Butterflies? What butterflies?

YOUNG WOMAN

Hundreds of them, all over his body. You don't see them?

COP TWO

Get out of here. GO!

YOUNG WOMAN

(Smiling, as she slowly exits)

Keep looking.

She exits.

COP ONE

What the fuck was that?

Beat. COP TWO approaches the statue.

(Indicating the cooler)

Danny, we got to do something about this. Like right now. Danny!

COP TWO slowly extends his hand and strokes the bull. He repeats the motion several times. He stops, raises his arm and looks at it, then at his shoulders. He sees the butterflies. They have settled on him.

Lights fade.

END OF PLAY