

ROADKILL CONFIDENTIAL
a noir-ish meditation on brutality
by Sheila Callaghan

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CAST OF CHARACTERS:

TREVOR – female, mid 30's, furtive and glamorous
WILLIAM – male, mid-late 40's, balding, dorky, well-meaning
RANDY – male, 14, wiry and manic
MELANIE – female, late 20's-early 30's, bubbly and shrill
FBI MAN – male, 30's-40's, cool, level, mysterious, jaded

(the following may be double-cast:)

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN
DOCTOR

PLACE:

A small New England county, upstate New York.
A road.
A dark nondescript room.

TIME:

The end of fall, moving into the winter.

NOTES:

The setting should not be real, or naturalistic.
It should not be a set for the piece to play within but rather something against which the piece can resonate: more installation than set.

An ellipsis is set within parenthesis is used to indicate a gesture or some sort of vocal sound appropriate to the character and the situation. It is not a realistic sound, however.

The installation will begin as something simple, but will transform throughout the play, perhaps during the transitions at the hands of Trevor, until ultimately the entire playing space and beyond is one enormous diorama.

PLEASE NOTE: Trevor is onstage for the entire duration. When not specifically noted, she is working and watching television, and reacting to it all. She is especially present on stage whenever FBI guy is talking, whether lit specially, or in her own realm of movement and expression.

All scene titles are projected.

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EPILOGUE: NICE FLOWER

TREVOR is seated in a stark, dark room, a single light penetrating.

She holds a fresh flower. She is handcuffed. She wears moviestar glasses and has gorgeous hair.

FBI MAN enters. He hands her a coffee. She hits it away with her hand.

FBI MAN

Least it was iced

FBI MAN mops up the spill.

FBI MAN (cont.)

Nice flower

TREVOR

I'm waiting for it to die

FBI MAN

Do you know who it's from

TREVOR

A fan, darling

FBI MAN

A suitor
How did he get in

TREVOR
(shrugs)

I didn't see him
I found it next to the toilet

FBI MAN

Romantic

FBI MAN shakes a newspaper at TREVOR, front page.
She glances at it.

He drops the newspaper. In front of her.

FBI MAN (cont.)

You are officially more famous than you were before
How do you feel about that?

A long beat.

FBI MAN (cont.)

All right, angelface, let's have a dose of straight talk.

TREVOR

I'd like to sleep
May I sleep tonight

FBI MAN

That's up to you

TREVOR

I've told you everything

FBI MAN

Except the important part

TREVOR

I can't make you believe me

FBI MAN

Would you believe you?

Long beat.

I have some news for you
About your family

Your husband will be out of the country a while longer
Your stepson is in a prison in San Juan
attacked a Canadian boy
Went at him with a shrimp fork
The boy is blind in one eye

TREVOR

I need to talk to William

FBI MAN

I can make that happen, yes
I can even get your stepson out of jail and home safe
If you don't mind...

FBI MAN places a recorder on the table.

TREVOR refuses to speak.

FBI MAN (cont.)

Look
You made your point
You're in the superior position
Why not use it
Think of yourself as a retired magician
Who can now tell the world her secrets

FBI MAN presses a button on the machine.

FBI MAN

You said you found it on the net

TREVOR

Yes

FBI MAN

Shipped regular mail

TREVOR

Yes

FBI MAN

From a high-school in Omaha

TREVOR

Yes

FBI MAN

A category 8 agent

TREVOR

Yes

FBI MAN

Kid in a lab

I don't know

TREVOR

What's in your control, Trevor?

FBI MAN

TREVOR smacks the tape recorder away.

A beat.

That was.

TREVOR

****SOMETHING HAPPENS HERE, TO HELP TELL THE STORY OF TREVOR AND FBI MAN; IE, FBI MAN'S FANTASY OF TREVOR, SUDDEN AND LOUD AND WILD AND FANTASTIC, WITH DANCE. THEN THEY REVERT BACK TO THEIR SEATS, LIGHTS NORMAL****

FBI MAN is alone now, spotlight, rare air. He speaks to us.

You could say it all began eight years ago

FBI MAN

But that's not where I'll start
I'll start with one month ago

FBI MAN glances at TREVOR. Suddenly, she is at her studio, in bed with her lover, a frizzy-haired man.

It was a radiant Tuesday morning
In the heart of autumn
She was working on something big

FBI MAN

ONE MONTH AGO: RUBBER FACE

The FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN is playing with TREVOR's face.

Everything around them is covered in tarps.

They are sleeping on a makeshift bed on the floor, which is just a pile of blankets, an open sleeping bag, and a few pillows.

Trevor is staring at a flickering TV with the sound off.

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Rubber-face

TREVOR

Mm.

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I'll make coffee?
What is this?

He's holding a piece of paper. He reads.

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN (cont)

Friendly Fire
The Roadside Explosives
Mortar Rounds
The Drive Bys
The Ethnic Cleanse
Checkpoint Fuckyou

TREVOR

Band names

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Who's in a band?

TREVOR

No one
I couldn't sleep.
Nightmares
My hands were like this the whole time

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

What did you eat for dinner last night

She looks over at the corner.

TREVOR

Bottle of red wine

Chocolate croissant
Lime tortilla chips

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Because sometimes what you eat
Like eating badly affects your dreams
The shattering of one's self-image

TREVOR

I was the keeper of the marvel

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

What's that

TREVOR

And people macheteed each other

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

What's the marvel

TREVOR

But I wasn't afraid of death.
I was afraid of being anesthetized by blasphemies
of the flesh

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Okay
Too much TV

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN turns off the TV.

She turns the TV on.

TREVOR

How's your back

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I'll live
They were heavier than I thought

TREVOR

Poor thing

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Are you using more wood, or

TREVOR

Metal, darling
They're

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Yeah?

TREVOR

Different. Nothing like the old stuff

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I love the / old stuff

TREVOR

Nothing like it

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

The Impact series

TREVOR

Night and day

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I mean the first time I
Your opening at the Whitney
Ow

TREVOR

I have advil

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I mean visceral and dark / but um with

TREVOR

Lift with your legs

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I was swimming!
But alienated, a little?

TREVOR

Okay I don't want to, um.
Talk

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Maybe I just wasn't prepared
And also you were famous, so

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I need to tell you something

She turns the TV off.

TREVOR

Darling
I need to get / back to work

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I accidentally peeked beneath the tarp

Beat.

TREVOR

When

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Just for second
I saw fur

TREVOR

Did you touch it?

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Just for a second

TREVOR

You touched it

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Hardly, it was more like a

TREVOR

With the gloves on?

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I took them off

TREVOR

Oh God

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Just for a second

TREVOR

I said not to touch it

I know
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I said “don’t touch the art”
TREVOR

Nothing broke or
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

“hold the base by the straps”
TREVOR

The glue / was
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Why did you touch it
TREVOR

DRY, okay
I didn’t even SEE anything
I just FELT it
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Oh God
TREVOR

Trevor
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

Oh God
TREVOR

Trevor
I’m sorry
Please
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

(...)
TREVOR

Talk to me
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

(...)
TREVOR

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

What was the exact crime
Let me understand

TREVOR

You weren't supposed to be one of them.

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN

I'm not.

A beat.

Wait what do you mean?
Like those freaks on the lawn with the camcorders, or
I'm a fan Trevor but I'm not disgusting
I'm not
I'm not

FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN does not hear or see her. Maybe
he has disappeared, or is frozen.

TREVOR flips over the paper with the band names.
TREVOR writes.

TREVOR

Dear you:

Thank you for your help
You are a singular person
I'm so very sorry

With affection:
Trevor

To us.

Everything
Is about to change

****SOMETHING BEAUTIFUL AND VIOLENT AND
DRAMATIC HAPPENS HERE.**

FBI MAN

She was right
She was right about everything

Except when she was wrong
And then

TREVOR

I fucked up
I fucked up
I fucked up
I fucked up
I fucked up
I fucked up
I fucked up

FBI MAN

But she didn't turn herself in

TREVOR
(to us)

I didn't

FBI MAN

She had bigger fish to fry

TREVOR

Collateral damage

FBI MAN
(to us)

Not many folks can pinpoint the exact moment they sacrifice their humanity.

A beat.

TREVOR
I can.

FBI MAN
I can.

A beat.

FBI MAN

Later that night
I got a phone call from a hospital upstate

THIS COULD BE THAT

During the following, TREVOR drives home from her studio. She wears special gloves.

She hits several small animals along the way. THUMP.
THUMP. THUMP.

Each one she hits she stops and retrieves, with compassion
and horror. The animals are all still alive.

It is a dance; the Hit Animal Dance.

It is funny.

Meanwhile....

The FBI MAN stands next to a DOCTOR

They both stand over the corpse of the FRIZZY-HAIRED
MAN.

The FBI MAN reads from a small piece of paper in a
plastic bag, which he handles with rubber gloves and tongs.

The DOCTOR is very, very nervous. He keeps looking
over his shoulder.

FBI MAN

The Drive Bys
The Ethnic Cleanse
Checkpoint Fuckyou

DOCTOR

Was in his back pocket
Admitted last week
Dizziness, fatigue, fever
We assumed it was a severe pleuropneumonic infection
Dangerous but not enough to, um
But then we found that paper
So we did some tests
By the time we figured it out, well
(...)
Rapid diagnostic testing is not widely available for this

FBI MAN

Uh-huhm

He revolves around the body, examining it, like a dance.

DOCTOR

We are so glad you are here
The disease is called "tularemia"
"Rabbit disease"
S-sm-smaller mammals act as reservoir hosts
Prairie dogs, hares, muskrats, squirrels, voles
Humans can contract it several ways
Through ticks or flies or mosquitoes
Or by handling the meat and skins of infected animals

FBI MAN

Uh-huhm

DOCTOR

Or um
From food or water that has been contaminated
Or through the air
If um, sprayed

FBI MAN

Uh-huhm

DOCTOR

Um
Symptoms include:
Rapid onset
Sudden fever
Headaches
Muscle aches
Diarrhea
Joint pain
Dry cough
Progressive weakness
It's one of the m-m-most infective bacteria known to m-m-man
What, um, what

FBI MAN

The defense department classifies this as a category 8 agent
Was used as a weapon by the Russians during World War II
Before that by the Japanese against Manchuria
The US developed strains of the disease in the 50's
Part of their biological warfare program
Terminated in the early 60's

DOCTOR

Wow

Um

FBI MAN

However, the disease cannot be spread from person to person

DOCTOR

No

It infects through mucous membranes, the gastrointestinal tract, the lungs
S-sk um skin

FBI MAN

Uh-huhm

DOCTOR

We have no vaccine
Everyone is so paranoid around here
We sent the receptionist home
The nurses think we moved him to CPU

FBI MAN

Good

DOCTOR

This
Of course this could be a single incident
Like the last time
Martha's Vineyard
A flea bite
Complete accident
Um
This could be that

The FBI MAN takes off his Ray Bans and leans into the
FRIZZY-HAIRED MAN, to inspect him more closely.

We see he has a long scar across one eye.

A beat.

DOCTOR

He was twenty-five
He was a student

The FBI man returns his glasses to his face and looks at the
back of the letter.

FBI MAN

"With affection
Trevor"

The DOCTOR disappears.

The FBI man is in a spotlight, thinking. A dramatic
moment for him. Maybe music.

He opens his cellphone. Dials a few numbers. Into the
receiver:

FBI MAN

It's time.
How soon can you get it to me?
Perfect.

To us.

I won't lie
I'm at my best
When the fate of the nation is at hand

Domestic situations however are not my specialty
International was always my bag

But like any good agent
I adapt

So I motored up to Albany
Got myself a shitty, heatless studio
the heart of the Hudson Valley
And I readied myself for the ride

He opens a trunk of costumes.

He dons an exterminator's outfit, "Bugs B-gone", and a
cap.

Meanwhile....

CELLOPHANE

WILLIAM , MELANIE, TREVOR, and RANDY are all
seated at dinner.

MELANIE is a little giddy and tipsy
She is dressed elegantly.

TREVOR is uncomfortable.

RANDY eats in complete silence. He wears headphones.

WILLIAM
(sipping wine)

Prune
Cedarwood
Um

MELANIE
As a rule I'm not a red wine person but this

WILLIAM
The fellow recommended it /
A little oaky, but

MELANIE
Mmmmm

TREVOR watches them. The doorbell rings. She gets it.
It's the FBI man in his exterminator's outfit.

TREVOR
Exterminator

FBI MAN
Keep eating
I'll find my way around

No one looks at him, ever.

He winks theatrically at us, then begins to inspect the
house. He surreptitiously scrutinizes door hinges and
vents.

WILLIAM
Whooo, exhausted!
Third week of the semester
Like they all have permanent hangovers
Typical

Ohhhh! MELANIE

What? WILLIAM

A lyric just popped into my head. MELANIE

Red redwiiiiiiiine
Goes to my heeeeeaaad
Makes me forget that I'm

No no wait it goes:
Red redwiiiiiiiine
Stay close to me
Don't let me be alone
Just mrahmrahngarahnga

And then there's a rap, I can't remember

Didn't you two used to make wine?
When Trevor first moved in?

WILLIAM
At the wine store there was a brochure for the artwalk
It starts tomorrow
It'll probably be mobbed but if we get up early

MELANIE
It's supposed to rain

WILLIAM
They'll set up tents

TREVOR
I need to work, darling

WILLIAM
It's one day

MELANIE
(to Trevor)
I remember you on your knees picking grapes outside
Like a month after you moved in?

You were so young!
I asked what you what you were doing
You said "we're making wine"
But my brain heard "we're making love"
I was so ashamed--

WILLIAM
(suddenly remembering)

Ah!

Rapping.

Red red wine you mek me feel so fine
You keep me rockin' all of the time

MELANIE
(delighted)

Yes!

RANDY

Dad.

WILLIAM
(feeling a little foolish but going for it)

Red red wine you mek me feel so grand
I feel a million dollar when yajusin ma 'and

MELANIE

It's like a code:
"Rockin"
You keep me drunk!
Keep going!

WILLIAM
(uncertain)

Red red wine you mek me feel so sad
Any time I see ya go it mek me feel bad

RANDY

Dad! I'm eating!

WILLIAM
(uncertain)

Red red wine you mek me feel so fine
Monkey back and moosaban a sweet ep line

WHAT?!

MELANIE

WILLIAM
(getting into it)

Red red wine you give me oleeba-zing
Oleeba-zing mek me do me own ting

Yay!

MELANIE
(applauding)

I'm sweating!

WILLIAM

That was AMA/ ZING

MELANIE

We used to
in college
we'd play it over and over
ah

WILLIAM
(out of breath)

Do you need some / water?

MELANIE

I have the spins
I'm okay

WILLIAM

THIS PLAY IS NOT OVER!

**Contact the author (sheila.callaghan@gmail.com)
to read more...**