

# **BLOOD** **BIAS**



**A Novel**  
**James R. Tate**



*Chief of Police Reese Glockman is told to stay out of the way of the FBI when a serial killer leaves his mark on the sleepy town of Ferguson, Texas. But, when Glockman's daughter is kidnapped by the killer, it becomes personal and nothing will stand in his way, not even the killer's mysterious accomplices.*

## **Blood Bias**

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## Chapter 1

**R**ichard McAfee wanted her to bleed, longed for it even, and literally ached to draw the wonderful coppery odor of her fear into his engorged nostrils, to taste her panic on the tip of his quivering tongue. He wanted to see the bitch's life drain out and pool around her naked body. It would be the ultimate punishment for disgusting him, just like all the others.

He had taken her to the master bedroom, near the back of her own house, and bound her hands and feet to the four tall posts of an antique oak bed. Her red lips puffed obscenely around the ivory hand towel pulled tight across her mouth and tied at the back of her head. Several deep scratches lined her swollen cheeks and punctuated her thin face. The woman's wrists and ankles, once delicate like those of a ballerina, were now whelped and bloodied. "Nylon rope's less likely to stretch like the other kinds," the old geezer at the hardware store had said. Richard inspected the double knots and shrugged. *Guess he was right.*

The bed reminded him of his mother's, the one she eventually shared with another woman. Thinking about the other woman made his skin crawl and brought his anger to the surface again, becoming an ever increasing tsunami of rage he knew he could not control much longer.

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Leaning his hip against the bed next to her, Richard stared into the woman's panicked eyes, drawing strength from her fear, forcibly resisting the urge to place a mirror in front of her and let her see what she had become, what her lifestyle had rewarded her with. She had been feisty and rebellious—the only thing he admired about her—but her fire now waned in the reflection of his favorite knife. The urge to plunge the six inch blade into her, over and over, clawed at his mind. He closed his eyes and imagined the spatter of blood dripping down his face and over his thin lips, just like with the other filth he had disposed of. He opened his eyes and cursed under his breath. “The others,” he groaned. How he hated life with the others. They weren't about to let him kill the woman until all of them had their turn with her.

Especially Rachel.

He grimaced at the thought of the things Rachel would do to the woman's pale, naked flesh. Just thinking about it made him want to kill them all, particularly Rachel, and he would, soon. But for now, he would let her have her turn and just sit back and try not to look at the unspeakable perversion.

Rachel's voice cut through the quiet air, delicate and somehow deadly at the same time. “Don't you dare touch her with that knife.”

Richard grunted his disgust and placed the knife on the putrid mauve bedspread, forcing himself to release the handle that felt so comfortable in his hand. “I wasn't about to touch her.”

It was only a small lie.

Rachel emerged from the shadows and quietly approached the girl. Richard drifted into darkness, his mind awash with incoherent thoughts while Rachel fulfilled her needs. The world around him faded away. He heard the whisper of moans, could almost feel what Rachel felt, could smell her sweat interlaced

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with the perfumed lust hanging in the air. The darkness felt...safe. At some point in his life, someone had said that this transcendence into the unknown abyss only happened to special minds, special minds such as his, and he believed it to be true. Richard also believed he was special because his mother had told him so. Mother had always been right, just like when she said his father was a worthless piece of shit. His father had disappeared out of his life when he was a toddler, so everything he knew about him had come from a wrinkled photograph and what his mother told him. The hatred he harbored for his father originated from his mother, but festered inside of him like an open wound, picked at and scratched over the years until it grew into a fevered boil. Now he hardly remembered his father's face through the red behind his own eyes.

"When is it my turn?" a voice asked.

Richard snapped out of his trance. He was standing in front of the naked woman, staring at her wide, bloodshot eyes streaked with damp mascara. Drawing in a deep breath, he tuned out the voice behind him and lavished in the joy of the loathing and hatred he saw in her expanded orbs. He smiled at the hint of madness bubbling just under the surface of her emotions, a glimmer of what she might do to him if she were to get loose.

Mark spoke behind him again, a bee buzzing around the ears. "Uhh, Richard? Is it my turn to... you know." He let loose a girlish giggle. "My turn to do it with her?"

Richard squeezed his eyes shut and tried to squelch the anger welling within him, anger driven from having to put up with such an idiot. How long had the inept twit been a part of his life? More years than he could remember. Too many. He couldn't imagine how he'd allowed himself to be burdened with such a moron given that Mark could be the poster boy for the Dating for Idiots guide. Like Rachel though, Mark wanted to

get in on the action. Unlike Rachel, he didn't have a clue of what he was doing. The likelihood of Mark getting laid without someone gagging and tying up his *date* seemed ludicrous. Richard couldn't picture it at all. The thought of having sex with these women sickened Richard, but Mark didn't seem to care who they were or how they lived their lives. What did it matter? He would do anything to shut Mark up. As for the women unfortunate enough to have to put up with Mark's clumsy attempt at lovemaking, they were going to die anyway.

If not for the finality of his favorite knife, and the smell of death in the end, Richard didn't think he would be able to stomach what the others did.

"What about it, Richard?" Mark said, pulling him from his thoughts.

Richard waved a dismissive hand. "Whatever. Just get it over with."

He watched Mark fumble his way over her, groping and pawing, then closed his eyes, feeling the darkness coming again. He could almost feel her pallid skin with his own hands, would almost swear his fingertips felt her heartbeat pulsing in her jugular. Anger boiled just under his skin. He wanted to squeeze the life from her, to choke the breath from her lungs, to dig his fingernails into the arrogance in her eyes. He wanted to....

"Let's get on with it, Rich." Elliot's baritone voice broke the silence like a ship's horn on a foggy night.

Richard started. He opened his eyes and blinked the woman's battered face back into focus. Where had Mark gone? Had he finished already? Feeling disoriented, anxious, Richard glanced around the room, his brain working to reconnect itself. When he turned back to the naked woman, her eyes were clenched closed. Tears streamed down her face. Her whole body shook in great tremors. Large red blotches covered her torso,



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neck, and legs from her exhausting attempt at resisting Rachel and Mark. Richard imagined he probably put a few bruises on her himself when he snatched her from her car a few hours ago. A sharp smile creased his lips.

A few bruises would soon be the least of her worries, he thought.

Richard turned to see Elliot standing in the shadows near the far wall blowing smoke rings from a Marlboro.

“You sure you don’t want to get a little of this before I finish her off?” Richard asked.

Elliot shook his head. “Just get it over with.”

Richard didn’t understand Elliot. Never had. Why would he be part of it if he had no intention of participating? He knew why the others were involved. Rachel saw it as a chance to experiment, to fulfill her fantasies without having to work for it. And Mark? It doesn’t take a rocket scientist to figure that one out. What woman in her right mind would have anything to do with a limp noodle like Mark? This was the *only* way Mark was going to get laid. As for himself, Richard accepted the fact that he had the self appointed job of liberating the world of these disgusting creatures, these hybrid mutations of what a woman was supposed to be. He knew without a doubt his purpose in all of this. But what about Elliot’s?

“I don’t get it, Elliot,” Richard said. “Why are you here?”

Elliot didn’t respond. He seldom spoke.

Richard picked up the knife lying forgotten on the bed and absently twirled it between his fingers. “Why are you doing this? I have a job to do. You don’t.”

Elliot drew in on his cigarette and blew out gray smoke in a slow deliberate cloud. “I’m making sure no one jacks with you while you do what you gotta do.”

Richard nodded and then shrugged his shoulders. He guessed that was as good a reason as any. A damn good reason.

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Maybe he did need protection, a guardian angel. Though he doubted God approved of what he was doing.

The woman moaned. Richard watched her face contort from fear to anger, to rage, then to a deep sense of foreboding. She knew she was about to die. He saw it in her eyes. She was right.

Wrapping his fingers tightly around the walnut knife handle, he placed the blade to her throat. Her brown eyes flitted left and right, apparently looking for a miracle, some savior to bust through the door and shoot the bad guy. There would be no savior. Richard traced the blade down her chest and then across her stomach. The sharp blade left a thin line of crimson in a figure eight. Richard's heartbeat raced. He ran the blade along her left leg and gave a firm push just inside her thigh. A thin line of blood snaked down her leg. The woman screamed into her gag, her face now the color of her lipstick. Tears poured down her face from wild, desperate eyes.

Richard leaned close to her, his lips nearly touching her ear. His voice came out soft, taunting. "I'm not going to kill you yet."

A loud guttural sob filled the room. She shrank away from him, pressing her body into the mattress.

With his open palm, he slapped her hard across the cheek. "Don't pass out on me." He liked it so much more when they remained conscious.

Lifting his tall, lanky frame from the bed, Richard pulled a Marlboro from the pack lying on the nightstand. He struck a match from a matchbook he fished from his pocket and held it to the cigarette until it glowed bright orange. A cloud of gray smoke bellowed from his lips. He drew in again, then touched the scalding tobacco to the pale flesh of the woman's abdomen. The skin hissed. She thrashed violently from left to right. Then her body went ridged. Richard prodded her again with the

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searing ember and the room filled with the stench of burned skin, and the muffled scream of agonizing pain.

Richard blew on the glowing end of the cigarette. The ashes powdered the woman's torso like make-up for the dead. He touched her again with the cigarette, working on the pattern. The girl convulsed. Her eyes rolled back in her head. He was close to losing her. Time was short.

Glancing at the nightstand, Richard lay the cigarette down and picked up a photograph of two women holding hands, with large vacation smiles covering their tanned faces. One wore a sun visor over dark brown hair tied in a ponytail, the other a blonde with a neckline haircut. He turned it toward the woman.

"Looks like you've lost your tan, Erica." He pointed at the dark haired woman in the picture. "Susan still had hers." Richard couldn't help but smile as he touched the picture to her bound lips. "Kiss Susan goodbye."

Erica's eyes bulged with understanding. She thrashed and flailed her legs, jerking the bindings like a dog at the end of its leash. The oak bed squeaked and groaned. Richard slapped her hard across the face again. Erica's movements slowed like a toy with dying batteries, until finally she lay sobbing into her damp pillow, her naked chest heaving in and out, trying desperately to draw air through the gag. Blood trickled from her nose.

Richard could smell her blood. Or maybe it was just her fear. His heart began to gallop in his chest again. The cigarette on the edge of the nightstand had burned nearly to the filter. He lit another one, placed it to his lips and pulled in a deep drag. This time he finished his artwork without pause; a drag on the cigarette, a burn on the abdomen, another draw, another burn, having no trouble ignoring Erica's screams of agony as he worked, until finally it was done.

The room now stank of charred flesh and urine, mixed with cigarette and sweat. Richard stubbed out the butt on the mirror

slick finish of the night table. He had a fleeting image of a beat up night stand next to his mother's bed with dime-sized burns in the finish where she had stubbed out her cigarettes until they were nothing but a wisp of fading smoke. He flicked the crumpled filter to the floor and looked into Erica's eyes, the right one nearly swollen shut now from the slap he gave her.

Elliot spoke behind him. "Finish her off so we can go, Richard."

Rachel chimed in. "Cut her open, Richard. She wasn't any good anyway. Too skinny to be any fun." She laughed in his ear.

Mark joined in. "Can I do it, man? Can I stick her with that thing?"

Richard didn't answer. He focused on Erica, and his hatred for her. His face reddened.

His mother spoke in his ear then. "You go outside now, Richard. Brenda and I are going to talk for a while. You run along and play."

Richard thrust the knife into Erica's right arm, temporarily pinning it to the mattress. Blood splattered him and the bedspread. Erica lunged forward in a horrific grimace, stretching her restraints taut. She gulped longingly for air, her head lolling from side to side, her eyes showing nothing but egg whites.

"Go on and play," his mother said again. Now he could hear Brenda's voice in the background as well. She was laughing at him.

Richard stabbed Erica again and again, the handle now sticky in his hand.

Between the pounding thuds of his heartbeat, and the rise and fall of the knife, Richard heard Rachel and Mark cheering him on, and Elliot taking deep drags of cigarette with deliberate, long exhales. And his mother's laughter.

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The ceiling fan clanked and warbled overhead. A clock chimed in another room.

The darkness overcame him.



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