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Review I Google Myself

★★★★★

UNDER St. Marks (see Off-Off Broadway). By Jason Schafer. Dir. Jason Jacobs. With Tim Cusack, Nathan Blew, John Gardner. 1hr 15mins. No intermission.

"I haven't been completely honest," admits the obsequious cyberstalker played by Tim Cusack, slyly, toward the start of Jason Schafer's oddball thriller *I Google Myself*. After searching for himself online, this creepily insinuating fellow—referred to in the script as One—has fallen in lust with a gay porn star who happens to share his name: the cocky Two (played with nicely practiced insouciance by Nathan Blew). Having posed as a journalist in order to meet Two, One learns that their nominal twindom is only superficial: Two's moniker is a nom de porn, borrowed from the kid who beat him up in middle school. Soon enough, One has arranged an encounter with this onetime bully: Three (the credibly dopey Gardner), now a stoner with anger issues and a sensitive blog.



STALK CHARACTER Cusack, left, obsesses over porn star Blew. Photo: Jason Schafer

Oh, what a tangle the Web can weave! And those are just the first two scenes of Schafer's zippy play, in which the three unnamed namesakes get twisted into a darkly comic daisy chain of power, vanity and revenge. (The script owes a stylistic debt to the offbeat 2000 indie flick *Chuck&Buck*, and Cusack's unsettling star turn is very much of the Mike White stripe.) Although the permutations of the plot eventually defy belief—especially the ending, motored by authorial concept rather than character—*I Google Myself* is a diverting exercise in discomfiture, ably directed by Jason Jacobs for the queer-eyed Theatre Askew. Tucked away in an East Village basement space, this modest modern noir may be worth searching out.

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