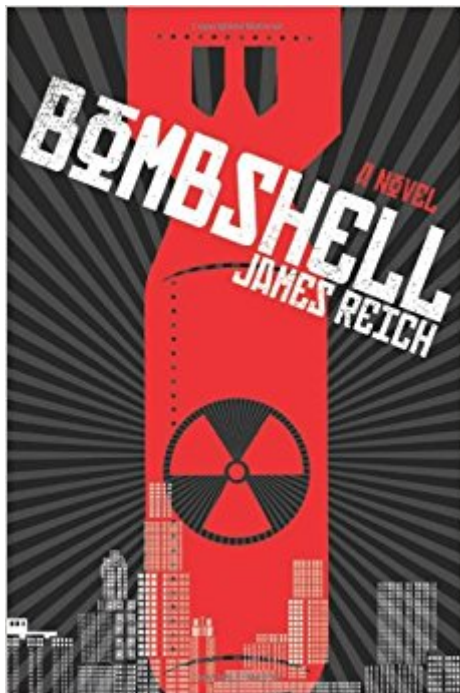


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# Bombshell: A Novel



## Synopsis

"Somewhere between the macho-hipster fantasies of Quentin Tarantino and the banshee-activist theatrics of Pussy Riot dwells Varyushka Cash...Now that's entertainment." - New York Times Book Review

**Bombshell** is a nuclear thriller set twenty-five years after the 1986 Chernobyl disaster, in which an alienated young Russian woman born in its shadow undertakes a road trip across the U.S., waging a guerrilla war against the nuclear industry and leaving in her wake a trail of destruction and assassinations. Obsessed with would-be Warhol assassin Valerie Solanas, Varyushka Cash recreates her atomic past through escalating violence and her one true goal: an assault on the Indian Point nuclear plant on the bank of the Hudson River. All along she is relentlessly pursued by the CIA, eager to capture Varyushka on charges of domestic terrorism. The cat-and-mouse chase leads to a final showdown in a decimated and irradiated New York, there on the cusp of a frightening new future.

"So many great "Avantpop" works--Steve Erickson's *Amnesiascope*, Jonathan Lethem's *early genre novels*, most everything by Kathy Acker--are hanging out, waiting for *adventurous oddball filmmakers* to adapt them, bringing delightful visions of an American *wasteland* to silver screens everywhere!

"*Bombshell*" a novel by James Reich, descends from *this literary sensibility*, and it forges the conventions of the thriller with the aesthetics of punk *rock*; in other words, it's art film gold."

The initial draft of *Bombshell* was completed five months before the Fukushima catastrophe, written from the author's conviction that the twenty-fifth anniversary of catastrophe at Chernobyl, Pripyat, and beyond would be marked by an echo in the present, shadowed by the real threat present in our unguarded and deteriorating nuclear facilities. *Bombshell* is a combustible and commercial step forward by one of our most creative and intellectual writers today.

From KQED/NPR/PBS: *\*Summer Reading Pick\** "When hunting for a summer read, the obvious thing to look for is explosions. Explosions and something a little sexy, a little decadent, a little radical. Moving cars, motels, an impossible goal, down-and-out characters. James Reich's *Bombshell* is all of these except inside out. Imagine an unhinged heroine, a criminal road trip, a dark race to jumpstart America's first total nuclear meltdown.

*Bombshell* is an entirely creative recasting of the summer read, peppered with historical tidbits that will inspire both your fascination and repulsion."

From *The Rumpus*: "James Reich's second novel, is an incredibly dense, rich, and well-paced novel. Within its 259 pages the reader encounters Chernobyl, feminism, terrorism, rendition, Valerie Solanas, Jane Fonda, Hiroshima, the Trinity test site, and much more.

In the hands of another novelist, this sheer mass of information and references might result in a novel bloated with digressions. Luckily, Reich's punchy, no bull\*\*\*\* prose style and

love of action keeps the plot moving swiftly ever forward toward a seemingly inevitable, doom-filled climax that has much to say about nuclear power without ever feeling pedantic ...  
 (Bombshell) stands out because, for all the loudness of its characters and subject matter, it manages to feel subtle and seamless in its execution. It's a novel that doesn't sacrifice politics for plot, or vice versa, and it's a novel that will pass by too quickly and leave you wondering what in the world its author will dream up next." From The Santa Fe New Mexican:  
 "The blood-splashed killing scenes (are) the best of their type I've read in a good while ... The story revs like a goosed engine until it overheats in the final scenes in a deserted Manhattan. All along the way, you can't help but think the author wants us to seriously consider the nuclear equation and crimes against women. But it's almost too much fun for that."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Bombshell delivers on every artistic level: visionary story, beautiful language, and an unforgettable, emotionally resilient and iron tough heroine, in this indelibly smart, wild and electrifying powerhouse of a book."  
 - Emily Rapp, The Still Point Of The Turning World  
 "Bombshell is great stuff, and James Reich writes like a demon. He invokes figures as wonderfully diverse as Valerie Solanas and Nancy Reagan's astrologer as icons in a supremely bizarre, darkly humorous universe. Varyushka Cash is a heroine for the ages." - Mary Dearborn, Mailer: A Biography  
 "Reich is a formidable writer. He brings his characters and events to life with cinematic clarity. His eye for detail makes even the familiar seem alien. Above all he gives form to the terrifying invisible nuclear air that envelopes us all.  
 Bombshell is a cautionary tale well told, offered up by a passionate and supremely gifted new author." - Malcolm Mc

Neill, "Observed While Falling: Bill Burroughs, Ah Pook, and Me" Like Cormac McCarthy wandering a William Burroughs wasteland while blasting a riot grrrl mixtape on a scavenged Walkman!" - S.A. Crary, Kill Your Idols, Director "Defiant, toothsome, and flaming with color, the voice of James Reich is one of the most exciting to emerge in recent years; he is both something new and something wholly real. If it is possible for a true underground writer to exist anymore, he is that author. Bombshell is sublime." - Stephen E. Andrews, author of 100 Must-Read Science Fiction Novels Praise for Bombshell "Reich's novel is chock full of explosive ideas conveyed with radioactive prose. His heroine Varyushka Cash makes Lisbeth Salander look like a dimwitted Mary Poppins. This is dangerous fiction - handle with extreme caution." • Isaac Adamson, Edgar Award Finalist, Complication "The feminist heroine is a fresh twist on the thriller genre." • Kirkus

James Reich is the author of 'Bombshell' (July 2013) and 'I, Judas' (October, 2011) published by Soft Skull Press. James is a member of PEN American Center and the International Association of Crime Writers: North America. He was born in England and has been a resident of the United States since 2009. He is Creative Writing and Literature faculty member at Santa Fe University of Art and Design, and a founding member of the post-punk band Venus Bogardus.

I loved every page of this book. It's chock full of beautiful prose, moral quandaries, and thrilling action sequences. What more could you want? I could not put the book down and am looking forward to Reich's next!

This is just an outstanding book. Just when you think you know what is going to happen, the whole thing changes, and gets even better. One of the best books I have ever read.

Had high hopes after checking out the reviews. I am 200 pages in and i LITERALLY feel like I am reading a Tumblr Feminazi blog. The writer falls in love with his own writing and thinks he is Cormac McCarthy. Barely anything has happend and I am almost to the end of the book and EVERY. SINGLE. ANALOGY. is about radiation and atom bombs, no I mean honestly every metaphor and and reference, every single one, is the same one used over and over and over. Terrible book. I am extremely liberal and agree with the politics of this book but everything else is seriously horrible.

Reich brings a mastery of language that is rarely, if ever, seen within the thriller genre. His elegant,

colorful and violent prose often evokes sexual images within the space of a moment, allowing the reader to experience the chaotic and multifaceted inner workings of his disturbed characters. Varyushka Cash, the leading figure among these, is as frightening at times as she is admirable. Though confrontational and perhaps the tiniest bit crazy (albeit she may be the only sane one in an insane world), it is hard not to like her. I'm not sure which is more frightening; the idea of a terrorist inducing nuclear power plant meltdowns, or the sheer number of these facilities that exist within the United States and other nations.

**BOMBSHELL: A Novel by James Reich**---Whatever you may have heard, all is true and more. A phantasmagoric panorama of political and personal armageddon that jumps off where Orwell's cruelest revelations end... and makes every single damn sentence COUNT, like a post-punk, pre-meltdown Nabokov. Historical obsessives, Read it. Armchair radicals, Read it. At the end of their rope feminists, Read it. Shattered environmentalists, Read it. Conspiracy debaters, Read it. Certainly every single freak I know in New Mexico MUST read it. Hell, every single one of you out there, READ IT, if you've got an ounce of guts or a strand of concern. And prepare to be, if you'll pardon the necessary cliché, blown away.

A brilliantly written novel which takes us into the mind, heart and soul of its heroine, Varyushka Cash. Cash is not an easy heroine but you are compelled to journey with her to the very end, a journey filled with emotion, despair and yet humour. The author has thoroughly researched every aspect of his novel and in so doing has delivered a timely reminder to us all. We could so easily stumble blindly into this nightmare scenario. James Reich is a powerful writer and I would heartily recommend this book.

One cannot read this book without experiencing a true chill. Its revelation of the potential cataclysmic impact of our world's degenerating nuclear plants, plus the almost blasé, dispassionate violence it engenders in Reich's heroine, Cash, leaves one horrified, devastated... and riveted. Everyone should read this book and make sure the issues it addresses are front and center in their consciousness, actions and politics. While global warming is a paramount area of concern, its consequences won't even be relevant once our nuclear power plants start leaking and exploding.

**Bombshell.** It is hard to imagine a more explosive title - and like nearly every word in this incendiary novel, it radiates with so many references, it is impossible not to be awed and astonished. It has

been said that James Reich doesn't waste a word, and this could not be more true, for each word is chosen with such infinite precision and drenched with so many multiples of meaning, it is simply staggering. In *Bombshell*, James gives us a riveting tale that not only mesmerises, albeit guiltily, but ends by grinding us up and spitting us out, so that by the end of the novel, we not only believe what is happening, we blame ourselves for letting it happen! It is a cautionary tale, that both scolds and scalds us. Like *Deadman*, the film by Jim Jarmush, we know from the start that our heroine is doomed. We recognise that she is both deranged and deformed, but nevertheless the worthiness of her crazy scheme forces us to follow her and root for her up to the novel's cataclysmic ending. Contrasted against the Blond Bombshell, Jean Harlow, our heroine wears the fragile shell of a woman, but inside she is the damaged daughter of the nuclear age - and it is she who detonates the biggest bombshell of all, the fragility of our nuclear power plants. By the excruciating end of her story, we can't help but feel this is the beginning of the end for the rest of us. The novel accomplishes something else just as important. It forces us to remember all that we have forgotten since the first atom bombs fell on Japan; forcing us to remember every demonstration, every bra burned, every lip service paid to Feminism, Peace, Love & Understanding, and the fight against nuclear power. There is no way one can read this volatile novel without feeling complicit in our own destruction. James succeeds by giving us an exceedingly visceral and detailed rendering of our world. So real, so thoroughly researched, with prose so richly evocative that every word blazes with the echoes of our past failings and our future doom; we are swept up in the horror as if it was really happening now. But the message is clear. It could happen now and it will be bloody awful if it does. I have one more thing to add and this might be an odd conclusion, but don't they have a prize for offering a work such as this, one that focuses our attention in a brand new way on a complex issue? And isn't that prize called 'The Pulitzer Prize?' James Reich deserves the highest recognition for writing such a superb novel. Reviewed by Laura Dunlap

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