

Delving deep inside

This Is How It Goes

Darlinghurst Theatre

Stage



Wayne McDaniel, former professional basketballer turned actor, shuffled out of a gruelling rehearsal, got into his car to drive

home, stopped at a traffic light and burst into tears.

Exhausted, the 198cm-tall performer phoned a friend for consolation, parked at the side of the road, turned off his phone and spent the next 20 minutes gathering his scattered thoughts.

The night before the rehearsal, McDaniel had been spruiking the talents of Sydney Kings basketballers in his role as court-side announcer for their home games. Later, his young daughter woke him in the middle of the night.

"I was driving down Cleveland St in Surry Hills and I had tears coming out of my eyes," says McDaniel, who is appearing in American playwright Neil LaBute's latest play, *This Is How It Goes*, at Darlinghurst Theatre.

"I was so exhausted I sat in the car and thought, 'What have I come out of?' This [play] is a monster of a piece, so much deeper and darker than anything I've done before.

"I thought, 'I have to make sure I can stay on top of this'.

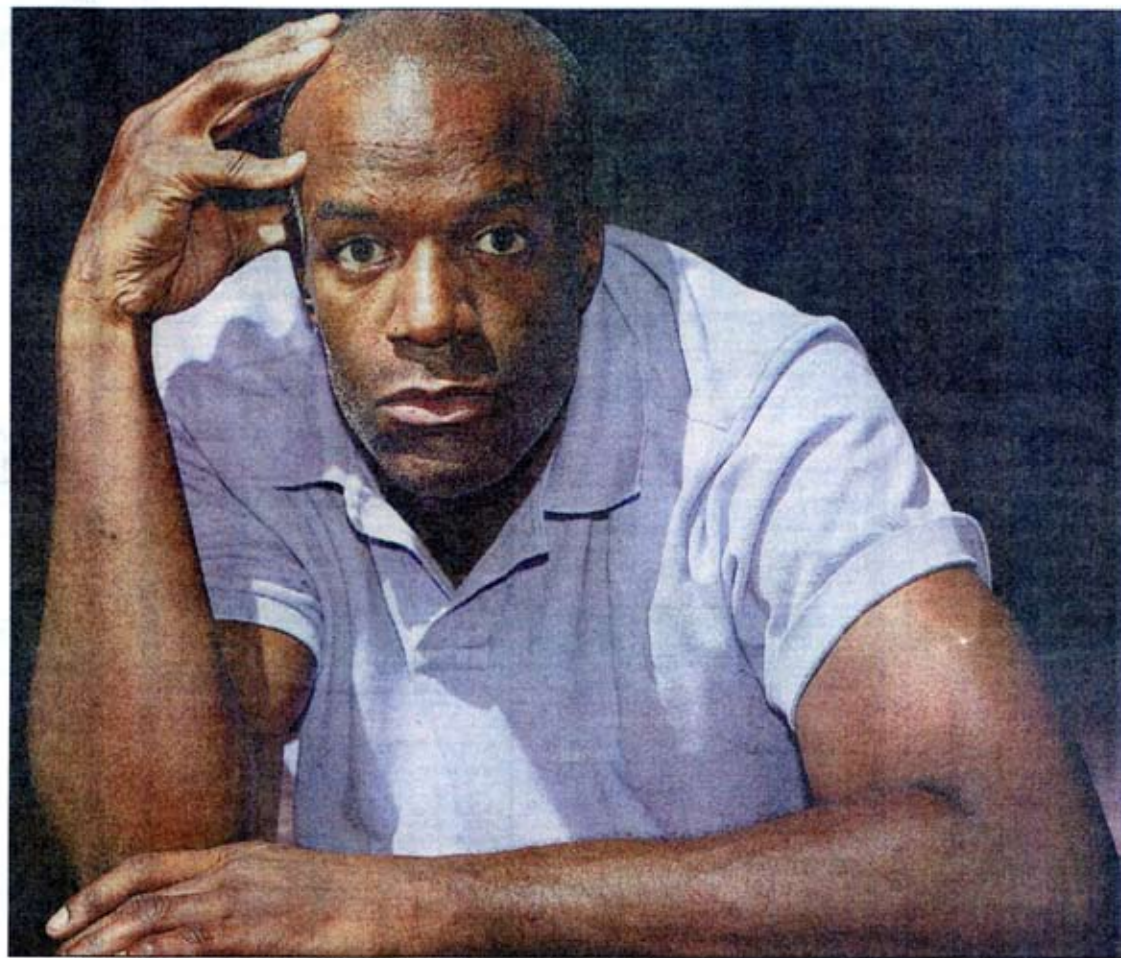
"It's much tougher than a basketball finals game because it's not just physical. It means encompassing my whole being.

"It's meaty and juicy and very challenging. The tears were a combination of the exhaustion and also the challenge to go to that dark side of my character and be comfortable with it."

In *This Is How It Goes* (directed by Toby Schmitz) Cody, played by McDaniel, has the seemingly perfect inter-racial marriage.

A former champion athlete, he met and married Belinda (Rebecca Rocheford Davies), a high-school cheerleader, as teenagers but after 12 years and two children their relationship has become humdrum.

When Belinda meets an old classmate, played by Patrick Brammall, nothing can ever be the



Primal . . . ex-professional basketballer Wayne McDaniel plays a businessman with marriage troubles

same between the married couple.

"It's very dark and powerful," says McDaniel. "He's a charming and witty businessman who has been left a fortune, kind of a classic guy.

"But he's also primal and raw and this love triangle highlights the chip on his shoulder."

McDaniel, a former competitor

in the Australian National Basketball League, who was voted one of the top 25 all-time stars of the competition, retired from the sport more than 10 years ago.

"I didn't have the motivation at 36 to keep playing," he says. "I knew I wanted to move into other things.

"It was always in the back of my

mind that I would do some sort of acting in some capacity, but I didn't think it would be this kind of powerful theatre."

□ 19 Greenknowe Ave, Potts Point; until March 22. \$25-\$30, 8356 9987, darlinghursttheatre.com