

FATALITY

by Todd Ford



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CHARACTERS

VOICES: These characters represent influence. They are shadowy characters who speak in a low hiss like whisper.

CHARLIE: A care free partier and Dave's friend. He believes in living life in the moment.

DAVE: A high school senior. He is popular and attractive. He usually makes the correct decision but is easily susceptible to the voice of influence and friends.

LUKE: Another of Dave's friend, He is loud brash and occasionally bullying.

HUNTER: Another of Dave's friend. Hunter is typically a good kid but is more concerned about Dave being in trouble then the consequences of his actions.

PERSON 1: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

PERSON 2: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

PERSON 3: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

PERSON 4: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

PERSON 5: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

PERSON 6: A friend of Dave's who tries to be a voice of reason in a sea of influence.

FATHER: Dave's father who has developed an angry resentment of Dave because of Dave's choice.

BROTHER: Dave's brother who idolized him and now struggles to find a suitable role model.

MOTHER: Dave's mother who feels guilt at the loss of her son.

GIRLFRIEND: Dave's girlfriend who sees her future shatter as a result of Dave's choice.

VICTIM'S MOTHER: One of the victims in the car Dave's car struck. Angry, resentful unforgiving.

FEMALE VICTIM: One of the victims in the car Dave's car struck. Angry, resentful unforgiving.

MALE VICTIM: The victim that was in the car with Dave. Angry, resentful, unforgiving.

Genders can be changed or parts doubled to meet your needs.

PRODUCTION NOTES

This script has purposely been left very open for interpretation. The staging that I envisioned while writing was a darkened stage with a harsh light on Dave. The other characters would be lit in a softer light leaving an almost ethereal feel to them. Voices faces should be concealed (with hood or mask) except in places where they play specific character. The voices of reason and the victims have been left nameless intentionally (i.e. person 1, victim's mother) to show that their voice did not have a penetrating impact on Dave's choice. However I leave it to the director's discretion to interpret the play as they see fit. Doubling and gender changing is acceptable for any character in the play except for *Dave* who should not be doubled.

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(In darkness we hear the screech of tires followed by the inevitable impact of two cars. The stage is then illuminated by a slow red flickering light giving the impression of flame. Sitting in the middle of the stage we see a young man. His head is down. HE takes a deep breath and speaks.)

(The voices overlap and build in intensity as the scene progresses)

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Have a beer.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Everybody's doing it.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Have a toke.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* It's just weed.

(ONE of the VOICES separates from the group and takes on the persona of CHARLIE meanwhile the VOICES continue chanting the background. DAVE sees CHARLIE and stands.)

CHARLIE: Have a beer man. Relax. We're light years away from parents and expectations. It's our senior year. It's time for you to have some fun.

DAVE: *(taking beer)* OK, but just one. Remember last time. I still haven't gotten the smell out of my rug and I don't think Valerie will ever talk to me again.

(CHARLIE takes out a joint and lights it. HE offers it to DAVE coughing slightly in the process.)

DAVE: No thanks. You know I don't do that stuff. *(pointing to the beer)* This is my only vice. Won't judge you, just not my thing.

CHARLIE: Dave. You've got to broaden your horizons. We're not freshmen anymore. Trust me it will change your world. After all everybody's doing it. If it were that bad they wouldn't.

DAVE: I don't know.

CHARLIE: *(handing him the joint)* Just have a toke. You don't like it, no sweat.

(CHARLIE rejoins the VOICES taking up the chant as HE does so.)

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* You're fine.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* It's only a block.

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VOICES: *(in a whisper)* It's been an hour.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Just drive slow.

(ONE of the VOICES separates from the group and becomes LUKE the chant continues in the background. LUKE approaches DAVE holding a beer.)

LUKE: *(handing DAVE the beer)* Here you go have another beer. No sense letting it go to waste.

DAVE: No, I got to go soon. I have an eleven o'clock curfew and I'm already an hour late. My parents are going to freak. I wish I hadn't had that last one I got to sober up.

LUKE: Sober up. You're kidding right? It's been like an hour since your last beer and you only live a block away.

DAVE: Yeah, but I'm kind of tired too and you know I really don't think I should...

LUKE: What's wrong with you? This is a party, you should be having fun. Instead you're nursing beer like a baby.

DAVE: But what if I get pulled over?

LUKE: You won't. Just drive real slow. Obey all the traffic laws. It's only a block you'll make it.

(DAVE takes beer from LUKE's hand and LUKE rejoins the VOICES taking up their chant as HE does. DAVE lies down on the floor.)

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* I do it all the time.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Just chew some gum.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Just stay between the lines.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* You're just tipsy not drunk.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* You got to get home somehow.

(ONE of the VOICES leaves the group and becomes HUNTER. HUNTER shakes DAVE awakening him.)

HUNTER: Dave, wake up man. Don't you have an eleven o'clock curfew? It's going on midnight. If you ever want to see the sun again I'd get home and sneak in.

DAVE: *(still clearly intoxicated)* I don't feel so good. I think I may still be a little drunk. I better not...

HUNTER: Here's some gum. Just get going or you're going to get busted.

DAVE: But, I'm still...

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HUNTER: You're not drunk just tipsy that's all. You really need to get home somehow. I'm just looking out for you. Your parents aren't exactly understanding.

DAVE: Okay. Okay, I'm going.

HUNTER: Just stay between the lines. You'll be fine.

(HUNTER rejoins the group taking up the chant as HE does so. DAVE stands looking frustrated and lost. The chant builds in intensity ending with no one will get hurt.)

VOICES: *(louder and in unison)* No one will get hurt.

DAVE: NO! You're wrong. You are so wrong. You said no one would get hurt, but everyone did. You said it was OK, but it wasn't. You told me you did it all the time, but never let me know this would happen. Why? Why did this happen to me? I've lost everything. I've lost it all. There's only one person responsible and that person is me. I took four lives and destroyed countless others. Mothers, friends, and families grieving because of my reckless action. I made a conscious decision. A defining act. I was warned but didn't listen.

(Lights go out. They rise to a pale blue. SIX PEOPLE stand lined up. DAVE stands stage left with car keys in his hand. DAVE walks forward and is stopped by the FIRST PERSON.)

PERSON 1: Dave, I think you should crash here tonight.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Everyone is doing it. It's just a joint. You're tipsy not drunk. You got to get home somehow.

DAVE: I got to get home somehow or my parents will freak.

(DAVE walks forward to PERSON TWO who stops him.)

PERSON 2: Can I give you a ride home, Dave?

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Have a beer. Have a toke. It's been an hour. It's only a block.

DAVE: No thanks, it's only a block. I'll be alright.

(DAVE walks forward to PERSON THREE who stops him.)

PERSON 3: Come on, Dave. Don't do this, you've had too much.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Everybody's doing it. You're fine. Just chew some gum. You're tipsy not drunk.

DAVE: I'm tipsy not drunk, but thanks for worrying about me.

(DAVE walks forward to PERSON 4 who stops him.)

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PERSON 4: You don't have to do this. You'll get arrested, just let me give you a ride home.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Have a toke. It's only a block. Just drive slow. Just chew some gum.

DAVE: It's only a block. I'll just chew some gum. If I'm pulled over they'll never know.

(DAVE walks forward and is stopped by PERSON 5 who is noticeably crying.)

PERSON 5: Dave, honey, I won't get in the car with you. I can't stand seeing you like this. Please don't drive I don't want to lose you.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* I do it all the time. It's been an hour. Just stay between the lines. Everybody's doing it.

DAVE: *(angrily)* Everybody's doing it. Why do you always have to ruin my fun? Don't judge me.

(DAVE walks forward to PERSON 6 who stands in front of him, arms crossed.)

PERSON 6: Dave, you're my best friend, I won't let you do this. If you are going to drive you're going through me.

VOICES: *(in a whisper)* Have a beer. Just stay between the lines. It's just weed. You're fine.

DAVE: I'm fine, now get out of my way.

(DAVE starts to walk forward. PERSON 6 pushes him. DAVE hits him hard and PERSON 6 falls to the ground. DAVE mimes putting keys into the car door. We hear the sound of a crash again and the lights return to the red flickering state.)

DAVE: Six times. Six times, I was warned, but I didn't listen. I've hurt so many. I thought I could handle it, I was wrong.

PERSON 1: If only I hadn't thrown the party.

DAVE: It wasn't your fault. I could have stayed. I didn't have to leave. You offered me...

(DAVE reaches out to PERSON 1 who falls to his/her knees.)

PERSON 2: If only I hadn't brought the beer.

DAVE: How could you know I wouldn't have control? If you hadn't brought it someone else would have. You can't be blamed.

(DAVE reaches for PERSON 2 who falls to his/her knees.)

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PERSON 3: If only I'd cut you off.

DAVE: You couldn't have stopped me. I wanted beer and I was going to get it. I just wish I'd listened.

(DAVE reaches for PERSON 3 who falls to his/her knees.)

PERSON 4: If only I'd called the cops.

DAVE: You didn't want me in trouble. You thought it would be OK. Don't blame yourself.

(DAVE reaches for PERSON 4 who falls to his/her knees.)

PERSON 5: If only I'd been a better girlfriend.

DAVE: Honey, you couldn't have known. How could you. You always looked for the best in me. I love...

(DAVE reaches for PERSON 5 and SHE falls to her knees.)

PERSON 6: If only I'd been stronger.

DAVE: You we're strong. I failed you. You are my best friend and I failed. You tried to help me and I hit you. Please don't...

(DAVE reaches for PERSON 6 and HE falls to his knees. The lights fade to a cool blue. FIVE PEOPLE line behind the area where DAVE is standing. FATHER approaches DAVE.)

FATHER: I know I should be telling you how much I'll miss you. About how sad I'll be without you. About how this was a tragic accident, but I can't. I feel nothing but anger. How could you have done something so stupid? Was that last beer really worth it? Was it worth the damage you have done? This was no accident, it was a selfish act. Your mother and I cared for you, raised you, taught you right from wrong. We watched as you went from rolling to crawling to walking. We held your hand as we led you into school. We beamed with pride at your successes in high school. We were proud of you. We watched as you compassionately touched those around you. We watched as you became a guiding brother, a loving son, and a good friend to those around you. Then it all changed. In one decision you destroyed it all. You left those you touched with nothing. You a left a brother with no one to guide him. Friends with nothing but questions. Parents with nothing but broken hearts. I should grieve, I should forgive, but I hate.

(FATHER pushes DAVE to one knee.)

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DAVE: Dad, please no. I didn't mean to make you hate me. Please don't hate me. Dad come...

(MOTHER stands behind DAVE and interrupts him with her speech.)

MOTHER: I stood by your cradle for hours, staring at you, watching you sleep. For the first year, I almost never left your side. I was afraid that if I did you would stop breathing. Years passed, but I always stood near you worrying. I kissed boobos and dried tears. I always watched over you. High school came and my friends, my family and even you told me that it was time to let you go. So I did. I let you have your freedom and it ended you. I love you and forgive you. It was not your fault. It was mine. I should have stood a moment longer. I should have somehow held onto you for a bit more time. You died alone without your protector. I'm left empty and hollow, a shell of who I used to be. When you were young, I knew my role. Now without you that roll is gone, perhaps it would be best if I were gone to.

(MOTHER pushes DAVE onto two knees.)

DAVE: Please, don't do this. I didn't know it would happen. You couldn't have protected me, don't take your own...

(BROTHER approaches him.)

BROTHER: *(tears streaming down his face)* You were my hero. You were my superman. To me you could leap tall buildings, outrace trains, and survive anything. You were invincible. What am I to do now? I no longer have a hero. What can I do in a world without heroes? I feel the darkness close in around me. You see the hero is gone, but the villains still remain. The darkness will enclose me. I will be battered and bruised. I will be insulted and ridiculed. I will look for someone to show me how to get through this, but no one will be there. There will be light too. I will succeed and triumph. I will feel joy in my heart. I will have my first date, my first kiss, my first car, my first child. In those moments of joy, I will look to someone to share them with. I will reach for you. Sadly, there will be no one there. Mom and Dad said that I will always carry you in my heart. How can I share things with someone in my heart? How can I rely on someone who is in my heart? How can I lean someone who is in my heart? I needed you. I needed you with me and you abandoned me. Why did you do it? Was the drink really worth it? Was the high

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so incredible that you didn't care about me anymore? I trusted you and you let me down.

(BROTHER pushes DAVE into a sitting position.)

DAVE: I never wanted to let you down. I made a mistake. It was just a mistake. I want to take it back. Please, let me.

(GIRLFRIEND approaches DAVE.)

GIRLFRIEND: I had a vision. I knew we were too young, but I had a vision anyway. In this vision we were old, but together. We were surrounded by people. As they talked I slowly began to realize who they were. They were our children and our children's children. They were who we were going to become and who would come after us. The vision has been replaced now. It's replaced by one I saw yesterday. I stood by your coffin. I saw your cool pale skin. I touched your rigid lifeless hand. A man came up and said "Doesn't he look peaceful?" I wanted to scream. No, you didn't look peaceful. The man in my dreams he looked peaceful. He looked content just being with me. You didn't look peaceful. You looked dead. All those dreams are gone. All those children are gone. You sipped from that bottle you drank away our future. When you smoked that joint you burned my soul. When you got into that car you careless crushed our future like the twisted metal you were trapped in. I hate you for that. I'm left with only one question. I loved you. Why didn't you love me?

(GIRLFRIEND pushes DAVE so HE is laying on his back. Ceremoniously FATHER, MOTHER, BROTHER and GIRLFRIEND place a single rose on his chest. The lights dim to a barely visible glow and the VOICES whisper in the darkness. TWO carry a black sheet. As THEY say the following lines the VOICES close in finally enshrouding him in the sheet.)

VOICES: *(whispering)* Should

VOICES: *(whispering)* Have

VOICES: *(whispering)* Listened

DAVE: I did. I listened to you. I did exactly what you said.

VOICES: *(whispering)* Not

VOICES: *(whispering)* To

VOICES: *(whispering)* Us

DAVE: Then who? Who am I supposed to listen to?

VOICES: *(whispering)* Father

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VOICES: *(whispering)* Mother

VOICES: *(whispering)* Brother

VOICES: *(whispering)* Friend

VOICES: *(whispering)* Girlfriend

VOICES: *(whispering)* They all told you.

VOICES: *(whispering)* They all warned you.

DAVE: I should have heard them.

VOICES: *(whispering)* But you listened to us.

DAVE: Who are you?

VOICES: *(whispering)* Temptation.

VOICES: *(whispering)* Desire

VOICES: *(whispering)* Influence

VOICES: *(whispering)* Rage

VOICES: *(whispering)* We are you.

DAVE: No, no you're not me. I'll get out of this, there's always a way out.

VOICES: *(whispering)* No escape.

VOICES: *(whispering)* No exit.

DAVE: No. God, no. What will become of me?

VOICES: *(whispering)* Broken

VOICES: *(whispering)* Buried

VOICES: *(whispering)* Hated

VOICES: *(whispering)* Forgotten

VOICES: *(whispering)* Twisted

VOICES: *(whispering)* Burnt

VOICES: *(loudly covering with shroud)* Dead.

(Lights suddenly go to black out. A dim blue light comes up at the back of the stage. DAVE sits up the shroud falling off of his face. THREE SHADOWED FIGURES stand in the background.)

DAVE: It's over, thank God it's over. It was just a dream. Thank God it was just a dream.

(The THREE FIGURES touch DAVE.)

VICTIM'S MOTHER: This is no dream, Dave.

FEMALE VICTIM: This is reality.

MALE VICTIM: The reality is you killed us.

DAVE: I didn't. It was an accident. I'm sorry. Please. I am so sorry.

VICTIM'S MOTHER: It was no accident.

FEMALE VICTIM: It's as if you shot us.

MALE VICTIM: You made the conscious choice.

VICTIM'S MOTHER: You took the drink.

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FEMALE VICTIM: You got in the car.

MALE VICTIM: You took the chance.

DAVE: I wouldn't have if I'd known it was going to come to this. I wouldn't have if I'd know it'd cost me so much.

VICTIM'S MOTHER: What it cost you? It cost me my life, my husband my child. I had them stolen from me for your good time. I had no say in the matter. My daughter had been at a friend's party. It was getting out of control and she didn't feel comfortable. She called me because she knew what the right decision was. She decided to do what was responsible. She made a choice. She made a responsible decision. When I picked her up she was crying. I held her close and told her how proud I was of her. She smiled and we drove away knowing she did the right thing. She was only a freshman and she made the right choice. Why couldn't you. Because of you our lives were cruelly ripped away by somebody who was too selfish to care.

DAVE: I didn't mean to be selfish. I just...

FEMALE VICTIM: Didn't mean to be selfish? Well that's what you were. You took with no thought for others. You stole my life from me. I didn't even know you. My mom and I were in the car coming home. It was my first real high school party. I so wanted to be popular to fit in. But when I saw it start to careen out of control I listened to my conscious. Some place somewhere else you decided not to. You forgot to think because you're selfish. I thought about my friend and my family. I thought about my dad and what he would tell me to do. I made the right decision. I just wanted to get back to my dad. My dad is still waiting. He'll always be waiting. For your good time you've given him an eternity of sorrow and pain.

DAVE: I didn't know the pain I would cause. I didn't realize. I can't take it back.

MALE VICTIM: That's right, you can't take it back. I got in that car to try and stop you. I was your responsibility. Your passenger. I begged you to stop. I told you that you were too drunk. You wouldn't listen. I was your friend and you destroyed me. I was the quarterback of the football team. I had just asked my girlfriend to prom. I was riding high and life was good. I'll never know what I could have become. I had dreams. I wanted to go to college. I wanted to learn. I wanted to be a success. I wanted to finish my senior year with my buddies. To dress in a gown and throw a hat into the air. Because of you I will never do these things. I will never graduate or joke with my buddies again and it's all your fault.



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