

The Capsule

A ten minute play

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CAST

DAVID: 30

CAROL: 15

SETTING

A cheap motel room

A cheap motel room. A bed, and a table with a purse and a wallet on it. A man of 30 is getting dressed. A young woman lies on the bed, on her stomach, looking up at him.

CAROL: When can I see you again?

DAVID: I'm not sure. I'm pretty busy over the next few weeks.

CAROL: Doing what?

DAVID: Work stuff.

CAROL: *(pause)* What about two weeks time?

DAVID: Sorry, I can't make it. Maybe in a month or so.

CAROL: A month?

DAVID: Maybe. I'll email you.

CAROL: Email?

DAVID: Yeah.

CAROL: Okay. *(pause)* I have to tell you something.

DAVID: What? That I was just great and made you come again and again?

CAROL: No.

DAVID: Then I don't think I'll be very interested, to be honest.

CAROL: I think you will be.

DAVID: Okay, try me.

CAROL: *(pause)* I'm only 15.

DAVID: *(pause)* What?

CAROL: I'm only 15.

DAVID: Are you joking? Trying to see if you can give me a heart attack?

CAROL: No.

DAVID: *(pause)* Oh fuck.

CAROL: It's okay, I'm not going to tell anyone.

DAVID: But you told me you were eighteen.

CAROL: I liked you.

DAVID: You should have told me!

CAROL: I didn't want to put you off.

DAVID: It would have put me off, I can tell you. I wouldn't have touched you with a barge-pole.

CAROL: That's why I didn't tell you.

DAVID: But you look so much older. You look...let me see your ID.

CAROL: You don't believe me?

DAVID: You don't look that young.

CAROL: Well, I am.

DAVID: Then show me some ID.

CAROL: You think I'm lying to you?

DAVID: Show it to me!

CAROL: God, okay. You don't have to go psycho.

(She holds out her purse and he snatches it from her and opens it.)

DAVID: What's this?

CAROL: It doesn't have my age on it. It's a library card.

DAVID: Well, what does?

CAROL: My school ID.

DAVID: Where is it?

CAROL: Give it to me and I'll -

DAVID: Just tell me where it is?

CAROL: *(pause)* Under the photo of my friends.

(He frantically drags it out and looks at it.)

CAROL: We're so pissed in that photo. It was Sarah's birthday -

DAVID: 10 August 1991. *(He does the maths in his head.)* Shit. Only one month until your sixteenth birthday.

CAROL: Are you going to buy me a present?

DAVID: What?

CAROL: For my birthday?

DAVID: Are you insane? I could go to gaol for this. *(pause)* Why did you decide to tell me this now?

CAROL: I just...I don't know. I thought you should know.

DAVID: So I could put an end to it?

CAROL: Well....no.

DAVID: Oh God. I can't believe you. After all the fun we've had together, you're going to blackmail me. Is this what your plan was from the beginning? - To set me up?

CAROL: No, no -

DAVID: Because I'm not exactly rich, you know? I'm just a middle-ranking public servant with a mortgage.

CAROL: I don't want your money, I don't.

DAVID: Then why are you doing this?

CAROL: I just...I don't want to lose you.

(Pause)

DAVID: You don't want to lose me?

CAROL: No, I -

DAVID: You haven't fallen in love with me, have you?

(She shrugs)

DAVID: Oh for God's sake, Carol, this was supposed to be a casual thing. That's why people register on that site. They want casual sex, not love, then back to their normal lives.

CAROL: I didn't mean to.

DAVID: You don't even know anything about me.

CAROL: I do now.

DAVID: What do you mean?

CAROL: You're a middle-ranking public servant. With a mortgage.

DAVID: Well, yes. Not exactly unique, is it?

CAROL: Do a wife and kids come with the mortgage?

DAVID: *(pause)* Carol, we agreed to say as little about our real lives as possible.

CAROL: But that was at first. I want to know you better now.

DAVID: Why? So you can tell the Police all about me.

CAROL: I told you -

DAVID: This is ridiculous. I'm just going to leave. I'm going.

(He starts to leave)

CAROL: What about your wallet, *David*?

(He stops. She holds it out to him.)

CAROL: Is that your real name? That's what your licence says. Is the address on it right, too?

DAVID: You went through my wallet?

CAROL: When you were in the shower.

DAVID: God, you really are fifteen.

(He snatches the wallet)

CAROL: Why did you lie to me?

DAVID: Why did I lie to you? That's rich coming from you.

CAROL: At least I told you my real name.

DAVID: Like I said, I wanted us to know as little about each other's lives as possible.

CAROL: Why?

DAVID: Look, forget about that. I just want you to answer one question. If I walk out of here right now, are you going to the police about me?

CAROL: *(pause)* I don't know.

DAVID: Oh Christ. What do you want, Carol, please tell me. If it's money -

CAROL: I want to know why you don't want us to know anything about each other. This is the third time we've seen each other, and I had to look in your wallet to find out anything. Can't you tell me why?

DAVID: *(pause)* Because it would ruin the fantasy.

CAROL: What fantasy is that?

DAVID: That...that the unsexy things of life wouldn't be able to get in here. Things like work, and mortgages and pressure and bills and disappointments and all those other things. I just wanted it to be about sex. Wild, uncontaminated sex. That's all.

CAROL: But I want to tell you things about myself.

DAVID: You've already told me the most important thing. That's all I need to know.

CAROL: Aren't you even interested? After all the things we've done together. I did everything you asked me to.

DAVID: I know. You've been great. I've had a wonderful time. I have.

CAROL: So I'm just like a...a sex object to you?

DAVID: *(pause)* All right. Tell me this. Why does a fifteen year old girl register on a web site that's function is to bring people together for casual sex?

CAROL: *(pause)* My cousin told me to.

DAVID: Your cousin?

CAROL: She did it and she met a man who's really rich. He buys her lots of presents. And he's even given her money. He's really nice.

DAVID: You thought I was rich?

(She shrugs)

DAVID: How could you possibly have been able to tell? We arranged to meet over the internet without knowing anything about each other.

CAROL: But I saw you before I met you.

DAVID: When?

CAROL: I saw you at the fountain. You were wearing the red tie so I knew it was you, remember. Before I spoke to you me and my cousin watched you for a while -

DAVID: Your cousin saw me?

(She nods)

DAVID: Oh great. A witness.

CAROL: She said she had to get a good look at you before she'd let me talk to you.

DAVID: To make sure I looked rich?

(She nods)

DAVID: God knows why she gave you the okay to speak to me.

CAROL: She didn't.

DAVID: What?

CAROL: She thought you looked like a middle-ranking public servant.

DAVID: *(pause)* But I was wearing my best suit.

(She shrugs)

DAVID: Then why did you talk to me?

CAROL: *(pause)* I liked your face. I thought you were...kind.

DAVID: *(pause)* Thanks. Sorry I'm not rich.

CAROL: I don't care.

DAVID: And I'm sorry I never got you a present. I should have thought.

CAROL: You brought champagne the first time. That was nice.

DAVID: But not the last two times.

CAROL: No. But I don't mind. I just like being with you.

DAVID: And I like being with you, Carol, but we can't see each other again. I'm sorry.

CAROL: But I'll be sixteen soon, so it will be all right.

DAVID: *(pause)* Carol, the mortgage does come with a wife and kids.

CAROL: *(pause)* Oh.

DAVID: I'm sorry.

CAROL: But you don't wear a ring.

DAVID: I know. I hate rings. When I put it on it made me feel...anxious. It felt so tight. So I took it off the day after the wedding.

CAROL: When did you get married?

DAVID: *(pause)* Five years ago.

CAROL: In a church?

DAVID: Yes, in a church.

CAROL: What sort of dress did your wife wear?

DAVID: A white one. That's all I can tell you.

CAROL: What's her name?

DAVID: Carol, I'm sorry, I'm not telling you that.

CAROL: *(pause)* What about the names of your kids.

DAVID: Carol!

(Pause)

CAROL: You know, when I went through your wallet I saw your medicare card.

DAVID: So?

CAROL: There were no kids listed on it. I'm on my mother's card and my father's.

(Pause)

DAVID: Aren't you the crafty one?

CAROL: You're not married with kids, are you?

DAVID: No.

CAROL: Then why did you say it?

DAVID: Because you said you were in love with me and I was trying, ever so politely, to put you off.

CAROL: Don't you like me?

DAVID: I like you. But I don't want a relationship. Especially not with a fifteen year old.

CAROL: Why not?

DAVID: For God's sake Carol, I'm twice your age! Do you think I'm going to hang out at the shopping centre with you and your friends? Or go to a blue light disco?

CAROL: I don't hang out at shopping centres. And I don't even know what a blue light disco is.

DAVID: Well, whatever it is you do, I can assure you, I don't do it.

CAROL: Well, if you'd just listen I can -

DAVID: The whole purpose of us meeting was casual sex. Between two consenting adults. That was it. But instead I end up with a little kid. I knew this was too good to be true. When my mate told me about it, I thought it was crap, and now I know it is.

(Carol starts to cry.)

DAVID: Oh Carol, I'm -

CAROL: I just want someone to talk to.

(She continues to cry.)

DAVID: Okay, okay.

CAROL: You're not the only one with a stuffed life.

DAVID: My life's not that bad -

CAROL: My Mum and Dad got divorced last year, and my sister's really sick.

DAVID: *(pause)* I'm sorry to hear that.

CAROL: And I keep failing things at school. Not everything, but I'm no good at essays. I just don't know how to argue properly. I just don't get it.

DAVID: Well, maybe you could talk to your teachers about it.

CAROL: I have, but they just get frustrated with me. So in the end I just nod my head and say, "oh right. I see. Thanks."

DAVID: Maybe you could get a tutor.

CAROL: My parents can't afford a tutor. My father is a removalist and my mother works as a receptionist. It's not like they're middle-ranking public servants.

DAVID: I doubt I could afford a tutor either. Especially considering the way the economy is going.

CAROL: How much do you get paid?

DAVID: Carol -

CAROL: How much?

DAVID: *(pause)* Seventy-five thousand a year.

CAROL: *(pause)* That's more than my parents earn combined.

DAVID: *(pause)* Have you thought of seeing your school counsellor?

CAROL: No way! My friend went to her and said all she did was make her spend the session writing a study plan.

DAVID: That sounds like a good idea. If you set aside a certain amount of time each day to study, even if it's only thirty minutes, it's amazing how much you can achieve.

CAROL: *(pause)* God, you sound like one of my teachers.

DAVID: *(pause)* Well, Carol, it's the only way to succeed. You have to have a plan, and then stick to it. How much time do you devote to study each day at the moment?

CAROL: God, I don't know.

DAVID: Well, there's your problem. But it's easily fixed. In fact, I have an idea. How about tomorrow you email me a draft study plan so I can make comments?

CAROL: What?

DAVID: And also send me some of your essay questions. Then I can give you some tips. And when you've finished the first draft of your essay I can make some suggestions. What do you say?

CAROL: *(pause)* Well, I guess so.

DAVID: Great. So make sure you send an email tomorrow and then we can meet again next week. Of course, you understand we won't be able to sleep together any more. But I can be your friend. Someone you can talk to. And I guarantee your marks at school will go up. I promise, Carol.

(He clasps her hands, passionately.)

CAROL: Okay, that's great. I'd better go now.

DAVID: What's the hurry? Don't you want to have a bit more of a talk? I'd love to hear more about your life.

CAROL: Sorry, I can't. I've got...netball training.

DAVID: Oh, okay. Well, you leave first and I'll leave in about ten minutes.

(She gathers up her stuff.)

DAVID: You were so right about us having a talk. I'm glad you've shared those things with me. I really think I'll be able to help you.

CAROL: Yeah, it'll be great.

(She starts to leave.)

DAVID: Remember, send me an email tomorrow. Tonight if you can.

CAROL: Yeah, I will.

DAVID: Great. See you soon.

(CAROL exits. DAVID stares after her for a moment, then yawns and lies down on the bed. Blackout.)