

Final Draft 8 Demo

INFLUENCE

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LOGLINE: After fleeing the scene of the fatal car accident that he caused, Luke struggles to cope with the guilt of what he has done. He discovers that the man who died in the crash left a wife and two children behind and he is determined to find a way to make it right.

FADE IN.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

MARIA, in her early 40's sits at a table with her husband, JOHN (mid 40's), and her two children, JACOB (4) and EMMA (13). Maria and JOHN are in an intense conversation while Emma distracts Jacob by incessantly scribbling on a napkin.

JOHN  
(through his teeth, trying to keep  
his voice down) I told you I would  
take care of it.

MARIA  
(in a raised tone) OK, when?

JOHN  
Keep your voice down. Can we please  
just talk about it later?

Maria grumbles and rolls her eyes, as John focuses intently on his food, pretending that the discussion never happened.

INT. SPORTS BAR - EVENING

LUKE, a young successful business executive in his late 20's, excitedly watches the game on the big screen with his buddies, all dressed in their suits after work. They knock down a few beers, enjoying their bachelorhood.

ADRIAN, Luke's closest friend, also in his late 20's, is a little past tipsy and screams in Luke's ear, even though Luke is right next to him.

ADRIAN  
Dude! You believe that? That was so  
sick! Man, if somebody did me like  
that, I would have to knock that  
boy out! (pretending he's on the  
court) You wanna throw down? What  
you got? BAM! WHAT!

Adrian hangs on Luke as he bursts out in laughter.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - EVENING

John leaves a tip for the waitress. Maria stands up, leaving him there at the table with the kids without saying a word. He rolls his eyes and stands up to get the kids ready to go.

JOHN  
Come on. Let's go.

INT. SPORTS BAR - EVENING

Luke and Adrian watch the TV intently as the game comes down to the last few seconds. Everyone in the bar counts down.

LUKE  
(yelling) 5-4-3...Come on! Come on!

The whole bar erupts into cheering. Luke and Adrian high five each other and others around them.

INT/EXT MARIA & JOHN'S CAR/ROAD - NIGHT

John is driving home. Maria grimaces as she looks out of the passenger window. Emma plays with a portable game console in the back seat, trying to ignore her parents. JACOB sleeps soundly in his car seat.

MARIA  
(in a snide tone) So...are you ready to talk about it now?

JOHN  
I don't know why you always have to take that tone with me. I'm doing the best I can. It would really help if you would just support me instead of nagging me constantly!

MARIA  
OK, so now I'm nagging? That's nice.

INT/EXT LUKE'S CAR/ROAD - NIGHT

Luke is driving Adrian home in a black luxury sports car. As one of their favorite songs come on, Adrian blares the stereo. Luke chuckles at Adrian's drunkenness and they both scream along to the song.

INT/EXT MARIA & JOHN'S CAR/ROAD - NIGHT

JOHN  
Well? You know I feel the stress of this situation too! Ever since you lost your job, it's all on me...the bills, the food, the mortgage...

MARIA  
There it is...since I lost my job...you know I'm looking.

JOHN  
I know. It's just - I don't know what we'll do if we lose the house.

INTERCUT - LUKE'S CAR/ROAD

Adrian is channel surfing to find another hit song. Luke is amused by his behavior.

LUKE

Dude, you gotta lay off the sauce!

ADRIAN

Hey, you only live once right?

Suddenly, Luke clips the back, right bumper of Maria & John's car in the lane to the left of them. There are no other cars in sight.

BEGIN SILENCE

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Maria & John's car is sent spinning out of control to the left as Luke's car continues forward. Luke watches in his rear view mirror as he sees the car spin around and crash into a parked car.

END SILENCE

INT/EXT LUKE'S CAR/ROAD

Luke is in shock, fidgeting, and begins to pull the car over.

ADRIAN

(yelling) What are you doing? GO!

LUKE

What? But we have to..

ADRIAN

Are you crazy? GO! Nobody saw! We barely even touched him! He's fine! Come on man!

LUKE

How do you know he's ok? We have to make sure!

ADRIAN

Come on dude! We'll get arrested! He's fine - just GO!

Luke hesitates, then speeds up and drives away.

INT LUKE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Luke is lying in his bed with his head buried deep in the pillow. He begins to awaken with his eyes squinted tight, as the light pierces through his eyelids. He rolls over, and winces as he feels his head pounding from the night before.

He shakes his head, as he realizes that maybe he drank one too many. He sits up and turns to get out of the bed and in an instant, the accident comes rushing into his memory.

FLASHBACK - SERIES OF SHOTS:

The crash is re-enacted in an array of shots. He sees flashes from the accident, as well as scenes he imagines from what may have happened after they fled the scene - blood on the steering wheel, broken windows, ambulance sirens.

Luke is crouched over, clenching his fists, squeezing his forehead and blinking his eyes in disbelief.

INT LUKE'S APARTMENT - PRESENT DAY

LUKE  
My God, what did I do?

Just then, Luke's phone RINGS. It's Adrian.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
(with fear in his voice) DUDE!

ADRIAN  
Dude, I am so hung...over...

LUKE  
Do you even remember what happened last night?

ADRIAN  
You mean that game?! That was one of the best games I've seen in years!

LUKE  
NO! I mean on the way home!

ADRIAN  
..Oh yeah! Man - that was CRAZY, huh? We're so lucky there wasn't anybody around! We would've been stuck!

LUKE  
WHAT! How can you say that? What if that guy got hurt?

ADRIAN

He didn't get hurt - you barely even bumped him!

LUKE

He spun out! You know what man...I...I gotta go!

ADRIAN

OK, wanna go to Jim's to watch the game again tonight? I hear it's Ladies Night!

LUKE

I gotta go. I'll call you later.

Luke hangs up the phone and sits for a moment to think. He jumps up and goes to his laptop where he begins to research. He sits at the computer for hours, frantically looking for any information and finally comes across a news report (video).

EXCERPT FROM NEWS REPORT:

Friday evening, a local man was killed by a suspected drunk driver who crashed into the man's car, causing him to spin out and crash into two parked cars. Authorities say the man's wife and children were also in the car, but only minor injuries were sustained. The suspect fled the scene and there have been no witnesses identified at this time.

BACK TO SCENE

Luke sinks in his chair as he stares at the computer.

LUKE

No... No... This isn't happening.  
No... Oh my...

Luke begins to sob with his head in his hands.

FADE TO BLACK

There is a startled inhale, followed by 4 very heavy breaths.

Luke turns the light on, his face covered with sweat. He shakes his head and buries it in his hands. After a moment, he throws his hands down, jumps out of bed and goes to get a beer from the fridge. He sits down at the computer.

BEGIN MONTAGE:

Luke is pacing in his apartment. He is ignoring numerous phone calls, stops shaving and showering. He is on the computer researching constantly. It has been several days.

END MONTAGE:

Luke is sitting at the computer. He pushes the keyboard away in frustration. There is an empty cocktail glass on the desk. He jumps up, grabs his coat and keys and goes out the door.

INT/EXT LUKE'S CAR/CRASH SITE - DAY

Luke drives up to the site of the crash and parks a block away. He hesitates to look up. He pauses, takes a deep breath, and brings himself to look over at the site.

There isn't much that sets it apart from any other part of the street. There are cars parked all along the right and left side of the tree-lined street. There are no remnants of an accident.

Then Luke looks closer and sees a small memorial set up at the bottom of one of the trees. There are flowers and a photo. He begins to tear up and takes another deep breath as he gets ready to get out. As he starts to open the door, he notices a woman crossing the street towards the memorial. He instantly freezes and retreats back into his car.

Maria, dressed in drab, loose sweats and a tan trench coat, her hair thrown into a ponytail, walks over to the memorial. She stands in front of it, staring.

Luke holds his breath as he waits for her to do something, his eyes now welling up even more.

Maria stands very still, gazing emotionless at John's photo. She kneels down slowly and fixes the flowers around the memorial, making sure they all face the proper direction. She strokes John's photo one time before standing up and walking back across the street to her car. She pulls off.

Luke, taken back by her brevity, becomes frantic. He is fidgeting with his keys and in an impulse, pulls out of his parking spot to follow Maria.

He follows her for a while until she pulls into a grocery store parking lot.

EXT GROCERY STORE PARKING LOT - DAY

He parks not too far from her and watches her and she goes in. He sits waiting and hears the phone RING. It's Adrian. He ignores it, but the call causes him to snap out his trance.

LUKE  
What am I doing?

Luke starts his car to leave, when Maria comes out of the grocery store. Unable to control his curiosity, he follows her once again. This time, he follows her home.

EXT MARIA'S HOUSE - DAY

Luke pulls up about 500 feet away and sees Maria's sister TANYA, who is watching the kids for her. Luke watches from his car as Maria enters the house and greets her children.

The children go to play in their rooms while Maria slumps down at the kitchen table, exhausted and defeated. Tanya walks over to her and hands her a cup of coffee, but Maria just begins to cry. Tanya comes closer and embraces her.

Luke collapses his head in his arms on the steering wheel.

EXT MARIA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT DAY

Luke wakes us suddenly as Maria's car door closes. He has slept there all night. He hides as Maria passes in her car and he quickly starts his car to see where she's going. He follows her to a nearby bank.

EXT BANK PARKING LOT DAY

Maria gets out of her car, dressed in business attire. Intrigued by her changed appearance, he follows her in.

INT BANK - DAY

Maria is sitting at the desk of a banker. The banker appears to be calming Maria as she is raising her voice towards him. UNIDENTIFIABLE ARGUING.

Luke looks intently at her face, paying close attention to her mouth, attempting to read her lips. The banker tries to calm Maria down, but she continues to bark back.

Maria jumps out of her chair and storms out of the bank.

INT/EXT LUKE'S CAR/MARIA'S HOUSE - THE NEXT MORNING - VERY EARLY

Luke slowly opens his bloodshot eyes and realizes he is at Maria's house again. There is no movement in Maria's house and a very exhausted Luke drives off to go home.

INT LUKE'S APARTMENT - EVENING

Luke is sitting at the computer, looking at the article he found about the crash. He hears a KNOCK at the door. Confused, he stands to go open it. He finds Adrian at the door, dressed in a suit with a smirk on his face.

ADRIAN

Sup?

Luke turns around to go back inside, but leaves the door open for Adrian to come in.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Dude. What's going on with you? Where have you been? I've been calling you for days!

LUKE

I've been busy.

ADRIAN

Busy? You haven't been at work, you haven't answered my calls, what the hell is goin on?

LUKE

Don't worry about me, I'm fine.

ADRIAN

You keep this up, you may not be fine - more like unemployed!

LUKE

Did you come over here to lecture me?

ADRIAN

No man, just checking up on you to make sure everything's cool. Wait a second. Is this about what happened the other night?

Luke looks at him, then looks down.

ADRIAN (CONT'D)

Dude, I'm telling you nothing happened to the guy. It was nothing. Let it go!

LUKE

Nothing? It wasn't just a guy! It was a whole family and that guy was the Dad. He's dead Adrian! He's dead! And now his wife and children are left with nothing! His wife doesn't have a job and they're gonna lose everything because of me! Does that sound like something I should just let go?

ADRIAN

Whoa, chill out...slow down. How do you even know all this?

LUKE

Because I found the report online and...

ADRIAN

The report said all of that?

LUKE

Well, it said part of it, then I went down there and I saw her at the memorial so I followed her and...

ADRIAN

Wait. You followed her? You're out of your mind! You're really crazy! You have to stop this!

LUKE

I know, but I just feel like I have to do something!

ADRIAN

What's done is done. There's nothing you can do now. Let it go!

LUKE

(under his breath) Whatever man.

ADRIAN

(changing the subject) So what's up with tonight? I'm gonna go check out this new spot downtown. Come with me and forget about all that stuff! There's gonna be this DJ that...

FADE TO BLACK

EXT PARK - DAY

Maria is sitting at a park bench, watching Emma play with Jacob on the playground. She is wrapped tightly in her trench coat with a scarf around her neck. Luke sits beside her on the bench, looking straight ahead as if looking at his own child playing. Maria takes note of him, but continues looking forward. Her eyes begin to well up and a single tear drop falls down her cheek.

Luke hands her a tissue.

MARIA

Oh, excuse me...thanks.

LUKE  
It's no problem.

MARIA  
...So, which one's yours?

LUKE  
Oh, that's him over there. Kevin.

Luke Points out a little boy who's playing on the playground.  
He appears to be about 5 or 6 years old.

MARIA  
AwwW, he seems to love the park!

LUKE  
Yeah, he does.

MARIA  
Mine are over there. The older one,  
playing Mommy is Emma. She's 13 and  
the little guy is Jacob. He's 4.

LUKE  
Looks like Emma's quite the helper.

MARIA  
Yeah, she's helped me out a lot  
lately. She's a blessing.

Maria starts to tear up again.

MARIA (CONT'D)  
I'm sorry.

LUKE  
No, it's ok...really.

Both Luke & Maria look out at the playground.

LUKE (CONT'D)  
...You know how people say that  
everything happens for a reason?

Maria continues looking forward.

LUKE (CONT'D)

I used to think that. But now, I'm  
starting to realize that things  
happen as a consequence of choices  
that we make, good or bad. And it  
seems like it's not until we make  
bad choices that we understand the  
impact that they really have on the  
people around us. It's not that we  
intend to make bad choices...I guess  
all we can do when we hurt others  
by our choices is...to make it right  
the best way we know how.

Just as Luke finishes his speech, Jacob runs up to Maria.

MARIA

You guys done playing? OK, well I guess we're gonna get outta here!

LUKE

(fumbling) Oh, ok ...s...s...sorry for rambling. Guess I just needed to tell someone that. Thanks for listening.

Maria is busy getting the kids ready to go.

MARIA

Alright, well it was nice meeting you.

LUKE

Nice meeting you.

Maria begins to walk away. Luke stands up and starts to walk in the other direction. Maria turns back to take another look at Luke and she sees him walking away from the park alone. She looks at the boy who Luke claimed as his son and sees him running up to another person.

Confused and a little scared, she grabs a hold of Jacob a little tighter and nudges Emma to move faster.

INT MARIA'S HOUSE - LATER THAT EVENING

Maria is cooking dinner and realizes that she needs something from her purse. She goes over to her purse and reaches in. With a confused look on her face, she pulls out an envelope.

She doesn't recognize it and carefully opens it to see what it is. She pulls out a letter that is folded into thirds. As she opens the letter, she begins reading cautiously.

LUKE (V.O.)

Ever since the night of the accident, I've known that what I did was wrong. I should have stopped. I should have made sure everyone was ok.

Maria sits at the kitchen table stunned as she continues.

LUKE (V.O.)

I should have taken responsibility for my actions. I've spent the last 2 weeks wondering why I didn't stop. Why wasn't I the first one to your car?

INT POLICE STATION - EVENING

Luke sits at the desk of a Police Detective. He has just finished confessing. The Policeman stands and walks over to Luke to place him in handcuffs.

LUKE (V.O.)

Why wasn't I the first one to call 9-1-1? Why didn't I do what was right? Now I see that even though I can't change the past, what I can do is to try to change the future by doing what's right. I have decided to take responsibility for my bad choice.

INT MARIA'S HOUSE - EVENING

Maria reaches in the envelope and pulls out a check. She breaks down into tears.

LUKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I ask that you please accept this check as an offering from me to you and your family. I know it won't bring your husband back, but my hope is that it may help you to move forward.

Maria hears a KNOCK at the door. Still crying, she opens the door to find two Police Officers. They tell her that Luke has confessed and she falls onto one of the Officers, sobbing.

LUKE (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I want you to know that I am extremely sorry for all of the pain that I caused and I can only pray that you will one day forgive me.

INT POLICE STATION - EVENING

Luke is led by Police Officers out of the Detective's Office. His face appears scared but at the same time, he feels relieved as finally, the burden has been lifted.

FADE OUT.

THE END.

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