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SF PERUSALS

SPARKPLUG

by David Judge

SAMUEL FRENCH

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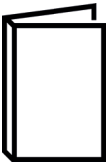
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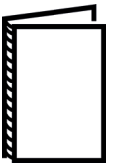
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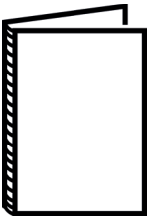
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



David Judge is an actor, poet and playwright from Manchester. His dual heritage and working-class roots sit at the centre of his work and his visceral, vibrant, lyrical and urgent voice asks valuable questions about identity, community and loyalty in Britain today.

David trained as an actor at E15 Acting school and with the National Youth Theatre and has spent over ten years working in theatre and TV. During this time, he began writing poetry/spoken word and became a regular on the Manchester open mic scene, including a performance at the Manchester Literature Festival 2014.

His first play *Skipping Rope*, commissioned by Box of Tricks through their PlayBox playwright on attachment scheme, went on to reach the final forty of the Bruntwood Prize for Playwriting, 2015. In 2016 David was a playwright on attachment to Talawa and the Royal Exchange Theatre, Manchester.

His three plays, *Skipping Rope*, *PanLid* and *SparkPlug*, have all been finalists for the Alfred Fagon Best New Play of the Year Award.

You can follow him on Twitter @Davidsjudge

CREATIVE TEAM

DAVID JUDGE – PLAYWRIGHT

David Judge is a dual heritage poet, playwright and performer from Manchester. During his PlayBox attachment to Box of Tricks in 2014–15, David wrote his debut play *Skipping Rope* which went on to be a finalist for the prestigious Alfred Fagon Award 2015 and was shortlisted to the last 40 of the Bruntwood Prize 2015. David was Talawa writer-on-attachment with the Royal Exchange 2016–17 during which time he wrote *PanLid* (finalist for Alfred Fagon Award 2018) which was presented as part of PUSH Festival in January 2018. David was on the BBC's Hotlist 2017. He has recently completed the Channel 4 4screenwriting programme. As a spoken word artist, David regularly performs with Bad Language and has twice reached the final of spoken word competition *Word Wars*.

HANNAH TYRRELL-PINDER – DIRECTOR

Hannah trained as a director at Mountview Academy of Theatre Arts and is Joint Artistic Director of Box of Tricks. Directing credits for Box of Tricks include: *Narvik* (Liverpool Playhouse Studio 2015 and national tour 2017); *In Doggerland* (national tour); *Word:Play/NWxSW* (Regional Tour); *Picture a City* (Everyword 2012, Liverpool Playhouse); *London Tales* (Waterloo East and Nu:Write Festival, Zagreb); *Head/Heart* (national tour); *Word:Play 4* (Arcola); *True Love Waits* (Latitude, Pulse, Nu:Write Festivals); *Word:Play 3* (Theatre 503); *Whispering Happiness* (Tristan Bates); *Captain of the School Football Team* (Hotbed and Latitude festivals '09); *Word:Play 2* (Theatre 503); *Word:Play* (Union Theatre); *A Hole in the Fence* and *Rural* (White Bear). Other directing includes: *Uprising* (Monkeywood at The Lowry), *JB Shorts 11* (Joshua Brooks), *Narvik* (Everyword 2013), *100 Seel St* (The Alligator Club, Liverpool), *JB Shorts 7* (Joshua Brooks). She is a script reader for The Royal Exchange, and the Bruntwood Playwriting Prize.

KATIE SCOTT – DESIGNER

Katie is an Associate Artist of Box of Tricks and is an award-winning theatre designer based in the North-West. Upon graduating from LIPA, she was the inaugural winner of the Liverpool Playhouse Studio Prize For Theatre Design. She has since worked extensively designing for various forms of theatre and was shortlisted to be a member of the Old Vic 12 in 2017. Katie's credits include: *Peter Pan* (The Dukes, Lancaster); *Searching for the Heart of Leeds* (West Yorkshire Playhouse); *Blackout* (The Dukes, Lancaster); *Narvik* (Box of Tricks – national studio tour); *Plastic Figurines* (National Studio Tour 2015 and New Diorama 2016); *Chip Shop Chips* (Box of Tricks – national tour 2016 and 2018); *Under The Market Roof* (Junction 8); *Held* (Liverpool Playhouse Studio – winner of Liverpool Daily Post Arts Award for Best Design 2012); *We Are The Multitude* (24:7 Festival – MTA nominee Best Fringe Show); *Gargantua* (NT Connections – Lowry Young Company); *The Ballad of Rudy* (Goblin Theatre – Royal Exchange Studio); *Bluestockings* (ALRA North); *The Grid* (Young Everyman Playhouse Company – Liverpool Everyman); *Clybourne Park* (Said & Done Theatre Company – Unity Theatre Liverpool).

RICHARD OWEN – LIGHTING DESIGNER

Richard is an Associate Artist of Box of Tricks. For Royal Exchange Theatre: *Hunger For Trade, The Gatekeeper, Winterlong, Zack, Powder Monkey, Salt, The Palace of The End* (Galway Festival and Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh), *Dr Korzack's Example, Jonah and Otto, The Flags, Monster, Mojo Mickeybo, The Flags (studio), Christmas Is Miles Away, Come Blow Your Horn*, *Mayhem, Dogboy, The Rise And Fall Of Little Voice*, *The Happiest Days Of Your Life*, *Rafts And Dreams*, *Across Oka, Moonshed, Dead Wait, On My Birthday* and *Quids and Dimps*. Lighting designs for other companies include, *Narvik, Plastic Figurines* (Box of Tricks); *Tree* (Old Vic Theatre); *Flesh* (Monkeywood Theatre Company); *Manpower* (2DestinationLanguage); *Brassed Off, Bouncers, Educating Rita, Bedevilled* and *The Little Mermaid* (Sheffield Crucible); *The Buddy Bolden Experience* (Fittings Multimedia Arts) and

Flesh N Steel The Last Freakshow and *Edmund The Learned Pig* (Fittings Multimedia Arts in association with the Royal Exchange Theatre); *Weeding Cane* (for Weeding Cane in association with the Royal Exchange Theatre); *In The Shadow Of Trees* and *Veil* (for Horse and Bamboo Theatre Company) and *Delphic* in concert for MIF13.

CHRIS JAMES – SOUND DESIGNER

Chris is an Associate Artist of Box of Tricks and has worked with the company for more than ten years. Box of Tricks sound designs include: *Chip Shop Chips, Plastic Figurines, In Doggerland, My Arms, Whispering Happiness, Word:Play* and *Word:Play 2, A Hole In The Fence, Rural,* and *Beyond Omarska.* Other work: Associate sound designer for *Democracy* (Old Vic Theatre*); School for Scandal* (Bath Theatre Royal); *The Bargain* (National Tour); Head of Sound for *Million Dollar Quartet* (National Tour); *King and I* (National Tour; *Blood Brothers* (National Tour) and *Cabaret* (National Tour). He was a Sound and Broadcast Supervisor at Royal Opera House Muscat, in Oman from 2012 to 2017. Chris is currently Head of Sound for the UK tour of *Rock of Ages.*

HANNAH CALASCIONE – ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

Hannah is currently completing her director training at Birkbeck College on a secondment with HOME Theatre, Manchester. She completed her social sciences BA at The University of Cambridge in 2016 and then worked at Potboiler Productions first as Director/Producer's Assistant and then as Literary Development Assistant. Assisting credits include *The Little Stranger* (Film – Potboiler/Pathe/Element) and *The Maids* (HOME Theatre). Previous directing credits include *All the Little Lights* (Guildhall School of Music & Drama, CoLab); *Knots* (Theatre N16); *The Effect* (Corpus Playroom); *trade* (Corpus Playroom) and *All My Sons* (ADC Theatre). She still works as a script reader for Potboiler Productions.

MAX EMMERSON – ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

Max trained as an Arts Manager at the Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts (LIPA). He has worked as Assistant Producer for the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, Bill Kenwright Productions in the West End and for Sell A Door Theatre Company in London. Since 2012, Max has been producing new writing, musicals and dance at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and internationally. Producing credits include: *The Tempest* (Royal Exchange Theatre); The Bruntwood Prize Ceremony 2017, *The People Are Singing* (Royal Exchange Theatre); *Adam & Eve & Steve* (Kings Head Theatre, London 2017 and Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2016); *Shout! The Mod Musical* (Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre 2016 and Edinburgh Fringe Festival 2015/16); *Shake It Up Baby* (Unity Theatre, Liverpool 2016) and *Dirt, Roses, Animals & God* (Norwegian Tour 2015). Max was the first recipient of the Anthony Field Producer Prize at LIPA and successfully completed the Stage One Producers apprenticeship scheme.



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Our playmaker Patrons: (Sue Tyrrell, John and Gloria Quayle, Kath Quick and Ed Benson); Niki Woods, Mark Fox and the University of Salford; Luke Owen; Matthew Linley; The Unity Theatre, Liverpool; Jason Done for the development of the play; our Board (Caz Brader, David Bryan, Chris Honer, Rhiannon McKay-Smith, John Quayle), Sean Croke and Marley for the promotional images, Nial Diamond and Hampton Motors.

Supported by Arts Council England, Granada Foundation.





NOTES ON STAGING

The play is set between the early 1980s and early 1990s and this should be apparent to the audience in the set, costume and sound design.

The set design can be as abstract or as naturalistic as the creative team decide. It is important that the audience knows where Dave is at any given point in the action, and also which car he is driving, however how these locations and vehicles are represented to the audience is entirely up to the creative team's discretion.

Stage directions are included as guidelines and can be interpreted freely to fit with the overall production concept.

All characters in this play are the be performed by one actor

- Indicates an interruption

... indicates a pause, waiting, searching or doing

. Is a suggestion to end the thought or breath. Please feel free to play with these to suit your performance

NOTES FOR CASTING

This play can be performed by a white male or a mix-raced male.

Please select which prologue you use depending on your casting choice.

An alternative prologue can be found on p115.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thanks to everyone included in my memory of this story.
Even the bad ones.

Also, a massive thanks to Box of Tricks for encouraging me to tell it in this form and bringing it to life.
Thanks to all the theatres who have welcomed this story.
And the theatres who haven't...but will.

Thanks to my Great Nana and Grandad
Who taught me to believe in fairies at the end of garden.

Thanks to everyone who has interacted with me at some point in my life.
Those moments make me, no matter how big or small.

A thanks to Jane Fallowfield and Talawa Theatre company for their continued support and guidance.

Thank you.

X

SparkPlug received its world premiere in a production by Box of Tricks Theatre Company, which opened at HOME, Manchester on 14th February 2019 before embarking on a national tour.

CAST

DAVE David Judge

CREATIVE TEAM

Director	Hannah Tyrrell-Pinder
Designer	Katie Scott
Lighting Designer	Richard Owen
Sound Designer	Chris James
Assistant Director	Hannah Calascione
Associate Producer	Max Emmerson
Production Manager	Liam Whittaker
Technical Stage Manager	Adam Steed
Press & PR	Chloé Nelkin Consulting

MEMORY

This a story about me, my Dad and my family
As I remember it.
The truth of this story exists in the truth of my memory.
This story may be contsested
By people who remember it differently.
It is based on real people and real events
As I remember them.
My memory cannot be contested.
Truth cannot be broken.
Only hidden
Or shared.
This is my story
As I remember it.

For Big Dave...

By Little Dave.

Pre-Set

House-lights.

The stage is littered with tyres and batteries – exhausts and sparkplugs – spare parts of a Ford Escort – and Capri – the remains of a Fiat 126 – bits and bobs of various Vauxhalls and other spare parts belonging to other retro cars.

DAVID *(10) plays with the car parts as the audience enter.*

In between the selection and placement of car parts he says – 'And... And... And...'

As the audience settle – the lights change and Michael Jackson's ***"BAD"*** *album plays from the car radio.*

DAVID *makes himself a bed on a back seat and gets into it.*

He puts the headphones of his Walkman on and settles for sleep.

"SMOOTH CRIMINAL" *plays – it rewinds – fast forwards –* ***"MAN IN THE MIRROR"*** *plays – it rewinds – fast forwards –* ***"THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL"*** *plays – it rewinds – fast forwards –* ***"I JUST CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU"*** *plays – it rewinds – fast forwards –* ***"BAD"*** *plays – it slows down – like a Walkman on its last legs.**

As the batteries on David's Walkman die out – so do the lights and music.

Lights up.

---

* A licence to produce SPARKPLUG does not include a performance licence for "SMOOTH CRIMINAL", "MAN IN THE MIRROR", "THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL", "I JUST CAN'T STOP LOVING YOU", "BAD" . For further information, please see Music Use Note on page v.

Prologue

DAVE *(35) enters.*

He talks over the following action.

He rearranges an item or two – tucking **DAVID** *into bed.*

He carefully removes the headphones and Walkman from the back seat and puts them away.

He rebuilds as much of the Ford Capri as possible.

DAVE

He's got two dads

My lad

One's black

That makes him

Black

I suppose

So I'm told.

He's got two dads

My lad

One's black

One's white

He's half-caste

They say

Others say

He's coloured

Some say

Mixed race.

He's got two dads

My lad

I've never met the

Black one

Or his others

His family

Sisters or brothers.

He's got two dads

My lad

The black

Keeps him distanced from

My family

That really bothers me.

He's got two dads

My lad

I want to hold him up

Show him to the world

Guide him through his

Mistakes

Stupidity

The only thing

The black one gave him was

Ethnicity.

He's got two dads

My lad

One played with him for hours

Days

Years

The other

Left when he was

Minus eight months old.

He's got two dads

My lad

One of them is hardly a

Man

Was never really his

The other was also

His mother

For a time.

He's got two dads

My lad

One is from Jamaica

His mother says

One of them is

The Greatest dad in the world

He says.

He's got two dads

My lad

One of them is his father

The other is just

A cock

With balls.

DAVE *gets into the car.*

He searches in the glove box – finds a tape – inserts it into the cassette player and presses play

1983.

Rod Stewart's – ***"TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT"*** *plays.*[**]

** A licence to produce SPARKPLUG does not include a performance licence for "TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT". For further information, please see Music Use Note on page v.

DAVE *sits in a car seat downstage – he holds the steering wheel/gearstick.*

DAVE

So

Once again

Me

Inside

The car

Coming from

Irish Wythenshawe

Driving into

Moss Side with its

Ex-Island dwellers.

Outside of the car the bricks of the shops become a

Long

Red

Tunnel

Passing by my peripheral.

Inside of the car the smoke of a B&H gold

Blends with the soundtrack of a Rod Stewart

Knicker flicker

'STAY AWAY FROM MY WINDOW...
STAY AWAY FROM MY BACK DOOR TOO...
DISCONNECT THE TELEPHONE LINE...
RELAX BABY, DRAW THAT BLIND...'

Outside of the car is

Blurred

Just like my memory of it.

Dirty.

Inside of the car is me

Listening to proper heartbreakers
Smelling fresh
Looking sharp
As always.
I indicate
Outside of the car
Flashes of orange
A turn
Inside the car
A splash
A blending scent of Old Spice mixed with Holsten
A can of Pils plots its escape
It dives head-first towards the passenger side
'No'
I catch it
'Yes'
The car stalls
'Shit!'
Outside of the car
Is dark
Littered around the people are darker
Most of them moving with a rhythm
Talking in rhyme to a
Dumdumdumdumdididididumdumdummmm
Dumdumdumdumdididididumdumdummmm.
Inside the car
Keys turn
Everything rumbles
Thank fuck for that I'm thinking as

The tape cassette continues

My ears absorb the lyrics

'OOH BABY DON'T YOU HESITATE
'CAUSE
TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT'

I'm

Picking Angela up

Again

From her friend's place

As always.

I park up

Outside of the car is

Dark

Haze

Bass.

Inside the car

I'm sat

Waiting

Again

Looking at a flat above a barber's

A flat with a party inside

A flat that I know I could

You know

Get out

Knock on

Go up

Join in

Mam doesn't like Angela being alone in

These

Places

So I could

You know

Just be there

Just

Watch over like

You know.

But the atmosphere in there is not my

Cup of tea

Bottle of Diamond

Or can of Holsten

It's smoky thick with this dark bass.

You see they may fancy white on a woman's face but mine they'll

They could

People round here may think I'm a bit

You know

If I go up

Start

What am I trying to say?

I'm saying

I'm not one of those who are

Of the other

You know

Fear

I'm not scared

...

I'm from Wythenshawe

I'm hard

I've fought

Lots
I've beaten
Lots
I've been
I drive a belting Capri for fuck sake.
But
For some reason
Round here
It
Yeah it
Not because
Because they're
You know
I'm not one of them that thinks like that.
...
For fucksake she always does this
Says she'll be outside waiting when she's not
She's not there
Where she said she'll be
Again
She
She should be at home
With Craig
She should be
...
I hate it round here
It's too dark
It's...
It's just so dark

Round here

Moss Side.

Even on a clear blue day

The tight streets wrapped around the tall houses make everything a sort of

You know

With the steam from the brewery plus the smog from town it's like

Like

A maze of dark back alleys with no sunlight able to break through the smog thick clouds.

It's dodgy

Dodgy as fuck

Round here.

But

I'm Dave

I do the picking up.

Plus

Well

You know

Sisters have mates

Sometimes that mate is a real cracker

Who's going to need the best mate's brother with the Ford Capri to put things in the back of.

So

Yeah

Got my heart on Joanne

A little

She's

She's so

Into them
Their
That
Culture
You know
So
Yeah.
No go.
But
Still
I do
Just a little
She's
She's loud
She's different
She's
Yeah
She's not into me
I don't think
Not yet
But
Well
I've got the Capri so
We'll see
...
Where is she?
Come on Ange
She knows I hate wait—
—Outside the car

A couple of blokes

One of them with

Rastas?

Dreadlocks?

Anyway

They link up with these lads that have been waiting on the corner.

Inside the car

I remember

The locks

I've not locked the locks

The doors

You know what I mean?

For fuck sake

I can't just

Start

You know

Leaning over

Locking all the

Looks

I'd look like a

Like I'm hiding something.

Then

Outside the car

I see these lads again

But now it's a gang of 'em

Pointing up at Joanne's

Angela's at the window

I turn off Rod.

Inside the car
I can hear the shouting from
Outside the car.
I get out the car
It's Angela
She's screaming – ***'Get off! Get the fuck off her, now!'***
Then
This
This fella appears at the window
He has Joanne by the hair
He's
He's holding her head out the window
...
Is that blood?
...
Is she bleeding?
...
Has he?
The fucking...
Now
I'm walking towards the barber's
Away from the car
Through a quartet of tutts from the gang
Followed by a

'Wotcha whitey'

I see the window's broke
Smashed
Has put her head through that?
As I get to the door

Further from my car
The party's parting
Most of the people leave
They disappear into the dark
I should
I should shout
Something
Call out
Find out what's going on
Find out who's smashed that window
Who's caused all this fucking drama
That's what I'd normally do
Never back down from a fight me
You know
But I do
I just let them pretend to ignore me
As if they can't see me sticking out like a fucking
Pigeon amongst cats.
Once they've gone
A cry from upstairs unfreezes me
So
I make my way in
Into
Into what seemed like the source of
All of the bass
All of the smoke.
I'm about
Four steps
Up the stairs

Towards Joanne

When a cough from the smoke

Becomes a choke from the bass as it shakes my lungs

...

I'm sprung into guard

As a

Fella

A man?

An Ainsley

I'll find out

Later

Anyway

He barges past me

Taking me

Two steps

Down

Away.

Before I have a chance to collar him

He goes.

Another moan

From upstairs

Takes me to the top of them

Straight into the living room

If you can call it that

Drugs everywhere

It stinks

Drinks spilt

Bits of glass from smashed bottles dance with splinters of window.

Some
Bob Marley wannabe
Sits on the floor
Sucking a
Druggy pipe.
Above him
A giant poster of the man himself
Laughing at me
With smoke in his mouth
Menace in his eyes.
I spot the record player
I grab it
I grab the druggy dosser
I show them both out the front door
From the top of the stairs
With a giant fucking
Smash.
Then
Quiet.
Then
Crying
Sobbing
Then
Somewhere in the smoke-stained shit
Joanne sits up
Soaked in tears
Covered in blood.
I try to calm myself
But it's like my heartbeat

Has replaced the bass beat
It shakes inside me.
As I move towards Joanne
I think of saying
It's alright?
I'm here?
Then a
Violent retch
From the toilet
Then again
Ange
Fucking hell.
I leave Joanne
With my thoughts of words that might've helped
Getting to Angela just in time to stop her drowning herself in the toilet
In her vomit
In her years of drunken mistreatment
...
'It's alright
I'm here'
...
In about ten minutes
Ange's out of the toilet
Joanne's out of her tears
But still in sobs
We're thirteen steps down
Outside of the barber's
Locking up Joanne's flat.

Then
Getting in
Into
Into the Capri
Taking Joanne to
Fallowfield.
Then taking
Ange
To Wythenshawe
To something familiar
To home
Where I'll get into telling my little sister a bit about herself
About her lack of
But
For now
It's
Quiet
Sort of
Joanne sobs in the front
Trying to
Trying
Ange slumps in the back
Trying to sleep
Whilst holding down her vomit.
She's a mess you know.
I pull up
After her one word since I found her

'Thanks'

Joanne's out of the car

Into her Grandparents'

...

'You can get in the front if you want Ange'

'Angela?!'

'What Dave?'

'You can get in the front'

'I'm alright here Dave'

'Get in the front'

'I don't feel well Dave'

'Stop taking drugs then'

What? There weren't any drugs Dave.

Don't be daft'

'There was. I could smell them Ange.

Fucking Druggies' pipes everywhere'

'It's just a bit of weed Dave.

Can we go home please?'

...

I decide to keep quiet for a sec

She looks like she could throw up any minute

...

Not in the Capri mate

No fucking way

...

Half way home

She starts to make a recovery

Miraculously

Brush out of her bag

On her hair

WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

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SF **PERUSALS**