

SHOOTER

by Jon Jory

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SYNOPSIS: A dramatic reading which highlights a nuanced perspective on school violence. Gain a new outlook while listening to a brother recount his younger brother's death and the events that led up to it.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(1 male)

SPEAKER (m)

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SPEAKER: What? You have got to be kidding. Really? You don't think you're a little behind the curve? That was a year ago, dude, more than a year ago. Don't you guys ever give up? Really, seriously, explaining all this—talking about this is not my life okay? I'm not defined by like twenty minutes in February are you? Did something happen to you August twelfth, three years ago, and that's who you are? Right?

Listens briefly.

The anniversary? You want to talk to me 'cause it's the anniversary? You bring a cake or something so I could blow out the candles? It's not an anniversary for me, brother. Did that like, occur to you? If I never, never, never-ever had to think about or talk about that again, then I would celebrate that anniversary. Big time. Look, you're a person—I respect you as a person, so I say to you as one person to another person—leave me alone!

Starts off.

What?

Turns.

People have a right to know?—Is that what you said? Wow. I'm sorry, where is that written down? Moses carve that on a rock somewhere? I have a right to know. My mom has a right to know. My dad who had a heart attack the next day and sits staring out the window, he has a right to know. And guess what, I don't think you're on the list. Now get this... leave... me... alone.

Starts off. Hears something. Turns. Attitude softens.

In Fresno? She died in the Fresno shooting? I'm sorry, dude, I'm really, really sorry. I just... I don't know... I get hostile. You get it, right? Sorry. I was being a jerk. Who do you write for?

Listens.

Yeah, that's fine. Whatever. I get it. Absolutely, I get it. Sorry. My brother, Cal, what can I tell you?

Listens, nodding.

He was a good kid. Quiet. Polite. Funny if you got him, strange if you didn't. A year younger than me. Outsider, y'know. Stayed off to himself. Used to write I love you on post-its and stick 'em on my parent's door. Always wore a tie over a t-shirt. That kid had a collection of crazy ass ties. So he would get ideas and play them out. He knew every car Ford ever made from 1903 to yesterday. Something crazy, like he could name 'em in order. Knew how this engine was different than that engine. Used to hang out at the dealership on weekends. So, anyway, he was thin, like a pencil—maybe a hundred 'an forty pounds but six foot. And he got this idea, he would go out for football. See, he didn't like the game but he liked the uniforms. He fixated on football uniforms like he did on cars. OCD, right? And he completely sucked, y'know? Couldn't catch a ball, wouldn't tackle, ninth string or something but he loved the uniform. They finally put him in a game for one play, at safety. I think we were ahead by like forty points. So they throw a pass and this guy catches a pass and Cal is the last guy to have a shot. And Cal just stands there and applauds the guy as he goes past him. Game over. Crowd boos him. He dresses in the locker room. Nobody talks to him. He walks out and some guys on the team grab him, tie him to the goal posts, throw footballs at him. Broke his nose. Bruises all over his face. Didn't come home to dinner. I found him out there, belted to the goal post about five hours later. He just laughed about it, but he stopped talking. He talked at home, but he never said a word at school. In class, out of class. Nothing. Teachers talked to my parents. No luck. A couple months later we're in class—American History and there's gunfire in the hall and I look out and it's Cal. He's firing an AK-47 on full automatic.

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