

POINT A

by
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FADE IN:

AT A COMPUTER, SOMEWHERE

Teenage eyes stare. Pop music plays. Small fingers tap out earnest keystrokes. A delicate hand touches a slight chin.

A bathroom mirror. An awkwardly sexy pose. A camera's flash. A USB cord plugged. The words "Upload your image now?" An "enter" key. A smirk. A "delete" key.

Bits and pieces of words: "Favorite Things," "What I Hate," "What do you think of me?" "What are you doing right now?" More kewl music. More angsty words. More hopeful images...

CROSS FADE TO:

INT. CLEVELAND - "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - DAY

JOSH BENNETT, 35, boyishly handsome, easygoing, with a tinge of middle-class frustration, strides down a row of cubicles.

Inside each, sit MEN, 25-40ish, most of whom are occupied with 'work' that has nothing to do with the magazine. There's googling, emailing, live chats and social networking, but today's big fascination is the latest viral web video.

A disembodied hand grabs Josh's elbow. It's VINCE, 30's, still wearing the dress shirt that barely fit him in college.

VINCE

Josh!

JOSH

Hey, Vince.

VINCE

Dude, you see this? Effed up!

He hits a key and they watch as a man's crotch meets the business end of a goose's beak.

Vince winces. Josh flashes a polite smile.

JOSH

Yeah, it's funny, I saw it. Back there, and around over on that side, too. Totally... "effed."
(beat)

Um, I gotta talk to Mike.

Vince nods, eyes still glued to the screen. Josh walks off.

MIKE'S OFFICE

Trophies, jerseys, life-size promotional cutouts -- it's a sports bar for a crowd of one. A floor-to-ceiling *Today's Guy* magazine cover features a sexy bikini-clad girl holding a cigar, and a banner that reads: "Me, quit *SMOKIN'?*"

MIKE HANSON, 40's, a guy's guy, bad knees and awkward charm, sits chuckling, engrossed in his computer screen.

Josh arrives at the open door. He knocks and enters.

MIKE

Josh, check this out. Oh, man!

He flips the screen around. It's the same "cringe" video. Josh and Mike watch as the unfortunate man once again abandons all hope of siring a family. Mike yelps and laughs.

JOSH

(sits)

Yeah, I saw it out in the --

MIKE

I never look at these things.
(pushes the screen aside)
Anyway, first, let me tell what an awesome job you did on this piece last month. Phenomenal feedback.

He opens a copy of *Today's Guy* and turns it to face Josh.

JOSH

(reads article title)

"The Top Ten Most Graphic Single-Shooter Video Games."

MIKE

Loved it. Especially this one, Terror -- what was it...?

JOSH

Terror Strike.

MIKE

Right. "Most realistic organ splatter." Sweet stuff.

JOSH

Nothing's too good for our readers.

MIKE

Come on, this is a great piece!

JOSH
It's crap.

MIKE
Sure it's crap. But it's
brilliantly written crap. No one
in Cleveland writes crap like you.

JOSH
Thanks, Mike.

MIKE
Josh, am I stopping you from
quitting this gig and going for a
Pulitzer Prize?

Josh doesn't have an answer.

MIKE
Okay, I'm sympathetic to your
desire to go more highbrow; I think
you'll like this one. I want to do
a piece on these video blogs.
Really get into the mind of the
'vlogger' who feels compelled to
expose their deepest secrets in
words and images on the internet.

JOSH
Kind of cultural commentary? What
do these sites say about us; what
we've become; have we taken
narcissism to its extreme?

MIKE
Exactly.

JOSH
Nice.

MIKE
But with bikini girls.

Josh does a double take.

MIKE
It's summertime, our readers want
bikini girls. Specifically college-
aged emotionally-unstable ones.
With eating disorders. And
preferably, a taste for men in the
thirty to forty-five age range.

JOSH
(beaten)
Anything else?

MIKE
Nope. Just pick the hottest one in
the Cleveland area and profile her.
And be thinking photo spread.

Josh, looking weary, gets up to leave.

MIKE
Josh, wait a minute.
(beat)
You've been here, what, five years?

JOSH
Seven, actually.

MIKE
Seven years. Man, that clock on
the wall just spins, doesn't it?

JOSH
Tell me about it.

MIKE
And you've got a girlfriend, who I
remember is, if you don't mind me
saying, not too hard on the eyes?

JOSH
Yeah, Lisa's great.

MIKE
So, you've got a fairly well-paying
job and a gorgeous girlfriend, but
you never seem happy.

JOSH
What do you mean? I'm happy.

MIKE
Don't lie to me, you're miserable.

Josh frowns.

MIKE
I'm gonna let you in on a little
secret. Nobody's happy.

JOSH
Really.

Mike catches site of Vince passing his door.

MIKE
Vince!

VINCE
Yup?

MIKE
Are you happy?

VINCE
You kiddin'? It's all I can do not
to drown myself in the shower every
morning.

JOSH
Jesus.

Vince smiles and walks off.

MIKE
May I tell you the one thing that
might just bring you happiness?

JOSH
Sure, Mike.

MIKE
Commitment.

JOSH
Commitment?

MIKE
Yes, commitment. You're an adult.
This is your life. Don't fight it.
Accept your fate. And be happy.

JOSH
Commitment. Got it.

Josh stands and heads for the door.

MIKE
Think about it. And Josh? My door
is always open. I'm not just your
boss, I'm your friend. Door.
Mine. Open. You.

JOSH
Thanks, Mike.

He leaves. Mike seems pleased with himself.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Josh gazes quizzically out at various icons of middle-class life; teenagers gathered on a sidewalk, a busy mall, mothers pushing strollers, and row upon row of cookie-cutter houses.

INT. JOSH'S APT - NIGHT

It's the Crate & Barrel catalogue, page 26. Josh enters.

On a puffy couch sits LISA, 30ish, strikingly pretty with a confidence held exclusively by the "strikingly pretty." She's on her cell phone, tissue in hand. She's been crying.

LISA

(into phone)

Oh, Mom, Josh just came in. I will. I will. Okay. Love you.

She puts the phone down. Josh immediately senses her mood.

JOSH

Lisa? What's up, babe?

LISA

Josh...

JOSH

What is it?

He sits on the couch next to her. He's really concerned.

LISA

Honey, I need you to just listen to me, okay? I've given this a lot of thought and there are things I just have to say to you.

JOSH

Okay...

LISA

Josh, we've been together for six years now, and I know how we both agreed that we could just live together and that marriage wasn't important, but Josh, you're thirty-five years old and I'm almost thirty-one --

JOSH

Lisa, we've been over this before --

LISA

I know, but things are different
now.

JOSH

How?

LISA

(losing her cool)

I've never been almost thirty-one
before!

(beat, calmer)

Honey, my home organizing business
is doing great, and you won't be
leaving the magazine any time soon.

Josh winces almost imperceptibly.

LISA

(more and more upset)

It's just that I don't want to keep
organizing other people's homes and
coming back to this apartment. I
want my own home to organize. I
want us to have a real home.
Together. I just can't deal with
this uncertainty anymore. I
thought I could, but I can't. I
need security in my life. You can
understand that, can't you?

JOSH

Yeah. I can.

LISA

(crying now)

Josh, I'm really happy in our
relationship. Aren't you happy?

JOSH

Happy?

LISA

Since we're both happy and we're
not getting any younger, I mean,
what more do you want? Is there
something more you want?

Josh really tries to respond, but somehow can't.

LISA

We're great together. We're a
great couple.

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)
But that's not enough, Josh. I
need to be married. I need a
commitment.

JOSH
A commitment?

LISA
Yes. A commitment.

A long pause. Josh is dizzy with swirling thoughts, then --

JOSH
Okay.

LISA
Okay, what?

JOSH
Let's do it. Let's get married.

LISA
Are you serious?

JOSH
Yeah. Yes. Yes, I am.

LISA
(freaks)
Oh, my GOD! Well, well when? When
should we do it?

JOSH
Umm... a couple of months?

Lisa hugs and kisses Josh. He tries to kiss her more, but --

LISA
Mom, did you hear that?

MOM'S VOICE
(on speaker phone)
I sure did!

JOSH
You mother was on speaker phone?

LISA
I wanted her moral support.

She excitedly grabs her phone and talks to her mother, as --
Josh sits by, waiting. And waiting...

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh sips coffee and taps at his computer.

He brings up site named "VlogNow.com." He searches on "Cleveland," and up comes the top-rated page: "Cloe's World." At the top is a slickly posed, but partially obscured image of a sexy dark-haired girl.

JOSH

(reading the page)

"Cloe's World: Making sense of all the nonsense fired across my bow."

He rolls his eyes, then his cursor over Cloe's Bio: "Place: Cleveland, Time: Indefinite, Mood: Awash in Dreams, Age: 22."

JOSH

Okay, Miss Self-involved, hit me.

He clicks on the link: "My Latest Vlog." The video starts. It's dreamy, artfully-composed sounds and images of youth - intense conversations, sneakers on pavement, laughter, hairstyles, mp3 players, phones, steaming coffee, texts, IMs - all accompanied by words spoken in a thoughtful girl's voice:

CLOE'S VLOG NARRATION

"My generation: elitists, posers, jocks and misfits. We hide in the spaces between the notes and melodies of our indie rock. We dream up revolutions we'll never start. We just want underground music in underground places..."

Josh sits back, impressed with what he's watching.

CLOE'S VLOG NARRATION

"We're a generation allergic to silence. We pour our lives into the internet; our names, replaced with screen names; the sound of our voices, replaced by the 'BLING!' of an instant message. We have the world at our fingertips, stored in a box on our desk. But is the world so shallow and malleable? Is it that predictable and small? Does nothing exceed 2-D?"

JOSH

This actually doesn't suck.

He clicks on a link: "Contact Cloe." An email window opens. Josh's words can be heard as he types them:

JOSH'S EMAIL
*"Cloe, my name is Josh Bennett.
I'm a writer for "Today's Guy"...*

EXT. CLOE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

A digital camera set on tripod faces a sunlit suburban yard. CLOE VARDIS' hand reaches in and sets the timer. Visible only from the neck down, she's a slender girl in jeans, Chuck Taylors and a hoodie. She runs into the shot.

The camera counts down, Cloe leaps into the air, and CLICK - an animated pose is frozen in time. CLICK - CLICK - CLICK, three more gravity-defying moves, then --

'BLING' her cell phone signals the incoming email.

Cloe picks it up, reads the mail -- spots the words "Today's Guy," "feature article with photos," and "contact me." With lightning dexterity she texts a response:

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

'Bloop,' Cloe's email response instantly appears in Josh's inbox. A bit stunned, he clicks on it. Her voice narrates:

CLOE'S EMAIL
"Fuck off, creep."

Josh's mouth literally drops open, but he quickly recovers and composes an answer:

JOSH'S EMAIL
*"I appreciate the speedy response,
but I think you may have the wrong
idea of the tone of this piece..."*

EXT. CLOE'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

On her phone, Cloe reads the rest of Josh's response and the words "...feel free to check my credentials."

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - DAY

Cloe searches the web and spots an article: "Cleveland's, Josh Bennett Wins Journalism Award." She reads...

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY
'Bloop,' Cloe's response appears. Josh chuckles. It's been no more than a minute since his response to her. He clicks:

CLOE'S EMAIL

"Okay, I can meet you tomorrow afternoon, five o'clock, C-Town Coffee, at the Sunrise Mall."

JOSH

Okay, she's eloquent and fickle.

He starts typing a response...

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Laptops, cell phones, and conversations over \$4.00 coffees.

Josh enters. He scans the room, then gets in line. He watches a sweet-faced teenage girl BARISTA call out orders.

BARISTA

Grande latte, tall soy latte, tall latte, grande skinny latte!

She turns her attention to Josh.

BARISTA

Can I take your order?

JOSH

Guess I'm having a latte!

The Barista is unmoved.

JOSH

Um... venti. Decaf.

BARISTA

Name?

JOSH

Josh.

He pays. The Barista eyes him as he leaves the counter.

Josh looks around the room again, then spots an attractive, DARK-HAIRED GIRL in a corner, engrossed in a book. He sits at a free table adjacent to her, then leans in...

JOSH

Um, Cloe?

The dark-haired girl smiles and shakes her head.

JOSH
Oh, sorry, I'm --

CLOE (O.S.)
Josh!

Josh turns and is surprised to find the Barista seated in front of him, holding his coffee. The Barista, who is...

CLOE
Decaf latte for the writer?

JOSH
Thanks. Cloe?

Cloe flashes a cheesy smile. Josh is perplexed.

CLOE
Sorry about the subterfuge. A girl can't be too careful these days.

JOSH
Wait, you are Cloe with the vlog?

CLOE
I am that Cloe.

JOSH
And you're twenty-two?

CLOE
I'm not that Cloe.

JOSH
Well, you're over eighteen, right?

Cloe looks guilty.

JOSH
Seventeen?

Cloe kind of squints like she's in pain...

JOSH
You're sixteen? Your profile says twenty-two.

The Dark-haired Girl looks up from her book.

CLOE
My profile says a lot of things.
You wanted to talk about my vlogs?

JOSH

I did. I do, I just. Um... I just
don't think this is going to work.

CLOE

I thought you liked my writing?

JOSH

Yeah, it's really excellent. It's
insightful; very impressive.

CLOE

But it's not impressive now that
I'm sixteen?

JOSH

No, it's just that you're a minor,
and the piece I'm writing, is --

CLOE

That is such bullshit!

Josh looks around. Suddenly, it's as if every eye is on him.

CLOE

What I write has no validity now
because of my age? Why do you
think I fucking lied on my profile?

JOSH

Nice mouth, little girl.

CLOE

Nice decaf, gramps.

JOSH

Okay, you know what? This was a
mistake, and now I'm gonna leave.

He rises and heads for the door. Cloe, annoyed, watches him.

CLOE

"Little girl?" Jerk.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Josh slams the door, then checks himself in the mirror.

JOSH

"Gramps?"

(looks at his coffee)

It's a big coffee and it's late in
the day!

INT. JOSH'S APT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh and Lisa sit side-by-side on their couch, each tapping away on their respective laptops; tapping, tapping, then --

LISA

Honey, look. This site lets me plan out every aspect of our marriage, from booking the reception hall down to the rental car for the honeymoon. Nothing left to chance. See?

Josh looks. The page's banner reads "Tie The Knot: Tight." Beneath it is a tacky animation of a bride putting a ball & chain around the leg of a profusely sweating groom.

LISA

Isn't this cute?

The animated groom momentarily mesmerizes Josh.

LISA

(teasingly pokes Josh)

Isn't it cute?

JOSH

Um... Yeah. Yeah, that's great.

"BLING" - Josh's phone announces a new text. Lisa's attention returns to her computer.

JOSH

Who's texting me this late?

He opens his phone. It's a text from Cloe; in her voice:

CLOE'S TEXT

"You call yourself a real journalist, but you let a 'little girl' scare you off? Check your email."

JOSH

How the...?

LISA

(half-interested)

What's that, hon?

JOSH

Work thing. I'm doing a piece on video blogs and I went to interview this girl today.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
 Her profile said she was twenty-two, but she was actually sixteen.

LISA
 Sixteen?

Josh checks his email. There's a new message from "Cloe_Vardis@genmail.com." He opens it. It's a link to Cloe's new Vlog.

JOSH
 Yeah, talented girl, but sixteen.
 Now, she not only somehow got my cell number, but she's emailed me.

LISA
 Maybe she's got a little crush?

JOSH
 That's what I need.

Lisa gets up and walks off.

Josh brings up Cloe's vlog and watches. It features Cloe narrating and starring in a 'micro-movie' of each idea.

CLOE'S NARRATION
"Seven Random Facts About Me...
One: I love the smell of cigar smoke; it reminds me of my grampa;"

Cloe, outside a cigar store, inhales deeply, closes her eyes, then flashes on an old man's hands and kind smile.

"Two: I have an incurable fear of things that sit underwater (not fish or animals) but logs, plants, big rocks; that kind of thing;"

A moss-covered log in a pond finds Cloe nearby, teeth clenched and eyes wide.

Through the laptop screen, Josh smiles.

CLOE'S NARRATION
"Three: When I open a carton of eggs, there has to be an even amount. If not, I will find a use for the odd-numbered egg;"

Cloe discovers seven eggs in an egg carton, frowns. Suddenly, an egg's broken onto the head of a baffled Pug, who then gets a rigorous hair treatment.

(MORE)

CLOE'S NARRATION (CONT'D)

"Four: I can't help but feel sorry for inanimate objects;"

Cloe raises a turkey baster and grimaces with sympathy.

"Five: I've come up with several great ideas that could make lots of money, but I've never done anything with any of them;"

Cloe holds a notebook out before her, smiles wide at a page, then abruptly tears it off, crumples and tosses it into a ready pile nearby.

"Six: I get waves of guilt for things that shouldn't make anyone feel guilty;"

Cloe pulls off the last paper towel, stares at the empty roll, then furrows her brow.

"Seven: I like my camera more than I like most people."

Cloe emerges from behind a digital camera. She stares straight ahead, and a sly smile creeps across her face.

The vlog fades to black.

Josh stares at the blank screen, frowning in thought. A few more moments pass, then he abruptly closes the laptop.

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Josh somewhat uneasily sits across from Cloe, who looks through some sheets of paper.

CLOE

My mom is totally not gonna care.

JOSH

That's fine, but I still need her to sign that consent form if I'm going to interview you.

CLOE

Because I'm a 'minor.' What a horrible word.

She taps at her cell phone.

JOSH

All it means that you're under eighteen.

CLOE

(reads cell phone screen)
False. It also means, "lesser or secondary in size, frequency, or importance. Not very serious. Insignificant." That's just rude.

JOSH

It could also mean 'minor,' as in a 'minor key' in music.

CLOE

Yes, but isn't the minor key the sad-sounding key?

Josh frowns. Cloe smiles, proud of herself.

JOSH

(checks his cell phone)
What time did your mother say she'd be here?

Just then, Cloe catches sight of her mother, DONNA VARDIS, mid 30's, a bit rough around the edges. She wears a cheap dress suit. Cloe waves her over.

CLOE

Mom, this is --

Josh half-stands as Donna plops down across from him.

JOSH

Josh Bennett.

DONNA

So, you're the writer who wants to exploit my underage daughter in your sex magazine?

Josh winces. Donna smiles, and only glances at the papers.

DONNA

Just playing with you. Donna Vardis. What's the story, now?

JOSH

Well, I, I think Cloe's writing and the work she's put up in her vlogs is really interesting and creative.
(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
I just need your permission to
interview her for an article.

CLOE
(in faux hillbilly accent)
Josh thinks I'm a genius, mama.

DONNA
Any brains she does have she got
from me. Got a pen?

Josh retrieves one. Donna eyes him over.

DONNA
You have any kids?

JOSH
No, no, I'm, I'm not married.
Engaged, actually, just recently.

DONNA
(stares at him a moment)
That's a shame.
(signs release)
I got no problem with this. It's
Cloe's decision. She knows I trust
her judgement a hundred percent.

CLOE
(same hillbilly accent)
Mama thinks I'm a genius, Josh.

DONNA
The dorkish quality, she got from
her father.
(beat, she stands)
I gotta get back to work. Just
enough time for a cigarette...

She looks at Cloe expectantly. Josh is puzzled.

CLOE
How many is that today?

DONNA
This'll be four, ma'am.

CLOE
Okay, then...

She pulls a pack of cigarettes from her purse and hands one to Donna, who pops it into her mouth.

DONNA

She's too good to me.
(shakes hands with Josh)
Okay, you two have fun.
(to Cloe)
See you later, sweetie.

Donna leaves. Cloe turns to Josh and smiles.

JOSH

You and your mother have an interesting relationship.

CLOE

I'm an only child. She'd totally die without me.

JOSH

And your dad?

CLOE

My dad, or as my mom refers to him, "the asshole sperm-donor;" he's around.

(convincing herself)

He was never really cut out to be a father - too much of a free spirit - which is something my mom cannot understand, but I do. He just needs to be free, you know?

JOSH

Sure.

CLOE

What about your family?

JOSH

I thought I was interviewing you.

CLOE

(playfully)

Yes, but if you want to plumb the depths of my fragile teenage psyche, how am I to trust you if you don't reveal something to me?

Josh stares curiously at Cloe for a moment.

JOSH

My dad died of a heart attack about five years ago. I keep in pretty good touch with my mother.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
And I've got an older brother, who
last we heard, was somewhere
between Florida and Texas.

CLOE
You're the rock of the family. The
one upon whose shoulders all things
fall. That's got to suck.

Josh doesn't have a response.

CLOE
And you just got engaged?

JOSH
Oh. Uh, yeah.

CLOE
Are you just totally in love?

JOSH
(laughs)
I hope so, we're getting married.

Something about Josh's response sticks with Cloe, but she says nothing. Josh reaches into his bag.

JOSH
You want to get started?

CLOE
I thought we already had.

Josh produces a digital audio recorder, then a few sheets of paper containing a long list of questions. Cloe chuckles.

JOSH
What?

CLOE
You're very organized.

JOSH
Yeah.

Josh turns on the audio recorder. Cloe straightens up.

JOSH
Okay, Cloe Vardis. You're sixteen.
Is that eleventh grade?

CLOE
Just graduated, actually.

JOSH

Wow. You thinking about college?

CLOE

What exactly is this article going to be? Do you want to know all my secrets?

JOSH

I just think you're a girl who has something to say. Kids your age never knew a time before the internet. The way you talk about it and use it - I think you kind of represent what's going on in your generation.

CLOE

I'm the voice of my generation?

JOSH

You're an interesting voice in your generation.

CLOE

(ala Marge Simpson)

Mmmmmmm...

JOSH

Tell me about these vlogs. Like, the one about the internet.

CLOE

I was just in a mood. Sometimes the internet makes me crazy. I love it but I hate it, you know?

JOSH

I know.

CLOE

I mean, I can be watching a movie, and like, texting, and checking out a music site, or blogging, and updating my Facebook, all at the same time, and it feels perfectly normal. Then it just hits me and I'm like, "agh, enough!" and I want to run outside and roll around in the grass.

JOSH

What do you do?

CLOE

I usually run outside and roll around in the grass.

Josh laughs.

CLOE

It's just that the world is literally right at our fingertips and it's really cool, but it's also completely insane. I mean, where's it gonna go from here, chips in our brains?

JOSH

It is the next logical step.

CLOE

I will not have a chip implanted in my brain. I refuse.

JOSH

You say that now. If they start rolling them out, you may just find yourself the first in line.

Cloe contemplates this, then realizes Josh is right.

CLOE

Oh my god.

JOSH

Don't feel bad.

CLOE

No, it's terrible.

JOSH

You want to hear terrible, I've all but completely lost the ability to write by hand.

CLOE

Oh, I know, right?

JOSH

I was on a flight to New York and my laptop battery died, and I was thinking, "how am I going to get any work done now?" Then, I remembered something...

Cloe's curious. Josh pulls out... a pencil.

CLOE
Oooh, freaky.

She takes it from him and stares at it in mock-wonder.

JOSH
You can write a thousand pages with
it, it's portable and requires no
recharging.

CLOE
And it makes an excellent fashion
accessory.

She puts the pencil in her hair and poses. Josh smiles.

CLOE
See, it's the simple things right
in front of us that we just don't
appreciate. That's exactly why I
need that roll in the grass.

JOSH
You mean you literally roll around
in the grass?

CLOE
I've taken some of my best pictures
that way...

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOE'S BACKYARD - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Cloe lays on her back on a lush bed of leaf-strewn grass.
She points her camera upwards at the treetops.

THROUGH THE LENS

Sunlight breaks through two trees whose branches intertwine --
the leaves on one have turned a crisp autumn brown, while the
leaves on the other are still in summer-green splendor.

CLOE'S NARRATION (V.O.)
*"I love how, just before fall
blooms, it holds hands with summer
first..."*

CLICK - CLICK - CLICK, Cloe's camera captures her words...

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY (END FLASHBACK)

Josh nods his approval.

JOSH

Nice.

CLOE

Why, thank you, sir.

JOSH

Do you really like your camera more than you like most people?

CLOE

(laughs)

I'm not, like, a hater or anything. It's just most of my friends, they don't see things the way I do. They just kind of want to live the life, you know, the boyfriend, the ring, the prom. And that's cool for them, but I'm inspired by different things.

JOSH

What inspires you?

CLOE

Oh, god, how much time do you have?

Josh is intrigued. Cloe rolls things around, then --

CLOE

It's so clichéd, but thunderstorms? The rain; I love that sound. Especially at, like, three a.m.

(beat)

Carnivals. Little kids at carnivals, the way they laugh.

(beat)

Not dusk, but a little before dusk when everything is just so much more bright and vivid? I love that time of day.

Josh is fascinated by Cloe's mind at work.

CLOE

Um... the smell of oranges.

(beat)

When people look graceful smoking instead of cheap or, like, hillbilly.

JOSH
That inspires you?

CLOE
Totally.
(beat)
You're a writer, what inspires you?

Josh tries his best to answer... but nothing comes.

Cloe waits. Josh laughs nervously, then is rescued, when --

Cloe spots MATT, (17), cute, forward-swept hair and skater slouch, as he enters the coffee shop and looks around.

CLOE
Oh, shit.

JOSH
What?

CLOE
(hides behind Josh)
There's just this kid. Don't look.
He kind of likes me and I don't
want to run into him right now.

In the distance Matt sends a text. Cloe's phone vibrates.

CLOE
Shit, shit, he's texting me. Can
we leave? I'll count to three and
we stand up together and you block
me as go out the back.

JOSH
Seriously?

CLOE
Please?

JOSH
Okay.

He packs up his things as Cloe peaks over his shoulder.

CLOE
On three?

JOSH
I got it.

CLOE
Okay. One, two, three.

Josh and Cloe stand together and make their way out, leaving Matt, in the distance, still searching for Cloe.

EXT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Josh and Cloe arrive safely on the sidewalk.

CLOE

Thanks.

JOSH

You know, I had more questions.

CLOE

That's cool. Just text me, or call me, or email me, or I.M. me, or hit me up on Facebook, but not Myspace, I don't really check it anymore.

JOSH

Right.

An awkward, but warm, moment passes between them.

JOSH

Do you need a ride, or --

CLOE

I can walk. I live close.

JOSH

Okay.

CLOE

Okay, then. Bye.

She turns to leave.

JOSH

Oh, hey, Cloe?

She turns back.

JOSH

How'd you get my cell number?

CLOE

I'm the voice of my generation, I have my ways.

She turns and walks off. Josh, amused, watches her go.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh and Lisa sit together on their couch watching a fashion-themed reality show. Lisa's in sweats with hair up, wearing glasses that she'd never wear anywhere but on that couch.

Josh sips a beer. Lisa digs a spoon into a quart of ice cream, and watches intently as a surly JUDGE berates an emotionally-wrecked CONTESTANT.

LISA

(mouth full)

Oh my god, that's why this show drives me crazy! She did not deserve that. I liked her dress. Didn't you like her dress?

JOSH

It was a little showy, and I don't have the calves to pull that off.

Lisa smiles and lovingly elbows Josh.

TV SCREEN

The Judge continues his tirade.

JUDGE

"What you've given us is completely boring. It shows no inspiration."

LIVING ROOM

The Judge's words catch Josh's attention.

LISA

(takes another spoonful)

I have got to stop eating this. They're going to have to bring me into the church on a fork lift.

She looks at Josh for a reaction, but he's lost in thought.

LISA

(play-whining)

Honey? You're supposed to tell me that you'd love me no matter what.

JOSH

I'd love you no matter what.

LISA
(easily pleased)
Thank you.

JOSH
Lees, lemme ask you a question.
What inspires you?

LISA
What inspires me?

JOSH
Yeah.

LISA
To do what?

JOSH
Anything. What makes you want to,
you know, get up and take action?

LISA
(trying to be cute)
Besides a designer blowout sale?

Josh rolls his eyes.

LISA
I don't know. I guess I'm inspired
to plan our wedding. Why?

Her attention is drawn back to the TV.

JOSH
I just -- you know I'm interviewing
that sixteen-year-old girl?

LISA
(eyes still on the TV)
Oh, you're doing that?

JOSH
Yeah. Cloe. Bright kid. We
talked about inspiration and she
came up with some pretty stunning
thoughts, and I've been thinking
about it and I can't think of one
damn thing that inspires me. There
are things I like, but nothing
that's like, "wow," you know?

LISA
Josh, she's a teenage girl. She
has no concept of the real world.
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)

She does nothing all day but gossip, style her hair and listen to boy bands. I wouldn't take anything she says too seriously.

JOSH

Hmm.

LISA

God, I would not go back to those days if you paid me. The drama. The uncertainty.

(beat)

I'm really happy we're getting married, babe. No more wondering about tomorrow. No more surprises.

She nuzzles to Josh. He puts his arm around her. They kiss. Josh tries to kiss her more, but Lisa gently cuts him off, preferring to just cuddle and watch TV.

LISA

And we can inspire each other for the rest of our lives, right?

JOSH

Right. Right, I was just --

LISA

(to the TV)

No not those shoes!

(beat, to Josh)

What, hon?

JOSH

Nothing.

Lisa's engrossed in the show. Josh is momentarily lost in thought, then his focus, too, returns to the TV.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cloe, on her bed, music in headphones, taps at her laptop. She scrolls through photos, each a variation of the same shot - her hands held in the shape of a heart, framing the setting sun. She frowns and deletes them one by one, then --

Success. Cloe smiles her approval and opens a photo. Her eyes darting excitedly, she quickly edits it, making minute but precise changes. The "hand heart" image glows...

Suddenly, she closes the picture window and opens a group of web pages of all kinds - photography competitions, arts colleges, film schools, one titled "Careers in Writing."

Cloe flips through the pages with growing intensity, when --

DONNA (O.S.)
Hey, sweetie.

Cloe quickly minimizes the screens and addresses her mother.

DONNA
(showing off her outfit)
What do you think?

CLOE
You look cute.

DONNA
Yeah?

CLOE
Hmm... you wanna try my green top
with that?

DONNA
I knew it.

She makes her way across Cloe's room.

DONNA
Wouldn't kill you to pick up this
place.

Cloe doesn't respond.

Donna grabs a pair of jeans, holds them up and assesses them.

DONNA
I swear I had a cute little body
like this before I had you.

CLOE
You're still a hot mama, mama.

DONNA
Not like I used to be. But
hopefully enough, tonight.

Cloe rolls her eyes.

Donna finds Cloe's green top, holds it up to herself and
waits for Cloe's reaction...

CLOE
Totally.

DONNA
Thanks, sweetie.

She dashes for the door, but stops and turns back --

DONNA
Oh, I got that application for you.

CLOE
Mom...

DONNA
Honey, we've talked about this.
Get a Cosmetology License. You can
start working right away and have
some money in your pocket. I know
you like to be creative; it's
creative -- and practical.

CLOE
I know.

DONNA
And if you get a job at the mall, I
told you, you can live here. We'll
be roomies!

CLOE
I know. Thanks, mom.

DONNA
Okay, gotta run, wish me luck.

She leaves before Cloe can respond.

Cloe turns her attention back to the open web pages. Frustrated, she closes them one by one.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Josh is asleep on the couch, the TV his only companion. He wakes and focusses on the screen - it's a frantic infomercial for "The Super Shammy." Half conscious, he watches...

JOSH
It's just a towel.

He checks the clock - '3:21 am.' He stands and heads for the bedroom, but stops at his computer and sits.

COMPUTER AREA

Josh opens his email and clicks through; delete - delete - delete - delete, then suddenly --

'Bloop,' an IM pops up. It's from Cloe. Her voice narrates:

CLOE'S IM
 "'Sup?'"

Josh, surprised, types a response. His voice narrates:

JOSH'S IM
 "Me. But not for much longer.
 Shouldn't you be asleep?"

CLOE'S IM
 "Insomniac."

JOSH'S IM
 "Sorry. Warm milk?"

CLOE'S IM
 "Will that counteract a dozen cups
 of coffee?"

JOSH'S IM
 "Probably not."

CLOE'S IM
 "Drat."

Josh smiles, then tries to end the conversation.

JOSH'S IM
 "Okay, well, good night --"

CLOE'S IM
 "Can I ask you a question?"

JOSH'S IM
 (some hesitation)
 "Sure."

CLOE'S IM
 "How does anyone ever want just one
 thing?"

JOSH'S IM
 "I'm not sure I get what you mean."

CLOE'S IM

"I want to be famous and inspirational and unconventionally beautiful. Another part of me wants to get married and be a mom and raise happy kids. I want to write stories and take pictures. Make people feel things, or at least want to feel things."

Josh, a bit taken aback, struggles to respond.

JOSH'S IM

"I think it's good to have a lot of interests. I think that makes you a well-rounded person."

Unhappy with his response, he starts to delete it, when --

CLOE'S IM

"I want to get drunk. I want to be sober. I want to do nothing. I want to impress, seduce, joke, party, pray, nap and embrace myself through every circumstance that life sends me."

Josh is stunned. And before he can respond --

CLOE'S IM

"But I'm so afraid that the things I want in life will always elude me. Maybe I want too much, or maybe it's just that what I want is too big for a person like me."

JOSH'S IM

(struggling)

"Cloe, I think what you're going through is normal."

He hits "Send," but again is not happy with his response.

CLOE'S IM

"Sorry, I'm rambling. You want to meet tomorrow? Finish the interview? Same time?"

Josh can't seem to think of anything to write, but --

JOSH'S IM

"Sure."

CLOE'S IM
"K. Gonna try to get some shut-eye. Good night. :)"

She signs off. Josh is more than a little perplexed. He hits a button and his computer screen goes black.

EXT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Josh exits his car. He checks his cell phone, then spots Cloe on a sidewalk bench, coffee in hand, her legs over --

Matt's lap.

Josh stops, self-conscious. Cloe notices him. She jumps up, prompting Matt to follow.

CLOE
Josh, this is Matt.

MATT
'Sup?

JOSH
How you doin'?

He gives Matt and Cloe a minute. They say goodbye. Matt skates away. Cloe turns to Josh and brightens.

CLOE
Sorry about that.

JOSH
Looks like you two worked it out?

CLOE
Ugh, I don't know.

JOSH
(indicates coffee shop)
Okay. You want to --

CLOE
(suddenly excited)
Can I show you something?

JOSH
I was hoping to finish our interview and --

CLOE
This is part of that. Please?
It's just this way.

Josh relents. Cloe leads him down the sidewalk.

JOSH
How many coffees is that today?

CLOE
The only thing keeping me awake
right now.

JOSH
You know, if you don't drink so
much of that, you'd sleep more,
then you wouldn't need to drink so
much of that. Kind of a circle
thing.

CLOE
Really?

They walk a little further and arrive at a --

FOOD COURT

Business people, teens and shoppers of all shapes and sizes
eat and mingle at rows of tables.

Cloe leads Josh to an empty one. They sit.

JOSH
Okay...

Cloe holds out her empty coffee cup, smiles, and purposely
drops it. She reaches under the table for it.

Josh waits, but Cloe doesn't reappear.

CLOE (O.S.)
Down here.

Josh bends down and finds Cloe, oddly amused with herself.

CLOE
Hello.

JOSH
How are ya?

CLOE
What do you think?

JOSH
I think maybe your mom was right
about the 'dorkish quality.'

CLOE

Ha ha. No, I mean look around.
I noticed this the other day.
Check out all the feet.

Josh cranes his neck and looks out at the scores of feet in various positions - standing still, walking, rubbing against one another - even one pair looking somehow "confused."

CLOE

People's feet communicate so much about them, but in ways no one ever notices. They tell a hundred different stories. Isn't it cool?

JOSH

It is. But can we sit up before my head explodes?

CLOE

Sorry.

They sit up. Josh gets back to normal as he listens to Cloe.

CLOE

I totally want to do a photo study of just peoples' feet. How they relate to each other. How unique and expressive they are. Don't you think that would be interesting...

But the more she talks, the more serious Josh becomes, till Cloe notices and trails off...

CLOE

What?

JOSH

What was that IM all about last night?

CLOE

Oh, it was just late and I had way too much coffee.

JOSH

(matter-of-fact)

Mmm... no.

Cloe stops short, then gives Josh her complete attention.

JOSH

You've got me a little worried about you.

CLOE

How can you be so sure?

JOSH

Because it was the middle of the night and you seemed upset and --

CLOE

No, I mean about your life? Your job, and you just got engaged and everything? How did you know what you wanted?

The question grabs Josh. He considers it, then --

JOSH

I don't think you can ever be totally sure of anything. Life just sort of happens.

CLOE

That's fucking bullshit.

JOSH

You, with the mouth!

CLOE

No, I'm sorry, but you can live with that? "Life just sort of happens?"

JOSH

(convincing himself)

Not completely. My job; I liked journalism, I studied it in college and I ended up at a magazine.

CLOE

You ever want to do anything else?

JOSH

(hesitates)

This isn't exactly the future I'd envisioned for myself, but I --

CLOE

I worry about my future all the time. What if I don't accomplish anything and end up a homeless failure? What if I get what I want and it's not what I want?

JOSH

Cloe, you've got time. You'll go to college; experience all kinds of new things. You'll figure it out.

Cloe doesn't answer. She looks out at the various groups of PARENTS and CHILDREN seated around her.

CLOE

All these happy, clichéd, content people. I want to strangle them for being so unrealistic. Maybe they really are happy; I don't understand how they can be, though. Maybe they're just really good at faking it.

Josh laughs.

CLOE

What?

JOSH

I have friends who married right out of college. Now, they have lives like these people. They say they're happy, but they've always said they envied me. I was 'free.'

CLOE

When you get married you won't be free anymore.

JOSH

(uneasy)

You make your choices in life.

CLOE

Then you're happy you're marrying...?

JOSH

Lisa. Yeah. Yes. Absolutely.

(grabs list of questions)

Okay, so --

CLOE

And how did you know you wanted to get married?

JOSH

(hesitates, struggles)

We've been together a long time.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
Lisa's great, and, and there's no
reason we shouldn't get married.

Beat - a moment of tense silence passes.

CLOE
(not at all convinced)
Oh. Well, great.

She looks around awkwardly.

Josh notices this. He struggles with his thoughts. His
frustration builds, then, exasperated --

JOSH
Cloe, I'm an adult!

CLOE
Meaning?

JOSH
Meaning I'm much older than you
are. And, and, and things, things
are different, more complicated
when you're an adult, in ways I, I
just can't explain.

CLOE
Can't explain to me, or can't
explain at all?

JOSH
Agh!

CLOE
I'm sorry, but you just don't
really sound that sure of things.

JOSH
Well, I am. I'm one-hundred
percent sure. I'm perfectly happy
and I didn't mean to give the
impression that I'm not.

CLOE
Okay --

JOSH
Okay!

CLOE
I'm sorry --

JOSH
No, it's fine!

Beat.

CLOE
Fine.

At last, mercifully, a moment of calm descends over them.

CLOE
Guess we better get back to my
vlogs - your big exposé on the
typical teenage mind?

JOSH
Cloe, 'typical' is the last word I
would use to describe you.

Cloe's proud of herself. Josh smiles.

EXT. CLEVELAND - DAY

The summer sun beats down on the bustling Ohio city.

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY
Josh taps at his computer.

JOSH'S SCREEN
*"Warhol could never have dreamed
how right he'd be. But his aim was
too low. In the era of social
networking, when a teenage girl's
creativity has instant global
reach, everyone is famous... all
the time --"*

EXPLODING LAUGHTER distracts Josh. He looks up. Mike and some GUYS convulse at a nearby computer. He sighs, then --

'Bloop,' an IM pops up. It's from Cloe. Her voice narrates:

CLOE'S IM
"'Sup?"

Josh, smiles and types a response. His voice narrates:

JOSH'S IM
"Hello."

CLOE'S IM
*"How's the article coming? Need
any more teen angst?"*

JOSH'S IM
"I think I've got it covered."

A few moments pass while he awaits a response, then --

CLOE'S IM
*"Does that mean I'll never see you
again?"*

Josh considers this a moment, then Cloe elaborates --

CLOE'S IM
":("

Josh frowns. He looks around at his office and his cackling office mates, then back at the ":(" on his screen... then --

JOSH'S IM
"You hungry?"

EXT. WESTSIDE MARKET - DAY

In a cavernous late-Victorian structure, it's endless stalls of fresh produce, baked goods, meats, wines, and imports.

Josh and Cloe bustle through the lunchtime crowds.

Cloe's dazzled by this feast for the eyes and palette.

CLOE
This is my new favorite place!

JOSH
Westside Market. Been here a hundred years and you've only discovered it now.

CLOE
Thanks to you.

She squeezes his arm.

JOSH
I worked here every summer all through high school.

Cloe produces her camera and starts snapping pictures.

CLOE
God, I feel like I'm in Europe!

JOSH
You've been to Europe?

CLOE
Only on Google Earth.

Josh considers this a moment, then stops abruptly and grabs Cloe by the shoulders --

JOSH
Here. Close your eyes...

CLOE
What, why --

JOSH
Just do it.

Cloe closes her eyes, self-conscious but excited.

JOSH
Now. Open your ears, and listen...

Cloe raises her chin, and hears --

OLD LADIES gossip openly in Italian; a MERCHANT hawks passionately in Spanish; a SALESMAN haggles angrily in Russian...

JOSH
(whispers in her ear)
Better than Google Earth?

CLOE
Totally.

She keeps listening...

LATER

They walk, enjoying fresh baguettes with cheese and fruit.

JOSH
You ever think of studying
overseas? Foreign exchange
program? It'd be a great start on
that long list of things you want.

CLOE
(shrugs)
Well, my mom wants me to get a
cosmetology license.

JOSH
A cosmetology license?

CLOE
Yeah, I mean, I have to be
practical, right?

JOSH
No. No, you don't.

He stops and faces Cloe. She really listens.

JOSH
Cloe, you're sixteen years old and
you're brilliant. You can do
whatever you want to do. Practical
is the last thing you should be.

A cautiously hopeful smile spreads across Cloe's face.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - COMPUTER AREA - NIGHT

By dim light, Josh researches web sites for student arts
grants, scholarships, foreign study programs, etc.

Lisa, in night clothes, walks by.

LISA
You coming to bed, hon?

JOSH
(not looking up)
Mmm...

LISA
What are you doing?

JOSH
College research for Cloe.

LISA
Cloe? You still writing that?

JOSH
Oh, no, finished it last week. I'm
just trying to help her out. She's
really talented.

LISA
(bothered)
Yeah. You've mentioned that.

JOSH
I'll be in in a minute.

LISA
Um... okay.

Lisa, now a little annoyed, walks off. Josh keeps working.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cloe and Josh sit on a bench together, enjoying the sun.

CLOE
I think about death a lot.

Josh shoots her a stunned look.

CLOE
It's not the dying that bothers me
so much, it's the thought of not
being alive anymore. I'd really
miss the world.

JOSH
You realize you've got maybe
another sixty or seventy years?

CLOE
Maybe. Maybe five minutes.

JOSH
Cloe, you can't live your life
worry about death all the time.

CLOE
Not all the time. But some of the
time. So I don't waste time.

Josh considers Cloe's words.

INT. ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL - ANOTHER DAY

Josh and Cloe sit in a pew and stare up at a magnificent
round stained glass window. They whisper...

CLOE
So, you don't believe in God at
all?

JOSH
Of course not.

CLOE

Okay, not the guy in the robe with the beard, but you don't think there's at least some kind of something out there?

JOSH

Nope.

CLOE

Wait, in an infinite universe and an infinite amount of time, there is no magic? Not one bit?

JOSH

Sorry.

CLOE

That's retarded. And sad.

JOSH

Spoken with true religious compassion.

Cloe has no answer. Nice. They gaze back up at the window.

EXT. WATERFRONT - ANOTHER DAY

Josh and Cloe lean on a railing and look out at Lake Erie.

CLOE

High school felt like everyone was moving at a regular speed, and I was on a completely different track; thinking strange thoughts. Like I was just sitting somewhere watching all of these normal people live. Does that sound weird?

JOSH

No. I've never been much of a joiner. It used to get me frustrated, like there was something wrong with me. I finally just accepted that I don't connect with most people.

CLOE

Just weird teenage girls?

Josh "seriously" contemplates Cloe for a moment.

JOSH
Well, one anyway.

Cloe elbows Josh - he smiles back at her.

A warm, comfortable moment passes between the two of them.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Josh and Lisa sit with a well-groomed WEDDING PLANNER who shows them color swatches, invitations, etc.

Lisa is enthralled. Josh is... not.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - STORAGE CLOSET - NIGHT

Josh searches through boxes of memories - photos, letters, vinyl albums, vhs tapes.

He finds his high school yearbook: "Impressions: 1991." He smiles at inscriptions like, "You're gonna do it, man!", "The best!" and "See you in Hollywood, dude!"

He turns to "Sports," and is pleased to discover numerous shots of a gleeful, triumphant Josh Bennett, Basketball Star.

EXT. PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Josh shoots free-throws. A bit rusty, he eventually hits one, then another, and another.

He attempts a lay-up, hits it, then a few more moves till he's happily sweating and really getting into his old groove.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cloe scrolls through her Westside Market photos - the stalls, the produce, one of her laughing, holding a squirming lobster, one of Josh mugging for the camera.

Her cell phone rings. She checks it. The screen flashes "MATT." She hits the button marked "DENY."

Returning to her computer, she moves the images together so she and Josh are side by side. Then, Cloe smiles...

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lisa gets ready for a night out. Josh enters.

JOSH
Why are you getting dressed?

LISA
Because we need to leave in twenty
minutes.

JOSH
Shit, that party's tonight?

LISA
Yes it is.

Josh rushes into the bathroom. As Lisa shakes her head, "BLING" - Josh's phone goes off.

LISA
Josh, your phone!

He emerges from the bathroom, grabs it. It's from Cloe:

CLOE'S TEXT
"Totally bored. Wanna chat?"

Josh smiles a little and closes the phone.

LISA
Who was that?

JOSH
Cloe.

LISA
Josh, what is going on with you and
that girl?

JOSH
What do you mean by that?

LISA
I mean you're hanging around with a
sixteen year-old girl.

JOSH
I'm not 'hanging around' with her.
She's, she's just, she's a nice
girl, she's kind of an outsider,
it's, it's nothing.

LISA
It's not nothing, it's inappro-
priate and weird, and I'm sure
you're giving her the wrong idea.
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)
(as she exits)
Hurry up, we have to go.

JOSH
Lisa!

She doesn't respond. Josh is left hanging.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cloe lays on her bed, not happy. She checks her phone. Nothing. Frustrated, she tosses it aside, when --

"BLING" - a incoming text. She grabs it, opens it:

MATT'S TEXT
"Party at Jake's tonight. You in?"

Cloe's disappointed, but responds:

CLOE'S TEXT
"Sure."

INT. LOFT PARTY - NIGHT

ADULTS (20's-40's) party in an upscale space. Despite the red wine and hors d'oeuvres, it's a pretty raucous scene.

Josh, beer in hand, mingles. He looks over at --

Lisa, with a nearly-empty wine glass and laughing a little too hard. Clearly, she's had a few. Josh is concerned.

INT. BASEMENT PARTY - NIGHT

TEENAGERS carouse amid wood paneling, old couches and a keg.

Cloe sits, drinking with Matt. His arm's around her. She looks a little uneasily at the boisterous crowd.

Someone sets up cups for a game of beer-pong.

Beer is then poured into the cups, but these cups are not at the teenagers' party. They're at --

INT. ADULT LOFT PARTY - NIGHT

It's an identical setup for beer-pong.

Josh watches, rolling his eyes as the Adults start to play.

SERIES OF SHOTS - INTERCUT

Teenagers toss ping-pong balls and down cups of beer, as --

Adults do the same, laughing and stumbling, as --

Matt brings more beer to Cloe, and --

Lisa gets in on the game, and --

Josh sees her and downs his beer, then walks away, as --

Cloe takes a big drink of her beer, and --

The game progresses and the Teenagers get more rowdy, as --

Cackling Adults fill more cups and start yet another game.

END SERIES OF SHOTS

INT. BASEMENT PARTY - NIGHT

Matt leans in to kiss Cloe. She kisses him back, then, she feels a vibration and reaches for her phone. A new text:

JOSH'S TEXT
*"Sorry. First chance to talk.
 What's up?"*

CLOE'S TEXT
"nm. u?"

Matt, annoyed by Cloe's texting, gets up and storms off.

INT. LOFT PARTY - NIGHT

Josh looks out at the Adults around the beer-pong table.

JOSH'S TEXT
"Just another mature evening."

INTERCUT

Cloe looks out at the Teenagers around the beer-pong table.

CLOE'S TEXT
"Tell me about it. imy."

JOSH'S TEXT
"imy?"

CLOE'S TEXT
"I miss you."

Josh can't help but smile at this.

Lisa spots Josh. Her face drops; she just knows who he's texting. She downs her glass of wine. Josh keeps texting.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It's late. Josh and Lisa enter. Lisa is very drunk. Josh is, too, but nowhere near Lisa's condition.

Josh puts down his keys and cell phone. Lisa notices.

LISA
You don't want to leave your phone there, you might get a text from your little girlfriend.

JOSH
What?

LISA
I saw you tonight. You looked like a child, it was embarrassing.

JOSH
Nice.

LISA
Are you trying to fuck that girl, Josh? One last shot before you settle down, finally?

JOSH
Wow, you are really drunk.

LISA
No, I'm serious. Why else would you be talking to her so much? I know it's not the conversation.

JOSH
I told you, Cloe's a friend. She's got nothing going for her but her brains, and I just want her to have a chance at something more.

LISA
More than what?

JOSH

More than settling for life in this
crummy little city.

LISA

Is that what you're doing? Are you
'settling' with me?

JOSH

You're not listening to me. You
never listen to me.

LISA

No, I want to know, are you?

JOSH

Lisa, go to bed.

LISA

Because, don't think I haven't ever
doubted this relationship --

JOSH

Lisa, go to bed!

Beat.

LISA

Fine.

Lisa shuffles out. Josh, annoyed, watches her go.

BATHROOM

Josh splashes water on his face, then catches his reflection - a pensive moment. He starts to pull off his shirt, when --

"BLING" - his phone announces a new text. He hears it.

LIVING ROOM

The phone flashes. Josh picks it up - it's from Cloe:

CLOE'S TEXT

*"I really, really need to see you.
Please call me?"*

Josh, alarmed, quickly moves to a quiet corner and dials...

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cloe, drunk, disheveled and crying answers her phone.

INTERCUT

CLOE

Hey.

JOSH

Cloe, what is it?

CLOE

Fucking asshole Matt.

JOSH

What happened?

CLOE

Can you come get me?

JOSH

Cloe, it's three in the morning --

CLOE

Please, I really need you. Please?

Josh hears Cloe's desperation. He wrestles with it, then --

EXT. BUS STOP - NIGHT

Cloe sits huddled. Josh pulls up.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT (PARKED)

Cloe shuffles into the passenger seat. And before Josh can say a word, she hugs him - and doesn't want to let go.

JOSH

Come on, come on, Cloe, what is it?

CLOE

It's nothing.

JOSH

Nothing? You just called me
desperate in the middle of the
night.

Cloe grabs his hand, making him a little uncomfortable.

CLOE

It's Matt. I just...

JOSH

What happened?

CLOE

We were at that party and we were making out, and it was getting pretty hot and heavy and -- he really wants to have sex with me...

Josh is suddenly very self-conscious.

JOSH

You know you don't have to do anything with anybody that you don't want to do, and no one has the right to force you to --

CLOE

Oh, no, no, Matt didn't try to force me. It's just that I feel bad, I mean, I think you and I have become really close, and, I, I just, I don't...

Josh touches her cheek and she looks up at him.

JOSH

Cloe, if you like Matt, it's okay.

CLOE

No. No, you don't understand. It's not that I don't want to sleep with Matt. I've been thinking about this a lot, and I... I really want to sleep with you.

Boom. Josh freezes. His heart does a lay-up in his chest.

Cloe moves toward him, rising to her knees.

Josh still doesn't move.

Cloe gets closer and closer, then --

They kiss... a kiss that lingers at tender, but as it starts to get passionate, Josh pushes Cloe away.

JOSH

Whoa, whoa, no, no, no, Cloe, no, this is, this is a really bad idea.

CLOE
I think about you a lot.

Josh shoots her a look - half afraid, half... not.

JOSH
I think about you, too.

CLOE
Do you want to sleep with me?

JOSH
Whoa, I, you know, we shouldn't
even -- this is just -- Cloe!

CLOE
Would you kiss me again? Please?

Josh locks eyes with Cloe. A moment, then --

They kiss again, this time even more heated, till --

Again, Josh pushes Cloe away and they fall backwards, winded.

JOSH
Okay, now that's it! Let's just,
hold on a second! This is crazy.
I could -- this is illegal.

CLOE
False.

JOSH
No, no, I'm pretty sure, this is --

Cloe pulls her phone from her coat and starts punching keys. Josh looks at her, curious. She holds up the phone:

CLOE
Age of Consent in Ohio is sixteen.
I already checked it on three
different sites.
(reads)
"No person over the age of eighteen
shall engage in sexual conduct with
a person who is less than sixteen
years of age."

Josh's eyes go wide. He grabs the cell phone and reads...

JOSH
Jesus, don't mess with the internet
generation.

CLOE
It's actually sixteen in thirty-one states.

JOSH
No shit?

Cloe stares directly at Josh - her resolve, firm.

CLOE
Josh, the law says I can do what I want to do. I know what I want to do. What do you want to do?

Josh tries to respond, but can only look down into Cloe's big, adorable eyes for one long fevered moment, then --

JOSH
Oh, no.

CLOE
Yeah.

Josh grabs her - and the real kissing begins, as --

CLOE'S NARRATION (V.O.)
*"A first kiss is never just a kiss.
It's the most intimate thing two
people can share. The details.
The electric thrill. It's the type
of moment that, no matter who you
are, makes you feel revived."*

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh sits, lost in thought. He obsessively checks and rechecks web sites for age of consent in Ohio - sixteen, without a doubt, sixteen. And just as he breathes easier --

MIKE (O.S.)
Boy, you really nailed that girl!

Josh has a minor heart attack. Mike appears at his cubical.

JOSH
Mike!

MIKE
I finally got around to reading your vlog piece. You surprised me.

JOSH

Oh, yeah, I know you said you wanted it to be about co-eds --

MIKE

No, it's great. That girl, Cloe, is the new millennium teenager. She's exactly where our world is at right now. I think it's some of your best work.

JOSH

Really?

MIKE

It's also completely useless.

Josh's face drops.

MIKE

Sorry, buddy, but you profiled a sixteen year-old girl. I mean, our readers are horny bastards, but they're not perverts. Okay, maybe they are perverts, but we don't need to encourage them, you know?

JOSH

Sure.

MIKE

Great writing, though. Maybe you should start your own blog.

JOSH

Maybe.

MIKE

(he walks off)

Woo-hoo. Sixteen! Hot potato!

Josh, still numb, watches him go, when --

'Bloop,' a new email grabs his attention. It's from Lisa. He opens it. In Lisa's voice:

LISA'S EMAIL

"The secretary says you're not in, and your phone must be off. I woke up this morning and you weren't here? Please call. I love you."

Josh stares at the words, the guilt pangs rising.

He turns on his phone, and the messages ring in. He scrolls through Lisa's texts till he reaches a string of Cloe's:

CLOE'S TEXT
"I'm still dizzy."

Another:

CLOE'S TEXT
"I'm free after 3."

Then, another:

CLOE'S TEXT
"Or, whenever you want me."

Josh looks sick. He hits "reply" and starts texting...

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Cloe stares out the window, serene and daydreaming. After a moment, she spots Josh on the sidewalk. He comes in.

Cloe leaps up and kisses him. Josh pushes her down and sits.

CLOE
I can't stop thinking about last night.

JOSH
Yeah. Listen Cloe, last night was, I just, it was a mistake, okay? I was a little drunk and you were a little more than drunk and I just -- I cannot tell you how sorry I am.

CLOE
Why?

JOSH
You're a great girl and I've really enjoyed the time we've spent together, but that was absolutely not what I intended. I'd never want to hurt you in any way.

CLOE
Josh, I'm fine, you didn't hurt me.
(a sly smile)
Well, maybe a little...

JOSH
Please! Can we not -- okay?

CLOE

Okay.

JOSH

(leans in close)

Wait, was that -- was that your
first time?

CLOE

Are you kidding?

JOSH

Oh, yeah, of course, I'm sorry.
So, so you were a... a virgin?

CLOE

(off his look - he wasn't
kidding)

No! Josh, I had my first boyfriend
when I was fourteen. I've had sex
hundreds of times!

JOSH

(his face drops)

Hundreds?

CLOE

Well, it was with the same person,
but it was, like, almost every day
for over a year, so, yeah, it could
be hundreds.

JOSH

Why'd you break up, he have a heart
attack?

Cloe laughs. Josh starts to breathe more easily.

CLOE

Umm... did it seem like it was my
first time?

JOSH

Actually, no.

Cloe beams with pride.

JOSH

Will you stop?

Cloe rolls her eyes.

JOSH

So, you really are fine?

CLOE

Yes, stop torturing yourself. I really like you, Josh. I'd been thinking about it for a while, and I'm glad it happened.

(beat)

Are you sorry it happened?

JOSH

I'm engaged.

CLOE

Oh, yeah. You should break up with her.

JOSH

Why, so we can run off together?

Cloe smirks.

JOSH

(struggles)

Cloe, this is just not a good situation. Last night was --

CLOE

Mind-blowing.

JOSH

Okay, yes, it was. But there are about fifty reasons it was also a mistake. It can't happen again. I mean, what's wrong with me? You're sixteen. I've got emails older than you.

CLOE

Nothing's wrong with you. We connect, you said it yourself. Okay, so don't break up with Lisa. Don't. Stay with her. Get married if you want, but don't tell me last night wasn't something special.

JOSH

(really struggles)

It was. But it can't happen again.

CLOE

It can if you want it to. It can happen right now... if you want.

Josh stares at Cloe, his attraction to her is as intense as his conflicted feelings...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Josh and Cloe lay in bed. They've had sex... again. Now, in the stillness, Cloe hugs Josh as he strokes her hair.

CLOE
How did you want it to go?

JOSH
What?

CLOE
Your life. You said that you weren't living the life that you'd thought you would. What was the life you wanted?

JOSH
I almost can't remember. For a while I wanted to be an actor.

CLOE
An actor? Really?

JOSH
Yeah, can you see that?

CLOE
I totally can, you're so cute.

Cloe kisses Josh.

JOSH
I was gonna be a musician, but I couldn't play anything. Maybe a pilot, or an archeologist, or both, I had big plans.

CLOE
Sounds like it. What stopped you?

JOSH
That would be the question.

CLOE
Life just 'sort of happened?'

She stares into Josh's eyes. He studies her face.

JOSH
You're so pretty.

Cloe blushes.

JOSH
No, really, you are.

Cloe puts her head back on Josh's chest.

JOSH
What am I gonna do?

CLOE
About what?

JOSH
Oh, I don't know. About the fact
that I'm a felon in nineteen
states, and that I'm supposed to
get married, but all I want to do
is stay here in this bed with you.

CLOE
I told you, don't leave Lisa, just
see me. You can still get married.
This'll just be us. Just for now.
No one ever has to know.

Josh can't help but consider Cloe's words...

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Josh comes in. He looks exhausted. Lisa's been waiting.

LISA
Josh!

She runs to him - a cautious hug.

JOSH
Hey.

LISA
I was so worried. Where were you?

JOSH
I just needed to clear my head.

LISA
I'm sorry about what I said, I was
drunk. I couldn't understand about
Cloe, but it wasn't fair of me to
jump to conclusions. I trust you.
Completely.

Josh doesn't respond; how could he?

They sit on the couch.

LISA
Do you forgive me?

JOSH
(really squirming)
Oh. Yeah, don't worry about it.
I can see how you would have gotten
the wrong idea. It's probably not
a good thing for me to be...
talking to Cloe so much.

LISA
I just think you need to be
careful, you know? I mean, you
don't want anyone thinking you're
some kind of pervert.

JOSH
Yeah, right.

A cautious, awkward moment passes between them.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Josh brushes his teeth, then catches his reflection in the mirror. He stares at himself, his toothbrush slowing...

JOSH
I'm evil.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - DAY

Cloe lays on her bed, blissfully happy. She places her hand on her chest, presses down slightly and closes her eyes.

CLOE'S NARRATION (V.O.)
*"I'm just filled to the brim with
life. I wish I could take this
feeling and put it in a pill, and
give it to everyone I meet."*

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh, distracted, tries to get some work done, when --

'BLOOP' - a new email pops in. It's from Cloe. It's titled "Research Material." Curious, Josh opens it to reveal --

A picture of Cloe in skimpy underwear, posing seductively.

Josh jumps, knocks his mouse off his desk. As he bends down to get it, the picture remains on the screen --

Vince approaches and talks while looking at some papers.

VINCE
Hey, Josh do you --

Josh pops up without the mouse. Vince looks at him.

VINCE
Uh-oh. You've got the eyes.

JOSH
What eyes?

VINCE
Porn eyes.

JOSH
What? That's ridiculous.

Josh glances at the picture still on the screen.

VINCE
Please. You think you're talking to an amateur?
(tries to see)
Can I take a look?

Josh grabs his monitor and shields it from Vince.

JOSH
Okay, okay, you got me!

VINCE
Fine, hog it for yourself. But be smart about these things. Porn is the reason the Lord made flash drives.

JOSH
Thanks for the tip.

Vince holds up a hand to say, "don't mention it," puts a finger to his lips indicating, "silence," throws up the universal "okay" sign - then struts off.

Josh finally retrieves his mouse and closes the picture.

INT. SUNRISE MALL - PARKING LOT - JOSH'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Josh waits. He looks stressed.

Through the car windows, everywhere he looks there seem to be TEENAGERS - walking, laughing, talking, texting, etc.

He frowns, checks the time, then --

CLOE (O.S.)
Hi, old man!

Josh is startled. Cloe opens the door and jumps in. Her glowing face puts him more at ease.

JOSH
Hello, um, young lady.

CLOE
You get my present?

JOSH
You trying to get me fired?

CLOE
I hate to tell you but there's way
more where that came from!

She beams. Josh shakes his head and starts his car.

INT. MOTEL OFFICE - DAY

A jaded CLERK watches an uneasy Josh count out cash.

CLERK
I can just charge the same card?

JOSH
Uh... no, cash is fine.

The Clerk tries to glance past Josh to see who's with him. Josh sees this and gives the Clerk a look.

CLERK
You know, we have weekly rates.

Josh says nothing, signs the receipt, then, after a thought --

JOSH
How much?

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Josh and Cloe enter calmly. But as Josh shuts the door --

Cloe leaps into his arms and they kiss and fall onto the bed.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Josh and Cloe hold hands as he drives.

Josh looks down at Cloe, she flashes her 'cheesy smile.'

JOSH

You're a very interesting girl, you
know that?

CLOE

I'm your girl.

They share a warm moment, but... although Cloe doesn't see, Josh suddenly seems worried.

CLOE

Oh, can we stop at my school?

JOSH

Your, your high school?

CLOE

Yeah, it's not too far. I need to
pick up some stuff I left there.

JOSH

Cloe, I need to get home.

CLOE

It'll just take a minute.

Josh is not too happy about the idea, but relents.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Josh's car pulls in past the bleachers, sports fields, etc.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Josh is clearly uneasy. Cloe spots this and smiles.

CLOE

Okay, be right back.
(pecks him on the cheek)
Don't hit on any of my friends!

JOSH

Wow, you're hilarious.

Cloe jumps out. Josh sinks into his seat.

A FEW MINUTES LATER

Josh checks the time. He frowns. He opens his phone, tries to send Cloe a text, but the screen reads, "unable to send."

Annoyed, he hops out of his car.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

It's deserted - just Josh surrounded by the icons of high school; trophies, student photos, colorful banners, etc.

He runs his hand along row of lockers and stops at an open one - its door is adorned with cut-outs from teen magazines, stickers, a mirror, etc.

He catches himself in the mirror a moment, then --

FEMALE TEACHER (O.S.)
Can I help you?

Josh, startled, closes the locker door to reveal a FEMALE TEACHER, 30's, plain-but-pleasant, facing him.

JOSH
Oh, uh, no. No, I'm, just waiting for, for a student. She's --

FEMALE TEACHER
Which student?

JOSH
Cloe, uh, Cloe Vardis.

FEMALE TEACHER
Oh, Cloe! Wonderful girl.
Brilliant.

JOSH
Yeah, she's really something.

FEMALE TEACHER
You must be so proud of her,
graduating a year early!

JOSH
Oh, OH! No, no, I'm not -- I'm just a, just a friend.

He speeds past the Female Teacher, who, curious, watches him.

FEMALE TEACHER
Oh. Well.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

The clock reads "3:45 am." Josh lays wide awake. He stares guiltily at Lisa sleeping next to him...

COMPUTER AREA

By the dim light of the monitor Josh works at his computer...

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

Josh waits; he's tense.

Cloe opens the door and jumps in next to him. He relaxes some. They kiss.

CLOE
So, what's my surprise?

Josh produces a thick manila envelope.

Cloe opens it. It's applications for schools like The Rhode Island School of Design, Chicago Art Institute, NYU, The London Art College, and The Sorbonne.

Cloe is stunned, then, her eyes fill with tears.

CLOE
Josh...

JOSH
Those are applications for the best art colleges in the world, Cloe. You belong at one of those places.

CLOE
You really think so?

JOSH
They'd be lucky to have you.

CLOE
But how am I gonna --

JOSH
I'll help you every step of the way. Essays, recommendations, whatever. There's a real good chance you can get a scholarship. You can do this.

Cloe grabs Josh and holds him tight. She's happy, but a little sad, too.

Josh holds her; he feels the same.

INT. MOTEL ROOM - DAY

Josh and Cloe lay in bed. Cloe faces away from him, breathing softly. Josh lightly touches her hair. He's concerned. Cloe, too, looks worried.

CLOE

Why do you think you never got married before now?

JOSH

Cloe...

CLOE

I'm just curious.

Josh considers.

JOSH

I was waiting for the right time.

CLOE

What about the right person?

JOSH

Do you really want to have this conversation?

CLOE

She doesn't make you feel the way I make you feel.

JOSH

Cloe...

She rolls over to face Josh.

CLOE

Why? Why would you and me be so impossible?

JOSH

You're sixteen?

CLOE

You keep saying that. But it doesn't mean anything.

JOSH
It means this situation is
impossible. Be practical.

Cloe's shocked by that last word, but calms...

CLOE
She doesn't make you feel the way I
make you feel.

She jumps out of bed. Josh wants to speak, but can't.

EXT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - PARKING LOT - DAY
Josh walks to his car and stops short when he sees --
Matt, skateboard in hand, leaning against his car.

MATT
(nervous)
'Sup?

JOSH
(ALSO nervous)
'Sup?

MATT
You're Mr. Bennett, right?

JOSH
Yeah, that's right, uh, call me
Josh. Matt, right?
(beat)
How'd you know I work here?

MATT
Googled you.

JOSH
Of course.

MATT
So, like, you're, like, friends
with Cloe, right?

JOSH
Well, I, I interviewed her for an
article. It didn't work out, but
we still, uh, talk... occasionally.

MATT

Oh.

(beat)

You know if she's seein' anyone?

JOSH

(taken aback)

Oh, uh, she hasn't said anything...
the few times I've spoken to her.

MATT

'Cuz she's being all, like, weird
and totally not returning my texts,
and I thought maybe... I dunno
maybe you knew something. She said
you were pretty cool.

JOSH

Did she?

Matt nods.

JOSH

Well, Matt, I, I wish I could help
you, but I...

MATT

Yeah, that's okay.

He drops his skateboard down and looks at Josh a long moment.

He hesitates - could he know about Josh and Cloe?

MATT

Thanks, anyway.

JOSH

No problem.

Matt starts to skate away, then stops and turns back to Josh.

MATT

She's pretty rad, you know?

JOSH

Yeah. I know.

He skates off. Josh, pensive, watches him go.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Lisa watches TV.

Josh enters, looking distracted and stressed.

Lisa looks up from the TV, sees Josh's mood and is concerned.

LISA

Hi, hon.

JOSH

Hey.

LISA

How was your day?

JOSH

(checks mail)

Uh-huh.

He starts to walk off. Lisa looks worried.

LISA

(cautiously)

Josh?

He turns.

LISA

Do you want to watch some TV?

JOSH

Um. No, that's okay.

LISA

Well, it's 'Fashion Files' and I know you like that show, so I --

JOSH

Actually, Lisa, I don't like that show, and I don't want to watch it!

LISA

What's wrong with you?

JOSH

Nothing. I just can't take one more night of the fucking mindless, vapid moron-fest that is reality TV, okay?

LISA

No, it's not okay. Josh, what's going on with you? You've been distant for weeks and now you're acting like a total rude asshole!

(beat)

(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)
Are you still trying to punish me
for that Cloe thing?

JOSH
(coming apart)
What? No, no, that's, no I just -
I'm under a lot of pressure at work
and right now I'm tired and I need
a shower, and -- I know I've put
you off about the marriage stuff,
but it's just been -- we jumped
right into it and suddenly it's
like everything is coming in on me
all at once and I'm just not sure --

Lisa hears this and instantly looks worried.

JOSH
No, no, Lisa, don't. I don't mean
that, I'm just --
(beat)
Give me ten minutes, okay?

Lisa is stunned and pretty-much baffled by Josh's outburst.

LISA
(trying to calm him)
Okay. Take your time.

Josh fumbles out of the living room.

A moment later Lisa hears the shower.

She listens to it, then, after a thought --

BATHROOM - BATHTUB

Josh showers. Suddenly, the curtain's pulled back and it's --
Lisa... naked.

Josh's eyes pop.

Lisa steps in with him, she's deliberate and determined.

Josh says nothing, just stares at her, then --

They kiss deeply, and with increasing passion...

BEDROOM - LATER

Josh and Lisa lay in bed, sweaty. The clock reads 3:23 am.

Josh stares at the ceiling - astonished. Lisa glows.

LISA
Is it me, or has it not been like
that in a long time?

JOSH
It's not you.

Lisa nuzzles to him.

JOSH
Lees, I'm sorry I've been so -- I
know I've been... distant, I just --

LISA
You don't have to apologize.

JOSH
No, I do, I -- since we decided to
get married, I've just been
thinking about a lot of things.
Things I haven't thought about
before and I -- it's hard to
explain, I --

LISA
(drifting off)
Don't try. We're fine. It's late.
We'll talk tomorrow. I love you.

She falls asleep.

Josh tries to respond, but says nothing, only stares...

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh still stares, as if he hasn't closed his eyes all night.

MIKE (O.S.)
Hey Josh, you got a second --

He arrives, then gets a good look at Josh.

MIKE
Whoa, son, what happened to you?

JOSH
Uh, late night.

MIKE
You sly dog. Guess this
engagement's agreeing with you?

No response from Josh.

MIKE
Hello?

He sees Josh's desperation, and his eyes go wide with fear...

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY
Mike sits in his chair. Josh slumps down across from him.

MIKE
Josh, buddy, what's the problem?

JOSH
I'm in love...

MIKE
That's a problem?

JOSH
...with a sixteen-year-old girl.

MIKE
That's a problem.
(beat)
Wait, it's that girl from the
article! You danced too close to
the flames, man, the writer's
fallen for his subject. Classic!

JOSH
I'm afraid it's more than that.

MIKE
So you've got a crush - a bizarre
and somewhat disturbing crush - but
it'll pass. Just keep your hands
off her, know what I mean?

Josh looks up at Mike, guilt written all over his face.

MIKE
Wait, you didn't...

Josh's look confirms it.

Mike's eyes bug out. He leaps out of his chair and does a
kind of a 'stepping on hot coals' dance.

MIKE

Whoa, whoa, shit, Josh, this is
bad, really bad, I'm mean, this
means you're a statut -- OH MY GOD!

JOSH

No, no, Mike, Mike it's okay. It's
not illegal. The age of consent in
Ohio is sixteen.

MIKE

(stops short)

Sixteen?

JOSH

Yeah, it's actually sixteen in
thirty-one states.

MIKE

No shit?

(beat)

How 'bout Illinois?

JOSH

Eighteen, why?

MIKE

Oh, no reason, uh...
(changing the subject)
So, so does Lisa know?

JOSH

Oh, no, no, god no. I'm just
trying to work this out, you know,
it's pretty complicated.

MIKE

Fuckin'-Ay right, it is. Is it
this girl who kept you up all
night?

JOSH

No, that was me and Lisa.

MIKE

But you're also, um... with the
sixteen-year-old?

JOSH

Like I said, complicated.

(beat)

Cloe is amazing. She's just this
bolt of lightning.

(MORE)

JOSH (CONT'D)
I've never met anyone like her.
I've never felt the way I feel when
I'm with her.

MIKE
(genuine concern)
You really think you're in love?

JOSH
I know it's crazy. I know it. But
I think I might be.

MIKE
Okay, I know this is rather
indelicate, but how's the um, uh...

JOSH
Off the charts.

MIKE
(a look of fear, then)
So, what do you want to do?

JOSH
What else can I do? I've got to
stop this.

MIKE
Okay, then you need a plan. Here's
what you do. Take some time. Try
to cool it with the little kid --

JOSH
Mike!

MIKE
You know what I mean.
(beat)
Put same space between you and the
problem, just for now. Then, get
your ass to the gym. Work out till
you can't see straight. Emotions
are just chemicals in the body.
Like snake venom, you gotta sweat
this shit out of your system.

JOSH
You think that'll work?

MIKE
Not a clue.

Josh sighs.

INT. GYM - CARDIO AREA - DAY

Josh sweats profusely as he runs the treadmill - hard.

WEIGHT TRAINING AREA

Josh works a chest machine while, next to him, two YUPPIES, ROB and DAVE, 30's, trade off on the bench press.

YUPPIE ROB

Jesus friggin' christ, you should have seen it.

YUPPIE DAVE

Oh, here we go...

YUPPIE ROB

My daughter just turned sixteen, right, and she wants to have a pool party, and I'm like, fine, just nobody gets too drunk and no drugs.

Josh can't help but overhear their conversation.

YUPPIE ROB

So, last Sunday I have, I kid you not, about a dozen smokin'-ass teenage girls in bikinis dancing around my back yard. I mean, shit!

YUPPIE DAVE

You're a sick man.

YUPPIE ROB

Oh, guilty as charged. The things I was thinking? Please. And my wife kept looking at me, you know, with that 'look.'

YUPPIE DAVE

What did she think you were gonna do?

YUPPIE ROB

Seriously, right? I mean I'm a sick bastard, but I'm not a sick bastard, you know what I mean?

Josh, now thoroughly uncomfortable, rises and walks off.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Lisa's cooking a feast. Josh enters in his gym clothes.

LISA
Hey, baby!

She kisses him and feels his arms.

LISA
Looking good, tiger.

JOSH
Uh, thanks.

LISA
You just relax, I'm making all your favorites. It'll be ready soon.

Josh smiles a little.

KITCHEN - LATER

Josh and Lisa finish their wine over what's left of dinner.

LISA
You want another piece of cake?

JOSH
God, no. But everything was fantastic, babe, really great.

She beams. Josh smiles back.

LIVING ROOM - LATER

Josh and Lisa cuddle on the couch, contented. Lisa clicks through channels on the TV, and stops on a magazine show.

TV HOST (V.O.)
"Next up, "Cyber Stalkers." Adult predators who find their innocent teenage victims online and exploit them for sexual purposes. Is your child at risk?"

LISA
Ugh. Perverts.

Josh's eyes bug out.

LISA

Has Cloe ever said she has, you know, guys in their twenties contacting her online?

JOSH

Uh... no. And I really haven't talked to her in a while, anyway.

LISA

Oh?

JOSH

Yeah, you know, teenagers. Short attention span.

LISA

Oh.

(looks back at TV)
Pathetic. They should all be publicly castrated.

Josh looks nauseous.

JOSH

Why don't you see if there's a movie on?

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Donna, annoyed, scans the scholarship papers on Cloe's desk.

Cloe appears at the door.

CLOE

Way to invade my privacy.

DONNA

What the hell is all this?

CLOE

Scholarship stuff.

DONNA

I can see that. Don't think for a minute I'm paying for some art school, young lady.

Cloe grabs the papers from her mother.

CLOE

That's why it's called a scholarship, mother.

DONNA

You're not getting a degree that's
only gonna leave you unemployed.

CLOE

Well, thanks for believing in me!

DONNA

You sound just like your father.
Life doesn't work out the way you
want it to, Cloe. I wanted to go
to college, but I had you instead,
all on my own. I sacrificed. You
need a career you can rely on. Get
this other crap out of your head.

CLOE

God, you are so unfair!

DONNA

Life's unfair, kiddo.

She struts out, leaving Cloe frustrated and angry.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - COMPUTER AREA - NIGHT

It's late. Josh opens his email and clicks through; delete -
delete - delete, then suddenly --

'Bloop,' an IM pops up. It's from Cloe.

CLOE'S IM

"'Sup?"

Josh sees it, but doesn't respond.

CLOE'S IM

"*My mom's being a total bitch, got
a minute?*"

Josh stares at the screen.

CLOE'S IM

"*Heloooooooo?*"

Josh, tense, closes the chat program and shuts his computer.

But after a moment --

"BLING" - his phone announces a new text. He opens it...

CLOE'S TEXT

*"Hey, I think your computer is
having emotional issues."*

Josh shuts off the phone. He looks worried.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Cloe lays on her bed, staring at the phone screen... Nothing. She frowns, and texts another message.

CLOE'S TEXT

"RU OK?"

She hits 'send' and waits...

And waits...

But a response doesn't come. Cloe's baffled.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Cloe, on her phone, walks the curb like a balance beam.

CLOE

*Hey, it's me. I emailed and texted
you and it's been, like, six hours
and I haven't heard anything and I
really want to talk to you...*

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Josh, tense, listens to the rest of Cloe's message:

CLOE (V.O.)

*"...I'm sorry if I said something
that made you mad. You know me, I
just open my stupid mouth and god
knows what comes out. Um... okay,
so call me. I miss you. Bye."*

Josh, guilt weighing heavily on him, turns off his phone.

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh opens his email to find a string of emails from Cloe. He deletes them unread, then blocks Cloe's email address.

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Cloe works the counter. A BUSINESS MAN, 30's, approaches.

BUSINESS MAN
Venti drip, please.

Cloe glances at him.

BUSINESS MAN
Decaf.

Cloe's face drops. Her eyes well up.

BUSINESS MAN
Regular is fine.

INT. DEPARTMENT STORE - DAY

Josh and Lisa browse the flatware. Lisa clings to Josh, who tries his best to look interested.

LISA
Oh my god, I just cannot decide.
(holds up a plate)
Do you like this, hon?

JOSH
(really trying)
Um... sure.

Lisa squeezes him tightly.

They walk a bit further and Josh stops short when he sees --

A TEENAGE GIRL behind a counter. She's got a real 'Cloe' look to her. She seems bored as she texts someone.

The Girl glances at Josh. He smiles pleasantly. She sneers back. He quickly looks away.

EXT. PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Josh shoots three-pointers. He hits one, then another, and another. But despite this success, he looks miserable.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - DAY

Cloe, frazzled, sits on her bed in front of her laptop. She wears headphones.

She checks her email, reads... frowns. She hits refresh.

She clicks through a music website - song, after song, after song - but nothing is right. She throws off the headphones.

She refreshes her email again and again. Still nothing.

Frustrated, she rubs her face, then suddenly calms, and --

Opens a new tab and searches on "Today's Guy Magazine." At the web page, she clicks the link called, "Map our Location."

Cloe hesitates only a moment, then studies the map...

EXT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - PARKING LOT - DAY

Josh emerges from the building and walks. He looks pensive.

A little further on, he stops short, then --

Searches, a little unsure, for his keys, then finds them.

He gets in his car and drives off.

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Josh enters. The apt is dark except for a light coming from the kitchen. Curious, he investigates and sees --

KITCHEN

Lisa, bringing a cup of tea to the kitchen table for --

Cloe!

Josh's eyes go wide. Lisa sees him.

LISA

Josh. We have a visitor.

Cloe looks up at Josh and forces a nervous smile. Josh looks down at Cloe - hoping Lisa can't see him sweat.

JOSH

Hi, Cloe.

CLOE

I haven't seen you in a while.

JOSH

It has been a while. How are you?

LISA
(condescending)
Cloe's been telling me about all
the schools you helped her apply
to. It sounds exciting.

Suddenly, she hears the low 'RING' of a cell phone.

LISA
Oh, that's my phone.
(to Josh)
Honey, sit down. Relax!

She exits, leaving Josh and Cloe alone.

Josh sits across the table from Cloe. Lisa can be heard on
the phone in the next room.

JOSH
What are you doing here?

CLOE
You've been totally blowing me off,
what else am I supposed to do?

JOSH
You need to leave. I'll talk to
you later.

CLOE
No you won't.

JOSH
Cloe --

CLOE
I love you.

The words hit Josh hard. Cloe sees this.

CLOE
I love you.

Josh is about to reply when Lisa enters.

LISA
Sorry about that.
(beat)
Why don't we all go into the living
room and relax?

Cloe grabs her tea and hurries out, avoiding Josh's glare.

LISA
(whispers to Josh)
She's so cute!

Josh looks like he's going to pass out.

LIVING ROOM

They sit around the coffee table.

LISA
Josh, Cloe said that there was
something important she wanted to
say, but that she wanted to wait
for you to get home, first.

JOSH
Really?

CLOE
Yeah.

Beat.

LISA
Well? Is it college news?

CLOE
(very nervous)
No, um, I, I don't, I'm sorry, I --

She starts to cry. Lisa sees. So does Josh.

LISA
Cloe, sweetie, what is it?

JOSH
Cloe...

CLOE
I'm sorry. You seem really nice,
but I have tell you. Josh and I --

JOSH
Cloe!

CLOE
(blurts it out)
We've been together, in, in a
relationship. We've been sleeping
together. I love him. And I know
he loves me.

Silence.

Cloe's winded, Josh is terrified, and --

Lisa stares, completely stunned, then --

LISA

Oh my god, Josh. I knew it.

Josh tries to speak, when --

LISA

Cloe, I was a teenager once, and I understand what it's like to have a crush, especially on someone like Josh, but sweetie, you can't go around saying things like this --

CLOE

It's the truth.

LISA

Sweetie, I'm sure you think it is --

CLOE

This isn't some teenage fantasy!

LISA

Now, sweetie --

CLOE

Stop calling me that! I'm not delusional and I'm not a liar! Josh, say something!

Josh avoids her desperate eyes.

LISA

Josh doesn't have to say anything, Cloe. It's you that need to admit that you're making this up --

CLOE

Bull shit!

LISA

I'm trying to be nice to you, Cloe, but I'm not going to let you sit here and --

CLOE

Fuck you, Mary Poppins!

LISA
All right, that's it, you're
leaving!

She stands and grabs Cloe's arm.

CLOE
Josh, tell her! Josh!

Josh stands, but still won't look at her.

Lisa hustles Cloe to the door.

CLOE
Let go of me! Josh, please!

But Josh says nothing. He watches, almost frozen.

Lisa pushes Cloe. Cloe fights back. And Josh stares, then --

Inexplicably, he hears himself speak...

JOSH
It's true.

Lisa and Cloe turn...

JOSH
Lisa. Everything she said is true.

For a moment Lisa's confused, but Josh's face assures her that there's no uncertainty, then --

LISA
You fucker! You fucker, you
fucker, you fucker!! Bastard!
I knew it! I knew it!!

She physically attacks Josh with all she has. Cloe recoils.

LISA
Liar! You fucking liar!!

JOSH
Lisa, stop! Stop it! Calm down!
(beat)
Cloe, wait outside!

Cloe runs out.

LISA
You son-of-a-bitch! I felt guilty
for doubting you, and you let me!
(MORE)

LISA (CONT'D)
And you were fucking that little
girl!

JOSH
She's not a little girl --

LISA
Don't even try to defend yourself!

She attacks Josh again.

JOSH
Lisa, stop this!

LISA
Get out! Just get the fuck out of
here! Get out!!!

JOSH
Lisa, stop. Please! Just, just --

LISA
No, no, no, no, just get out of
here. Get out, get out, get out!!!

Josh escapes out the front door.

Lisa slams the door, rears back, takes a breath and SCREAMS.

EXT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Josh reels, in shock. Cloe, very scared, waits nearby.

From inside, Josh hears Lisa cry out, then smash something.
He takes this as his cue, and grabs Cloe's hand.

JOSH
Come on.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

Josh drives. Cloe stares at him.

CLOE
I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Josh doesn't respond.

CLOE
Are you gonna say anything?

Josh looks at her, starts to speak, then thinks better of it. He drives. Cloe just sits, confused.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Josh pulls in and stops in a deserted area under a light.

He jumps out of the car and slams the door. Cloe gets out, but can do nothing but watch him.

JOSH

(paces, mumbling)

I cannot believe this. I cannot
believe this!

CLOE

I'm sorry.

Josh glances at Cloe, still says nothing and keeps pacing.

JOSH

I'm thirty-five years old. You're
sixteen. Sixteen! You come into
my life now? Now?!?

(right at Cloe)

You know, I was fine! Everything
was fine till I met you!

CLOE

You seemed so miserable.

JOSH

Yes, I was miserable, but I didn't
know I was miserable!

CLOE

I'm sorry. I love you.

Josh stops and looks at her. He calms. Cloe's still unsure.

Suddenly, Josh walks right up to her. She's confused, then --

JOSH

I love you, too.

Cloe breaks into tears, then laughter, as she throws her arms around Josh and they embrace and kiss...

INT. JOSH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Lisa huddles on the couch crying some, but mostly seething.

Then, she gets an idea --

COMPUTER AREA

Lisa jumps into the chair and opens Josh's computer. She does a hard drive search on "Cloe," and an address book listing pops up for "Cloe Vardis - Home."

LISA
You little shit.

She opens the listing, reads, then picks up her phone...

INT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

Josh and Cloe, amazingly, actually look a little happy.

JOSH
Remember the time you asked me what inspired me and I didn't have an answer?

CLOE
Yeah?

JOSH
I do now.

They clasp hands. Cloe smiles warmly.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - NIGHT

Josh's car pulls up at the curb and stops.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - NIGHT (PARKED)

Josh and Cloe feel the weight of the situation.

CLOE
Where are you gonna go?

JOSH
Not back home.

CLOE
I'm sorry I did that. I just --

JOSH
Don't be. I'm sorry I cut you off.
It was a shit thing to do. This
whole situation is just... crazy.

Cloe suddenly looks worried.

JOSH
But I love you Cloe. I do.

They kiss.

Cloe exits the car. Josh watches her go.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Donna watches TV. As the front door handle turns, she hears it, shuts off the TV and waits.

Cloe enters, with some trepidation.

CLOE
Hi.

DONNA
Hi.

Cloe, relieved, heads for her room, when --

DONNA
You wanna come here and talk to me?

CLOE
What is it?

DONNA
What is it? I just got a call from that Josh guy's girlfriend, that's what 'it is.' What the hell are you're doing, Cloe, he's thirty-five years old!

CLOE
I'm aware of that, mother --

DONNA
Oh, no, drop the attitude.

CLOE
I love Josh, mom, and he loves me.

DONNA
Oh, please! He loves fucking you!

CLOE

Yeah, and I happen to love fucking
him!

DONNA

Cloe!

CLOE

Mom, you got me birth control when
I was fourteen. You let me have
boys over!

DONNA

Yeah, boys your own age.

CLOE

So, it's not the sex, it's his age?

DONNA

Yes, of course it is!

CLOE

I can do what I want with my body,
but only if it's with someone my
own age? That's so stupid.

DONNA

No, it's the way things are. And
there's something wrong with a man
his age who goes after... you.

CLOE

What's the matter mom, you jealous
that he didn't go after you?

SMACK! - Donna answers Cloe with a slap across her face!

DONNA

I'm your mother!

CLOE

Since when?

Donna's stunned.

DONNA

Do you know how much I've
sacrificed for you?

CLOE

How could I not, mom? You remind
me all the time - how much you gave
up to have me; how there were all
these things missed out on.

(MORE)

CLOE (CONT'D)

(beat)

I didn't decide to have me, mom, you did. It's not my fault, but you still blame me every day of your life for it.

DONNA

You have a great life, Cloe, I've always given you the freedom to do whatever you wanted.

CLOE

Bullshit. You've let me do what I wanted because you were too busy doing what you wanted!

DONNA

Well, I'm not going to let you do this!

CLOE

You can't stop me, it's not illegal.

DONNA

You're still a minor. I'll get a restraining order.

CLOE

You do and I swear to god you'll never see me again.

An angry moment passes between them.

DONNA

You really think he's gonna leave his girlfriend to be with you?

CLOE

You don't know him, and you don't know us.

DONNA

Ugh, spare me.

CLOE

Never. You've never believed in me. You've never supported me.

DONNA

I feed you! I've given you a roof over your head!

CLOE

Well, maybe you don't have to
anymore.

Beat. It's a standoff.

DONNA

Cloe, you leave here to be with
him, and you're not welcome back.

Cloe's wounded by Donna's words, but without speaking and almost on autopilot, she turns and walks out of the house.

Donna's incredulous, and shaking, but says nothing.

EXT. STREET CORNER - NIGHT

Cloe runs to a stop, gasping with tears streaming.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Josh, depressed, sits with an untouched meal.

His phone rings. He grabs it and sees it's from Cloe.

JOSH

Hey.

(listens)

Okay, okay, just -- okay, okay,
I'll be right there...

INT. MOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Josh and Cloe lay together on the made-up bed - fully clothed - both of them reeling, but for the moment, calm.

JOSH

You feeling better?

CLOE

A little.

Beat.

JOSH

Well, you can't say this hasn't
been interesting.

They both break into nervous laughter, then, it subsides.

CLOE

What are we gonna do?

JOSH

Believe me, I've been thinking
about nothing else.

CLOE

(looks right at him)

Do you really want to be with me?

JOSH

(almost not believing it)

I really do.

CLOE

Then, let's just be together.

JOSH

You make that sound so simple.

CLOE

Why isn't it? Everybody knows now.

JOSH

Well, for starters, you've got to
go to college.

CLOE

I'm not going to college.

Beat.

JOSH

What?

CLOE

We're together now. Why would I
want to go to college? I just want
to be with you.

JOSH

Cloe, you're going.

They sit up - the peaceful mood has changed...

CLOE

What, now you're telling me what to
do with my life?

JOSH

No, I'm telling you what you're not
gonna do with it.

CLOE

What the fuck does that mean?

JOSH

You have a list of about a hundred things you want. You're not giving them up just to be with me.

CLOE

I don't care about that, now.

JOSH

Well, I do.

CLOE

But you said you love me.

JOSH

I do, believe me, I wouldn't go through all this if I didn't.

CLOE

Wait... I want to be with you and you want to be with me, but if I stay here so we can be together, what, you'll break up with me?

JOSH

Absolutely.

CLOE

Oh my god, that is insane!

JOSH

I'm sorry.

Cloe jumps up, searching for an answer.

CLOE

I'll just stay anyway. You can't stop me.

JOSH

Then stay, but we won't be together.

CLOE

I do not understand this at all!

JOSH

(a sinking feeling)

I know.

CLOE

So, make me.

JOSH

I can't.

CLOE

Why?

JOSH

Because you're sixteen... fuck.

CLOE

Oh, come on, Josh --

JOSH

Cloe, if you stay with me - if you don't go to college now, you may not get the chance again.

CLOE

I can go later.

JOSH

Yeah, but later isn't...

(struggles)

Leaving home, seeing how big the world really is, and how small yours has been? I can't explain it. You just have to live it. And this is your time to do that.

CLOE

Josh...

JOSH

If you stay, things will change in your life, or this thing with us won't work out. Time passes faster the older you get, and one day you turn around and all your plans and where you thought you'd be are just... gone.

CLOE

(tears in her eyes)

You don't know that.

JOSH

Cloe, I'm living proof of that.

Cloe sits back on the bed with him.

CLOE

But I don't want to leave you.

JOSH

And I don't want you to go. But
you have to.

Cloe's stunned. She wants to speak, but no words come. And somehow, some small part of her knows Josh is right.

Josh, certain he's right, looks absolutely miserable.

EXT. CLEVELAND - DAY

A late-summer wind pushes around the first falling leaves.

INT. CLOE'S HOUSE - CLOE'S ROOM - DAY

Cloe stoically works at her computer. She sends email after email - each a different scholarship application.

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - MIKE'S OFFICE - DAY

Mike sits across his desk from a downtrodden Josh. A nauseating silence hangs in the room.

MIKE

Jesus.

JOSH

Yeah.

MIKE

So... Lisa?

JOSH

I moved out. She won't even look
at me.

MIKE

Sorry.

JOSH

No, it's for the best. It should
have happened a long time ago.

MIKE

And Cloe?

JOSH

Rhode Island School of Design.
She's working out the scholarships,
but it's looking good.

MIKE

(trying to be positive)
Well, that's good.

JOSH

Yeah. And I'm happy about it. I
am. She's got her whole life in
front of her. If she'd stayed here
for me it might have worked for a
while, but there's just no way it
wouldn't have ended badly.

Mike nods. A thoughtful moment passes, then, he frowns.

MIKE

Well...

Beat.

JOSH

What?

MIKE

Life ends badly, when you think
about it. I mean, we're all gonna
end up the same place one way or
another, right? All we really have
are the moments in between.

Josh listens closely.

MIKE

I've found that the future pretty
much has a way of working itself
out, you know? You just try to
find a little joy in it all. If
you're really lucky... love.

Boom.

Josh's face drops. Then, slowly but deliberately, a light
bulb glows above his head. His eyes bug out. He starts to
hyperventilate. Mike sees.

MIKE

Josh?

Suddenly, Josh jumps up stares intensely at Mike, who then
stands to face him.

MIKE
What's wrong?

Then, Josh hauls off and PUNCHES Mike squarely in the face. Mike heads straight for the floor.

Josh then snaps out of his trance and leaps to Mike's aid.

JOSH
Mike!

MIKE
Please, I have a weak heart...

Josh sits him up. Suddenly, he's giddily happy.

JOSH
Mike, I'm sorry. And I quit.

MIKE
That's okay, buddy, I pretty much had you fired half-way down to the floor.

JOSH
Listen, I gotta go.

MIKE
Yeah, u-huh, sure.

Josh hurries out.

MIKE
I mean, who am I to... ugh.

He falls back down to the floor.

INT. "TODAY'S GUY" MAGAZINE OFFICES - JOSH'S CUBICLE - DAY

Josh opens his cell phone and dials Cloe's number...

CLOE'S MESSAGE
"Hey, it's Cloe. I'm not here --"

Josh closes his phone, then jumps behind his computer.

He checks his email, instant messages, social networking sites - everywhere Cloe might be....

Nothing.

Frustrated, he YANKS the mouse cord out of the computer.

Mouse still in hand, Josh charges through the cubicles.
He passes Vince, stops, and shoves the mouse into his hand.

JOSH
This is for you.

Vince takes the mouse, then watches, baffled, as Josh leaves.

INT. SUNRISE MALL - C-TOWN COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Josh enters and encounters a long line of PATRONS. He scans the store... no Cloe.

Josh pushes his way to the front of the line where a YUPPIE is in mid-order with a BARISTA.

YUPPIE
Tall latte. No, make it a grande.
Grande skinny latte --

Josh shoves the Customer aside.

YUPPIE
Hey!

JOSH
Haven't you had enough coffee?!?

The Yuppie jumps back. Josh turns to the Barista.

JOSH
Is Cloe here?

BARISTA
She left a little while ago.

JOSH
Thanks.

He turns and rushes out.

YUPPIE
(to the Barista)
What kind tea do you have?

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (MOVING)

Josh scans the streets as he drives... no Cloe.

EXT. CLOE'S HOUSE - DAY

Josh's car pulls up near a park across the street.

INT. JOSH'S CAR - DAY (PARKED)

For a few moments, Josh just stares at the front door to Cloe's house. Then, as musters his courage and reaches for the door handle --

He glances into the park and catches sight of something...

UPWARD, THROUGH THE LENS OF CLOE'S CAMERA

Shimmering late-summer leaves drift in and out of focus.

Suddenly, into the frame comes a very blurry Josh. As he blocks the dusky sunlight, his image slowly sharpens. He smiles nervously.

JOSH

Hi.

He promptly goes back out of focus.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Cloe lays in the grass, camera still in front of her face. She moves it away and looks up at Josh, expressionless.

JOSH

Hi.

CLOE

Hi.

Silence.

JOSH

I, I wanted -- I need to talk to you. I tried calling, but I, I couldn't get you.

CLOE

Yeah, I've been kind-of unplugged lately.

JOSH

(trying to lighten things)
Time to roll around in the grass?

No dice. Cloe only smirks.

CLOE

(stands)

Look, I don't really think there's anything to talk about. I mean, you made yourself really clear, and I get it. I do. In fact --

JOSH

No, no listen. I know what I said, but I didn't -- I mean, I know this situation is crazy, but --

CLOE

Yeah, you've said that, like, a hundred times. I don't really need to hear it again. I'm sixteen, you're thirty-five. There's no denying it. So, please just leave me alone.

She starts to walk away.

JOSH

No, wait, Cloe!

She stops.

JOSH

Just listen to me, okay?

Cloe turns back around and waits.

Josh struggles for the right words... and keeps struggling...

CLOE

I'm listening.

JOSH

Yeah, I'm just... gimme a second --

CLOE

(stomps her foot)

Agh!!

JOSH

Okay, okay.

(a deep breath)

Cloe, I've never met anyone like you. Everything about you is just so... incredible.

Cloe softens.

JOSH
And I know it's crazy, but --

Cloe glares at him.

JOSH
(damage control)
Surprising! And very unexpected.
(beat)
When I'm with you, I feel like...
me. Like, the me that I'm supposed
to be, the me that I want to be, if
that makes any sense at all.

CLOE
It does.

JOSH
I know I said that I don't want you
missing out on your dreams just to
be with me. And I meant that. As
much as I want you in my life and I
want you to be happy even more.

CLOE
I know.

JOSH
But what I didn't realize until
about an hour ago is that it
doesn't have to be one way or the
other.

CLOE
What do you mean?

JOSH
I'm not gonna let you go, so you
can chase your dreams. I'm going
to hold on to you, and make sure
those dreams come true.

CLOE
Josh...

JOSH
No, listen. I don't have a lot of
answers in this situation. I don't
know what tomorrow is going to mean
for you and me. But whereever you
go next, I want to go with you.

Cloe's eyes fill with tears.

JOSH

And if it doesn't work out between us, then it doesn't work out. But I'm not gonna let that stop me from grabbing at the first thing in my life - the only thing - that I've ever been sure of. I love you Cloe. I love you. And I want you in my life for however long it lasts.

Cloe - tears streaming down her cheeks - throws her arms around Josh.

JOSH

I'm sorry.

CLOE

Me too.

JOSH

So you understand?

CLOE

Yes.

JOSH

And you love me?

CLOE

Yes, of course.

JOSH

And you want us to be together?

Cloe clings to Josh, but doesn't say... anything.

Josh breaks their embrace and looks at her.

JOSH

You want us to be together, don't you?

Still no answer from Cloe.

JOSH

Right there, you're supposed to say 'yes.'

CLOE

(sad)

Yeah.

JOSH
Not exactly what I was thinking...

CLOE
Josh...
(sits on the ground)
Come here.

JOSH
(much trepidation)
Okay...

He sits. They face each other. Cloe takes his hands.

CLOE
Josh, I've never met anyone like
you, either - even if that does
sound a little ridiculous coming
from 'one so young.'
(struggling)
But I've been thinking a lot about
us. And even more about me. For a
minute there, I really did kind-of
forget about everything that I said
I wanted. And that really
surprised me. And it also scared
me. I guess I'm not quite as
mature as I'd like to think I am.
And as much as I don't want to be,
I'm kind of just a kid.

Josh listens.

CLOE
But I absolutely love you. I do.
And I hear what you're saying about
making sure my dreams come true. I
just don't think that's something
you can do for me. I think it's
something I have to do for myself.
(beat)
I think we just have to be a
little --

JOSH
Don't say it.

CLOE
Practical.

JOSH
No, no. Practical is bad. Forget
practical.

CLOE
I can't.

Cloe looks down, sad, but nevertheless certain of herself.

Josh is stunned, but gets it, too.

A quiet moment passes between them.

CLOE
What do you think?

JOSH
I think you really know how to ruin
a guy's epiphany.

Cloe cracks a sad smile.

JOSH
And I think you're a hell of a lot
more mature than you give yourself
credit for.

CLOE
But am I wrong?

JOSH
No.

CLOE
I didn't think so.

They stand and face each other.

Josh looks at Cloe, and Cloe looks back at Josh. Both of
them are worn out.

JOSH
I'm, uh, I'm gonna go, okay?

CLOE
(crying)
Yeah.

JOSH
'Cuz if I stay any longer I'm just
gonna really start crying, and
believe me, it wouldn't be pretty.

CLOE
We can't have that.

JOSH
Right.

CLOE

So, we're doing the right thing,
right?

JOSH

Yeah. Yes. Absolutely.

CLOE

Sometimes you've got to be
practical? We're agreed?

JOSH

Sometimes it's a good thing.

CLOE

That smartest thing.

JOSH

The wisest choice.

Beat.

JOSH

Okay, I'm just gonna give you a hug
now, and then I'm gonna go, okay?

CLOE

Okay.

JOSH

Okay.

They hold each other - a long, slow, warm embrace.

A light breeze picks up. A few leaves fall around them.

They separate slightly, still looking into each other's eyes,
doing their best to be courageous.

Their bodies part, but they still hold hands.

Then, they drop one hand and hold with the other as they
start to turn away from each other.

Now, just their fingers intertwine as the sunlight glistens
through the spaces between them.

Just fingertips touching, now, they're about to part, when --

JOSH

Oh, no.

CLOE

Yeah.

And suddenly...

Their fingers clasp again, and --

Josh and Cloe pull themselves back into an embrace, and --

They kiss. One hell of a kiss. A kiss that does not stop.

And they stand, holding each other in the setting sun...

CLOE'S NARRATION (V.O.)

"I want to get drunk. I want to be sober. I want to do nothing. I want to impress, seduce, joke, party, pray, nap and embrace myself through every circumstance that life sends me. And maybe - just maybe - I won't do it alone."

FADE OUT.