

BROWSERS

"Pilot Episode"

written by
David Javerbaum

COLD OPEN

A COMPUTER SCREEN.

FF shot of the homepage of Gush, a fictional website modeled on The Huffington Post. The banner headline reads "This Is Our Youth?". The subheadline reads "Unpaid Interns Launch Uncertain Future at Gush". Between these two are photos of the people we'll soon know as KATE, JOSH, GABE and PRUDENCE.

An iMac-style cursor clicks on the headline. After a second the 'article' page of the story appears with a video box. The cursor clicks on the 'play' button, then the 'full frame' corner-box. Video fills the screen:

EXT. ASTORIA, QUEENS - MORNING

ESTABLISHING SHOTS OF AN ORDINARY SEPTEMBER MONDAY MORNING. KATE, 22, ATTRACTIVE, NEUROTIC, CASUALLY DRESSED, WALKS OUT OF HER APARTMENT BUILDING DOOR ONTO THE STREET, WEARING EARPHONES. DISNEYESQUE MUSIC BEGINS WHEN SHE CLOSSES THE DOOR; THOUGH LOUD, IT SOUNDS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM HER EARPHONES. SHE SINGS TO THE CAMERA, MUSICAL-THEATERY OVER-THE-TOP CHEERY AT FIRST, BUT QUICKLY LOSING CONFIDENCE.

KATE

*Hello, Monday morning!
Oh, how wonderful you feel!
You're just like me: you're breezy,
bright, and sunny!
And although I may be slightly stressed,
And my heart is pounding in my chest,
And I got four hours of sleep at best,
And I'm either manic or depressed,
And I'm overwhelmed and underdressed...*

(The music ends awkwardly.

She looks at herself)

*Under-underdressed, actually. Like,
slut.*

(Looks at her chest)

*Aaaand I'm nippin' out. So dumb
slut.*

(Turns around, walks away)

Headlights on and nobody home.

(Keeps walking away)

I should not be trusted with me.

SHE KEEPS WALKING FOR AN AWKWARD SECOND.

EXT. ASTORIA, QUEENS - MORNING

THE EXACT SAME ESTABLISHING SHOTS. ONCE AGAIN KATE EMERGES, THIS TIME IN DRESSIER CLOTHES, AND TO LESS DISNEYESQUE, "REALER" MUSIC THAT SOUNDS MUCH FULLER. NO ONE ELSE NOTICES HER OR EXPRESSES AWARENESS THAT SHE'S SINGING AS SHE WALKS.

KATE

*Hello, Monday morning.
So listen, here's the deal:
I am starting at a job that pays no
money.
I'm twenty-two and I live in Queens,*

INT. - TINY DISHWASHER OF KATE'S APARTMENT

A DIRTY PLATE OF RICE AND BEANS SITS IN THE DISHWASHER NEXT TO AN OPEN BOTTLE OF SUNKIST.

KATE (V.O.)

*I've been eating nothing but rice and
beans,*

EXT. - SUBWAY ENTRANCE

KATE DESCENDS DOWN A SUBWAY STAIRCASE.

KATE (O.S.)

*And I'm kind of lost, and a bit confused,
But I can't help feeling amused*

INT. - SUBWAY PLATFORM

KATE SINGS, ONE OF MANY PEOPLE WAITING FOR THE TRAIN.

KATE

*That this is my life!
Don't know what I'm doing in it,
But it's my life!*

The approaching train virtually drowns out her next line.

KATE (CONT'D)

Growing closer by the minute!

INT. - CROWDED SUBWAY CAR

KATE

*(Straphanging)
This is my life,
Which I'm stalling
'Til my calling
Makes a call.
But for now, I'm gonna fake it after all!*

Excited, she takes off her earphones and flips them into the air Mary Tyler Moore-style. They land on a man next to her.

KATE (CONT'D)

I am so sorry!

INT. - KID'S BEDROOM IN MAPLEWOOD, NJ

A NOTE FROM THE SONG SEGUES INTO AN ALARM CLOCK GOING OFF. JOSH, 23, NERDY, ROLLS OVER AND TURNS IT OFF. HE STARES AT THE CEILING. AT FIRST, HIS LIPS DON'T MOVE WHEN HE SINGS; HE IS "THINKING" THE SONG.

JOSH (V.O.)

Hello, so-called...

(Makes "finger-quotes")

"real" world.

(Note the quotes around the "real.")

Hello Dad's new girlfriend screaming

A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

DAD'S NEW GIRLFRIEND (O.S.)

Mornin', honey!

WE NOW SEE JOSH IS SLEEPING IN A BLANKET WITH A HUGE IMAGE OF WORF FROM STAR TREK: DEEP SPACE NINE. RAPID CUTS SHOW HE'S IN HIS CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - CHILDHOOD PHOTOS, STACKS OF BEAT-UP SCI-FI NOVELS, A RECENTLY-ADDED COLLEGE DIPLOMA.

JOSH (O.C.)

I'm a grown-up man in my childhood room.

I am out of work and in the womb.

INT. - KITCHEN TABLE

JOSH, NOW DRESSED SLOPPY IN JEANS AND AN A GAME OF THRONES T-SHIRT, SITS EATING COUNT CHOCULA. HIS FATHER AND AN ATTRACTIVE BLONDE TWENTY YEARS HIS JUNIOR SIT NEXT TO HIM, TALKING AND FLIRTING. JOSH LOOKS MISERABLE.

JOSH (V.O.)

But today I'm launching a new career

That'll get me the hell out of here

INT. - STARBUCKS

HE IS AT THE FRONT OF THE LINE. NOW HE SINGS "OUT LOUD," THOUGH AS ALWAYS NO ONE ELSE HEARS IT.

JOSH

And give me my life!

(To the cashier)

JOSH (CONT'D)

Yeah, a double-shot espresso.

(To himself)

This is my life!

CASHIER

Want a pastry?

JOSH

Yeah, I guess so.

INT. - BUS

HE SITS ON A CROWDED COMMUTER BUS HAVING HIS ESPRESSO AND SCONE. HE SINGS WITH FOOD IN HIS MOUTH.

JOSH

This is my life,

Not a pastime.

Now at last I'm

On my way.

HE BEGINS TYPING INTO HIS CELLPHONE. THE MANHATTAN SKYLINE IS IN THE BACKGROUND.

JOSH (CONT'D)

So start tweetin' the news...

A TWEET APPEARS IN A BUBBLE IN THE CORNER OF THE SCREEN LIKE A REAL TWEET, FROM HIS TWITTER ACCOUNT @MODERNVALJEAN: "On way to first Day at Gush. #NervouslyPredisillusioned"

JOSH (CONT'D)

I'm leaving today!

HE SMILES.

EXT. - PENN STATION

GABE, 22, BLACK, GAY, STRIDES THROUGH PENN STATION, FASTER AND MORE CONFIDENT THAN OTHER COMMUTERS. HE SINGS PROUDLY TO THE CAMERA.

GABE

So much injustice worth fighting!

So many wrongs worth destroying!

I'm gonna go make a difference!

It's gonna make me annoying!

EXT. - CHELSEA

PRUDENCE, 22, CHINESE-AMERICAN, STONED, STANDS IN AN URBAN PARK, TRYING TO DISCREETLY SMOKE A JOINT. SHE COUGHS HER WAY THROUGH NEARLY ALL HER MELODY, BARELY SINGING A WORD.

PRUDENCE

[COUGH COUGH COUGH] excitement!

[COUGH COUGH] challenge!

[COUGH] tomorrow [COUGH COUGH].

[COUGH COUGH] donut!

[NOTE: THIS CAN ALSO BE SHOT WITHOUT SHOWING THE JOINT, BUT JUST WITH PRUDENCE, RED-EYED, AMBLING DOWN THE STREET AND FORGETTING THE LYRICS ONE LINE IN.]

PRUDENCE HAS SEEN A DONUT STORE ACROSS THE STREET. SHE HAPPILY BEGINS WALKING TOWARDS IT. AS SHE DOES KATE WALKS BY HER, PAUSES AND LOOKS AT THE FRONT OF A HIP-LOOKING BUILDING. THE SIGN SAYS "GUSH.COM," AND FEATURES A CARICATURE OF ITS FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER, JULIANNA MANCUSO-BRUNI. KATE TAKES A DEEP BREATH. SHE WALKS THROUGH THE DOOR TO SECURITY.

KATE

Hello, Monday morning.

One more secret to reveal:

I'm so absolutely terrified it's funny.

SHE HANDS THE SECURITY GUARD HER DRIVER'S LICENSE. HE PLACES IT DOWN ON HIS DESK. THE LICENSE IDENTIFIES HER AS KATE BLOMQUIST. HER AWKWARD FACE IN THE PICTURE SINGS.

KATE (IN DRIVER'S LICENSE) (CONT'D)

Gonna try my best not to look that scared!

GABE'S DRIVER'S LICENSE IS PLOPPED DOWN ON THE SAME DESK. IT IDENTIFIES HIM AS GABRIEL BLACKMAN. HIS PICTURE SINGS.

GABE (IN DRIVER'S LICENSE)

Gonna seem incredibly well-prepared!

JOSH'S DRIVER'S LICENSE IS PLOPPED ON THE SAME DESK. IT IDENTIFIES HIM AS JOSH GRIBB. HIS PICTURE SINGS.

JOSH (IN DRIVER'S LICENSE)

Gonna have a job like a grown-up does!

PRUDENCE'S DRIVER'S LICENSE IS PLOPPED ON THE SAME DESK. IT IDENTIFIES HER AS PRUDENCE YU. HER RED-EYED PICTURE SINGS.

PRUDENCE (IN DRIVER'S LICENSE)

Gonna come back down from this buzz!

INT. - GUSH.COM

THE FOUR OF THEM EMERGE FROM AN ELEVATOR INTO THE LARGE, HIP OFFICES OF GUSH.COM. PRUDENCE HOLDS HER DONUT.

KATE, JOSH, GABE AND PRUDENCE

*And spin out my life!
My amazing untold story!*

A CRUDELY PRINTED-OUT SIGN TAPED TO THE FRONT OF RECEPTION SAYS "NEW INTERNS --->." THEY HEAD DOWN A HALLWAY COVERED WITH PHOTOS OF JULIANNA HOBNOBBING WITH FAMOUS PEOPLE.

KATE, JOSH, GABE AND PRUDENCE (CONT'D)
*My life!
My befuddled road to glory!*

INT. - LARGE BULLPEN

THE FOUR OF THEM ARRIVE AT THE CORNER OF AN ENORMOUS BULLPEN AREA BUSTLING WITH PEOPLE, EXCITEMENT, ENERGY, ETC. JUSTIN, A HANDSOME, COCKY 24-YEAR-OLD GREETES THEM; WE DON'T HEAR WHAT HE SAYS, BUT WE GATHER HE IS TELLING THEM TO SIT DOWN AND WAIT HERE. THEY ALL PUT ON NAMETAGS WITH THEIR FIRST AND LAST NAMES ON THEM: "HI, MY NAME IS KATE BLOMQUIST", ETC.

KATE, JOSH, GABE AND PRUDENCE (V.O.)
*This is my life.
I am flying
While I'm trying
Not to freak.*

ONE AT A TIME, WE WATCH THEM AS THEY PEEK THEIR HEADS UP OVER THE TOP OF THE CUBICLE TO THE SCENE AROUND THEM. THEY ARE TRYING TO TAKE IN THE "GROWN-UP" SCENE.

KATE, JOSH, GABE AND PRUDENCE
*It's the first day...
It's the first day...
It's the first day...
Of the rest of my week.*

ALL FOUR OF THEM ARE NOW "BROWSING" OVER THE CUBICLE WALL AS the title, "Browsers," pops up with a quick music sting underneath THEM.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

INT. - LARGE BULLPEN AREA

VARIOUS SNIPPETS OF ORDINARY MONDAY-MORNING OFFICE LIFE.
NOTHING PARTICULARLY EXCITING.

CUT TO THE FOUR NEWBIES, GAWKING AT THE WONDER OF IT ALL.

GABE

(Rapt)

This is the coolest place in the
whole world.

PRUDENCE

(Stoned)

Yeah.

JOSH IS LOOKING AT GABRIEL'S NAMETAG: "GABRIEL BLACKMAN". HE
BEGINS TYPING INTO HIS PHONE. ITS SCREEN APPEARS IN THE
CORNER OF OUR SCREEN AS "GABRIEL BLACKMAN" IS ENTERED INTO
THE GOOGLE SEARCH BAR. THE PHONE SCREEN APPEARS FOR A SECOND.
IF YOU PAUSE IT, YOU CAN GLEAN THAT HE WENT TO OBERLIN, WAS
STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT, HAD SOME BYLINES FOR EDITORIALS ON
THE STUDENT PAPER, ETC.

KATE

Have you guys been to the office
before?

JOSH

No.

PRUDENCE

I have. I mean not this one, but,
you know. Others.

GABE

It's teeming with life!

JOSH

(Cynical)

Well, it looks teeming with PC's.
Yikes. Julianna! It's a little
something called "Apple". Look into
it.

GABE

Do you think we get to meet her? Do
you think she went through our
resumés? Did she pick us?

JOSH
It's possible. I saw an interview
with her where she said...

QUICK CUTAWAY TO JULIANNA IN AN INTERVIEW.

JULIANNA
"I love the young people at Gush.
They are the Zeitgeist."

KATE
I saw that too.
(Flawlessly)
"I love the young people at Gush.
They are the Zeitgeist."

JOSH
Wow. Flawless.

KATE
I think that's how I got hired.

JOSH
Right.

KATE LOOKS EMBARRASSED.

GABE
She's one of my culture heroes. So
cool, so no-bullshit, and so pro-
gay.

KATE
Didn't she marry a gay guy once?

GABE
Soooo pro-gay.

JOSH
Although she's been married like,
ten times, so the odds are that one
of them would be, right?

GABE IS NOT AMUSED.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Yeah, it's possible she knows about
us. She probably knows about my
twitter feed. @ModernValjean? Ever
hear of it? Over 3,000 followers?
Twitter says it's similar to Steve
Martin and Albert Brooks?

JOSH (CONT'D)

Penetrating cultural criticism
along with random thoughts about my
Dad, who's a dick?

(No one's heard of it)

You should check it out.

KATE

Look.

THEY LOOK UP. JULIANNA, 55, GLAMOROUS, ARIANNA HUFFINGTON-
LIKE, IS WALKING THROUGH THE BULLPEN, SOCIALIZING, TALKING
LOUDLY AND GENERALLY BEING LARGER THAN LIFE. THERE IS A
SLIGHT TENSION/FEARFULNESS AMONG THE PEOPLE AROUND HER.

PRUDENCE

She looks younger than in real
life.

KATE

(Awed)

How do you become that? How do you
wind up as her after starting out
like - just to name the first
person who pops into my head - me?

PRUDENCE

(Out of nowhere)

Whoa! Wait. Your name is Gabriel
Blackman?

GABE

Yes.

PRUDENCE

Like, 'Gay Black Man?'

GABE

(He's heard this before)

Yes.

PRUDENCE

Do you... do you think that's why?

JUSTIN

(Shouting from a doorway)

Hey, everybody? We're ready. Why
don't you come in here.

GABE, PRUDENCE AND KATE STAND UP. GABE GLARES AT PRUDENCE.
JOSH LINGERS A SECOND. HE GOOGLED "KATE BLOMQUIST" AND IS
STARING AT HIS PHONE AT THE RESULTS SCREEN, WHICH APPEARS ON
OUR SCREEN FOR A MINUTE. THERE ARE SOME IMAGES - ONE OF HER,
AND A FEW OF ANOTHER ATTRACTIVE WOMAN.

JOSH
(Lustfully)
Helloo, some other woman named
Kate Blomquist!

INT. - CONFERENCE ROOM

JUSTIN TALKS. THE INTERNS SIT AROUND A COFFEE TABLE.

JUSTIN
Less than a year ago, I was sitting
exactly where you're sitting,
although we've since replaced the
chairs. I started out as an intern.
Today I am among the five highest-
ranking of Julianna's six executive
assistants. I'm proof that here at
Gush, talent at any level is
noticed and rewarded. Having said
that, I now need to discuss
"Winnowing Week."

GABE
Winnowing week?

JUSTIN
(Uncomfortably)
So what we do, it's kind of a
hallowed tradition, "Winnowing
Week", each new crop of interns, by
the end of the first week, so,
whichever one is not working out
the most, gets fired. Basically.

GABE
Fired?

JUSTIN
Well, I guess "fired" is when you
get rid of someone you're actually
paying. "Let go." But um... yeah.

GABE
No.

JUSTIN
Yeah.

KATE
Seriously?

JUSTIN
Seriously.

BEAT.

KATE

Seriously?

JUSTIN

Look, Julianna believes the business world can be profoundly unfair, and her management style, you know, reflects that.

JOSH

On what basis are we judged?

JUSTIN

Just your overall performance this week in the things we ask you to do. It's fair. In that regard.

GABE

Did you go through it?

JUSTIN

Yes I did. We had six interns. They fired a guy named Evan. Last I heard he was working at a Quizno's.

PRUDENCE

Quizno's rocks! I love them.

AWKWARD BEAT.

JUSTIN

Anyway, you'll always have Gush on your resumé, so... there's that. Now just give me a minute and I'll take you on a little orientation.

HE EXITS.

JOSH

Is this for real?

GABE

This is unconstitutional, unconscionable...

PRUDENCE

Uncool.

KATE

It's not for real. It's a hoax. It's like a freshman hazing thing.

JOSH
Are you sure?

KATE
Yes, abso-, I'm like, 50% sure.

JOSH
Cuz I can't lose this job, man.
This is what's gonna get me out of
my Dad's house.

KATE
You're not making any money.

JOSH
But it literally gets me out of his
house. I mean, I'm here now, right?

GABE
I can't believe Julianna would do
something like this.

KATE
It's like that short story The
Lottery where all the townspeople
draw lots and pick up rocks and
that woman gets stoned.

PRUDENCE
(Paranoid)
What woman got stoned?

KATE
Hey, Prudence, do you want to
borrow some Visine? 'Cause, you
look like you have, you know...
"allergies".

SHE OFFERS PRUDENCE VISINE FROM HER PURSE.

PRUDENCE
Thanks. My allergies are bothering
me. Must be the pot!

GABE
(Privately to JOSH)
Showing up high to your first day
of work?

JOSH
I know. What a bad Asian.

INT. - OFFICE

JUSTIN IS LEADING THE INTERNS THROUGH THE HALLS, POINTING TO VARIOUS PEOPLE.

JUSTIN

...so down this little alley is a lot of our section editors. That's Jason, he's Politics. Jeannette, Business... he's Tech... she's Media... Sports... and usually that desk is Women's Issues, but she's out on her lesbian honeymoon.

A PERKY WOMAN PASSES BY.

VICKY

Hey, Justin.

JUSTIN

Vicky.

VICKY

(To interns)

Hi! I'm Vicky, I edit all the celebrity blogs. We have a lot of stars with a lot to say who need a whooole lot of help saying it, so--

TOM, ANOTHER STAFFER CALLS TO HER.

TOM

Vicky, Angelina Jolie's stop-fricking piece just came in.

VICKY

You mean "fracking."

TOM

Yes I do, and so does she, probably, but she keeps calling it "fricking". So why don't you go fix it--

VICKY

Yeah...

TOM

'Cause she's tight with Julianna, so---

VICKY

Yeah...

TOM

If you don't want to end up working
for Drudge.

VICKY

I HEARD YOU TOM!

SHE WALKS AWAY BRUSQUELY. TOM SMIRKS AND WALKS AWAY.

JUSTIN

So let's head over to your area...

KATE

(Away from JUSTIN)

I think this is real.

GABE

I think this is very real.

JOSH

I think this shit just got mad
real.

(GABE stares at him)

I said that with mocking self-
irony.

INT. - COMPUTER SCREEN

A FF OF THE GUSH HOME-PAGE. WE TOUR IT ALONG WITH THE
INTERNS.

JUSTIN (V.O.)

Gush.com is the largest content
aggregator on the web. We have 24
content areas with 82 separate
subsections covering everything
from politics to entertainment to
New York to Latino voices to our
latest, "mindful living," which I
don't know what the hell that is.
It's a beast, and feeding that
beast takes a lot of material, and
that takes a lot of coffee runs and
a lot of browsing...

JUSTIN (O.C.)

And both of those are where you
come in. A lot of what we'll be
asking you to do is search the web
for stuff we can repurpose.

KATE

You mean cut-and-paste?

JUSTIN

No, *repurpose*. In fact around here we like to think of the stuff we find as pre-purposed. By the end of the day I want a list of forty links we would have never found without you. Quirky, heartbreaking, scandalous, heroic, tragic... all that good stuff.

JULIANNA (O.C.)

Justin!

JUSTIN

Yes?

JULIANNA APPROACHES JUSTIN. THE INTERNS ARE IN AWE. WE HEAR FOR THE FIRST TIME HER UNTRACEABLE ACCENT.

JULIANNA

Push my Amy Winslow lunch back an hour.

JUSTIN

Alright.

JULIANNA

I like that shirt on you.

JUSTIN

Thank you.

JULIANNA

You heard about the massacre in Peru?

JUSTIN

Awful.

JULIANNA

But the Knicks trade, eh?

JUSTIN

Smart move.

JULIANNA

I agree.
(Without looking)
The new interns?

JUSTIN

Yes.

JULIANNA
(Ominously)
Plus one, right?

JUSTIN
Ummm, yeah.

SHE TURNS TO THEM AND SIZES THEM UP.

JULIANNA
A hearty welcome to Eeny, Meenie
and Minie. Soon, we will choose our
Moe.

(Back to JUSTIN)
Come with me.

(They start walking away)
You saw the new "mindful living"
page?

JUSTIN
Looks amazing.

THE INTERNS ARE STUNNED.

PRUDENCE
(Paranoid)
Shit shit shit.

SHE FRANTICALLY DROPS MORE VISINE IN HER EYES.

JOSH
Wowzers browsers.

KATE
Well said.

GABE
*And she's having lunch with Amy
Winslow?*

KATE
She's the conservative columnist?

GABE
She's everything awful about the
right-wing. A bigoted homophobe.
And they're having lunch. Charming.

JOSH
I can't blow this, man! How would I
tweet my followers?!?

KATE

Look, there's noting we can do about it, ok? Let's just try to calm down and do our jobs.

THEY TURN TO THEIR COMPUTERS.

KATE (CONTINUED)

So where are you from, Prudence?

PRUDENCE

(Suddenly focused)

L.A.

KATE

I'm from Providence. It's a nice city. Kinda has an inferiority complex with Boston. I always say in my standup act, 'cause I do a little standup, that Providence is to Boston what Boston is to New York. It's--

PRUDENCE CAN NO LONGER HEAR HER. SHE HAS EXPENSIVE HEADPHONES ON. SHE IS STARING TRANCE-LIKE AT THE COMPUTER.

KATE (CONT'D)

Y'ello?

WE NOW SEE PRUDENCE IS A SAVANT WHEN IT COMES TO BROWSING. A RAPID-FIRE PSEUDO-PSYCHEDELIC MONTAGE OF THE VARIOUS VIRAL VIDEOS SHE WATCHES WHILE TYPING, CLICKING, LINKING, AND CUTTING-AND-PASTING WEB ADDRESSES ONTO HER 'NOTES' PAGE. HER EARPHONES PLAY THIS TECHNO SONG:

PRUDENCE (V.O.)

Everywhere I look I see a chipmunk on a waterski.

Everywhere I look I see a fat kid dance amusingly.

Then I send it out to you; that's what I was born to do.

Everywhere I look I find a virus to invade your mind.

Goin' viral. Goin' viral.

Time falls into a spiral.

Goin' viral. Goin' viral.

Puttin' worms inside your brain.

Goin' viral..

GABE, JOSH AND KATE ARE WATCHING HER AMAZED.

GABE

That's some epic browsing right there.

JOSH

(Tapping her shoulder)
Prudence? Sorry to interrupt, but we were watching you. You're amazing.

KATE

A privilege.

PRUDENCE

Thank you.
(Emboldened)
You know that video "Monkey and Baby Sing Bieber Medley"?

GABE

Of course.

JOSH

Who doesn't?

PRUDENCE

I discovered that.

JOSH

I thought that broke on "Tosh.0".

PRUDENCE

Yeah... after I sent it to him.

JOSH IS IN LOVE. A TWEET FROM @MODERNVALJEAN APPEARS ON THE SCREEN ROUGHLY WHERE A THOUGHT BUBBLE WOULD BE: "CHICKS WHO RUMMAGE THROUGH THE DETRITUS OF DISPOSABLE POP CULTURE ARE **HOT.**"

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. DELI - LUNCH

KATE IS SIMULTANEOUSLY WOLFING DOWN A SANDWICH, READING THE NEW YORK TIMES AND TEXTING. HER PHONE APPEARS IN THE LOWER LEFT PART OF THE SCREEN; WE CAN SEE (IF WE PAUSE THE SHOW) THE TEXT CONVERSATION SHE'S BEEN HAVING WITH "MOM", EXPRESSING HER ANXIETY ABOUT WINNOWING WEEK: IS IT REAL? DOES IT MAKE ANY SENSE? HER MOM'S LATEST REPLY COMES IN: "YOU CAN ALWAYS BACK COME TO ST. LOUIS!!! :-)" KATE SHUDDERS.

JUSTIN (O.S.)
Newspaper? Old school!

HE STANDS OVER HER. THE PHONE SCREEN INSTANTLY DISAPPEARS.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Mind if I sit down?

KATE
Go ahead.

JUSTIN
I just wanted to tell you, that video you submitted with your application was unbelievable.

KATE
Oh God. You know I wondered if that had something to do with getting this.

JUSTIN
I've watched it five times. In fact...

HE HAS TAKEN OUT HIS IPAD AND NOW PLAYS THE BEGINNING OF THE VIDEO. KATE IS DRESSED AND MADE UP EXACTLY LIKE JULIANNA AND DOES A PERFECT IMITATION OF HER. CLASSICAL MUSIC PLAYS.

KATE ON IPAD
...and another reason I'm going to hire this beautiful, vibrant woman Kate Blomquist is that she is the absolute Zeit-est of all the Geists I have ever met. As an intern she--

JUSTIN
How did you know she uses the word "Zeitgeist," like, constantly?

KATE

(Embarrassed)

I saw her use it an interview once.

JUSTIN

I mean, we saw lots of better resumés, but that just floored me. You got a pair on you, man.

KATE

Balls, I assume.

JUSTIN

Yes. 'Tits' would be harassment. You know, we're starting a new thing where we take cool segments from local news shows and recontextualize them for Gush with post-produced intros and bumps.

KATE

OK...

JUSTIN

My point is we're going to be recruiting people from in house, and you're someone who clearly has some on-air charisma, so... Just something to think about for the future.

KATE

What future? I might not last the week, right?

JUSTIN

Right. I hope you do though.

AWKWARD BUT PREGNANT BEAT.

JUSTIN

Speaking of which, you should--

KATE

(Stands up)

Yup.

JUSTIN

'Cause Gabe and Josh are both very impressive, and Prudence is--

KATE

I know. She's like the Mozart of sitting there.

INT. - BULLPEN - LATER

JOSH IS STRESSED OUT. ON A CORNER OF HIS SCREEN IS A LIST OF SIX SITES HE'S FOUND. NUMBERS 7-20 ARE BLANK. HE LOOKS LEFT AT PRUDENCE. SHE IS PLAYING PLANTS VS. ZOMBIES.

JOSH
You're done already?

PRUDENCE
Yeah... I can help you as soon as I mulch this zombie.

JOSH
(Nervous)
No no, thanks, I'm good.

HE TURNS TO THE RIGHT TO CATCH GABE LOOKING UP IN TRIUMPH.

JOSH (CONT'D)
How's your trollin' goin'?

GABE
Good. I found video of a protest last week at Occupy Tahiti.

JOSH
Isn't that old news?

GABE
Not on Tahiti, I guess. Check it out.

INSERT:

ON HIS SCREEN WE SEE YOUTUBE VIDEO OF SIX SCRUFFY MEN IN GRASS SKIRTS ON A TROPICAL BEACH, LOOKING SLIGHTLY UNHAPPY.

JOSH
They don't seem that unhappy.

GABE
For Tahiti that's miserable. This could go on Politics, Economy, Travel...

JOSH
(Threatened)
Oh yeah, well check this out: My friend's the manager for The Bare Minimum and he just tweeted they're posting their new video tonight. I'm gonna go tell the music editor.

GABE

Justin said save it for the end of the day.

JOSH

Hey, if I wait 'til the end of the day it won't be a scoop. The 24-hour news cycle: 'Tsall about the scoops!

JUSTIN APPROACHES.

JUSTIN

Hey Gabe, I need you to do a Starbucks run for Amy Winslow. She'll be here in ten minutes. Here's her order. Just leave it Conference Room C when you're done. Petty cash is at reception.

HE WALKS AWAY. GABE IS NOT HAPPY.

GABE

Fuck man, I didn't take this position to get a gay-baiting rage-aholic an...

(Checks order)

Iced venti.

KATE

What are you gonna do?

GABE

I refuse to contribute to her rage.

KATE

Don't do anything stupid.

GABE

I'm gonna make it a decaf.

PRUDENCE

Nice!

CUT TO:

JOSH IS SHOWING A ROCK VIDEO ON THE COMPUTER SCREEN OF CASSIE, A HIP WOMAN IN HER LATE 20S. JOSH STANDS BEHIND HER, NERVOUS, DESPERATE FOR HER APPROVAL.

CASSIE

Nah, it's nothing.

JOSH
(Stunned)
Why?

CASSIE
I know The Bare Minimum. They exist
in a musical netherworld between
emo and ska. And the video is eh.

JOSH
But to college kids, they're, like,
a totem of coolness, kind of what
Sigur Rós was in the early
aughts...

CASSIE
But I wouldn't know that because
I'm 28, which is ancient, right? Is
that what you're saying?

JOSH
No...

CASSIE
Oh. So it's not an age thing, I'm
just generally out of touch with
what's cool?

JOSH
No...

CASSIE
OK. Well, thanks for stopping by.

JOSH
(Desperate)
You're cool to me.

CASSIE
Yes. I am cool to you.

SHE "COOLLY" TURNS BACK AROUND. JOSH SKULKS AWAY.

CUT TO:

HE RETURNS TO HIS CUBICLE SEAT, SAD AND MAD.

KATE
How did it go?

AFTER A MOMENT JOSH HAS AN IDEA. HE SMILES, PULLS OUT HIS
CELLPHONE AND BEGINS TYPING INTO IT.

PRUDENCE
What are you doing?

JOSH
Here, I'll show you.

WITH A FLOURISH HE HITS "SEND" ON HIS PHONE. THE TWEET HE JUST SENT FROM HIS TWITTER HANDLE, @MODERNVALJEAN: "#GUSH MUSIC: WHERE COOL GOES TO REACH ROOM TEMPERATURE." HE CHUCKLES TO HIMSELF AS HE SHOWS PRUDENCE.

JOSH (CONT'D)
Score another one for
@ModernValjean.

HE GETS VERY EXCITED AND DIVES INTO A FANTASY...

CUT TO:

WE SPEND THE NEXT MINUTE IN AN IMAGINARY STYLIZED ROCK VIDEO IN WHICH JOSH LOOKS AND ACTS LIKE A REBEL ROCK 'N' ROLL STAR. AT FIRST HE STARS IN A "DRAMATIC RECREATION" OF HIS ENCOUNTER WITH CASSIE, PLAYED BY SOMEONE LIKE BLAKE LIVELY. SHE MIMES SCREAMING AT HIM.

JOSH (CONT'D)
*I won't ever let the man --
Or in this case, a woman who's the man --
Point is, I won't ever let her kill my
voice.*

JOSH, BROODING, RETURNS TO THE "BULLPEN," WHERE KATE, GABE AND PRUDENCE LOOK AT HIM EXPECTANTLY. HE OPENS A GUITAR CASE AND PULLS OUT... A CELLPHONE. THE OTHER THREE CHEER.

JOSH (CONT'D)
*'Cause when she treats me like some rock
that she can step on,
I pick up my weap-on of choice.*

JOSH NOW IS THE LEAD SINGER IN THE BARE MINIMUM (OR WHATEVER ACTUAL BAND WE CAN GET). HE IS PLAYING BEFORE A PACKED CROWD.

JOSH (CONT'D)
*'Cause when I tweet, I'm free!
Free to let these fingers fight the
powers that be!
Free to set the world to right with all
the truth I can express
In 140 characters or less!
I rock my freshman roommate!*

A NERDY GUY JOSH'S AGE PUMPS HIS FIST INTO THE AIR.

JOSH (CONT'D)
I grok my cousin Sue!

A 13-YEAR-OLD GIRL SMILES, REVEALING BRACES.

JOSH (CONT'D)
*I shine the light of truth
On velvethippo22!*

OBESE GUY IN CROWD
That's me!

THE CROWD WAVES IN UNISON, HOLDING THEIR CELL PHONES UP IN THE AIR IN ONE HAND AND TEXTING INTO THEM WITH THE OTHER.

JOSH
*My three thousand some-odd followers
Spread word of what I've done!*

PRUDENCE ENTERS, BACKLIT AND SUDDENLY BEAUTIFUL, FROM THE BACK OF THE HOUSE, HOLDING HER CELLPHONE.

PRUDENCE
Correction - three-thousand some-odd one!

JOSH SUMMONS HER UP AND LEADS THE CROWD IN A SING-ALONG.

JOSH
When I tweet...

CROWD
When you tweet...

JOSH
My problems end!

CROWD
Your problems end!

JOSH
They all melt away the moment I hit send!

CROWD
That very moment!

AN UNSEEN VOICE IN THE CROWD HAS STARTED SHOUTING.

GABE (O.S.)
That's not true! That's a total
lie!

JOSH LOOKS DOWN AT THE FRONT ROW, WHERE GABE IS ARGUING WITH AMY WINSLOW. IT'S THE INTRUSION OF REALITY INTO HIS FANTASY.

JOSH

Oh, not now! I'm heading into the key change!

INT. - BULLPEN

JOSH WAKES UP FROM HIS REVERIE TO FIND GABE IN A SHOUTING MATCH WITH AMY WINSLOW, A VERY THIN ANN COULTER-LIKE BLONDE. HER WHITE DRESS HAS A LARGE COFFEE STAIN ON IT. JUSTIN STANDS BETWEEN THEM. OTHER PEOPLE NEARBY WATCH.

GABE

That's not true at all!

AMY

Justin, I was in the elevator when this young liberal--

GABE

My name is Gabe!

AMY

--said he recognized me, that he hated what I stood for, that "he had a coffee for me, and here it was!", and then boom! He tosses it right on my blouse. Thank God it was iced.

JOSH

(Staring at her nipples)
Here here.

GABE

Justin, I was in the elevator, I recognized her, out of a sense of conscience I very politely said I disagreed with some of her views and also had a coffee for her, which I then handed over but the lid was loose and it spilled by accident.

JUSTIN

Listen, I don't want to get in the middle of a "he said, she said" thing.

AMY

(Under her breath)
More like "she said she said".

GABE

You are so hateful!

JULIANNA (O.C.)
Oh, see, see, right there... that's
not so good.

JULIANNA HAS APPARENTLY HEARD THE COMMOTION AND COME IN TIME
TO HEAR GABE'S FINAL OUTBURST.

GABE
M-M-Ms. Mancuso-Bruni...

AMY
(Very calmly)
He spilled coffee on me in the
elevator, Julianna. Because he said
he didn't like my politics.

GABE
That's not true!

JULIANNA THINKS.

JULIANNA
You're Gabe, right?

GABE
(Hopeful)
That's right, yes.

JULIANNA
From Oberlin?

GABE
Yes!

JULIANNA
Student council Vice-President?

GABE
You *do* know who I am!

JULIANNA
Yes. You are a very promising young
man. Eh, what a shame.
(Loudly, to office)
Winnowing week is over early this
time, everyone. We have a loser.

GABE IS SHELLSHOCKED.

JUSTIN
(Even he is surprised)
Wait, now?

JULIANNA

Yes. Congratulations, you three.

(To AMY)

So. Do you want to reschedule, or can you talk wet?

AMY

Can we reschedule? I'm a little flustered by all the incivility right now.

JULIANNA

Of course. Justin will work it out.

Let me walk you out, darling.

(They walk away.)

Use my dry cleaner. Trust me, he can get *anything* out.

JUSTIN APPROACHES GABE LOOKING GENUINELY SURPRISED.

JUSTIN

Gabe, sorry. Usually it's not 'til Friday. In fact... sorry, hold on a sec. I'll be right back.

HE KNOCKS ON JULIANNA'S DOOR AND WALKS IN.

PRUDENCE

That sucks donkeys.

GABE

It was an accident! She was lying!

KATE

But you did pick a fight.

GABE

No! I just said I disagreed with her views.

KATE

But who are you to say that?

GABE

It's why I'm here. To, to speak.

KATE

You're an intern! You speak when spoken to! Your day will come! Or it would have.

GABE

(Sad)

This is everything I ever wanted
and I blew it over a coffee.

JOSH

(Quoting Blade Runner)

All those moments lost in time.
Like tears... in rain.

(Beat)

Blade Runner? No?

KATE PITIES GABE. SHE LOOKS UP AT JULIANNA'S CLOSED DOOR. IT'S 50 FEET AWAY BUT SEEMS LIKE A MILE. SHE SIGHS IN RESIGNATION AND STANDS UP. SHE BEGINS SINGING, AND MOVING SMOOTHLY TOWARD THE DOOR. WE SOON SEE WHY: ANOTHER KATE IS PUSHING HER TOWARDS IT, ONE WHO LOOKS THE SAME AS KATE BUT FUNCTIONS AS HER CONSCIENCE. THEIR SONG IS A "DUET."

KATE

It's not like he doesn't deserve it.

KATE 2

He does.

KATE

It's not like he wasn't a jackass.

KATE 2

He was.

KATE

It's not like it's somehow my problem.

KATE 2

*It's his,
But it's not like he isn't a person.*

KATE

(Reluctantly)

*He is.
It's not like I'm safe in this job.*

KATE 2

No, you're not.

KATE

It's not like there's nothing to lose.

KATE 2

There's a lot.

KATE

It's not like it's smart.

KATE 2
It's astoundingly dumb.

KATE + KATE 2
But look out astoundingly dumb, here we come.

THE TWO KATES DO A LITTLE DANCE WITH EACH OTHER.

KATE
It's not like I'm noble...

KATE 2
...or loyal...

KATE
...or moral...

KATE 2
Or graced with incredible class.

KATE
It's just that I'm cursed with a conscience...

KATE 2
And it's an incredible pain in the ass.

"THEY" HAVE ARRIVED AT THE DOOR.

KATE 2 (CONT'D)
It's not like you have any right.

KATE
No, I don't.

KATE 2
It's not like it's going to work.

KATE
*No, it won't.
It's not like I know what I'm doing it for...*

KATE 2 GRABS KATE'S ARM AND MAKES HER KNOCK.

KATE 2
*And yet here you are, forming a fist,
Raising your arm, moving your wrist,
And risking your future by needlessly
knocking on this door.*

JULIANNA (O.S.)
Yes?

KATE LOOKS BEHIND HER. KATE 2 is gone.

KATE
(Under her breath)
Coward.

SHE PUSHES THE DOOR OPEN WITH A SCARY CREAK. JULIANNA SITS BEHIND HER DESK AT THE END OF THE ROOM. A LARGE PICTURE OF GENE WILDER AS WILLY WONKA LOOMS OVER HER DESK. JUSTIN IS NEARBY. THEY LOOK PUZZLED AND STARTLED RESPECTIVELY AT KATE AS SHE WALKS IN.

JULIANNA
Yes?

KATE
(Takes a deep breath)
Look...

JULIANNA
If it starts with 'look,' that means shut the door.

KATE SHUTS THE DOOR.

KATE
Look, I don't really know you, or how things are done here, or... anything, really. But... I think you ought to give Gabe a second chance. He worships you.
(Long awkward beat)
I... also worship you?

JULIANNA STARES AT HER.

JULIANNA
Justin, give me a minute.

HE WALKS BY KATE AND MOUTHS THE WORD 'WOW,' TO HER. HE SHUTS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. JULIANNA SIZES UP KATE UP AND DOWN.

JULIANNA (CONT'D)
Sit down.
(KATE sits. JULIANNA continues to stare.)
You remind me of myself at your age.

KATE
Thank you.

JULIANNA
I didn't say that was good.

AWKWARD BEAT.

JULIANNA

Kate.

KATE

Yes.

JULIANNA

What do you want out of life, Kate?

KATE

(Scared)

Right now, I just want out of life, period.

JULIANNA

When I was 22 I had no idea who I was or what I wanted. I was adrift on the tides of life. One day I was laying out tanning on a beach in the Cypriot village of Geriskipou when I saw a man - a very big, scary man - hitting his wife. Hitting her very hard. She was weeping. There was no one else there, no one to stop him. And at a certain point he turned and looked at me and... grimaced. "What are you going to do about it, little lady?" Now, I am not equating domestic abuse with winnowing new employees, a successful team-building technique that dates all the way back to *The Art of War*. Have you read that?

(KATE shakes her head)

I'll send you the app. Nor am I saying that coming into my office and speaking up for a friend is the same as having your uncle throttle a man and then drown him in a fishing net.

KATE

That's what you did?

JULIANNA

I'm not saying that either. My point is your action, while betraying both naïveté and stupidity, is not dissimilar to the kind of thing I would have done.

JULIANNA (CONT'D)

(She starts walking to her door)

Yes, you definitely remind me of myself at your age.

KATE

But that's not good?

JULIANNA

No. Because it makes me realize I'm old enough to have young woman remind me of myself at their age.

(Calling out the door)

Justin?

JUSTIN

Yes?

JULIANNA

Go get Gabe and tell him he's, let's say, learned his lesson or something.

JUSTIN

So, so he's staying?

JULIANNA

It would seem so.

(Looks at KATE)

You may leave, Kate.

(KATE nervously stands up and walks out)

But know this: You are now on my gaydar.

SHE SHUTS THE DOOR.

JUSTIN

She meant "radar".

KATE

I hope so. Otherwise I *really* don't know myself.

JUSTIN

(Impressed)

Like I said, you got a set of balls.

KATE

Thanks. I guess.

JUSTIN

So you're sticking around.

KATE
At least 'til Friday.

JUSTIN
Good.

KATE
Yeah.

THEY EXCHANGE A GLANCE. IT'S CLEARLY A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT.

INT. - BULLPEN - CONTINUOUS

JULIANNA IS COVERTLY WATCHING JUSTIN AND KATE THROUGH HER SHADES. SHE SMILES TO HERSELF AND WALKS OVER TO A PICTURE OF HERSELF A BEGINS TO WRITE SOMETHING, THEN STOPS, THOUGHTFUL. SHE BEGINS TO SING.

JULIANNA
*When I'm asked how I got so
successful,
I just smile and say "Hard work and
luck".
But that's not what it was; it was
really because
I am someone with whom not to fuck.*

THE CAMERA SLOWLY PANS FROM HER TO HER WALL, WHICH IS LINED WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF HER WITH CELEBRITIES.

JULIANNA (V.O.)
*I am smart, but I'm hardly a
genius.
And I can't say I'm good with a
buck.
But throughout my career it's been
painfully clear
That I'm someone with whom not to
fuck.*

WE DISSOLVE INTO VARIOUS SHOTS OF JULIANNA DEBATING PUNDITS ON TV. WE DON'T HEAR WHAT SHE'S SAYING, BUT HER ADVERSARIES APPEAR HUMILIATED.

JULIANNA (V.O.)
*I'm someone who makes up new rules
every day,
Rules everyone else is then stuck
with.
For instance, the rule that it
sounds déclassé
To say "I'm someone not to fuck
with."*

SHOTS OF JULIANNA AROUND THE OFFICE. SHE IS CHARMING AND SMILING IN ONE SCENE, SCREAMING AND YELLING THE NEXT. SHE APPEARS TO HAVE THE ENTIRE GAMUT OF HUMAN EMOTIONS ARE HER DISPOSAL.

JULIANNA (V.O.)

*It's a huge operation I'm running,
And I keep it from running amok
By making it known to both bigwig
and drone
That I'm someone with whom not to
fuck.*

AN INSTRUMENTAL BREAK IN WHICH WE SEE GABE RETURNING TO THE BULLPEN AREA WITH JUSTIN. HE IS GREETED BY PRUDENCE AND JOSH AND GIVES KATE A BIG HUG. WE CUT AWAY TO A SHOT OF CASSIE RE-WATCHING THE CLIP THAT JOSH SUBMITTED. SHE SIGHS AND GIVES A "MAYBE IT'S NOT SO BAD" GESTURE.

VICKY

(Loudly)

Hey, um... Josh?

CUT TO A VERY, VERY SLOW CLOSE-UP OF AN UNHAPPY 23-YEAR-OLD WORKING BEHIND THE COUNTER AT QUIZNO'S. HE HAS A NAMETAG THAT SAYS 'EVAN'. HE STARES FORLORNLY AT THE CAMERA.

JULIANNA (V.O.)

*It's nothing I want people
stressing about.
In fact, people's stress level
falls off
As soon as they're free of the
burden of doubt
As to whether I might cut their
balls off.*

WE FINALLY COME BACK 'LIVE' TO JULIANNA, WHO IS DOING YOGA ON A MAT IN HER OFFICE. HER EYES ARE CLOSED. SHE IS IN AN IMPRESSIVE STRETCH POSITION. SHE SINGS.

*But for now, I'm content to do yoga
And serenely await the next schmuck
Who walks in my room
And brings on his doom
By being naive enough not to assume
I'm someone with whom...*

(Opens her eyes, looks at
camera)

Not to fuck.

SHE SMILES. THE SONG ENDS.

AS THE MUSIC OF THE OPENING SONG BEGINS WE DISSOLVE TO THE FOUR NEW INTERNS TALKING TO EACH OTHER ON THE ELEVATOR AT THE END OF THE DAY. THEY HAVE CLEARLY BONDED. THEY WALK OUT THE DOOR; EVERYONE BUT GABE GOES ONE WAY; GABE WAVES GOODBYE AND BEGINS WALKING DOWN THE STREET; HE SINGS.

GABE

*This is my life
And I very nearly blew it.*

PRUDENCE SITS AT A TABLE AT QUIZNO'S EATING A SANDWICH.

PRUDENCE

*This is my life,
And I'm glad I'm passing through it.*

JOSH IS IN BACK IN HIS BEDROOM ON HIS COMPUTER, WATCHING THE BARE MINIMUM VIDEO ON GUSH, SMILING. HE "THINK-SINGS".

JOSH

*That is my life!
That's it right there
On the site - there,
That's my link!*

FINALLY, KATE RETURNS TO THE FRONT DOOR OF THE APARTMENT BUILDING WE SAW HER LEAVE AT THE TOP OF THE SHOW.

KATE

For a first day...

SHE THINKS FOR A MOMENT. WE SEE A VERY BRIEF MEMORY SHOT OF JUSTIN FROM HIS LAST CONVERSATION WITH HER. SHE SMILES.

KATE

There's potential, I think.

SHE TURNS THE KEY AND WALKS IN. HER IMAGE STOPS, AS AT THE END OF A MOVIE PLAYED BACK ON YOUTUBE. THE CURSOR OF GOD REAPPEARS AND CLICKS THE 'X' BUTTON IN THE TOP RIGHT. THE IMAGE DISAPPEARS.