BROWSERS

"Pilot Episode"

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COLD OPEN

1 A COMPUTER SCREEN. 1

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:

2 EXT. ASTORIA, QUEENS - MORNING 2

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 closes 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!
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. I should not be trusted with myself. Moron.

Awkward beat as she walks away.

3 EXT. - ASTORIA, QUEENS 3

Once again Kate emerges from her apartment, this time in dressier clothes, less Disneyesque music, and much more naturalistic direction. No one else notices her or expressed 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.

4 INT. - TINY DISHWASHER OF KATE'S APARTMENT 4

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.

5 EXT. - SUBWAY ENTRANCE 5

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

6 INT. - SUBWAY PLATFORM 6

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)
Drawing closer by the minute!

7 INT. - CROWDED SUBWAY CAR 7

KATE
(Straphanging)
This is my life,
Which I'm stalling
(MORE)

KATE (CONT'D)
'Til my calling
Makes a call.
But for now, I'm gonna fake it
after all!

She excitedly takes off her earphones and flings them into the air Mary Tyler Moore-style. They hit a man next to her.

KATE (CONT'D)
I am so sorry!

8 INT. - KID'S BEDROOM IN MAPLEWOOD, NJ 8

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 "thinks" the song.

JOSH (V.O.)
Hello, so-called "real" world.
(Makes "finger-quotes")
(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. Rapid cuts show he's in his childhood bedroom - childhood photos, stacks of beat-up sci-fi novels, a recently-added college diploma. The bedroom of a pop-culture geek.

JOSH (O.C.)
I'm a grown-up man in my childhood room.
I am out of work and in the womb.

9 INT. - KITCHEN TABLE 9

Josh's father and an attractive much-younger blonde sit at the breakfast table, yapping. Josh, now dressed for his first day of work, sits in front of his bowl of Count Chocula. Now he sings "out loud" to the camera.

JOSH
But today I'm launching a new career
That'll get me the hell out of here

10 INT. - STARBUCKS 10

He's at the front of the line. He keeps singing out loud, though as always no one else hears it.

JOSH
And give me my life!
(To the cashier)
Yeah, a double-shot espresso.
(To himself)
This is my life!

CASHIER
Want a pastry?

JOSH
Yeah, I guess so.

11 INT. - BUS 11

Josh sits on a crowded commuter bus wolfing down 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 phone, the Manhattan skyline in the background.

JOSH (CONT'D)
So start tweetin' the news...

A tweet appears in the corner of the screen from JOSH's Twitter account @ModernValjean: "On way to first day at Gush. #NervouslyPredisillusioned"

JOSH (CONT'D)
(Smiling)
I'm leaving today!

12 EXT. - PENN STATION 12

GABE, 22, black, gay, absolutely sure of himself, strides confidently through Penn Station and sings proudly to the camera.

GABE
So much injustice worth fighting!
So many wrongs worth destroying!
(MORE)

GABE (CONT'D)
I'm gonna go make a difference!
It's gonna make me annoying!

13 EXT. - THE HIGHLINE 13

PRUDENCE, 22, Asian-American, stoned, is trying to discreetly puff a joint. She coughs her way through nearly all her melody, barely singing a word.

PRUDENCE
[COUGH COUGH COUGH] excitement!
[COUGH COUGH COUGH] challenge!
[COUGH] my dreams [COUGH COUGH]!
[COUGH COUGH] donut!

She has seen a donut store across the street and happily walks toward it. As she does she passes by KATE, who pauses and looks at the front of a hip-looking building. The sign says “Gush” and features a caricature of its founder and publisher, JULIANNA MANCUSO-BRUNI. KATE takes a deep breath and walks through the door to security.

14 INT. GUSH - SECURITY DESK 14

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 LICENSE) (CONT’D)
Gonna try my best not to look that scared!

15 GABE’s driver’s license is plopped down on the same desk. It identifies him as GABRIEL BLACKMAN. His picture sings. 15

GABE (IN LICENSE)
Gonna seem incredibly well-prepared!

16 JOSH’s driver’s license is plopped down on the same desk. It identifies him as JOSH GRIBB. His picture sings. 16

JOSH (IN LICENSE)
Gonna have a job like a big boy does!

17 PRUDENCE’s driver’s license is plopped down on the same desk. It identifies her as PRUDENCE YU. Her red-eyed picture sings. 17

PRUDENCE (IN LICENSE)
Gonna come back down from this buzz!

18 INT. - GUSH.COM 18

The four of them emerge from an elevator into the lobby of the large, hip offices of Gush.com. PRUDENCE holds her donut.

K, J, G + P
And spin out my life!
My amazing untold story!

Two crudely printed-out signs taped to the hall and a glass partition read “NEW INTERNS -->” and direct them to four seats in the lobby.

K, J, G + P (CONT’D)
My life!
My befuddled road to glory!

JUSTIN, a handsome, cocky 24-year-old, greets 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 nametages with their first and last names on them.

K, J, G + P (CONT’D)
This is my life.
I am flying
While I'm trying
Not to freak.
It's the first day...
The first day...
The first day
Of the rest of my week.

One by one, the four of them turn around and “browse” at the office through the slats of the blinds. The title, “BROWSERS,” pops up underneath them.

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONE

19 INT. GUSH - DAY 19

Various snippets of ordinary Monday-morning office life. Nothing particularly exciting.

Cut to the four newbies, gawking at the wonder of it all.

KATE
This is surreal.

JOSH
I can't believe it! I work for Gush!

GABE
And now it begins. Now my grand voyage begins.

PRUDENCE
Yeah.

Beat.

JOSH
Do you think Julianna went through our resumés? Do you think she picked them herself?

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

19 pt Quick cutaway to JULIANNA in an interview. 19 pt

JULIANNA
The young people are the heart and soul of Gush. I love getting to know them. They are the Zeit--

Quick cut back to KATE doing a perfect imitation of Julianna.

KATE
"-geist. And if there's one thing this Zeit could use, it's more geist, ha ha ha."

PRUDENCE
That's amazing.

KATE
Thank you.

PRUDENCE
It's like you kidnapped her larynx.

Awkward moment.

GABE
Julianna is one of my culture heroes. Cool, confident, take-no-prisoners, and so pro-gay.

KATE
Didn't she marry a gay man once?

GABE
Soooo pro-gay.

JOSH
Well, even if she doesn't know us she might know about my twitter feed. @ModernValjean? Ever hear of it?
(No one has)
"Similar to" Steve Martin and Albert Brooks? You should check it out. It's a lot of incisive pop-culture crit. And a few thought about my Dad, who's kind of a dick.

KATE
Look! It's her!

They look up. JULIANNA, glamorous, cosmopolitan, is walking through the bullpen, socializing, holding court and generally being larger than life. There is a high-energy tension among the people around her.

JOSH
She looks younger than in real life.

KATE
(Awed)
How do you become that? I mean how do you wind up as her after starting out like - just to name the first person that pops into my head - me?

PRUDENCE
(Staring at his nametag)
Whoa, wait. Your name is Gabriel Blackman?

GABE
Yes.

PRUDENCE
'Gay Black Man'?

GABE
(He's heard this before)
Yes.

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

JUSTIN
(Shouting from doorway)
Yo! Fearsome foursome! Would you kindly make your way into the P-Gram?

GABE, PRUDENCE and KATE stand up. JOSH lingers a second. he is starting at his phone. The screen pops up on our screen and we see that he has googled "Kate Blomquist" and is staring at the results. There are a few images - one of our kate, but several of another attractive woman, a model.

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

20 INT. - THE PARALLELOGRAM 20

Justin addresses the interns gathered around a conference table in a room we see is called - and is - "The Parallelogram".

JUSTIN
I'm Justin, and less than a year ago, I was sitting exactly where you're sitting, although we've since replaced the chairs. I started out as a lowly intern. Sorry - with air quotes - a "lowly" intern. But today, I am among the five highest-ranking of Julianna's six executive assistants. I'm proof that in these halls there is opportunity for advancement for anybody who show themselves to be Gush material. Having said that, I now need to discuss...
(He writes it on a white board)
Winnowing Week.

He has accidentally/on purpose written the last word "Weak."

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Silly me.
(He replaces the 'a' with an 'e')
Winnowing Week.

GABE
Winnowing Weak?

JUSTIN
So what we do, and it's kind of a hallowed tradition, with each new crop of interns, by the end of the first week, whichever one is not working out the most, gets fired.

GABE
Fired?

JUSTIN
Well, no. I guess "fired" is when you get rid of someone you're actually paying. "Let go," I guess. "Set free."

GABE
No.

JUSTIN
Yeah.

KATE
Seriously?

JUSTIN
Seriously.

Beat.

JOSH
Seriously?

JUSTIN
Look, Julianna believes the business world can be profoundly unfair. And that it often should be.

JOSH
So, on what basis are we judged?

JUSTIN
Just, you know, your overall performance this week in the things we ask you to do.

KATE
Did you go through it?

JUSTIN
Indeed I did. We had a class of six interns and they fired a guy named Evan. Last I heard he was working at a Quizno's.

PRUDENCE
Quizno's rocks! I love their flatbread!

Awkward beat.

JUSTIN
Anyway, you'll always have "Gush, 2013" on your resumé, so... there's that. Now just give me a minute and I'll take you on a little orientation.

He exits.

GABE
This is wrong. This is unconstitutional, unconscionable...

PRUDENCE
Uncool.

JOSH
Is this for real?

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

JOSH
Are you sure?

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

JOSH
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 just refuse to believe Julianna would arbitrarily fire someone before letting him show he's the next great writer-slash-social activist of his time! It's unjust!

KATE
It reminds me of 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
(A gesture of kindness)
Hey, Prudence, do you want to borrow my Visine? 'Cause, you look like you have, you know, "allergies."

PRUDENCE
(Taking it)
Thanks! You know, my allergies *are* bothering me. Must be the pot!

GABE
(Sotto voce to JOSH)
She shows up high to her first day of work?

JOSH
I know. What a bad Asian.

21 INT. - OFFICE 21

Justin is leading the interns through the halls and trying a little too hard to show how comfortable he is.

JUSTIN
...so down this little alley, "Editor Alley" we call it, or I do, a lot of our section editors. That's Jason, he's Politics.
(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Jeannette, she's business - all business, right Jeannette? - Roger's Tech... Media... Sports... and that desk is usually Women's Issues, but she's away on her lesbian honeymoon.

A perky woman passes by.

VICKY
Hey, Justin.

JUSTIN
Vicky.

VICKY
(To interns)
Hi! I'm Vicky, me and Tom over there edit all the celebrity blogs. We have a lot of stars with a lot to say who need a whoooole lot of help saying it, so--

TOM calls to her.

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

VICKY
You mean "fracking".

TOM
I do, and she probably does too, 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
I get it, Tom.

TOM
You don't want to get sent back to Drudge.

VICKY
Basta!

She walks away brusquely.

JUSTIN
Ah, office politics. You'll all get to experience it. All but one. This way.

KATE
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)
That was said with knowing self-irony.

22 INT. - COMPUTER SCREEN 22

A FF of the Gush homepage. We tour it along with the interns.

JUSTIN (V.O.)
As you probably know, Gush is the largest content aggregator on the web. We have 24 content areas with 82 separate subsections, 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.

Back on camera.

JUSTIN
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, and both of those are where you will be coming in. A lot of what we'll be asking you to do is search the web for content 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.
(MORE)

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
So, by the end of the day I want a list of forty links we would have never found without you. Articles or videos, news or commentary, quirky, hearbreaking heroic, tragic, all that good stuff.

JULIANNA
Justin!

JUSTIN
Yes!

JUSTIN instantly drops his calm exterior and appears slightly nervous as JULIANNA approaches.

JULIANNA
Be a dear and push my Amy Winslow lunch back an hour, would you?

JUSTIN
Of course.

JULIANNA
(Almost like a test)
You heard about Christie?

JUSTIN
Launching an exploratory committee.

JULIANNA
The Knicks trade?

JUSTIN
New point guard.

JULIANNA
Kim Kardashian?

JUSTIN
Vacationing in St. Barts.

JULIANNA
The massacre in Peru?

JUSTIN
25 dead.

JULIANNA
26.
(Without looking)
These are the new interns?

JUSTIN
Yes.

JULIANNA
Still “plus one”, right?

JUSTIN
Ummm, yeah.

She turns to them and sizes them up.

JULIANNA
A hearty welcome to Eeny, Meeny and Meinie. Soon, we will find out who is... Mo.
(Back to JUSTIN)
Come with me. You saw the new “mindful living” page?

JUSTIN
Looks amazing.

They walk away. The interns are stunned.

PRUDENCE
(Paranoid)
Shit shit shit shit shit.

She frantically drops more Visine in her eyes.

JOSH
Wowzers browsers.

KATE
This is *real*.

GABE
Not only is it real but she’s having lunch with Amy Winslow.

KATE
The columnist.

GABE
The fascist bigoted homophobic demagogic columnist.

KATE
I’m hearing ambivalence.

GABE
It’s not funny.

PRUDENCE
It was kind of funny.

GABE
No it wasn't. And neither is my name. But "Prudence", for you? That's *hilarious.*

JOSH
I can't blow this, man! What would I tweet my followers? How could I look their avatars in the eye?

KATE
OK look, there's nothing we can do about it, OK? Let's not turn on each other. Just calm down and do our jobs.

They turn to their computers.

KATE (CONT'D)
So, where are you from, Prudence?

PRUDENCE
(Suddenly focused)
L.A.

KATE
Oh. I'm from Providence. Nice city. Kinda has an inferiority complex with Boston. I do this bit in my stand-up act, 'cause I do a little stand up, that Providence is New York's Boston, because...

PRUDENCE, now with fancy headphones on, seems in a trance.

KATE (CONT'D)
Y'ello?

23 We now see that 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: 23

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.
(MORE)

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

The other three are now standing beside her in awe.

GABE
That is some epic browsing.

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

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

G, K + J
Of course, who doesn't know that, yeah, etc.

PRUDENCE
I discovered that.

JOSH
No no, that broke on "Tosh.0".

PRUDENCE
Yeah... after I sent it to him.

They all look at her in awe.

JOSH
(In love)
My God.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

24 EXT. - THE HIGHLINE 24

KATE is wolfing down a sandwich, reading the newspaper and texting. We see her phone screen: “Is it real, Mom? Can they actually winnow me?” Her Mom’s latest reply comes in: “brb greece fire in kitchen”. KATE is puzzled. A second later comes “grease (sorry!)” KATE is even more puzzled.

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

He stands over her. The screen disappears.

JUSTIN (CONT’D)
Mind if I sit down?

KATE
Is my answer part of my assessment?

JUSTIN
(Sits down)
I love the High Line. Can you believe it was just an abandoned elevated train line for decades? Julianna had a lot to do with making it happen.
(Turns to her)
But you know that, don’t you?

KATE
Oh God.

JUSTIN begins pulling out an iPad.

JUSTIN
It’s nothing to be embarrassed about. It’s awesome. I’ve watched it five times.

KATE
I should never have put in my application.

JUSTIN
Here’s the best part:

24 pt He plays a video of KATE dressed and made up exactly like Julianna on his iPad. She imitates Julianna as classical music plays. 24 pt

KATE (O.S.)
It has been one of the great fortuities of my life to have taken part in the revitalization - dare I say, resurrection - of the High Line, this beautiful testament to architectural splendor. I--

KATE (O.C.) (CONT'D)
I just saw some stupid interview and I started imitating her and my boyfriend thought it was funny and convinced me to send it in. Said it would impress people.

JUSTIN
He was right. It did. Very funny. *And* it showed balls. Smart man, your boyfriend.

KATE
Ex.

JUSTIN
"-cellent." Excellent!
(Dropping the bravado)
Lame joke, sorry. That was... I don't know.

Awkward beat. They are both suddenly vulnerable.

KATE
Is it fun working for Julianna?

JUSTIN
It is every adjective in the world working for Julianna.
(Beat)
Well, you should get back and browse. I would hate for you to be the one to--

KATE
I know, I know.

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

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

25 INT. - BULLPEN 25

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 once I earn the Magnet-Shroom.

JOSH
No no thanks, I'm good.
(Turning to GABE)
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.

25 pt INSERT: On his screen is Youtube video of some scruffy men in grass skirts sitting on a tropical beach, looking slightly unhappy. 25 pt

JOSH
They don't seem that unhappy.

GABE
For Tahiti that's miserable. I found it on this obscure Polynesian political blog. No *way* anyone's seen this.

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

GABE
We're supposed to save it for the end of the day.

JOSH
(Walking away)
If I wait 'til the end of the day it won't be a scoop! The 24-hour news cycle's all about scoops!
(To himself)
Probably.

JUSTIN
(Approaching GABE)
Gabe, take a break. I need you to do a Starbucks run for Amy Winslow. Here's her order and some cash. Just leave it at Conference Room C when you're done. She'll be here in ten minutes.

He walks away. GABE is not happy.

GABE
Man, I didn't take position to get a gay-baiting rage-aholic an...
(Checking order)
Iced venti cappuccino.

KATE
What are you gonna do?

GABE
I refuse to contribute to her rage.

KATE
Don't do anything stupid, Gabe.

GABE
I'm gonna make it a decaf.

PRUDENCE
Fuck yeah!
(Beat)
Sorry. I got the Magnet-Shroom.

26 INT. MUSIC EDITOR'S DESK 26

JOSH, desperate for approval, stands behind CASSIE, a hip woman in her late 20s, as she watches a rock video.

CASSIE
Nah, it's nothing.

JOSH
Why?

CASSIE
I know The Bare Minimum. They're like half-emo, half-ska, nothing. And the video itself is eh.

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

CASSIE
But I wouldn't know that because I'm 28, right? I'm ancient.

JOSH
No...

CASSIE
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. Hey, this is your first week, right?

JOSH
Yes.

CASSIE
Who knows. Might be your last.

She turns away.

JOSH
(Desperate)
You're cool to me!

CASSIE
Yes. I am cool to you.

She coolly turns back around. Josh skulks away.

27 INT. - BULLPEN 27

JOSH returns to his cubicle seat, sad and mad.

KATE
How did it go?

After a moment JOSH begins to smile. He pulls out his phone and begins typing into it.

PRUDENCE
What are you doing?

JOSH
Here, I'll show you.

With a flourish he hits "send". On our screen appears the tweet he just sent from his twitter handle: "#GUSH MUSIC: WHERE COOL GOES TO THAW." He chuckles to himself.

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

He gets very excited and dives into a fantasy. We spend the next minute in an imaginary stylized rock video in which JOSH looks and acts like a rebel rock 'n' roll star.

28 INT. MUSIC EDITOR'S DESK - DAY 28

At first JOSH stars in a "dramatic recreation" of his encounter with Cassie, played by an old schoolmarm. She mimes screaming at him.

JOSH
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.

29 INT. - BULLPEN - DAY 29

JOSH returns to the bullpen, where KATE, GABE and PRUDENCE watch him. He opens a guitar case and pulls out... a cellphone. The other three cheer.

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

30 INT. - BULLPEN - DAY 30

JOSH now is the lead singer in The Bare Minimum. He plays before a packed crowd, typing into his phone like a guitarist playing guitar.

JOSH
'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 with braces smiles.

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 phone 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, backlit and suddenly beautiful, addresses him from the back of the house, holding her cellphone.

PRUDENCE
Correction: three-thousand-some-odd one!

JOSH summons her up onstage and leads the crowd in a sing-along as the schoolmarm from earlier shakes her first and is swallowed up by the crowd.

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 reality intruding into his fantasy!

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

31 INT. - BULLPEN 31

JOSH wakes up from his reverie to find GABE in a shouting match with AMY WINSLOW, an Ann Coulter-like thin blonde. Her white dress has a large coffee stain on it. JUSTIN stands between them. Other people nearby watch.

GABE
You're lying!

AMY WINSLOW
Justin, I was in the elevator when this typical young libtard--

GABE
My name is Gabe!

AMY WINSLOW
--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, yes 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 WINSLOW
More like "she said she said".

GABE
You are so hateful! I hate that!

JULIANNA
Oh, 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 WINSLOW
(Very calmly)
Julianna, he spilled coffee on me in the elevator because he objects to my politics.

GABE
That's not true!

JULIANNA ponders. Tension.

JULIANNA
You're Gabe, right?

GABE
(Hopeful)
That's right, yes.

JULIANNA
From Oberlin?

GABE
Yes!

JULIANNA
Student council president?

GABE
You *do* know who I am.

JULIANNA
Yes, and the good news is, you'll always have Gush on your resumé.
(Loudly, to office)
Winnowing week is over early this time, everyone. We have a loser.

GABE is shell-shocked.

JUSTIN
(Truly surprised)
Wait, now?

JULIANNA
Yes. As for you, Josh, Kate and Prudence: Welcome to Gush.
(To AMY)
So. Do you want to reschedule or can you talk wet?

AMY WINSLOW
Could we reschedule? I'm a little flustered.

JULIANNA
Of course. We'll try for next week.
(They walk away)
You should use my dry cleaner. Trust me, he's gotten a lot worse than that out.

JUSTIN
(Truly sympathetic)
Gabe, man... sorry. Usually it's not 'til Friday. In fact... you know, hold on a sec. I'll be right back.

He walks away.

PRUDENCE
That licks goat nards, Gabe.

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 up!

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

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

JOSH
(Dramatically)
All those moments lost in time. Like tears... in rain.
(Beat)
Blade Runner? Anybody?

32 KATE pities GABE. She looks up at JULIANNA's closed door. 32
It's 50 feet away but feels like a mile. She sighs in resignation and stands up. She begins singing, moving toward the door, and soon we see why: Another KATE - her conscience dressed like an over-the-top angel - is pushing her towards it. The two KATEs sing a duet as they journey through the office, which is oblivious.

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 incredibly dumb.

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

KATE
It's not that 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 this conscience,

KATE 2
And I'm 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 you arm, Shaking your wrist,
And risking your future by need-
lessly knocking on this door.

JULIANNA (O.S.)
Yes?

KATE looks behind her. KATE 2 is gone.

KATE
Coward.

33 INT. - JULIANNA'S OFFICE - DAY 33

KATE pushes the door open with a scary creak. Reveal: JULIANNA's ornate, photo-filled office. A large picture of Gene Wilder as Willy Wonka looms over her desk. JUSTIN is nearby. They look surprised 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)
And I... also worship you?

JULIANNA stares at her.

JULIANNA
Justin, give me a minute.

As he leaves he walks by KATE and mouths the word ‘wow’. He shuts the door. JULIANNA sizes up KATE.

JULIANNA (CONT’D)
Sit down.

KATE sits. JULIANNA continues to stare.

JULIANNA (CONT’D)
You remind me of myself at your age.

KATE
Thank you.

JULIANNA
I didn’t say that was a good thing.
(Beat)
Kate.

KATE
Yes.

JULIANNA
What do you want out of life?

KATE
At this moment, 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 pointed 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)
(MORE)

JULIANNA (CONT'D)
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 said I wasn't saying that. My point is your action in coming in here, while betraying both naïveté and stupidity, is not dissimilar to the kind of thing I would have done.
(Gets up and starts walking to door)
Yes, you definitely remind me of myself at your age.

KATE
But that's not good?

JULIANNA
No. But only because it makes me realize I'm old enough to have young women come in and remind me of myself at their age.
(Calling out the door)
Justin?

JUSTIN
Yes?

JULIANNA
Go pull Gabe from the gutter and tell him he'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)

JULIANNA (CONT'D)
(Dramatically)
But know this: You are now on my gaydar.

34 KATE, CONFUSED, SHUTS THE DOOR. JUSTIN IS RIGHT OUTSIDE. 34

JUSTIN
She meant “radar”. She always does that.

KATE
Oh.

JUSTIN
You got a pair of balls.

KATE
Thanks. I guess.

JUSTIN
So. Guess you’re sticking around.

KATE
I guess so.

JUSTIN
I’m glad.

KATE
I’m glad too.
(Significant moment)
But I think you should go get Gabe before he jumps out the window.

JUSTIN
Yeah. Hey, there’s something I should tell you.

35 INT. - JULIANNA’S OFFICE 35

JULIANNA covertly watches the two of them through her shades. She smiles to herself and walks over to her desk. A beat begins. She begins to write something, then stops and looks to camera.

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.

We pan from her to her wall, which is lined with photographs of her with various celebrities.

JULIANNA (V.O.)
I am smart, but I'm hardly a genius.
And I've never been good with a buck.
But throughout my career I've made painfully clear
That I'm someone with whom not to fuck.

36 We dissolve into various shots of JULIANNA debating pundits and politicos on TV. We don't hear what she's saying, but her adversaries appear humiliated. 36

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,

The JULIANNA on TV turns to the camera and sings this:

JULIANNA
I'm not someone to fuck with.

The person she's debating looks scared.

37 INT. - BULLPEN - DAY 37

Now we see shots of JULIANNA around the office. She is charming and smiling one moment, screaming and yelling the next. She appears to display the entire gamut of human emotions on a daily basis.

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.

38 INT. - BULLPEN - DAY 38

Instrumental break. During it we see a shaken GABE returning to the bullpen area with JUSTIN. He's greeted by JOSH and PRUDENCE and gets a hug from KATE.

39 INT. MUSIC EDITOR'S DESK - DAY 39

Then we cut away to a shot of CASSIE re-watching the clip that JOSH submitted. She gives a "maybe it's not so bad" look.

40 INT. - QUIZNO'S - DAY 40

Cut to a very slow close-up of an unhappy 23-year-old working behind the counter at Quizno's. He has a nametag that says 'Evan' and 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.

41 INT. - JULIANNA'S OFFICE - DAY 41

Finally back 'live' to JULIANNA, who is doing yoga on a mat in her office, eyes closed. She is in an impressive stretch position. She sings.

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

A knock on the door.

JULIANNA (CONT'D)
(Screaming)
What?!?

JUSTIN pops his head in.

JUSTIN
Sorry, I just wanted to tell you that I told them.

JULIANNA
Told who what?

JUSTIN
Told the interns that “Winnowing Week” is a fake thing we do with every class.

JULIANNA
Fine.

JUSTIN
And that usually it lasts a week but... this time it didn’t.

JULIANNA
Fine.

JUSTIN
Can I ask why? I just wasn’t expecting it, so I--

JULIANNA
Justin. You know who used to ask me a lot of questions during yoga?

JUSTIN
No.

JULIANNA
Evan.

JUSTIN
Gotcha.

He leaves. For the first time, JULIANNA opens her eyes and addresses the camera.

JULIANNA
...*not to fuck.*

CODA

42 INT. - ELEVATOR 42

As the music of the opening song begins again 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.

43 INT. - QUIZNO'S - DAY 43

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.

44 INT. - KID'S BEDROOM IN MAPLEWOOD, NJ - DAY 44

JOSH is in back in his bedroom on his computer, watching The Bare Minimum video on Gush, smiling.

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

45 EXT. - ASTORIA, QUEENS - 45
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 short of JUSTIN from his last conversation with her. She smiles.

KATE (CONT'D)
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. A cursor appears and clicks the 'X' button in the top right. The image disappears.

END OF SHOW