INT. DORM ROOM -- MORNING

CLOSE ON: A COMPUTER SCREEN

A Word Document open, the cursor blinking on and off-- waiting for something to be typed. Slowly but surely, the name “JEREMY CONNORS” is typed in.

PULL OUT to reveal that this name is being typed onto an important-looking ESSAY--

PULL OUT EVEN MORE to reveal JEREMY CONNORS himself, 19, doing the typing while sitting at his desk.

He stops, looks at the screen, and sighs to himself.

CLOSE ON: THE SCREEN

The MOUSE hits “PRINT”.

CLOSE ON: THE PRINTER

PAGES come flying out-- the paper takes physical form. Jeremy’s HAND grabs the papers--

CLOSE ON: THE DESK

JEREMY’S HANDS make sure the pages are in order, neatly arranged behind one another. He STAPLES them together--

And proceeds to walk out of his room. TRACK with Jeremy--

INT. DORM HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

-- as he walks down the hallway, paper in hand. He reaches the ELEVATOR and presses the button, waiting for it to arrive. After some time, it does. The doors open and he’s about to enter when KEVIN, his good friend and hallmate, suddenly appears from the other side of the hallway.

KEVIN
Jeremy, what’s up?

JEREMY
(rushed)
Not much, just going to turn in the paper.

KEVIN
What paper?

JEREMY
The paper.
Kevin nods, impressed.

KEVIN
Finally got around to doing that, huh?

JEREMY
(joking)
Did you ever doubt that I would?

Kevin thinks.

KEVIN
Yes.

JEREMY
Well, what can I say? It’s a great day to screw with expectations.

Kevin chuckles and begins to walk off. Jeremy enters the elevator. HOLD on him as he says--

JEREMY (CONT'D)
(calling out)
Dude, when are you going to turn yours in?

We hear Kevin’s response--

KEVIN (O.S.)
Did that last week!

Jeremy laughs. The elevator doors close on his bemused face, as he remembers--

FLASH TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- A MONTH AGO -- DAY

Jeremy and Kevin sit in a smallish classroom, RANDOM STUDENTS surrounding them and chattering. A PROFESSOR attempts to lecture about class requirements, but Jeremy and Kevin talk over his voice.

KEVIN
I am so gonna blow off this class.

JEREMY
That’s... a healthy way to start the semester.
KEVIN
No, I mean, I’m just taking it for the requirement. I figure, I get a C, it’s all good.

Jeremy holds up his SYLLABUS.

JEREMY
Yeah, but did you see the final paper? It doesn’t exactly look blow-offable.

Kevin shrugs. They return their attention to the Professor--

PROFESSOR
And finally, of course, the paper. 10 pages, double-spaced, minimum 10 sources, and please, guys... no Wikipedia articles.

Kevin looks less thrilled about the class. The Prof is about to continue talking when a HAND shoots up.

WIDEN to reveal the hand belongs to LACEY, 18. Intelligence radiates from her eyes.

LACEY
I was just wondering, when you say sources, do you mean academic sources, like scholarly articles? Or do you just mean any source?

Jeremy is impressed by her attitude.

PROFESSOR
Well, it’s up to you, but I’d prefer--

LACEY
Oh, and do you think using the SPSS research database would be good? I know this isn’t a Stats class, but it could still come in handy.

Lacey is unaware that the entire class probably hates her right now. Everyone, except for maybe Jeremy...

JEREMY
(to Kevin)
Dude. Check out Knowledge Girl.
KEVIN
Ah, knowledge. A dangerous thing, except when it comes in the form of a hot co-ed.
("wisely")
She’s one to watch, my friend. One to watch indeed.

Jeremy settles into contemplative lull, watching Lacey as she asks even more questions. He’s intrigued.

FLASH TO:

INT. DORM LOBBY -- DAY -- PRESENT

ELEVATOR DOORS open as Jeremy exits, the paper in his hand. He walks out the lobby doors--

EXT. DORM -- CONTINUOUS

-- and begins walking down the street. He’s in his own world, focused on getting to his destination, until he hears--

MEREDITH (O.S.)
Jeremy!

He looks to where the noise is coming from and sees his friend MEREDITH. He keeps walking as he talks.

JEREMY
(as he walks)
Hey, Meredith. I can’t really talk, I have to turn in this paper.

MEREDITH
Look at my Jer, all academic. Seriously, it’s a good look on you.

JEREMY
Thanks. Hey, you coming out this weekend?

MEREDITH
You bet. How can Mer and Jer rock the parties if there is no Mer?

JEREMY
(far away now)
That’s what I like to hear. Listen, I’ll see you later!
Meredith laughs at his being rushed. Her LAUGH takes us to--

FLASH TO:

INT. MEREDITH’S ROOM -- THREE WEEKS AGO -- NIGHT

Though it’s three weeks ago, Meredith’s LAUGH still rings, but this time due to the prodigious amounts of alcohol she’s consumed. Jeremy and Kevin sit beside her, each finishing up SHOTS. There’s a KNOCK at the door.

JEREMY
Wait, Mer, who’s that?

MEREDITH
(as she walks to the door)
Oh, it’s Lacey, a friend of mine. She doesn’t go out much, but I mean, it’s Homecoming, right? I told her she had to pregame with us.
(teasing)
Plus she’s cute and single.

She opens the door--

ANGLE: JEREMY’S FACE

He looks surprised. PAN BACK to the door and we see why. Standing in the doorway is Lacey, looking surprised herself.

JEREMY
(vaguely)
Small world after all.

KEVIN
(to himself)
You know, I think there’s a song about that...

LACEY
(shy)
Hey.

MEREDITH
Wait, you guys know each other?

JEREMY
Yeah, we... there’s this class, and... yeah.

LACEY
How about that paper, huh?
JEREMY
Let’s not speak of such awful things.
(hold up a shot)
Shot?

Lacey rolls her eyes and heads over to the table. She takes the SHOT GLASS from Jeremy. They smile for a moment, then TAKE A SHOT TOGETHER. They SLAM their glasses down on the table--

FLASH TO:

EXT. LOCUST WALK -- PRESENT

Jeremy’s feet his the pavement. His walk is focused. He watches the typical Locust Walk CROWD, until something catches his eye. PAN over to see the BEN FRANKLIN BENCH STATUE. Ben is at his typical perch on the bench.

FLASH TO:

INT. JEREMY’S DORM -- TWO WEEKS AGO -- NIGHT

Jeremy sits on a couch in an almost identical position as Ben Franklin. Next to him is Lacey. They’re mid-conversation, laughing...comfortable. They fall silent.

LACEY
This is nice.

JEREMY
What is?

LACEY
This. The whole “laughing and not studying for a change” thing. It’s relaxing.

JEREMY
Yeah, you’re only saying that ‘cause you’ve probably already finished the paper. You can afford to relax.

LACEY
That’s not true.

JEREMY
Lacey, the truth. How far along are you on the paper?

Lacey’s a little embarrassed.
LACEY  
(begrudgingly)  
Second draft.

Jeremy laughs.

JEREMY  
No wonder you’re so relaxed.

LACEY  
Well, it’s gonna go through a lot more drafts before I turn it in.

JEREMY  
Wow. Your OCD rears its ugly head.

LACEY  
No, I’m... it’s...  
(this is hard for her)  
I’m on academic probation.

JEREMY  
(stunned)  
What? You? But you’re like--

LACEY  
(interrupting)  
An overachiever who never shuts up, I know. But it so happens that I’m failing all my other classes because it turns out that Wharton? Is not for me.  
(beat)  
It’s too late for me to drop anything, so I’m counting on our Sociology class. This paper is pretty much my ticket to not failing the semester.  
(beat)  
Now do you get why I’m Ms. Multiple Drafts? This is gonna be my best paper ever... but only because it has to be.

JEREMY  
(pensive)  
Wow...

Jeremy sees that Lacey is miserable. He wraps his arms around her, pulling her in for a hug.
She turns toward him, and their eyes meet. Their heads get closer. So do their lips. And just as their lips are about to meet—

FLASH TO:

EXT. LOCUST WALK -- PRESENT

Jeremy keeps walking. He notices a FOOD CART. PAN across the line of PEOPLE waiting--

FLASH TO:

EXT. LOCUST WALK -- TWO WEEKS AGO -- DAY

-- and KEEP PANNING across the line. It’s a different time and a different day, but people still wait hungrily in line. Jeremy and Lacey stand in line, hand-in-hand, mid-conversation.

LACEY
-- so I asked the professor about a re-do of the Finance midterm and he said he’d consider it.

JEREMY
See, that’s good.

LACEY
Yeah, but I mean, that’s not gonna help my grade much.
(beat)
What about you? How’s the Sociology paper?

JEREMY
(hesitant)
It’s... brewing. I have a lot of ideas.

LACEY
You also have less than two weeks to do it.

JEREMY
Don’t worry about it.
(vague)
I have a plan.

LACEY
(skeptical)
A plan?
JEREMY
A good one.

LACEY
(rolls her eyes)
If you say so. Oh, hey... do you mind proofreading my paper some time this weekend? It’s basically done, I just need a second opinion.

JEREMY
You know you’ve hit rock bottom when you’re asking the procrastination poster child for advice.

LACEY
(lovingly)
I believe in you. I think you’ll surprise them all.

JEREMY
With what, an A+ paper?

LACEY
(joking)
Well, don’t push it.
(she kisses his cheek)
Maybe a B. B+, if your plan is really as good as you say it is.

They laugh.

FLASH TO:

EXT. LOCUST WALK — PRESENT

Jeremy walks. He sees a flyer, reading “HARNWELL GUITAR HERO TOURNAMENT!”.

FLASH TO:

INT. DORM ROOM — A WEEK AGO

Jeremy and Kevin stand, holding GUITAR HERO GUITARS. The colorful imagery of the video game FLICKERS across their faces, and they are concentrating hard.

KEVIN
So...

JEREMY
Yeah...
KEVIN
I have so much work, man.

JEREMY
I know, me too.

But they keep playing.

KEVIN
Glad I finished the paper. Otherwise, I wouldn’t be able to be
calling your ass right now.

Jeremy shoots Kevin a look.

JEREMY
Barely.
(beat, presses “pause”)
Wait, you wrote the paper already?

KEVIN
Had to.

JEREMY
Oh.

KEVIN
You didn’t do it yet?

JEREMY
Don’t worry, I--

KEVIN
(interrupting)
Yeah, yeah, your “plan” or
whatever.

Jeremy presses buttons on his guitar until “HIT ME WITH YOUR
BEST SHOT” by Pat Benatar (or something else?) begins
playing.

KEVIN (CONT’D)
Are you seriously choosing Pat
Benatar over getting work done?

JEREMY
Dude, I have a plan. It’s all
good.
(beat)
Besides, who can resist the
awesomeness that is Pat Benatar?
Jeremy smiles to himself. Kevin shrugs and they resume play.

FLASH TO:

EXT. LOCUST WALK -- PRESENT

Jeremy walks. He’s coming closer to his destination. He sees something that reminds him of--

FLASH TO:

INT. JEREMY’S DORM -- A FEW HOURS AGO

Jeremy and Lacey sit at a COMPUTER. They’re both staring at the screen. Lacey is hesitant while Jeremy is stunned.

   LACEY
   So, what do you think?

   JEREMY
   I think it’s great. It’s... wow.

   LACEY
   Thanks.
   (beat)
   After my computer crashed I almost freaked out. Thank God I had it on my flash drive.

She motions toward the FLASH DRIVE, which sits near the computer.

   LACEY (CONT’D)
   It was the only copy I had left. And I lost my Finance midterm review sheet.

   JEREMY
   You didn’t back it up anywhere else? No CD, or external hard drive...?

   LACEY
   No.
   (beat)
   Why?

   JEREMY
   No, nothing. It’s just that... (quietly amused)
   No wonder you’re failing all your classes.
Lacey’s face falls.

LACEY
What?

JEREMY
(smug)
Oh, I didn’t mean it that way, babe. It’s just that maybe if you managed everything a little better, you wouldn’t always be two or three steps behind everyone else.
(beat)
Sure, this paper will save you in this class, but the pain and heartbreak of poor organization skills will last you a lifetime.

LACEY
Why are you saying this?

JEREMY
I’m just telling the truth. I thought we were close enough to be honest with each other.
(beat)
Guess I was wrong.

Lacey stands up, on the verge of tears.

JEREMY (CONT’D)
Oh, look, now here come the tears. Lacey, stop trying to hug and cry your way out of every situation. Maybe if you stopped “feeling” and started “doing”, you might not be on academic probation. Just a thought.

Lacey backs her way to the door.

LACEY
(devastated)
I can’t do this. I can’t...

JEREMY
(mock concern)
Is it something I said?

Lacey looks at him, her eyes painfully confused. She opens the door and runs out.
Jeremy’s face becomes flat, emotionless. He turns his eyes back to the COMPUTER SCREEN. He looks to the side of the computer and sees the FLASH DRIVE.

He nods to himself and looks back up at the SCREEN.

ANGLE: THE COMPUTER

In the top left corner of the essay is a name. “LACEY HILL”.

A slow smile crosses Jeremy’s face.

SMASH CUT TO:

THE FOLLOWING SCENES ARE RAPIDLY IN SEQUENCE, QUICKLY INTERCUT BETWEEN ONE ANOTHER.

EXT. LOCUST WALK -- PRESENT

Jeremy nears a class building. He opens the doors and heads up a staircase, down a hallway...

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. JEREMY’S DORM -- THAT MORNING

Jeremy slowly and deliberately deletes all the letters in “LACEY HILL”. Each time a letter goes, we see a FLASH of--

INTERCUT WITH:

INT./EXT. VARIOUS COLLEGE LOCATIONS

Jeremy and Lacey, having fun, cuddling, hugging, walking together... their relationship thus far. End with shot of them taking shots together from the time they first met.

CUT TO:

INT. JEREMY’S DORM -- THAT MORNING

And we’re back to where we began--

ANGLE: THE SCREEN

The cursor blinks, waiting for a name to be entered.

Jeremy types in “JEREMY CONNORS”. He sits back in his chair and sighs to himself. We’re back to the beginning.

ANGLE: THE SCREEN
The mouse is about to hit “PRINT”. Before it does, we--

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PROFESSOR’S OFFICE -- PRESENT

Jeremy slowly enters the Prof’s office, paper in hand. He clears his throat.

JEREMY
Hi. I... this is--

PROFESSOR
(interrupting)
Oh, is that your paper?

Jeremy considers this.

JEREMY
I came to turn it in.

PROFESSOR
OK then, let’s have it.

The Prof sticks his hand out expectantly.

Jeremy looks down at the paper and nods slowly to himself. He begins to raise the paper toward the Professor’s waiting hand, but before we can see if it ever gets there, we--

CUT TO BLACK.

THE END.