

# ADULTS

*a feature film by*

BRENDAN PROST

Every crisis makes us grow... some more than others.



A young child in a striped shirt stands in a doorway, looking out into a bright light. The child is silhouetted against the light, and the scene is dimly lit, with the light coming from the doorway. The word "ADULTS" is overlaid on the image in a stylized font.

# ADULTS

## *LOGLINE:*

After the unexpected death of his ex-girlfriend, a chronically irresponsible young adult is forced to take responsibility for her orphaned child. *Adults* is a tender and restrained dramatic film about a father and son both forced to simultaneously grieve and re-imagine what it means to be “grown up”.

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## *SYNOPSIS:*

*Adults* tells the story of a chronically irresponsible young adult, Guy, whose life is turned upside down when his ex-girlfriend and her husband die in a car accident. Guy is left to care for their surviving child, Bernard, and the full crushing weight of adult responsibility unwittingly piles onto him all at once.

While he struggles to rise to the challenge, his efforts are undercut by his grief and the constantly resurfacing memories of his interpersonal failures—manifest in the face of the child he abandoned at birth.

Guy's emotional instability prompts the young Bernard, whose sense of youthful naiveté has already been shattered, to try and provide strength and support to his fragile caregiver. This experience, coupled with Bernard's own grief, prompts a renaissance of sudden growth and maturity that alienates him from his peers. But, he remains trapped in the body of a child, and is subject to the infuriating whims and condescension of grown-ups who don't appreciate his agency, including Guy.

As the accidental father and son try to build a life together, they don't communicate honestly, they grow resentful, and they project their frustrations about the situation on to each other. Only when Guy's semblance of composure finally ruptures, are they both able to cast aside their preconceived ideas about how they "should" or are expected to behave, and what roles they're supposed to fill for the other, and are able to honestly connect over their shared grief.



A person is walking away from the camera on a paved path. They are wearing blue jeans and dark sneakers with white soles. To the right, there is a metal railing. The background is slightly out of focus, showing some greenery and a fence. The overall tone is contemplative and personal.

# ADULTS

## *DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:*

For me, *Adults* is a film about two separately occurring, but inexorably related, experiences of being “grown up” that I’ve had in my life.

The first is what I’m living day to day right now as a twenty-something. It’s the experience of a young man who externally appears grown and mature, but who internally is a mess of insecurities and anxieties that make him feel completely unprepared for the saddle of adult responsibilities. Someone who still feels like a child. The second is something I lived through as a young actor when I was thrust into the working world at a very early age. It’s the experience of a child who externally exhibits a lack of development, but internally feels more mature, and is eager for the freedom and agency of adulthood.

As a young man now, constantly in a state of overwhelm and emotional unpreparedness, I often find myself reflecting back on the bold and resilient child I once was, and wondering what the hell happened. As my personal exasperation with adulthood has grown, I’ve become interested in making a film that places these two experiences in collision with one another, in an effort to discover what happens between our youth and young adulthood.

The result is the story of Guy and Bernard, two characters in a profound state of a emotional instability, both forced to mature quickly, and how they do or do not rise to the occasion. And, like all of my film work, it’s an unabashedly personal story that I am insistent on bringin into the world for people to understand.

To reveal the heart of this understated story, I’ll be drawing upon my background as an actor-friendly director with a propensity for building nuanced performances, in a long form narrative, with modest character arcs. Like my previous feature projects, *Adults* will be an honest, earnest, and performance intensive film that is grounded in an unmistakably contemporary context.

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## *GUY*

Guy is a an immature and insecure man with a brusque sense of humour, who lives a life absent of care and responsibilities by choice. He fears that he doesn't have the resilience, or skills of emotional regulation, to cope with the stresses of a grown-up life. But, he's self-aware, and has always intended to mature, and "get his shit together"... one day.

When Guy is suddenly forced to look after Bernard, the son he abandoned at birth, the full crushing weight of adulthood unwittingly piles onto him all at once. He struggles to seize this sudden opportunity to change and redeem himself, but his efforts are undercut by his grief and the constantly resurfacing memories of his interpersonal failures-- manifest in Bernard's face.

To cope, Guy clings desperately to a superficial posture of emotional strength and maturity, which ultimately alienates him from Bernard and exacerbates his inner turmoil through an unhealthy repression. He convinces himself that being mature means not struggling, which means that when he becomes overwhelmed by his grief, he thinks that he's failing as an adult and a parent. So, he tries to hide what a hard time he's having. Which, obviously only makes things worse, and eventually culminates in a moment of rupture.



# ADULTS



## *BERNARD*

Bernard is the orphaned nine year old son of Arianna, Guy's ex-girlfriend. And, although he was raised by Ryder, Arianna's husband, he is actually Guy's biological son that he abandoned as an infant.

Bernard is a quiet, observant, and creative young boy with a profound connection to his mother and a genuine curiosity about her past. He recognizes that Guy is keeping things from him in this regard, and wants to know more,

Bernard understands very quickly the implications of his mother and stepfather's death. He's being thrust into a position that no one his age should have to be—dealing with the most profound guilt someone can feel. He immediately feels older, estranged from his peers, and alienated by the things he used to enjoy.

He wants to live up to the challenge, and begins to take on the role of caregiver to his fragile guardian, but he's frustrated by Guy's despondence. Bernard feels so much turmoil inside, but when he looks to Guy-- and sees someone who is hiding everything-- he comes to think that's what's expected of him. Throughout the movie, Bernard strives to understand his new living situation, to connect with Guy, and ultimately is in need of permission to finally grieve.



## JESS

Jess (female, mid 20s) is a recent university graduate pondering her next steps, and is waiting for something to shock and inspire her. She's engaged in an ongoing but casual sexual and romantic relationship with Guy, while she pursues other partners on the side. Like Guy, Jess is living very much in the moment without much plan for the future.

She is an extremely present and emotionally attentive individual. But, she is cautious about encroaching into anyone's life further than she's been invited to. Throughout the story, she wants to support Guy in his efforts to forge a new life and look after Bernard, but she's impeded by her doubts about his emotional preparedness, having experienced his immaturity firsthand.

## AIDAN

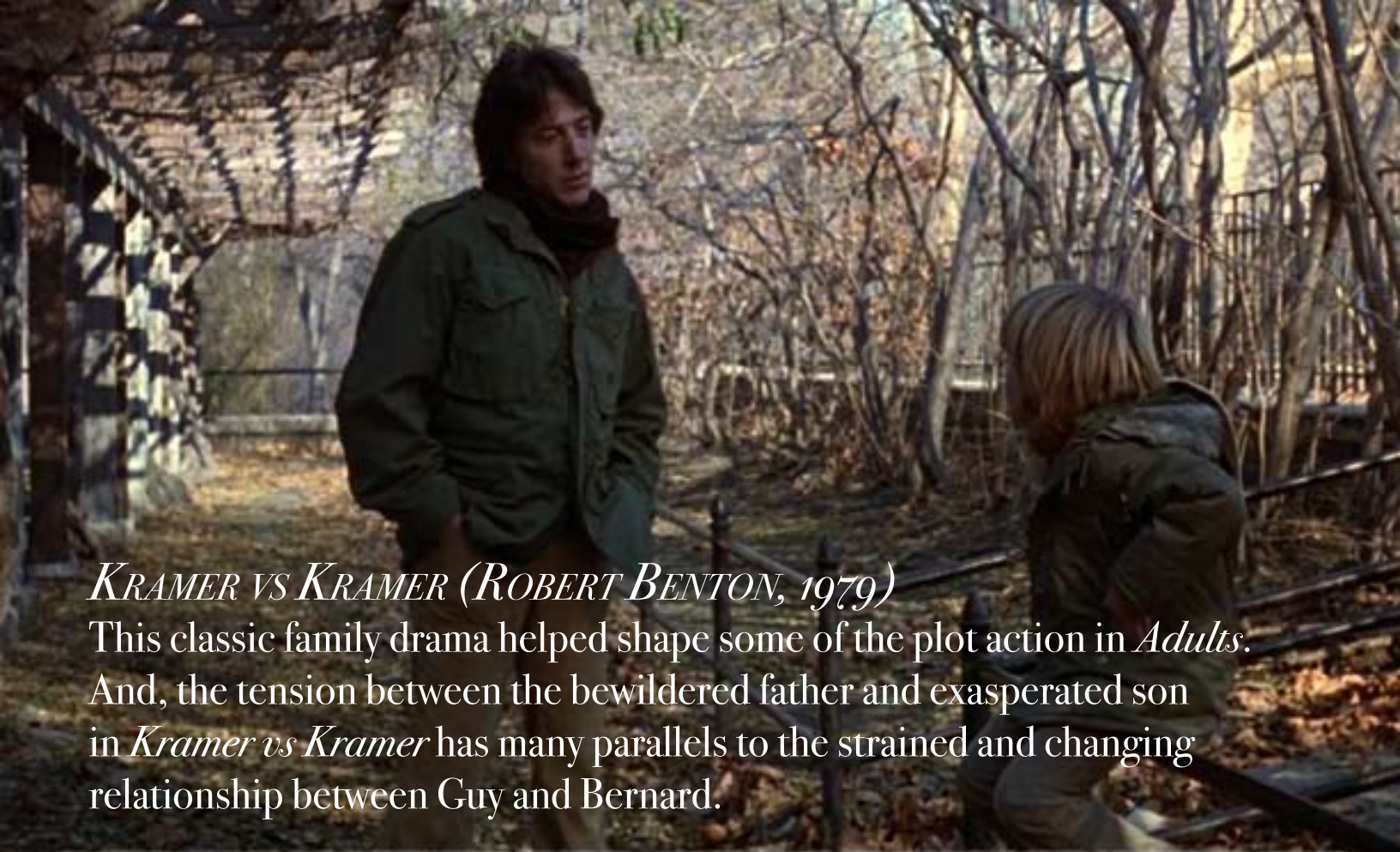


### AIDAN

Aidan (male, mid 30s) is the older sibling of Guy's ex-girlfriend, Arianna. He is a driven, independent and to the point individual who has had to build a life for himself in the face of hardship from an early age. Aidan is an emotionally guarded individual with everyone but his sister, with whom he shared a challenging upbringing.

He is resentful of Guy for disrupting Arianna's life, but restrains his frustration out of respect for his sister—who always urged him to give Guy a break. After Arianna's death, Aidan's goal becomes to ensure the health and safety of Bernard, and does not trust that Guy is up to the challenge.



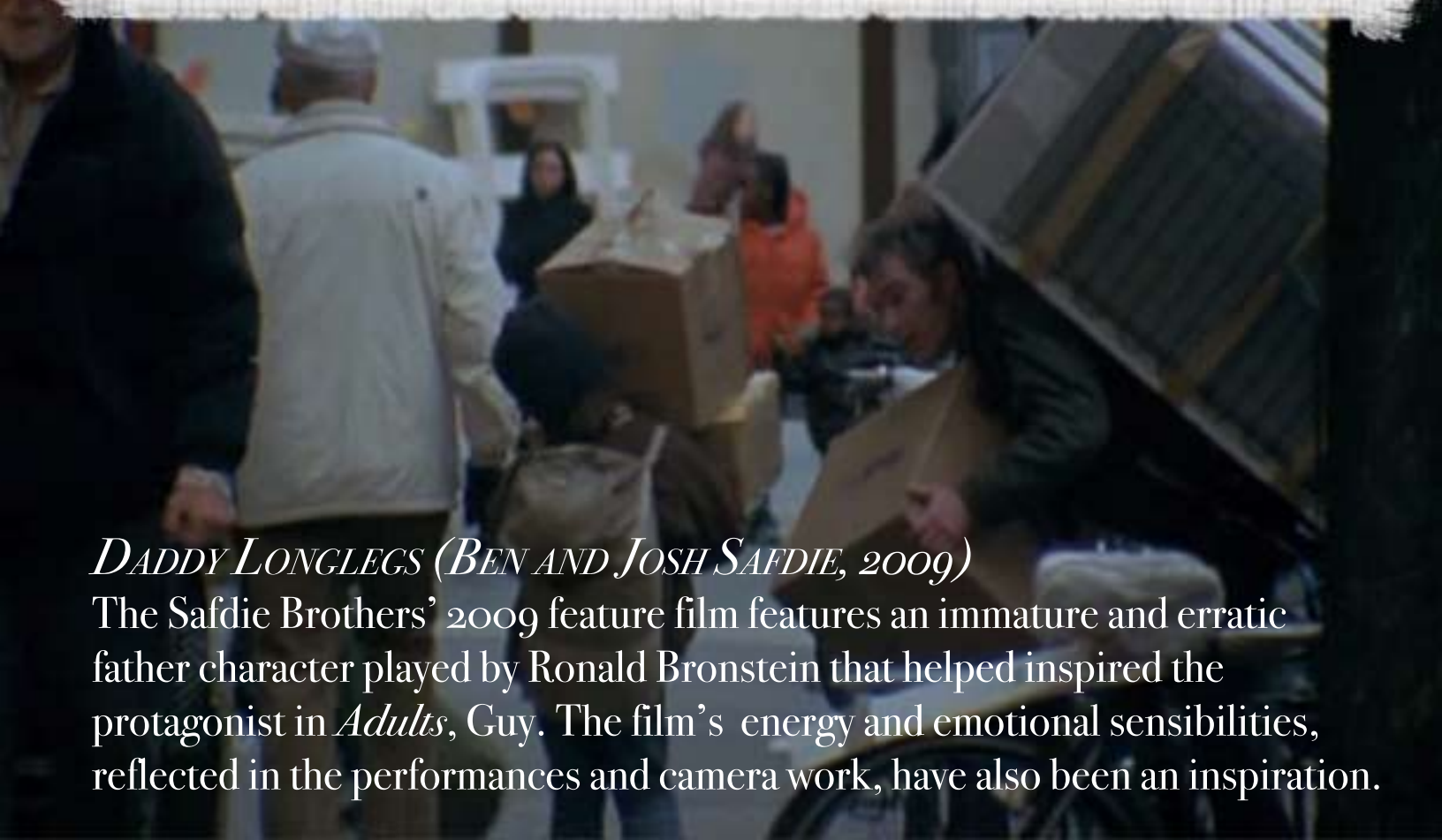


*KRAMER VS KRAMER (ROBERT BENTON, 1979)*

This classic family drama helped shape some of the plot action in *Adults*. And, the tension between the bewildered father and exasperated son in *Kramer vs Kramer* has many parallels to the strained and changing relationship between Guy and Bernard.

# ADULTS

*COROLLARY FILMS*



*DADDY LONGLEGS (BEN AND JOSH SAFDIE, 2009)*

The Safdie Brothers' 2009 feature film features an immature and erratic father character played by Ronald Bronstein that helped inspired the protagonist in *Adults*, Guy. The film's energy and emotional sensibilities, reflected in the performances and camera work, have also been an inspiration.

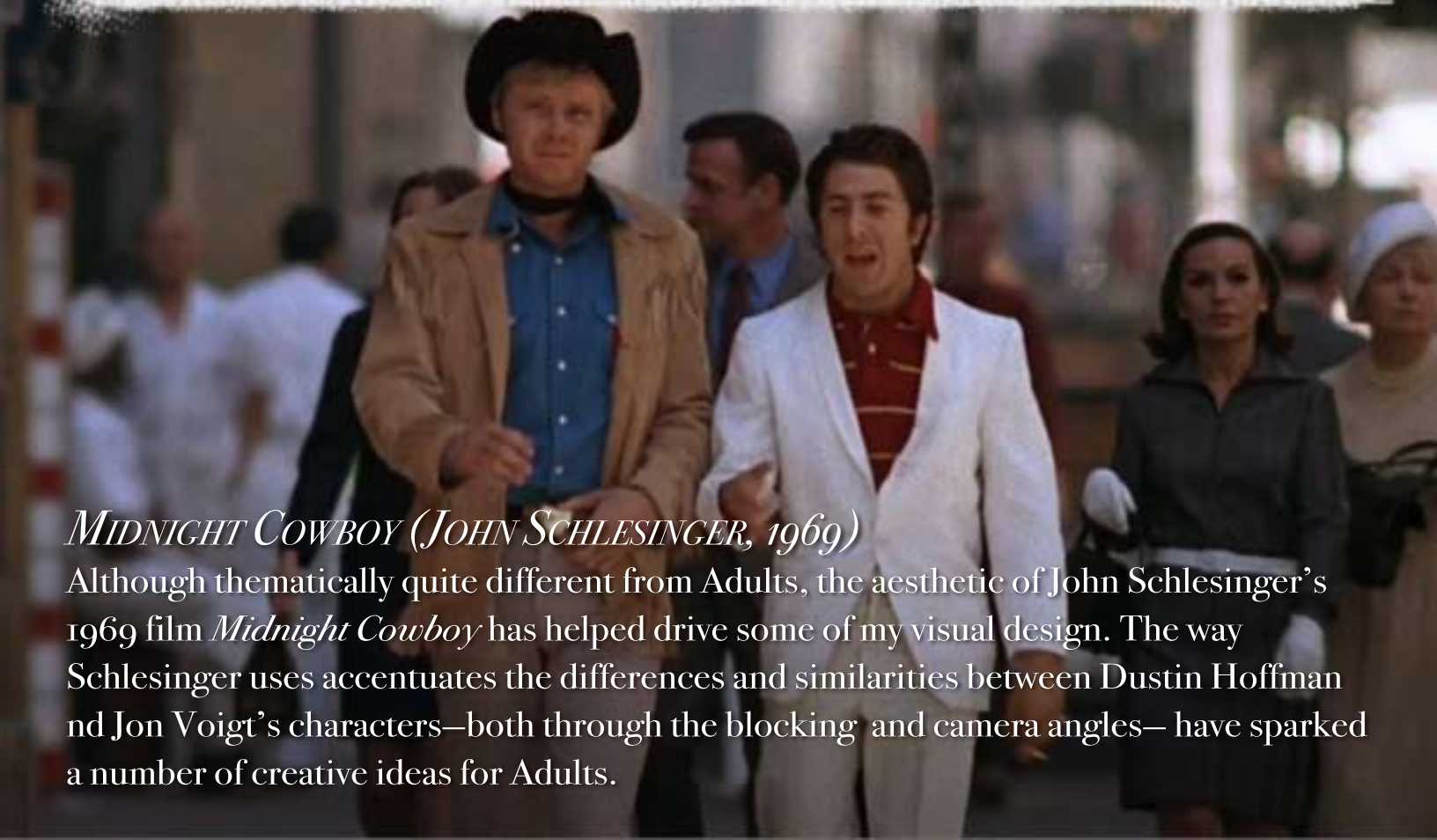




*HALF NELSON (RYAN FLECK AND ANNA BODEN, 2006)*

Ryan Fleck and Anna Boden's 2006 drama *Half Nelson* features an unlikely relationship between a drug addicted high school teacher and one of his pupils. Their unexpected bond, and what they are able to share and help one another with, helped emotionally inform the connection between the accidental pairing of Guy and Bernard.

**A D U L T S** *COROLLARY FILMS*



*MIDNIGHT COWBOY (JOHN SCHLESINGER, 1969)*

Although thematically quite different from *Adults*, the aesthetic of John Schlesinger's 1969 film *Midnight Cowboy* has helped drive some of my visual design. The way Schlesinger uses accentuates the differences and similarities between Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voigt's characters—both through the blocking and camera angles— have sparked a number of creative ideas for *Adults*.





# ADULTS *LOOKBOOK*

Levels and natural height differences, and how they are emphasized or subverted at certain moments, is a recurring visual motif throughout the film. Using strategic blocking and camera angles, the audience will be frequently reminded or challenged to think about what role physical size is playing in any given scene.







*LIGHTING*



*LIGHTING*

# ADULTS

## LOOKBOOK



*COLOUR & TEXTURE*



*COLOUR & TEXTURE*



*COMPOSITION*



*COMPOSITION*



*COMPOSITION*



*COMPOSITION*



*LENS CHOICE*



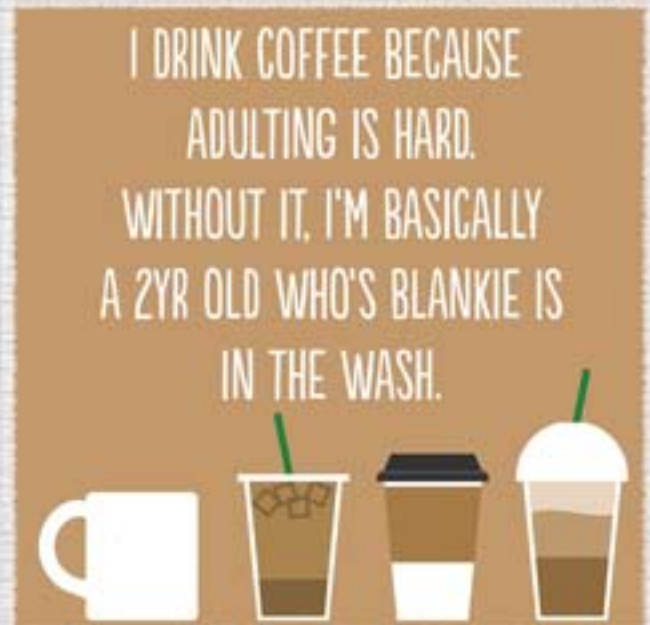
*LENS CHOICE*



# ADULTS *CULTURAL CONTEXT*

There have been so many changes to the economy in recent decades-- globalization, automation, the weakening of labour unions, and the deregulation of financial markets. It's started to seem like all the old benchmarks of achievement and success in adulthood, such as home ownership and a comfortable retirement, are no longer clearly viable goals for an entire generation. Short-term employment and renting is increasingly the norm, which casts a shadow on the prospects for young adults to follow in their parent's footsteps by having children and accruing wealth.

This instability and uncertainty, coupled with the daunting social and political challenges ahead--chiefly climate change-- have rendered millenials in a collective state of indignation and overwhelm. In the movie, Guy experiences an exaggerated and non-ironic sense of what has become known as "adulting"-- the sensation of being incapable or not ready for the responsibilities at hand, or the outright rejection of those responsibilities.





# ADULTS *CULTURAL CONTEXT*

Thanks to the internet, these days children have an entire world of knowledge right at their fingertips. And, consequentially, there are few reliable ways to control what they learn and when. Kids are being bombarded by mature images, characters, and stories from popular culture at an increasingly early age, and can't help internalizing their implicit expectations-- if not subscribing to them completely.

Simply put, living in proximity to the internet means that a lot of kids are growing up faster than they ever used to. Like Bernard in the film, they're watching the sweet naiveté of their youth slipping away long before it ever should.

Our movie asks-- what does it mean to grow up in this cultural context? What does it mean to be a child? And, what does it mean to be an adult?



# ADULTS



## *BRENDAN PROST - Writer & Director*

Brendan Prost is a performance-intensive filmmaker from Calgary, best known as the writer/director of four features: *Generation Why* (2009), *Choch* (2011), *Spaces and Reservations* (2014), and *Sensitive Parts* (2017). Brendan's directing credits also include a diverse set of short films including *Best Friends For Life* (2013), and *Getting There* (2014). Brendan holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts with distinction from Simon Fraser University, and was recently a resident in the Directors' Lab at the Canadian Film Centre.



## *DREW REDMAN - Original Score Composer*

Drew Redman is a freelance composer, electronic music producer and sound designer based in Vancouver, BC. He received his BFA in music composition from SFU and his MMUS Summa Cum Laude in scoring for film, television and video games from the Berklee College of Music in Spain. Drew has been a part of many collaborative projects for both media and live performances-- most recently, writing the music for the video game *Kaiju-A-Gogo*. Drew and director Brendan Prost have previously collaborated on the feature films *Spaces and Reservations* and *Sensitive Parts*.